

OUR KINGDOM MINISTRY

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Set the More Important Things First

¹ What are some important things that are vital to our spiritual well-being? These would surely include personal study, meeting attendance, persistent prayer, good association, and the Christian ministry. We cannot maintain good spiritual health without keeping important things foremost in our lives.

² However, all of us have a battle against fleshly desires and have a need for discipline. (Gal. 5:17) Never should we feel that there is more to be gained by pursuing selfish interests. (Jer. 17:9) Therefore, if we are to safeguard our heart and avoid being

misled, regular self-examination is crucial.—Prov. 4:23; 2 Cor. 13:5.

³ **Examine Your Own Heart:** You can do this by asking yourself some candid questions: Do I long to read God's Word? (1 Pet. 2:2) Do I appreciate the importance of attending all the congregation meetings? (Heb. 10:24, 25) Do I persevere in prayer? (Rom. 12:12) Do I seek the company of spiritually minded people? (Rom. 1:11, 12) Do I feel a personal obligation to declare the good news? (1 Cor. 9:16) Positive answers will show that you are desirous of putting the more important things first.

⁴ **Examine Your Daily Routine:** You need to follow up the examination of your heart's desires by establishing priorities for the use of time. This includes scheduling time for regularly reading the Bible and every issue of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, as well as for preparing for the meetings. Time must also be set aside for the family both to study and to pray together. Set a limit on how much time is spent in front of the TV or the computer. Be determined to attend all congregation meetings, and arrange everything else around them. Plan for the whole family to share in the field service each week.

⁵ Without a doubt, setting the more important things first in our life will prove to be a cause for joy.

Bible Studies That Produce Disciples

¹ "What prevents me from getting baptized?" asked the Ethiopian eunuch after Philip "declared to him the good news about Jesus." (Acts 8:27-39) In the eunuch's case, he already had a love for God's inspired writings, and after receiving spiritual help from Philip, he was ready to become a disciple. But not all people are convinced that they need to examine the Scriptures for themselves.

² Thankfully, Jehovah's organization has provided the new brochure, *A Book for All People*, to encourage people to examine the Bible's message for our day. The information in the brochure should be appealing to sincere people who may be educated but who know little about the Bible. This fine instrument is designed

to move people to want to look into the Bible.

³ When starting a Bible study, it would be helpful to review the excellent suggestions published in the June 1996 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert on how a productive study can be conducted in the *Knowledge* book. During the course of the study, consider the progress being made by the student so that you can determine which areas need further attention. Encourage the student to prepare his lessons in advance, looking up the scriptures. Comments made in his own words may reflect his heartfelt appreciation for the truth. Rapid progress is usually made by those who do additional reading of the Society's publications and regularly attend congrega-

tion meetings. Encourage him to speak informally to others about what he is learning. Kindly show him what he needs to do to make spiritual progress. We should not conduct studies indefinitely with indecisive ones. Students ought to take the initiative to learn, take a firm stand for the truth, and advance toward dedication and baptism.

⁴ In some households, more than one study is being conducted, as different members of the family have separate studies. However, having a united family study may be preferable in most cases, since it would help draw the family together spiritually.

⁵ Jesus' command is that we go make disciples. (Matt. 28:19) To do so, we must conduct Bible studies that help the students to progress to the point that they may ask, "What prevents me from getting baptized?"

SERVICE MEETINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

Week Starting September 1

Song 26

10 min: Local announcements. Selected Announcements from *Our Kingdom Ministry*.

15 min: "Set the More Important Things First." Questions and answers. As time permits, comment on "Setting Proper Priorities" in the February 22, 1987, *Awake!*, pages 8-9.

20 min: "Sharing With Others The Secret of Family Happiness." A talk covering paragraphs 1 and 6-8. Demonstrate paragraphs 2-5. Stress thinking in terms of making disciples and reaching the goal of starting studies.

Song 107 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting September 8

Song 27

10 min: Local announcements. Accounts report.

10 min: Local needs.

10 min: "Bible Studies That Produce Disciples." Talk.

15 min: Elder discusses "Motivate Students Toward Dedication and Baptism" (*km* 6/96 insert, pars. 20-2) with experienced publishers who conduct studies.

Song 109 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting September 15

Song 30

10 min: Local announcements.

15 min: Make Good Use of Videos. Review suggestions on use of Society's videos and relate local experiences that illustrate how to make greater use of the videos, both in our families and in our ministry.

20 min: Are You Using the *School Brochure*? An elder discusses the October 1, 1985, *Watchtower*, pages 30-1, with some parents and children. They

relate their personal experiences using the *School* brochure.

Song 112 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting September 22

Song 32

8 min: Local announcements.

