

*Study Guide*

# God's Design For **The** **Christian** **Home**

Taught by Ken Wilson, PhD



**SUNSET**  
International Bible Institute



# God's Design for “THE CHRISTIAN HOME”

**A STUDY GUIDE FOR CHRISTIANS WHO  
WANT TO DEVELOP A STRONG FAMILY**

Taught by  
KEN WILSON, PhD



Arranged for Study by  
DANNY MILLER, M.R.E.  
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External Studies  
3728 34<sup>th</sup> Street ☞ Lubbock, Texas 79410  
(806) 687-2121  
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### **DISCLAIMER**

The textbooks used in this course were selected because we consider them some of the best and are well adapted to this course of study. Both **“The Christian Home”** and **“Fantastic Families”** contain a wealth of knowledge which will increase your understanding of the Christian Home. The diagrams, charts and maps will enhance your study and help you to understand the over all content of this study. As will all books written by men, there may be some things you and I would not agree upon. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

## **Instructions and Requirements for Level II Students (Non-Transferrable)**

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Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the video or audio tape and the material in the study guide. Listen to the instructions and follow along in the study guide.

**Tests:** There will be two tests to complete for this course. One test is to be done at the end of lesson six (6) and the other is to be done at the end of lesson twelve (12). Each test will cover only the previous six lessons covered. All assignments must be completed by the time of your final test. Each test has to be passed with a 70% or better to pass this course. **(This will be 90% of your grade.)**

**Memory Work:** Memory work will be done on the honor system. You are asked to write your verses from memory on your test in the presence of the administrator. After you have completed the test and turned it in, correct your memory work with a different colored pen. Or, you may quote them to the administrator during the course and he will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us.

Please be diligent in doing your memory work! You will also have twenty-three (23) Bible verses to commit to memory. Please indicate which version of the Bible you are using in your memorization. **(This will be 10% of your final grade.)**

Due by the Mid-Term Exam:

Proverbs 22:6

Ephesians 5:22-28

Ephesians 6:1-4

Due by the Final Exam:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Proverbs 22:15

Ephesians 4:29-32

- ▼ The self-exam for each lesson is to be completed while you are doing the lesson or at the completion of the lesson.
- ▼ Level II must obtain a 70% or better on each test to pass this course. The mid-term and final tests will be worth 90% of the final grade.
- ▼ All assignments must be completed to pass this course.

**Grading Scale:** Reading and Memory Work (10%) Two Tests (90%) = 100%



## Instructions and Requirements for Level III Students (Transferrable)

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**The following assignments must be completed and turned in by the final test. Failure to meet all requirements could result in not passing the course or being dropped to a Level II student.** Courses completed satisfactorily may be transferable to the resident school.

**Reading:** Two books will be required, “Fantastic Families,” by Nick and Nancy Stinnett and Joe and Alice Beam, and “The Christian Home,” by Ken Wilson. These books must be read in their entirety and each will require a three (3) page evaluation to be sent in with your final test. **(These will be worth 15% of your total grade.)**

**Tests:** There will be two tests to complete for this course. One test is to be done at the end of lesson six (6), and the final test will be done at the end of lesson twelve (12). Both tests must be completed with a grade of 70% or more to receive a passing grade. **(The two tests will be worth 75% of your total grade.)**

**Self Exams:** All “self-exam” questions in the study guide must be completed in order to pass this course.

**Memory Work:** Memory work will be done on the honor system. You are asked to write your verses from memory at the time you take your test. Correct them with a different colored pen, or you may quote the verses to your test administrator who will inform us of your completed work. Please be diligent in doing this assignment. **(This will be worth 10% of your final grade.)**

Due by the Mid-Term Exam:

Proverbs 13:24; 22:6	Matt. 20:26-28	Galatians 6:2,5
Ephesians 5:22-28	Ephesians 6:1-4	I Peter 3:1-7
Colossians 3:18-21	I Corinthians 7:10-16	

Due by the Final Exam:

I Thess. 5:21-22	Malachi 4:6	Romans 1:24-27
I Corinthians 6:9-11	James 4:7-8	Hebrews 5:12-14
	Galatians 5:19-26	Philippians 2:3-4

<b>Grading:</b>	Reading and Evaluation Paper	20%
	Memory Verses	5%
	Two Exams	75%



