



Evaluate Your FAMILY GROWTH

By Robert D. Oberlander

The alarm sounds, and signs of life begin to emerge from within the Rogers household.

Scott's been up since 6:30, trying to make it to high school band practice on time for a change. Eddie, who's studying advanced physics at the university, is contemplating the relative relationship between perpendicular placement and the causal effect of obliquity. (He's deciding if getting up is worth the effort.) Cathy, a lively 12-year-old, hops across the cold floor to sit in front of the furnace, all the while complaining of frostbite.

Soon mom, dad and all the kids are scurrying around in a frenzy of activity, and the pace won't subside until the end of the day.

Too many days in too many households begin just as portrayed above, family members rushing here and there, until the days have turned into years, and the family is no longer together.

It's been said that life is a rat race

— and the rats are winning. Even though life does have its frantic moments, it shouldn't be that way continually.

Meaningful time together

Spending time together as a family can make life so much more rewarding. But it should be meaningful time, relevant to the needs of each member of that family. To insure positive growth, we occasionally need to look at ourselves as a unit, to evaluate our progress and plot a course for the future.

The apostle Paul tells us to redeem the time in Ephesians 5:16. That is to say, we ought to make the most of every opportunity we have for Christian growth. Not only as individuals, but as a family. That growth can only come if we separate ourselves from our everyday chores and take stock of where we are headed.

If there is a lack in showing the fruits of living God's way of life, if there is an empty hole where family

communication should be, then we need to recognize our weaknesses and build on our strengths.

Strive for the right direction with a desire to build a strong and meaningful family relationship based on God's way of life.

"... for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," says Paul in Galatians 6:7. What is more fertile ground for Christian growth than the family? Its trials and tests offer us many opportunities to display the type of character God wants us to have. Once this realization fully hits us we need only, as some say, to "get some sowin' going" to reap a bountiful harvest that only family love and togetherness can bring.

Analyze your family

So how does your family stack up? Take some time for a family self-appraisal to find out. By looking at our family life objectively we can gain a new outlook on how it really is as compared to how we would like it to be.

Family Self-Appraisal Inventory

(Instructions: Rate yourself on each point on a scale of 1 to 10.)

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- Do you show the fruits of the Spirit:
- ☐ Love (genuine concern for the welfare of others)
 - ☐ Joy (cheerful, positive outlook)
 - ☐ Peace (emotional stability, tranquility)
 - ☐ Longsuffering (patient)
 - ☐ Gentleness (sensitive)
 - ☐ Goodness (kind, considerate)
 - ☐ Faith (trust in God, confidence)
 - ☐ Meekness (humility)
 - ☐ Temperance (self-control, moderate)
- Do you:
- ☐ Pray regularly
 - ☐ Study regularly
 - ☐ Set an example through personal growth and maturing
 - ☐ Take part in Church activities
 - ☐ Instruct and guide your children

Total your score for this section and divide by 14 to get your comparative rating on a scale of 1 to 10.

INDIVIDUAL GROWTH

- Do you:
- ☐ Get enough sleep
 - ☐ Exercise regularly

- ☐ Eat well-balanced meals
 - ☐ Develop new skills and hobbies
 - ☐ Maintain a neat appearance
 - ☐ Read regularly
 - ☐ Make learning a lifetime activity
- Are you:
- ☐ Confident and positive
 - ☐ Dependable
- Do you:
- ☐ Encourage your spouse's self-improvement activities
 - ☐ Show interest in children's schoolwork
 - ☐ Guide your children in making their own decisions
 - ☐ Praise your children's achievements

Total your score for this section and divide by 13.

FRIENDSHIP AND SERVICE

- Do you:
- ☐ Visit friends and relatives, especially when they're sick
 - ☐ Provide warmth and support when others need help
 - ☐ Know and like your neighbors
 - ☐ Keep current with your community's affairs
 - ☐ Know your children's friends

Total your score for this section and divide by 5.

TEAMWORK

- Do you and your spouse:
- ☐ Share compatible values
 - ☐ Trust and respect each other
 - ☐ Resolve differences with love
- Do family members:
- ☐ Practice mutual support
 - ☐ Have constructive communication
 - ☐ Discuss and resolve disagreements constructively
 - ☐ Share family responsibilities

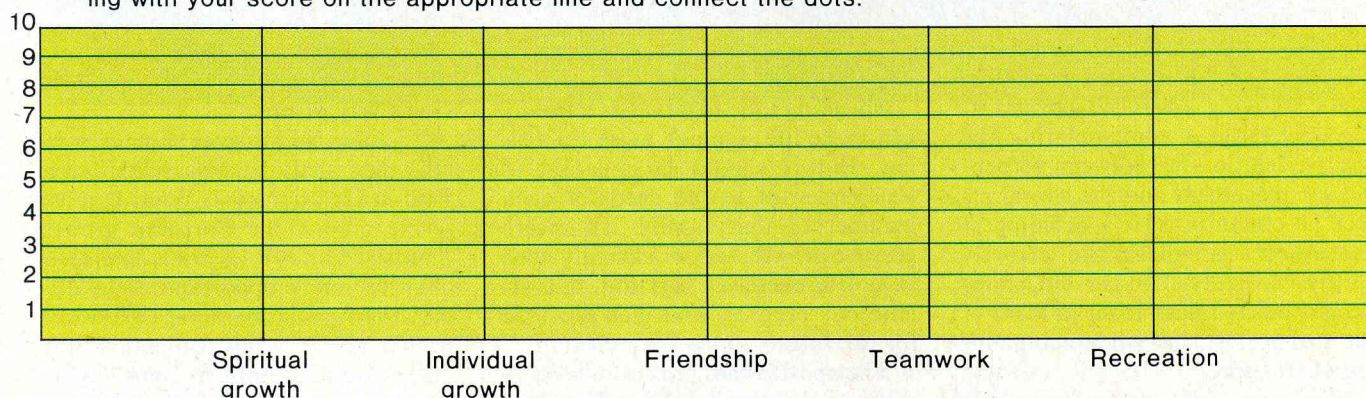
Total your score for this section and divide by 7.

RECREATION

- Do you:
- ☐ Spend time with your spouse
 - ☐ Spend time with your children
 - ☐ Keep up with your children's activities
 - ☐ Channel your children into wholesome hobbies and activities
 - ☐ Plan family recreation and outings
 - ☐ Try new activities together
 - ☐ Make wise use of TV as a family

Total your score for this section and divide by 7.

By following the instructions at the bottom of each section you can get an average score for that part on a scale of 1 to 10. This average score can then be plotted on the profile below. Just place a dot corresponding with your score on the appropriate line and connect the dots.



To help in this self-analysis, we would like to share with you a brief work-sheet, designed to aid you in taking a family inventory. This is not a test, but it is a tool that can help us all take a fresh look at ourselves as a family.

You might enjoy rating each of the points listed on a scale from 1 to 10.

This can be done by dad, mom, even the kids or the family as a whole.

Take a look at five important areas — spiritual growth, individual growth, friendship and service, teamwork and recreation — and apply the questions to your family.

You may want to analyze your family now and then again in a

month or two to see what progress you're making. Though this is not a test, high scores can be encouraging, and low scores can point to areas for personal and family growth.

Remember to be realistic and fair. No family is perfect, but an accurate self-appraisal can help a good family become even better. □