

Meadowbrook Church 4741 SW 20th Street Ocala, FL 34474 www.mbcocala.com

The content of this book was adapted from the What Happy Families Know series by Tim Gilligan.

Our mission is to help people move from where they are to where God wants them to be.



CONTENTS

- Who and What You Know
- || Foundations
- ||| The Five Love Languages
- // Live It. Tell It.
- VI Conflict and Peace
- VII Cooperation
- VIII Serving Together

Time-tested principles and practices that help to make home a happy place.



Who and What You Know

"Through [skillful and godly] wisdom a house [a life, a home, a family] is built, and by understanding it is established [on a sound and good foundation], and by knowledge its rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

PROVERBS 24:3-4 (AMP)

"The Lord by His wisdom has founded the earth; by His understanding He has established the heavens. By His knowledge the deeps were broken up and the clouds drip with dew."

PROVERBS 3:19-20 (AMP)

Notice that what God used to create and establish the world are the same things needed to build and establish a life, family, home—**WISDOM. UNDERSTANDING. KNOWLEDGE.**

Let's cover five foundational things that happy families know:

NO FAMILY IS PERFECT.

Despite what anyone's social media posts say, no family is perfect. Not mine. Not yours. Not theirs. And guess what? There's freedom in that. No one has to pretend. There is grace for every day and every situation.

IT REQUIRES EFFORT.

Establishing and maintaining a happy, healthy family and home requires ongoing effort. In fact, sometimes it even requires extra effort. Life brings many changes, with both ups and downs. We must put in the effort so that when new seasons come, we're prepared and ready.

THERE IS AN ENEMY.

A lot of times, we can give "the enemy" too much credit or power in our lives. The point is not that we should over-focus on this, but we should have a healthy awareness of the enemy's schemes. For generations, the enemy has tried to destroy marriages, homes and families. Let that stop with you and yours.

WHAT YOU KNOW MATTERS.

PROVERBS 3:19-20 (NKJV) says, "...do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you." Don't forget this! It's not "old-fashioned" or "religious." It's timeless and life-giving!

PUT GOD FIRST.

Scripture shows us in many places that blessing follows those who put their trust in the Lord. Bottom line...Christ must be at the center of your life and home! He can do, help and fix anything. He is present, powerful, loving and kind. When you involve Him, your family is equipped to handle wear, tear, stress and crisis, which comes to us all.



Foundations

We live in some perilous days, where it often feels as though we're swimming against the stream. So much of modern culture and media presents skewed perspectives regarding "truth."

Generations tend to react to the previous generation. It really only takes one generation of ignorance, or ignoring a truth, for truth to die.

One generation lives it, but if it is not effectively passed on, the next generation will only remember it. Then, if someone is not revived concerning truth, the next generation will reject it.

What you believe governs your life. Therefore, your beliefs set your foundation for living. Don't trade the "never-changing" for the "ever-changing."

In Matthew 7, Jesus shares the *Parable of the Wise* and the *Foolish Builders*. Two guys. Two houses. Two foundations. The same storm. Two different outcomes. The house built on the rock stood. The house built on the sand fell. The only variable? The foundation.

Looking at our own lives, storms come to us all. It's not a matter of if, but when.

Cutting to the chase, *happy families* know these things:

THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF HEARING AND DOING THINGS GOD'S WAY.

There are two ways to do anything: God's way and any other way.

HAVE A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND CENTER.

This cannot be overstated. Your beliefs inform your decisions. Your decisions determine your outcomes. Believe. Decide. Watch God at work in the outcome!



The Five Love Languages

There are a lot of different needs in our families, but there is one single need that stands above the rest...<u>the need to be loved</u>. There is nothing your spouse wants more than your love. If you have children, there is nothing your children want more than your love.

What if everything we need for a healthy marriage, healthy parenting, healthy friendships, is right in front of us? Well, that path IS right in front of us, and it can be found through *The Five Love Languages*.