# CONTENTS

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LESSON ONE	God's Pattern for Marriage . . . . .	1
LESSON TWO	Problems in Marriage . . . . .	7
LESSON THREE	Considering a Wife's Needs . . . . .	16
LESSON FOUR	Considering a Man's Needs . . . . .	24
LESSON FIVE	The Boundaries in Marriage . . . . .	34
LESSON SIX	The Purpose of Parenting . . . . .	42
LESSON SEVEN	The Significance of Fathers . . . . .	53
LESSON EIGHT	Birth Ordering and Parenting . . . . .	60
LESSON NINE	The Functions of the Home . . . . .	67
LESSON TEN	Communication That Cares . . . . .	76
LESSON ELEVEN	Building Strong Families . . . . .	85
LESSON TWELVE	The Home of the Soul . . . . .	96





## LESSON ONE

# GOD'S PATTERN FOR MARRIAGE

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### INTRODUCTION

**A**s members of God's church, we have the responsibility of establishing and maintaining proper human relationships. We must consider the need today for proper husband-wife relationships. Never has there been a greater need! It is estimated that an average three out of five marriages will end in divorce in America each year. We must realize that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). The situation is desperate even in the church today. The apostle Paul gave the Ephesians the ideal pattern – and it will still work today (Ephesians 5:21-33).

God has always required “submission” in marriage (Genesis 2:21-25; 3:13-19). He has always provided for a line of authority and responsibility. The very idea of some kind of rank or leadership in the church or the home has been a staple in God's plan for man. Such leadership is essential to any well-ordered society. Even in Jesus' work, it is stated, “the head of Christ is God” (I Corinthians 11:3). In government someone must be in charge; else, there will be anarchy. In the church someone must provide spiritual leadership, otherwise there will be confusion, false teaching, and chaos (Hebrews 13:7, 17). In business, schools, clubs, all group activity, someone must lead in order to accomplish unity and success in their endeavors. The same principle is applicable to the home (I Timothy 3:4-5; Ephesians 5:23; I Corinthians 11:3). God has always required order and discipline (I Corinthians 14:40). God has always required someone to lead.

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**LESSON AIM:** To examine some of the characteristics of the pattern God established for a Christian home.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** We will . . .

1. Examine what the Bible says about submission and how submission relates to the marriage relationship.
  2. Learn of three types of marriage relationships and how each one effects relationships in the home.
  3. Discover the God-given characteristics of the pattern for the Christian home.
-

God called us to have a “servant” attitude. The apostle Paul commands us to have the “mind of Christ” (Philippians 2:5-8). In this passage he emphasizes the quality of a servant’s heart and that it is most precious to God when we possess it. When it comes to leadership, most people struggle with the concept of SUBMISSION vs. SELFISHNESS.

## THE GLORY OF SUBMISSION

### A. God’s Teaching on Submission

1. God has always emphasized the value of a submissive heart (Luke 18:9-14).
  - a. Subjection does not mean the same as inferiority.
  - b. All of us are in subjection to someone.
2. Five keys to being submissive (I Peter 5:6-10):
  - a. Be HUMBLE and admit your mistakes (James 5:16).
  - b. Be not ANXIOUS about anything (Philippians 4:6, 7).
  - c. Be RESPONSIBLE and self-controlled (Ephesians 4:26, 27).
  - d. Be RESISTANT to temptation (I Corinthians 10:13).
  - e. Be WILLING to be patient and suffer for the cause of Christ (Hebrews 12:7-13).
3. Positions of leadership to be filled (Ephesians 5:22-25).
  - a. In marriage, the husband is to be the leader, not the dictator (I Peter 3:7).
  - b. Leadership means responsibilities and consequences (Genesis 3:16-19).
  - c. The wife is to “submit” (support) and adapt to her husband as the leader in the home as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22; I Peter 3:3-6).

### B. Three Types of Marriage Relationships

1. The “**father-dominant home**”— unhealthy spiritually, psychologically, and emotionally.
  - a. The father is harsh, autocratic, and lacking in relational skills.
  - b. The wife is warm, compliant, fearful, frustrated, and lonely.
  - c. The children usually lack relational skills, and have a strong tendency towards violence.
2. The “**mother-dominant home**”— unhealthy spiritually, psychologically, and emotionally.
  - a. The mother is controlling and dominant.
  - b. Her husband is usually very nice, kind, passionate (usually