17 min: How to Start a Conversation. Much of our success in the ministry depends on our being able to engage other people in meaningful conversations. When we are able to say something that gets others to listen, we have overcome one of the biggest barriers we face in witnessing. Discuss with audience key points in the *School Guidebook*, study 16, paragraphs 11-14. Have publishers who are skilled and effective in starting conversations relate the opening words they use when speaking to such people as (1) a pedestrian on the street, (2) a passenger on a bus, (3) a clerk behind a counter, (4) a shopper in a parking lot, (5) a person on a park bench, and (6) someone being contacted in telephone witnessing.

20 min: Review Congregation's 1997 Service Year Report. Service overseer commends congregation for fine effort, especially during March, April, and May. Offers suggestions from body of elders and last circuit overseer's report to increase field service and Bible study activity. Outline some practical goals for the new service year, including starting and conducting Bible studies and auxiliary pioneering during months with five weekends—November, May, August.

Song 113 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting September 29

Song 37

15 min: Local announcements. Remind all to turn in field service reports. Mention that we will begin studying the *Family Happiness* book next week

at the book study. In preparation for magazine work in October, discuss the need to "Analyze Your Territory," "Acquaint Yourself With the Magazines," "Prepare Your Opening Words," "Adapt to the Householder," and "Assist One Another," from the October 1996 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 8.

15 min: What Should a Christian Do When Called for Jury Duty? A talk by an elder on the April 1, 1997, *Watchtower*, pages 27-9.

15 min: Glorify Your Ministry. Audience discussion of *Our Ministry* book, pages 81-3. Ask these questions to highlight the main points: (1) How are we benefited by following Jesus' example? (2) How important is our responsibility to preach? (3) What motives prompted us to dedicate our lives to Jehovah? (4) What kind of conduct is required if a person is to serve God? (5) What can we learn from the way Jesus preached?

Song 121 and concluding prayer.

CONGREGATION BOOK STUDY

Schedule for congregation studies in the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*.

September 1: **Chapters 125-126**

September 8: **Chapters 127-128**

September 15: **Chapters 129-130**

September 22: **Chapters 131-132**

September 29: **Chapter 133 and review of book**

JUNE SERVICE REPORT

Number of:	Av. Hrs.	Av. Mags.	Av. R.V.	Av. Bt.St.	
Sp'l Pios.	162	119.0	94.2	50.3	4.3
Pios.	66,373	72.9	45.8	23.3	1.9
Aux. Pios.	24,351	57.7	36.9	14.1	1.0
Pubs.	813,139	9.5	7.2	3.5	0.3
TOTAL	904,025	Baptized: 5,983			

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Literature offer for **September:** *The Secret of Family Happiness*. **October:** Individual copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* Where interest is found on return visits, subscriptions may be offered. Starting in the latter part of the month, *Kingdom News* No. 35 will be distributed. **November:** Distribution of *Kingdom News* No. 35 will continue. Congregations that complete their territory by reaching householders in each home or dwelling with a copy of *Kingdom News* No. 35 may offer the *Knowledge* book. **December:** *New World Translation* with the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?*

■ The presiding overseer or someone designated by him should audit the congregation's accounts on September 1 or as soon as possible thereafter. Make an announcement to the congregation when this has been done.

■ U.S. Selective Service regulations require that all men register at the post office when reaching 18 years of age. All those required to do so should take care of the matter promptly, viewing it as a Christian's obligation to the superior authorities. Elders will want to have this in mind and give appropriate reminders to young brothers nearing the age of 18. Questions as to the young Christian's responsibilities in this regard may be answered by the elders.

■ The elders are reminded to follow through on instructions given on pages 21-3 of the April 15, 1991, *Watchtower*, regarding any disfellowshipped or disassociated persons who may be inclined toward becoming reinstated.

■ It is important that groups of 30 or more persons planning

to visit the Society's facilities first correspond by mail with the Central Tour Desk at 100 Watchtower Drive, Patterson, NY 12563-9204. The Central Tour Desk will care for groups that will be visiting Brooklyn Bethel, Watchtower Farms at Wallkill, the Watchtower Educational Center at Patterson, or the Jersey City Assembly Hall. Please provide information on the number coming and the dates and times for visiting each location. The Society will provide a description of the tours that are available as well as a map giving directions to each location. **LODGING INFORMATION HAS BEEN SENT TO THE CONGREGATION ELDERS AND MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE CONGREGATION SECRETARY.**

■ Those associated with a congregation should send all new and renewal subscriptions for *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, including their personal subscriptions, through the congregation.

■ The Society does not fill individual publishers' requests for literature. The presiding overseer should arrange for an announcement to be made *each month* before the congregation monthly request for literature is sent to the Society so that all interested in obtaining personal literature items may advise the brother handling literature. Please keep in mind which publications are special-request items.

■ Congregations may now begin submitting requests for *The Secret of Family Happiness—On Videocassette* (Volumes 1 through 6) in American Sign Language. They will appear as "Pending" on congregation packing lists until the videocassettes are available. Efforts will be made to ship each videocassette in time for the material contained in it to be considered

at the Congregation Book Study. These videocassettes should be requested only for those familiar with American Sign Language.