Written by Dr. Gary Chapman, this book was first published in 1992. Since its release, over II million copies have been sold. Over the past five years, it's had a resurgence, sitting on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list for over 265 weeks. The book is built on this single premise: people receive love in a specific way.

So here is the question for us—"Do we know the love language of those around us?" More importantly, "Are we speaking the language that makes them feel loved?"

To answer that better, let's look at each of the five love languages:

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

Our words have power. This language uses words to affirm other people.

QUALITY TIME

This language is all about giving the other person your undivided attention.

RECEIVING GIFTS

For some people, what makes them feel most loved is to receive a gift.

ACTS OF SERVICE

For these people, actions speak louder than words.

PHYSICAL TOUCH

To this person, nothing speaks more deeply than appropriate touch.

You may have taken *The Five Love Languages* test before. Maybe just by reading this, you can guess what your primary language is. Either way, take the free assessment at www.5lovelanguages.com. In fact, have your whole family take it.

THE "TANK CHECK" CHALLENGE

At some point this week, ask your spouse, kids, or family member, "On a scale of O-IO how full is your love tank?" Then ask yourself, "What could I do to help fill it?" These are two simple questions that can help meet their greatest need—to be loved.



Live It. Tell It.

We don't go to church just to hear a good message or see some people. We go to *lift up* through worship and *listen up* to the Word. And it doesn't stop there. We must realize the takeaway is that we are equipped with tools to help us in our daily lives. The message only makes a difference if we apply it. Application is the key. Application is the proof of learning. Application makes the difference. *Lift up, listen up, live it out.*

PSALM 144:15B (NIV) says, "Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord." Used here, the title of "Lord" carries the meaning of owner, ruler, master. Basically, you, your life and your family are not a time-share. You are wholly his!

In **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9 (NKJV)**, we find the "shema"—the most important text in the Old Testament. As you read this passage, let's look at the key points that *happy families* know and recognize the following:

TO BE LOYAL TO GOD (4-6)

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

This exemplifies exclusive and total devotion. There is no higher law and no other god. Get this settled in your heart and in your house.

TO TEACH AND TALK...DILIGENTLY (7)

"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

Teach and *talk* means "to point, pierce, instill, impart, impress." We add the word "diligently," to emphasize the importance of sharpening or repeating. This is more about lifestyle than lecture. Incorporate it into the natural opportunities (eating, driving, starting your day, and getting ready for bed).

HAVE REMINDERS (8)

"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."

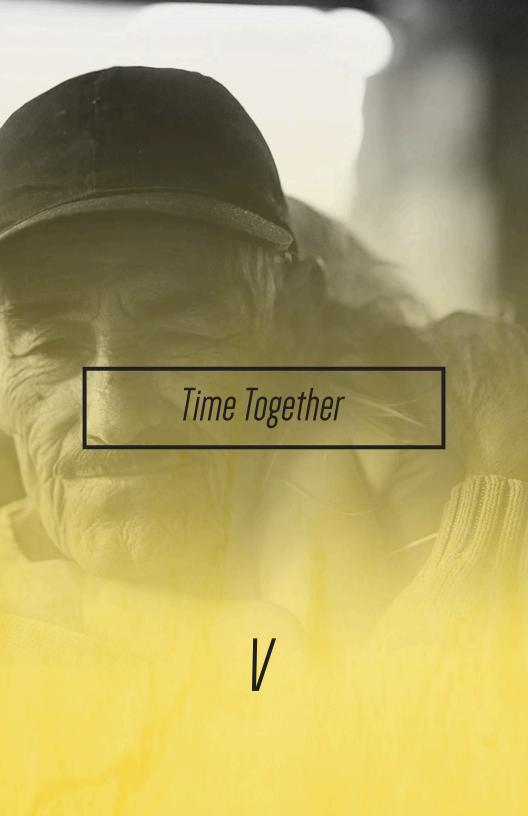
Jews would tie a knot in their clothing or a cord around their wrist or finger. No one is saying you have to do that, but what is something you can start today to remind yourself of the goodness of God in your life?