- incompetent at home and often at work), and is resentful.
  - c. The daughter, in this relationship, is usually lacking in understanding her feminine role, and the son as well lacks an understanding of his masculine role.
  - d. This environment also distorts a child's understanding of his/her sexual (homosexual vs. heterosexual) and leadership roles.
- 3. The **“father-led home”** a spiritually, psychologically, and emotionally healthy relationship.
  - a. Leads without dominating, disciplines without destroying the will, nurtures without spoiling, and being vulnerable but firm.
  - b. He provides a masculine role model.
- 4. Definitions.
  - a. **“Family”** – two people who have entered into wedlock and are living together. Children may or may not come to bless this home.
  - b. **“Home”** – refers to a family that happily lives together.
  - c. The **“Christian Home”** – is a family, where the relationships are Christian and the members seek to please God (Ephesians 5:10).
  - d. **“Mankind”** – refers to the outward man and the inward man (2 Corinthians 4:16).
  - e. **“Woman”** – was created for man. She was to be a “complement” to his life (Genesis 2:18).

### C. **“No Longer Two, But One Flesh” (Genesis 2:18; Matthew 19:6)**

- 1. The marriage pattern of oneness or “togetherness” was established in the first union. Adam and Eve were together in the following ways:
  - a. Together they sinned.
  - b. Together they were punished.
  - c. Together they worked.
  - d. Together they created children.
- 2. Together they form a functioning unit.
  - a. Either alone is in a sense non-complementary, but together they are complementary.
  - b. Though separate with the possibility of independent existence, they are at the same time a mutually dependent part of a functioning whole.

## **DISCOVERING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A PATTERN**

### **A. “Pattern” Is That Which Is Designed as a Model for Making Things, That Which Is to Be Copied or Imitated**

1. God has supplied the pattern for the home in His Word (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:3).
2. In respect to marriage, God has clearly spoken. Man must build the home according to the divine model.

### **B. The Pattern in Scripture for Marriage – “Monogamic” in Form**

1. A person can have only one scriptural mate at a time (Genesis 2:24; I Corinthians 7:2).
  - a. Marriage must be “united” in construction (I Peter 3:7).
  - b. Marriage was to be “procreative” in design (Acts 17:26).
  - c. Marriage should be a mutual obligation. Man and woman are complements of each other and dependent upon each other (I Corinthians 7:1-7).
  - d. Marriage must be “patriarchal” in government.
    - 1) The wife is to submit herself to her husband and he is to meet her needs and set the tone for the family.
    - 2) He is to model the kind of leadership that encourages, nourishes, disciplines and directs them in the footsteps of the Lord.
  - e. Marriage requires “mutual respect” (Ephesians 5:33; I Peter 3:7).
    - 1) The wife is to reverence her husband.
    - 2) The husband is to love and respect his wife and say and do things that reflect his love and need for her (I Corinthians 7:33, 34).
2. A dependent/co-dependent relationship. The wife is to be dependent upon her husband and he is to be dependent upon her dependency.

### **C. What are Masculinity and Femininity?**

1. A man feels masculine when he knows that his wife supports him, respects him, puts him on a pedestal, and thinks positively of him.
2. A woman feels feminine when she knows that she is loved, taken care of, protected, and honored.
  - a. When she has a sense of belonging.
  - b. When she has an intimate relationship with her husband and

- he validates her thinking.
- c. When her husband loves and cares for her unconditionally.
- 3. The fall of mankind hurt intimacy between a woman and a man.

## **CONCLUSION**

The issues about which couples argue are often symptoms of the fact that husbands do not feel that they or their ideas are important to their wives and that wives do not feel safe and protected by their husbands. Couples often must find issues to fight over to maintain enough emotional distance for self-protection. God didn't design marriage to be that way. He established a plan that would mutually reward both husband and wife, meet their needs and provide a union that would help them both to grow closer to Him.

**SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE**

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1. What is the definition of the word “pattern” as given in the study guide?

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2. What are five keys to being submissive?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Give three types of marriage relationships. Indicate which is the proper one.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe what is present when a man feels masculine.

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5. Describe three things that are present when a woman feels feminine.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON TWO

# PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE

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### INTRODUCTION



One of the tragedies of life today is the decay of marriages. Our newsstands are filled with family-oriented magazines. Book publishers are flooding the market with material on marriage and family life. You will see articles and books with such titles as: *How to Handle Conflict*, *How to Achieve Open Communication*, *How to Express Emotion Honestly*, *How to Prevent Children from Crowding a Marriage*, etc. Perhaps all this information is needed today in view of the fragile condition of most marriages. It seems the divorce rate today is reflecting a lack of realistic expectations on the part of many people.

