



Ladies of Grace
Bible Studies for Women
The Ministry of Womanhood Series

Every woman has been born into the ministry of God. It is spelled out for her in Scripture, lived out before others in her home, church, and community, and recorded by God in the pages of eternity.

Happiness Is Homemade

This is our last Bible study of this season, and we will be talking about something very practical, as well as spiritual ~ **the fact that God wants US to fill our homes with happiness.** There is a lot of talk in the Bible about being joyful and happy, and I'm afraid that many of our children will never be able to fully embrace those blessings if we don't teach them how to enjoy being biblically happy and joyful when they are young.

I want to begin this study today by reading what the Bible says about how we can find happiness and how we can pass it down to our children so that they will be able to have it too. Please turn with me to Proverbs 3:13-18, and let's read these verses together. What is the main subject of these verses? It is finding wisdom. And what happens to us when we find it? We become happy. The truth that I want to share with you here is this: in order to bring happiness into the lives of the people that live in your homes, you must first have happiness yourself. And how does the Bible say that we get it? By finding wisdom. How do we find wisdom? By reading the Word of God. And when we read what the Bible says about mothering and children, we find that God wants us to be "joyful mothers" (Psalm 113:9), that children are worth investing in (Psalm 127:3-5), and that childhood is precious to God (Matthew 19:13-15). In Proverbs 16:20, we find another key to establishing happiness in our homes ~ the act of handling matters in our homes wisely by putting our trust in the Lord and the precepts that we find in His Word. Having said all of this, I want to share with you a wise quote from a book entitled "Home-Making", written in 1882 by a Baptist Pastor named J.R. Miller:

"God wants us to fill our homes with happiness. He made childhood joyous, full of life, bubbling over with laughter, playful, bright and sunny. It is a crime to repress the mirth and the gladness and to try to make children grave and stately. Life's burdens will come soon enough to lie upon their shoulders. Life will soon enough bring care and anxiety and hardship and a weight of responsibility. We should let them be young and free from care just as long as possible. We should put into their childhood days just as much sunshine and gladness, just as much cheerful pleasure as possible. Beside the way also to make them strong and noble in character when they grow up to manhood and womanhood is to make their childhood and youth both bright and happy. If you want to produce a vigorous, healthy plant, you will not bring it up in a dark room; you will give it all the sunshine it will take. Human lives will never grow into their best in gloom. Pour sunshine about them in youth; let them be happy; encourage all innocent joy; provide pleasant games for them; romp and play with them; be a child again among them. Then 'God's blessing will come upon your home, and your children will grow up sunny-hearted, gentle, affectionate, joyous themselves and joy-bearers to the world.'"





FIVE WAYS TO FILL YOUR HOME WITH HAPPINESS

PROVIDE LOTS OF GOOD, CLEAN FUN

Kids were made to have fun. They love it! And they were made to enjoy fun with you and your husband too. Here are some ideas for incorporating good, clean fun into your family's life:

- ◆ **Enjoy nature and being outside.** Camping, gardening, playing tag, ball, hide-n-seek, long walks, races, sports, bug collecting, drawing with chalk, blowing bubbles, riding bikes, skating, fishing, building forts & other stuff, star gazing, swimming, picnics, cook-outs, squirt gun fights, and anything else you can think of to do outside. Also, take your kids to the farm and let them pick stuff like apples, strawberries, and blueberries. Buy as much outside equipment as you can: I assure you, it won't go to waste!
- ◆ **Enjoy listening to and making music.** Keep your home stocked with PLENTY of kids tapes. They are so fun to listen to! And gather as many instruments as possible. Kids love to sing and they love to make noise! Let them be musical, and don't hold them back just because you don't like the noise. If you are going to become a mother that provides good, clean fun, you are going to have to learn to love noise. Buy things like harmonica's recorders, plastic trumpets, and keyboards for your little ones to play with. As they grow older, buy real instruments too, and let them take music lessons. Even if they never become concert quality, they will have developed a fun hobby and enjoyed themselves in the process.
- ◆ **Enjoy playing board games.** Buy as many as you can. Kids love to play games, especially if you or dad are the ones that will play with them.
- ◆ **Enjoy good books.** Get a library card and take your kids to the library weekly. If you aren't sure what would be good for your children to read, get you a handbook like "Honey For A Child's Heart" by Gladys Hunt or "Books Children Love". Also, buy good books to have in your home as well. Kids like to be able to read things again and again when they are young. If your children aren't very interested in reading right now, choose a good book and read aloud to them each day. This will become a fun family time and your kids will look forward to it.
- ◆ **Enjoy good films.** Watch good movies together. Films like "Swiss Family Robinson", "Sounder", "Johnny Tremain", "The Sound of Music", and others like them are good tools to promote family togetherness and feel like your family has done something special without even leaving the house!
- ◆ **Enjoy making arts and crafts.** Kids love to make things with their hands! Fill your cupboards with stuff that they can make things with (paints & brushes, noodles, egg cartons, soap, toothpicks, glue, markers, crayons, chalk, paper, tape, yarn, rubber stamps, material, etc.). Invest in things like a sewing machine, hot glue gun, art books, drawing easel, smocks, and other things like that.
- ◆ **Enjoy having pets.** Kids love animals and they have so much fun playing with them.
- ◆ **Enjoy going out to grab a fun thing to eat.** Take the kids and go get ice cream from Dairy Queen, slurpees from 7-11, french fries from McDonalds, pizza from Chuck-E-Cheese, and other kid friendly places like that.
- ◆ **Enjoy eating fun food at home.** Make popsicles. Cut your sandwiches out in different shapes. Serve candy vegetables on their plates sometime. Draw happy faces on the pancakes. Put sprinkles on their toast. Make eating a fun experience at times.
- ◆ **Enjoy going fun places.** Kids love to go to places like the zoo, park, aquarium, Chuck-E-Cheeses, library, church, farms, animal shelters, and other places like this.
- ◆ **Enjoy playing WITH your kids.** Buy good toys and then have fun playing with your kids. Everything is much more fun for kids when Mom & Dad are involved. What are some good ideas of good toys? Practically everything that Little Tykes, Fisher Price and Lego makes. Anything that they can use to build with, make things into, role play with, or discover the world by using is considered a good toy.