■ When making literature requests, congregations should keep in mind that the Society's CD-ROM is not to be distributed indiscriminately. It is primarily for the use of publishers.

■ The May 1997 *Our Kingdom Ministry* "Question Box" recommended that we be cautious about working in the ministry with publishers of the opposite sex. There are good reasons for all to use good judgment in this matter. This does not mean that traveling overseers or even other brothers cannot work in the field ministry with sisters. Rather, the thought was expressed that it is not wise for a brother to be spending time *regularly* alone with the *same person* of the opposite sex to whom he is not related.

■ New Publications Available:
A Book for All People —Chinese, Chinese Simplified, English, French, Greek, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese

Enjoy Family Life (Tract No. 21) —Lithuanian
Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!

—Tibetan
Hellfire—Is It Part of Divine Justice? (Tract No. 74) —Arabic

How to Start and Continue Bible Discussions —Gujarati
Jehovah's Witnesses in the Twentieth Century —Vietnamese

Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life —Bulgarian, Myanmar

Should You Believe in the Trinity? —Persian
The Bible—God's Word or Man's?

—Slovak
The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever —Arabic
The Secret of Family Happiness

—Turkish, Urdu
Watch Tower Publications Index

1996 —English

Sharing With Others *The Secret of Family Happiness*

¹ The family is the basic unit of human society, and from the family come villages, cities, states, and whole nations. Today the family unit is under pressure as never before. Powerful forces are at work threatening the very existence of family life. How thankful we are that Jehovah, the Designer of the family arrangement, has provided us with instructions so that we can achieve fam-

ily happiness! Those who follow his guidelines find that problems are minimized and a successful family unit results. During September we have the privilege of sharing with others the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*. Take the initiative to approach people on the subject of family life. Be friendly, positive, and discerning. What might you say?

² *You could begin by raising a question such as:*

■ "Have you noticed that many families are finding it difficult to endure the pressures of life? [Allow for response.] Reports indicate that many people experience difficulties in the home. What do you believe would help families to find greater stability and happiness? [Allow for response.] Since God instituted the family arrangement, would it not be reasonable to examine the guidelines that he has given? [Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.] Such beneficial instruction is outlined in this book, *The Secret of Family Happiness*." Then ask the individual what he feels is a common family problem, show the chapter that discusses that problem, and offer the book.

³ *On the return visit, you might pursue the goal of starting a Bible study by saying:*

■ "I have thought about what you said on the subject of family life, and I brought you something that I think you will enjoy. [Show the *Require* brochure, turn to page 16, and read the six questions at the top.] Obviously, each one in the family must do his part to contribute toward family happiness. If you have just a few minutes, I will demonstrate how you can get the most benefit from this information." Then begin studying lesson 8.

Another way to start a discussion is to mention a problem, perhaps by saying:

■ "Although everyone wants to feel a sense of contentment and satisfaction, it seems many families have not really succeeded in this. What do you think would help them to find true happiness? [Allow for response.] Long ago, the Bible revealed what sort of problems we would see in families today. [Read 2 Timothy 3:1-3.] However, the Bible also tells families what to do to resolve these problems and to obtain lasting happiness. Its principles are set out in this book, *The Secret of Family Happiness*." Then show the review box at the end of an appropriate chapter, read it, and offer the book.

⁵ *When you return, use the "Require" brochure to start a study. You could say:*

■ "I was impressed with your willingness to examine the Bible's principles that apply to family life. Experience has shown that the best results are achieved by following the practical counsel found in the Bible. Here is a simple explanation of why that is so." Read the first paragraph of lesson 1 in the *Require* brochure, including either Psalm 1:1-3 or Isaiah 48:17, 18. If the opportunity allows, consider the remainder of the lesson. Offer to return to study the next lesson together.

⁶ *About Our Literature:*

Knowing that all our literature is valuable and that publishing it costs money, do you ever hesitate to offer magazines, brochures, or books to the people you meet? How can we be sure that we are not giving literature away to unappreciative people? One way is to ask the person if he will promise to read the item that you are presenting.

⁷ *When offering a "Family Happiness" book, for example, you might say this:*

■ "If you promise to read this book, I will leave it with you at no charge. [Allow for response.] You may wonder how we can afford to do this. It is because our work is supported by voluntary donations. If you would like to make a small donation toward our work, I will gladly accept it." One brother was getting little response until he made two changes. First, he added a word, saying: "If you would like to make a small donation today toward our work, I will gladly accept it." Next, he paused long enough to allow the household to respond. He then felt more confident that the literature was appreciated and that it would be read.

⁸ Let us put forth every effort we can to share with others the secret that leads to family happiness—following the instructions set forth in God's Word.—Ps. 19:7-10.