Someone once said, “Marriages may be made in heaven, but they sure take a lot of work on earth.” In view of all the pressures of conflicting demands and too little time, personal relationships are often taken for granted. With all the distractions, we can forget that building a strong marriage takes consistent work.

Marriages must thrive on a caring, loving relationship between the husband and wife. Without proper attention, marriages will fail. Couples slowly and quietly drift apart or they are pulled apart by terrible words and actions.

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**LESSON AIM:** To become aware of some unrealistic expectations that husbands and wives have regarding marriage.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will . . .

1. Become aware of the underlying reason for anger and the effects it has on marriage.
  2. Learn about two personality traits that can affect a marriage relationship.
  3. Examine the “Agape Principle” and how application of this principle can build strong marriages.
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## UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

### A. Myths and “Unrealistic Expectations” of Marriage

1. The myth that. . . marriage guarantees perfect joy.
  - a. Jesus taught that marriages are limited to this world (Mark 12:18-27).
  - b. Marriage is a training ground for eternity.
  - c. Attempts to ignore this biblical perspective of marriage as to the creation of “perfect joy” will lead to disappointment and failure.
2. The myth that... marriage is a totally fulfilling relationship.
  - a. Couples find themselves removed from family and must rely on each other.
  - b. Many marriages crumble from the false idea that all emotional needs will be met through their partner.
  - c. A local congregation of loving, caring brothers and sisters can provide emotional support that will enhance strong marriage relationships.
3. The myth that. . . marriage is for everyone.
  - a. The apostle Paul provides guidance for the individual who is single. (1 Corinthians 7:25-34).
  - b. Paul gives a positive view of the single’s life.
  - c. The single life is not inferior, but in some instances may actually be superior to marriage because there are no demands from the home or the family.

### B. Accept One Another

1. In all relationships, especially marriage, we must learn to “accept one another” just as Christ has accepted us (Romans 15:7).
  - a. Couples do not have the right to be angry with their spouses when they do not live up to their expectations.
  - b. Anger is produced by our own negative self-talk and attitude.
  - c. We do have a choice whether or not to be angry (James 1:19).
2. We are all different and we all come from different backgrounds.
  - a. Expectations of others must be realistic because not everyone will perform exactly as we expect them to.
  - b. There will be times when we must learn to deal with all types of personalities.
  - c. Christ provides us with the model of acceptance.

### **C. The Perfectionist and the Controller**

1. Living with a perfectionist (*The Christian Home*, by Ken Wilson).
  - a. Perfectionists believe that everything must be tidy and in a certain order or they cannot feel good about themselves and find peace.
  - b. Most perfectionists are taught in childhood to believe that “an orderly life is a happy life,” even if it hurts others.
2. Perfectionists have a temperamental tendency to have an “introvert” personality.
  - a. These people just do not believe that their behavior is wrong and or that they are hurting other people.
  - b. They are programmed to believe the lie, “my way is the only way.”
3. Dealing with the controller (*The Christian Home*, by Ken Wilson).
  - a. The controller is seeking some type of negative reaction from the other person which will reflect his/her power over the person he/she is trying to manipulate.
  - b. A good approach to use with the controller is to “respond” in a non-emotional manner that does not reinforce the belief system of the controller.
4. The controller must learn to accept responsibility for his/her own behavior.
  - a. When a person refuses to enable a controller, it is not rebellion, but it is self-control (Galatians 5:22-26).
  - b. The goal is to change the belief system of the controller and replace it with the truth that no one needs to be controlled and manipulated (James 4:10).

### **D. The Agape Principle**

1. The “Agape Principle” requires of us that we love our neighbor regardless of what he/she believes or how he/she behaves towards us (Matthew 19:19).
  - a. “Agape” is the noun form of the Greek word for “unconditional” love.
  - b. When Jesus says, “love your neighbor as yourself,” he uses the verb form “agapao.”
  - c. Jesus did not use “phileo” which is a verb form for “affectionate” love.
  - d. “Phileo” is not normally used in a command to “love” someone.