** Resist the temptation to be foolish by allowing unwholesome fun busters into your child's life: video games, wrong movies, bad literature & music, inappropriate toys, and going to inappropriate places.*

PROVIDE LOTS OF GOOD, EDIFYING FELLOWSHIP

Kids need friends. There is no doubt about this. But they need the RIGHT kind of friends. What are the right kinds of friends? Friends that encourage them to do right, love God, and obey their parents. In order for them to develop these kinds of friendships, you will need to help them to make the right kind of friends. How can you do this?

- ◆ Encourage them to make friends of their siblings. Allow plenty of time and opportunities for your kids to do things together.
- ◆ Invite the right kinds of kids to come over and play with your kids. These kids should share the same kind of values that your family does.
- ◆ Allow your kids to bring a right kind of friend with you as you go places like the library, park, etc..
- ◆ Make friends with other families that you approve of.

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Psalm 40:8



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- ◆ Make friends with your children yourself. Do things together, go places together, do chores together, make things together. Provide plenty of times for you to talk and just be together.
- ◆ *Don't allow bad friendships to even start to develop! Make sure you know who your child is hanging around with and what they are doing when they are hanging around.*

PROVIDE LOTS OF MEANINGFUL FAMILY TRADITIONS & CELEBRATIONS.

Kids love traditions and they love celebrations! Many of their fondest memories of childhood will center around these types of events. Because of this, it is very important that we make the most of them while they are growing up in our homes.

Here are some simple suggestions to help you in the making of meaningful family traditions and celebrations in your home:

- ◆ **Make birthdays fun.** Decorate with balloons, streamers, make signs, make special treats, use a special plate, buy gifts, serve special meals, have a party, or whatever else you can think of to celebrate in a special way.
- ◆ **Make anniversaries special.** Go out to dinner at a special place, buy flowers, buy cards, watch your wedding video, look at pictures, and whatever else you can think of that lets the kids know that you are making big over the fact that you are keeping your commitments.
- ◆ **Make Christmas & Easter meaningful.** Christmas is not about Santa and getting a bunch of toys. It is about celebrating the fact that God chose to send His Only Begotten Son down from Heaven to save the world from their sins. Enjoy the season in a way that honors this. Bake cookies for others, help the needy, make ornaments for your tree, read the Christmas story, sing hymns, go to church, have a birthday cake for Jesus, watch "It's Wonderful Life", go Christmas caroling, exchange simple gifts (stay within a budget!), have a special meal, decorate your house with nativity items and scriptures, and share Christ with others. Celebrate Easter by going to church, having an egg hunt with Resurrection Eggs, telling the story of salvation with jelly beans, buying new Sunday clothes, and giving baskets filled with Christian books, a Bible, or other things like that.
- ◆ **Make a big deal of Thanksgiving.** Thanksgiving is a day when we can all think back and be grateful. Make a big meal. As your children get older, let them take turns making the meal. Set the table up fancy. Read a book about pilgrims, go around the table and have everyone name one thing they are thankful for, collect notes of thankfulness in a jar during the month of November, and then read them during the Thanksgiving dinner.
- ◆ **Make the other holidays fun and meaningful as well.** Stay up late and make noise on New Year's Eve, serve the same special meal on New Year's Day, make heart shaped stuff on Valentines Day, Decorate with red, white, and blue on July 4th, go visit a national cemetery on Memorial Day, have a bar-b-que or go to the beach on Labor Day, wear green and talk about missionaries on St. Patrick's Day, celebrate motherhood on Mother's Day and fatherhood on Father's Day with kid-cooked meals, handmade cards and gifts, pray for our military in a special way on Veteran's Day, and celebrate the first day of each season with special treats like hot chocolate for winter, lemonade for summer, a trip to the pumpkin patch for fall, and planting seeds for spring.
- ◆ **Make one night a week a "Family Night".** On this night, grind everything to a halt and just be together doing something fun as a family.