DISPLAY AND DÉCOR (9)

"You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

This is not an act of superstition or good luck charms. Think of a Bible on your night stand or scripture on your fridge. If somebody visited your home, would they know what you believe?

In your house, there should be no other God, no higher law. This is not about rules, regulations and religion. It's about relationship with God. He demonstrated His love for us. The more we continually see and hear of His love, the more we love Him.



Time Together

As believers, we cannot overemphasize the impact of time together. One of the enemy's weapons is the strategy of disintegration. This is to break us up and keep us apart, and it can be done through the wasting of time. Time is the currency of this dimension. How you spend your time is how you spend your life! Rarely do we "find" time. We have to "make" time for the things that matter most.

Most things in life need maintenance. This includes families and relationships. In fact, much of any present pain or problem points to the need for maintenance. How do we maintain a happy family? Time together. Fellowship brings joy to relationship, and joy brings strength.

Happy families know to do the following:

GIVE TIME

There's a million ways to spend time, but there is no substitute for giving time to someone. When you give your time, you are giving your life. This is one of the greatest expressions of love.

INVEST ENERGY

Put something into your relationships. Don't bore the people you love. Be fully present. Wherever you are, be all there.

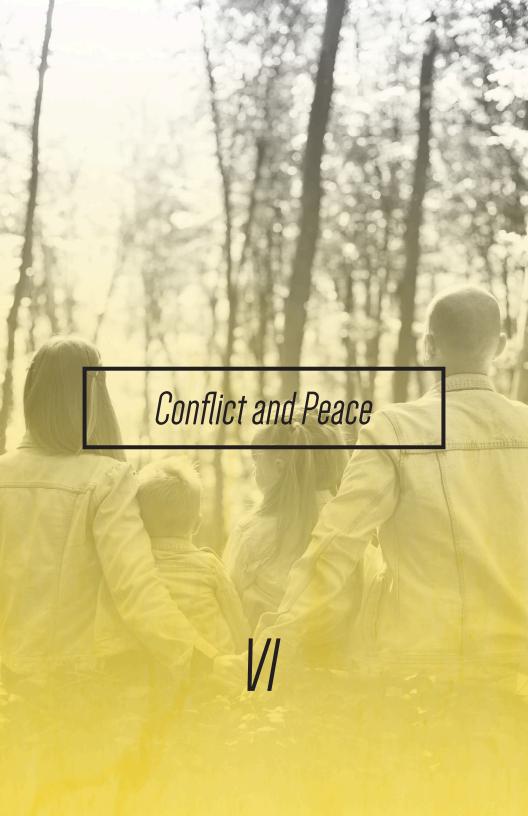
SPEAK HOPE

Your words matter. Use them to speak hope to those around you. The resurrection tells us that the worst thing is never the last thing! Therefore hope is a result of the resurrection. Let the language of your house be the language of hope.

ADD VALUE

Leave people and settings better than you found them. You're telling someone they're worth it by what you say and what you do.

The goal is to be *happy, stable, fruitful, blessed*. The greenhouse where this is developed and nurtured is family and relationships



Conflict and Peace

In life, it is not if you have conflict, but how you have conflict that makes a marriage, relationship or family either stable or fragile. Maybe you grew up in a setting where this was modeled wrongly for you. There was yelling, screaming, silence, avoidance, character assassination, name calling, stomping, throwing, hitting and hysteria. Regardless of what you saw, it is fully possible to disagree without "drawing blood."

The goal is not to bring up the past. That is what the devil does. However, patterns must be dealt with, especially when there is a better way. The Bible begins and ends in peace. We serve a God of peace. He is the Prince of Peace. We are called to peace!