- e. “Agapao” can be commanded because it is a type of love that requires us to love everyone unconditionally.
- 2. Jesus loves us and commands us to love and serve our enemies (Matthew 5:44-48; Romans 5:8; 12:17-21; 13:9).
  - a. A good biblical definition of “agape” love would be, “the kind of love that does not require affection, but does require that I do what is best for someone even if he/she doesn’t like it or thinks that it is unloving.”
  - b. “Agape” love is a “proactive” love and seeks the best for the other person.
  - c. Using the “Agape Principle” in a marriage relationship will help couples overcome the “unrealistic expectations” they have of their spouses and be more accepting of them.

**NOTE:** Jesus introduces a new form of love (agape), not naturally characteristic of man. Agape love “turns the other cheek” and “goes the second mile.” Agape love is not something that exists so much as it is something you **DO**, then something you **BECOME**, finally, it is something you **ARE**. The Christian home, with this extra dimension of agape love, has the best opportunity of any to be a happy home.

#### **E. The Need for Boundaries**

- 1. The purpose of boundaries is not to put limits on others, but to put limits on ourselves.
  - a. Boundaries are limits on how we allow others to influence us.
  - b. Boundaries are vital to our emotional, psychological, and spiritual health.
- 2. The Bible teaches that we must be responsible for our feelings and actions (Galatians 6:2, 5).
  - a. In Galatians 6:2, the Greek word for “burden” is “baros” meaning “a weight, anything pressing on one physically.”
  - b. This implies a giant boulder or heavy weight that is too much for one person to carry.
  - c. The Greek word for “load” (v.5) is “phortion” meaning “something to be borne, without reference to its weight.”
  - d. “Baros” represents a boulder of immense weight and “phortion” represents something as light as a “back-pack” for hiking.
  - e. We are to help those who can’t carry their load and at the same time take responsibility for our burdens.

3. If a person is not willing to take responsibility as they are capable, then they are sinning before God.
  - a. If we “enable” others by carrying their load when they are capable, we are encouraging them to be irresponsible.
  - b. We must set limits on others in regards to their influence on us.
  - c. Boundaries allow people to accept responsibility for their own behavior.

**Help carry each other's burdens.**  
**“Baros” - A heavy weight**



**Galatians 6:2,5**

**Each should carry his own load.**  
**“Phortion” - A light backpack**



## **FILLING OUR EMPTY PLACES**

### **A. Trust in God Provides Contentment in Any Circumstance**

1. Paul is a powerful example in the attitude of contentment (Philippians 4:11-13).
  - a. Paul was saying that with God he could be content in any circumstance.
  - b. It is not the circumstances in life that make us content, but our belief and trust in God.
2. Discontentment can lead to the process of leaving the Lord out of our lives.
  - a. Jesus tells the story of a man who had an evil spirit who was metaphorically swept clean which caused him to have an “empty place” in his life (Matthew 12:43-45).
  - b. The implication of this story is that when we are swept clean of sin, we must continue to keep close to the Lord (Romans 6:1-7 and James 4:6-10).

### **B. Discontentment with Our Circumstances Can Affect Our Behavior**

1. Our mind starts to have sinful thoughts which will ultimately lead to sinful actions (Matthew 5:21-30).
  - a. Paul gives us the solution to sinful fantasies in 2 Corinthians 10:5.
  - b. When we cease to rely on God for contentment, sinful behavior is just around the corner (James 1:13-15)
  - c. In this state, we have gotten off the track of trusting God to give us contentment.
2. God provides the truth that with Him we have peace and contentment (Philippians 4:4-13).
  - a. Trust in God will produce the real peace and contentment we experience as a child of God (1 Corinthians 10:13).
  - b. Dysfunctional behavior is caused when a person believes, “circumstances determine happiness” and God is left out of the picture.

## **WHY DO OPPOSITES ATTRACT**

### **A. The Most Difficult of All Human Relationships Is Marriage**

1. Marriage is an intimate relationship that requires many adjustments.
  - a. Marriage is the molding of each individual life into that of the other.
  - b. Satisfactory emotional adjustment is necessary for the success of a marriage.
2. There are two kinds of personalities in a dysfunctional family system - the **dominate male** and **dominate female**.
  - a. The dominate male will be attracted to a compliant, passive female.
  - b. The dominate female will be attracted to a passive male.
3. Dominant traits are difficult to change.
  - a. Research shows that people between ages 17 to 20 internalize their behavior.
  - b. After adolescence, a person’s natural ability to change decreases.
  - c. Solomon knew this and wrote, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).
  - d. The word “old” literally means, “hair on the chin” and

indicates the slowing down of the “changing process.”