** Don't get into the rut of treating holidays and specials day as though they were just normal "every days"! Kids love to plan for things and look forward to special days. Take advantage of this by making these days extra special for them to enjoy, especially while they are young.*

PROVIDE LOTS OF FORGIVENESS ALONG THE WAY

Anytime a group of people get together for regularly scheduled events, there is bound to be some disappointment. The kids won't always behave the way they should. The right kinds of presents won't be bought. People will forget to do their parts. Sometimes family members will be cranky or edgy. Decide ahead of time that you are going to forgive each other when these things happen. Don't give up on creating a happy home just because your home is sometimes filled with less than happy people. That is just a part of life and as the woman of the home, it is your job to teach everyone to forgive each other and see past this.

There is so much more that I could say about this very important subject! But I will close by sharing with you some of my very favorite resources that have helped me to bring happiness into our home:

Magazines:

Family Fun Magazine
Midwest Living Magazine

Books:

Family Celebrations Series by Ann Hibbard
Let's Make A Memory by Gloria Gather & Shirley Dobson

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My Home Was A Happy Place

By Sabrina Fink

When I look back on my childhood, there are so many words that I could use to describe what it was like. But, if I had to choose one word that best described my home ~ it would be the word, Happy.

My home was a happy place. I don't mean we were always walking around with goofy grins plastered on our faces, or that we quoted Bible verses to each other every time anyone got slightly frustrated. No! We were normal people who loved the Lord, but lived a very normal life full of ups and downs. The one thing my parents did to help us have such a happy home was to let me and my sister enjoy life!

They let us enjoy it the way we were supposed to. My parents didn't buy us the newest toys or the best video games, the television was hardly ever on, and I don't remember ever sitting around thinking how I wish I had a different life. Nope, my sister and I loved our life and we were surely never bored!

Kina and I came up with all kinds of things to do when we were little. We had this old mattress in our carport that my parents put out for us to jump on, and the neighborhood kids would come over for hours just to jump on the mattress. The best part for my parents was that it didn't cost them a thing, and we had more fun on that old mattress than we would have had at an amusement park! Then the neighbor decided to give us a trampoline. I ran home to tell my mom that we were going to be the proud owners of a trampoline! I was so excited that I failed to tell my mom that there was a humongous hole through half of the trampoline. Kina and I were so excited about that crazy trampoline with the huge hole in the middle of it. I'm sure my parents were not as excited about it, but they didn't say anything to discourage our excitement over it.

Then my dad made us a little balance beam to add to our odd collection of outside toys. This is how our Junior Olympics began. We had every single kid in the neighborhood over at our house every day to participate in our Junior Olympics. After all, we had all the right equipment: a soggy mattress, a little wooden balance beam, and a trampoline with a big whole in it! We were some very happy kids!

Then I can remember my days of bringing home stray animals. I brought home everything that I could! There



was a time I had a hamster, bird, bunny, dog, and a cat all at the same time. Then the hamster died. Oh, I was sooo sad! I had a funeral and we buried my hamster while all of the neighborhood kids watched on. We buried him in a glass jar (so I could dig him back up and look at him every once in a while), and put a big grave marker over him that said, "Here lies Cheesy. He was a good hamster, always loving, always kind, faithful and loyal even unto the end. RIP." I laugh so hard when I look back on how Kina and I thought about those things.

My mom would take Kina and I to the library almost every week, and on practically every hot day during the summer. We had so much fun going to the library. My mom never made it just a boring trip to get some books. Every time we went to the library, we would stop on the way and get a 7-11 slurpee! When we got to the library, we were armed and ready to go! We had our giant slurpee in one hand, and our huge laundry baskets clutched in the other hand. The laundry basket was for all the books that we were going to get. I remember once the library lady said that I wasn't allowed to check out more than 32 books at one time, so I had to put some back. I don't even remember if I read every book that I would check out, but I do know that I still love the library to this day. And I think it has a little bit to do with the fact that my mom made it fun!

There are so many more stories that I could write about to tell you about the fun things that we did growing up like the times when we had lemonade stands and pogo stick jumping contests. But, all in all, I think that to have a happy home, you don't have to go out and buy things to make your kids happy. You really don't even have to entertain them all the time either. I think that to have true happiness in the home, the only thing you have to do is be willing to give your children the time they need to be real kids. Let them play outside, help them in their interests in animals, and don't discourage them from being creative. If you give your children plenty of your personal time and attention, they will grow up to enjoy life, not because they have all the nicest and newest things, but because they have learned to enjoy the real things in life to the fullest.