

PROBLEM SOLVING

LESSON SIXTEEN

Follow up (As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Problem Prevention.)

1. *What are some things we're doing to prevent problems in our family?*
2. *What more can we do to prevent possible problems?*

Concept

Every family has problems. How we handle our problems makes all the difference. These are some ideas on how to solve problems:

1. **Focus on the present, and be positive.** Look toward a solution by asking, "How can we solve this problem?" instead of asking, "Why did this happen to us?" Try to see problems as challenges that you can overcome, and as possible opportunities to learn and grow.
2. **Keep the channels of communication open.** Expressing feelings is an important part of surviving a crisis. Every family member needs to know they are listened to and that their concerns are considered.
3. **Seek solutions in small steps.** Most problems don't have an "easy fix." Tackle problems one step at a time.
4. **Draw on spiritual resources.** God will sustain and strengthen families in time of need when families turn to Him.

It will help families solve problems if they develop "We can do it together!" attitudes. Most problems can be solved when families talk about it as soon as the problem arises, discuss all possible solutions, then decide how they will "tackle it" together. Even huge conflicts can be resolved more easily when several people work together finding solutions.

Helping, supporting, and encouraging one another are keys to problem solving. Working through problems together strengthens relationships and helps bond family members to one another.

Family Survey Review

Statement # 16. **We can talk about things without arguing.**

- Why is it important to be able to talk about things without arguing?

- What are some things we can do to keep from arguing?

Story

The Brooklyn Bridge that spans the river between Manhattan and Brooklyn is an engineering miracle. In 1883, a creative engineer, John Roebling, was inspired by an idea for this spectacular bridge project. However, bridge-building experts told him to forget it; it just was not possible. Roebling convinced his son, Washington, an up-and-coming engineer, that the bridge could be built. The two of them conceived the idea of how it could be accomplished and how to overcome the obstacles. Somehow they convinced bankers to finance the project. Then, with unharnessed excitement and energy, they hired their crew and began to build their dream bridge.

The project was only a few months under way when a tragic on-site accident killed John Roebling and severely injured his son. Washington was unable to talk or walk. Everyone thought the project would have to be scrapped since the Roeblings were the only ones who understood how the bridge could be built.

Although Washington Roebling was unable to move or talk, his mind was sharp as ever. One day as he lay in his hospital bed, an idea flashed into his mind about how to develop a communication code. All he could move was one finger, so he touched the arm of his wife with that finger. He tapped out the code to communicate to her what to tell the engineers who continued building the bridge. For 13 long years, Washington tapped out his instructions with one finger until the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge was finally completed.

Discussion

1. Did Washington Roebling have a big problem?
2. Does every person and every family have problems?
3. What can we do as a family to improve our problem-solving skills?

Activity

First, let's talk about one problem that our family has. Let's decide today how we can work together to solve this problem.

Second, let's do the activity called Family Contracts.

Assignment

1. *Make a greater effort to be aware of one another's problems.
Try to raise your level of sensitivity to better recognize the challenges in other people's lives.*
2. *Ask for help with problems when you need it.
Remember that to receive help with your problems, you need to share your concerns*

and challenges with those who care about you. There are always people who are willing to share your burdens.

3. *Reach out to help others when they need you.*

As a family, look around to those in need. You can help solve others' problems by giving of yourselves in service. Who is someone your family can help? What can you do to help them?

ACTIVITY

FAMILY CONTRACTS

Creativity can often solve conflicts between family members. Those involved must be willing to talk about the problem, decide what needs to be done, and agree to try new ways of acting towards one another. Sometimes it helps to "see" the problem and proposed solution by putting it into writing. Written contracts can help family members work together on agreeable solutions for everyone.

Activity

1. *Family members with a problem choose a time to get together for a contract session.*
2. *Make sure everyone understands that the reason for getting together is not to argue or fight about the problem, but to think about ways to solve it.*
3. *Use the steps of negotiation briefly outlined here to discuss the problem and possible solutions.*
 - *Be specific about defining the problem and then brainstorm possible solutions.*
 - *Decide on a mutually agreeable solution.*
 - *Clearly define what each person agrees to do in order to make the solution work.*
 - *Discuss the consequences if either person fails to comply.*
4. *Put the agreement into writing by using the following contract, or design your own.*

ACTIVITY

SAMPLE CONTRACT

You may use the following example, or design your own family contract. Encourage family members to be creative when putting their plan into words. Any format can be used as long as the contract is clear and understandable to everyone involved.

Whereas we, _____, and _____,
hereby agree that the following situation exists: _____

_____.

To solve this problem, we propose the following course of action:

We, _____, and _____,
agree to _____

_____.

If we don't do the above:

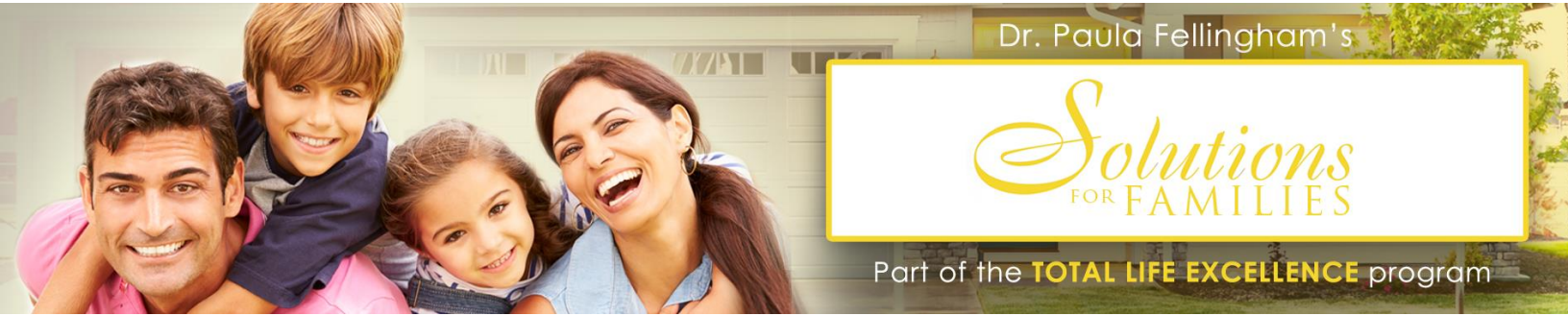
We agree to _____.

The following will prove that the terms of this contract have been successfully completed:

_____.

When we have solved our problem, we agree to the following reward:

_____.



Date: _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____