**B. Before Marriage, Opposites Attract; After Marriage, Opposites Repel**

1. After marriage, each spouse quickly finds fault with the other.
  - a. The dominant female will criticize her passive husband.
  - b. The dominant male will criticize his passive wife for being inept and non-assertive.
2. Two people who were once attracted to each other, now repel each other because they want to change the other person.
  - a. Neither spouse wants to change because of their dominant trait.
  - b. A dominant female wants her husband to be more assertive and the compliant female wants her husband to be more loving.
3. At this point in marriage there are “two getters” and “no givers.”
  - a. At the altar, both expected the other person to make them whole.
  - b. When both partners refuse to change, emotional distance occurs.
  - c. Marriage counselors know that most major problems in marriage involve issues of power.
  - d. God’s will is for each spouse to do his or her own changing and take responsibility for their behavior.

<p><b>Marriage is NOT <math>\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1</math></b>  <b>But it IS <math>\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}</math></b></p>
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**CONCLUSION**

Most newlyweds anticipate their marriage to be a happy one because their spouse is going to make them happy. This is an “unrealistic” expectation that each individual has regarding their partner. This will inevitably lead to the couple embroiled in a marital fight. Both were expecting the other spouse to do all the fixing. A marriage which involves two getters and no givers is bound to fail.

When two partners reach the point of unfulfilled expectations, stubbornness sets in. Both individuals will dig in for the long haul. Both refuse to change – and the reason they married each other in the first place has become the rub! Emotional distance occurs. Later, the kids or careers are asked to fill the void.

Sometimes alcohol, drugs and even an affair are used to soften the pain. Unwise counselors or friends may encourage divorce. At this point, God's image in the marriage is severely tarnished. God's will is for each spouse to do his or her own changing.

Each partner must be willing to give, sacrifice and compromise. The love that comes from that kind of relationship is deeper than the initial romantic attraction that brought two people together. No marriage is "bullet-proof." Every marriage must be constantly checked against the pattern God has provided us.

### **SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO**

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1. List three myths that can affect marriage in an adverse manner.
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Give a brief explanation of the "Agape Principle."  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. In Galatians 6:2,5 Paul encourages us to help bear other's burdens (baros) and at the same time carry out own load (phortion). Illustrate this principle using a diagram.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Solomon states, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). The word "old" literally means "\_\_\_\_\_."

5. In the book "Boundaries," Dr. Cloud and Dr. Townsend state what the purpose of boundaries are. What is the purpose of boundaries?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name the two kinds of personalities in a dysfunctional family.
- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Research shows that people between what ages internalize their behavior? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Before marriage, opposite \_\_\_\_\_. After marriage, opposite \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Most marriage counselors know that most major problems in marriage involve issues of \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Boundaries allow people to accept responsibility for their own \_\_\_\_\_.



## LESSON THREE

# CONSIDERING A WIFE'S NEEDS

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### INTRODUCTION

**T**here is almost always someone in our life who is our support system. For the husband, it is usually his wife, and usually he doesn't appreciate her in this role enough. In his best selling book, "Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus," John Gray has successfully made the point that men and women think differently and communicate differently. He states that men are motivated when they feel needed and women are motivated when they feel cherished. He concludes that when men talk about problems they instinctively offer solutions, but when women talk about problems, they primarily want to be validated. Women are more relationship-oriented and men are more goal-oriented.

John Gray notes that men are fulfilled through working out the details of a problem and women are fulfilled through talking about the problem. "Validating" is the most difficult process in communication for men. Men like to feel that they have the "right" answers and have a difficult time validating a woman's feelings when they disagree with them. "Validation" does not require that a person agree with someone else's feelings, it only requires that those feelings be recognized as valid to that person.

It is interesting that the Bible implores men to love their wives and that wives should respect their husbands (Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19). Men have a hard time expressing love to their wives and women have a difficult time showing respect to their husbands. The Bible says, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers" (I Peter 3:7). Peter is simply instructing that the husband should love and cherish his wife.

A wife needs a husband who will accept his responsibility as spiritual leader of the home. A wife needs a husband who loves her with sacrificial devotion. She needs to know that he is willing to sacrifice anything in order to meet her needs.

A strong desire that a wife needs is to know that her husband is a one-woman man. She needs to know that he is totally committed to her and there are no

other women with whom he shares.

The man should look to the needs of his wife in a loving way. This will include open communication. A wife needs to talk and be listened to. Husband needs to take special care to allow their wives to talk and learn how to communicate in words as well as deeds.