Happy families know to do the following:

FIGHT FAIR (GOOD COMMUNICATION)

Don't settle for poor communication, or no communication. Pursue good, clear, proactive communication. It helps us feel connected, avoid conflict and solve problems. Watch how this practice strengthens your relationships.

WATCH YOUR TONE

Simply put, watch your volume. Keep it down. Hold your peace. 90% of communication is inflection

DON'T STAY ANGRY

Staying angry defiles the atmosphere and distorts communication. What you focus on, you become. So if you stay angry at someone, you become angry.

FORGIVE

The longer you hold on to unforgiveness, the longer you stay hurt. There are no enduring relationships without forgiveness.

You will never have any lasting peace with others until you have peace with yourself. Further, you will never have any lasting peace with yourself until you have peace with God.



Cooperation

Life requires cooperation. For any family, relationship, team, project or endeavor—the load is lightened, progress is multiplied, and stability is strengthened when there is a spirit of cooperation.

Happy families know to do the following:

COOPERATE WITH GOD

Do what He blesses rather than only asking Him to bless what you are doing. The reality is that God always wants to bless you as much as He can. Cooperate in such a way as to invite blessings, not block them. Honor God, and He will honor you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. However, do your own thing, and you cannot expect God to bless you.

COOPERATE WITH ONE ANOTHER

Cooperation is how we live, travel and do life together. This cooperation is born out of love, not out of fear or force. Love is not a feeling. It is a way of thinking and behaving. Love always seeks to close the distance.

MAKE ROOM FOR ONE ANOTHER

Treat others the way you would want to be treated. Give others margin for growth, mistakes, recovery. Give others a break. Give others the same thing you would want if you were to make a mistake.

GUARD AND NURTURE CONNECTIONS

Remember, the enemy has a strategy of disintegration. In order to avoid that in our relationships, we must combat it. How? Talk. Listen. Pay attention. Cheer others on.

Compliment their ideas. Show interest in their interests. Spend time together. Play. Have fun. Be spontaneous. Laugh. Cry.

KEEP TRYING

Be resilient. God's mercies are new every morning. God's laws favor us. "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." **GALATIANS 6:9 (NLT)**

When we cooperate with God and cooperate with one another, God will bless us and our efforts. This produces something increasingly rare and wonderful!



Serving Together

Ultimately, what everyone is looking for is family. We are wired this way, even if we are unable to identify or articulate this need. Being part of a family provides opportunity for growth. It's where we learn, develop, dream and discover.

"Family" can be the answer or "family" can actually be the problem. Sometimes within our families, we didn't get all we needed. They didn't have or didn't know because their family didn't have or didn't know. Their story impacts your story.

The human problem has no human solution. It requires the Divine.

There are three basic needs of every individual: intimacy with God, intimacy with others and self-worth. The design, or the goal, is that these could be developed and accomplished through your family, while also steering us to be part of God's Family.

Everyone is welcome to join God's family! We are reminded in **JOHN 1:12 (NKJV)**, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."

Being in the family of God, *happy families* know these things:

IN GOD'S FAMILY, EVERYONE DOES THEIR PART

Being in the family of God also means you are part of the Body of Christ. Much like the metaphor of our own physical bodies, every part has its own unique responsibility. "From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." **EPHESIANS 4:16 (NKJV)**

STRENGTH IS FOR SERVICE

If you belong to God's family, you are called to take good care of our brothers and sisters! If I belong to God and you belong to God, then we belong to each other. It is super important to God how we treat one another.

God has given you gifts, talents, abilities, and strengths, so let's use them for Him! The Church is the most ready-made, efficient and direct opportunity to use your gifts and talents, everything that makes you unique! **ROMANS 15:1B-2 (MSG)** says, "Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, 'How can I help?'"

Don't just attend church, we are called to serve one another. There is JOY in serving!

For the complete teaching of this series, download our Mobile App.



mbcocala.com