The bottom line for husbands who desire to meet his wife's needs is to develop a "servant leadership" attitude. Our Lord is our great example for a "servant heart."

**LESSON AIM:** To examine how the husband can provide the necessary spiritual leadership that will give his wife a sense of security, love, and commitment.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will . . .

1. Understand the husband's role and responsibility to his wife as he considers her needs.
2. Focus on the biblical concept of the husband's responsibility as the spiritual leader of the family.
3. Discover that as head of the family, the husband is to have a "servant heart."

## PERCEIVING THE PROBLEM

**A. Lessons Learned from Bill's and Susie's Relationship** (*The Christian Home*, by Ken Wilson).

1. Bill and Susie seemed to be the perfect couple.
  - a. They did many things together, but had few relationships with other people.
  - b. Both were independent and respected each other's space.
2. Communication between Bill and Susie was breaking down.
  - a. Bill was worried that his wife was having an affair.
  - b. Susie felt like Bill did not love her any more.
3. Bill lacked insight into the needs of his wife.
  - a. Like most men, Bill was emotionally guarded.
  - b. He was not adept in expressing his love for Susie.
4. Susie had particular needs that were not being met.

- a. Susie needed physical expressions of love, intimacy, and acceptance.
- b. As her needs were not being met, Susie would drift into a deeper state of depression and loneliness.

**B. Susie Felt Guilt and Her Sinful Emotions Were Becoming Intensified**

1. Her fantasies were adulterous in nature (Matthew 5:27-30).
2. The affect of her fantasies created fatigue, stress-related ailments and the lack of desire to seek the will of God.

**C. Bill Had Missed the Fact That His Wife's Needs Were Not Being Met**

1. Bill received counseling that husbands are to be considerate and understanding of their spouse (1 Peter 3:7).
2. Bill was task oriented and didn't understand the importance of expressing love and affection towards Susie.
3. Both Bill and Susie needed to communicate and express their feelings to each other with love.

## **SETTING THE STAGE FOR LOVE**

**A. The Big Difference Between Men and Women**

1. There are basically two views of love and two expectations that men and women have regarding love.
  - a. Husbands associate erotic love with behavior as being aggressive, gallant, and masculine.
  - b. Women equate lovemaking with such behaviors as being charming, romantic, intimate, and desirable.
2. For a man to know his wife, he must enter her world of love.
  - a. It is important for the man to view love the way the woman views it.
  - b. The wife looks deeply into the feelings and tenderness of the expressions of love demonstrated by her husband.

**B. The Husband's Goal in Marriage**

1. The husband's goal in marriage should focus on becoming gentle, loving, and tenderhearted.
  - a. The husband needs to learn how to listen and be considerate of his wife's feelings (Colossians 3:19).

- b. The husband must respond to the wife's needs and take responsibility for his actions and feelings (Ephesians 4:26; James 1:19).
- 2. The husband should use sensitivity when listening to his wife's concerns.
  - a. A wife will not respond to her husband when he continually hurts her feelings without working out the problem.
  - b. Working out the problem requires direct, positive, non-accusative, "I" messages that reflect feelings.

## THE HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS WIFE

### **A. Unity in Marriage**

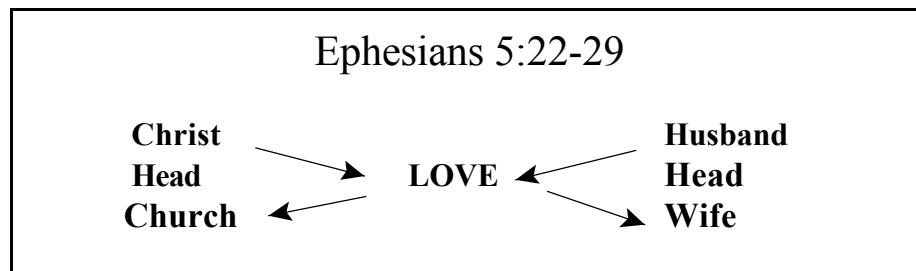
- 1. God has created certain expectations for the husband (Ephesians 5:22-23).
  - a. God sees the husband as providing spiritual leadership.
  - b. The Lord's concept of a leader is a person who is first and foremost a "servant" (Matthew 20:20-28).
- 2. The example of our Lord's concern for others is important.
  - a. Jesus was not in the business of giving orders or bossing others.
  - b. His first concern was to meet the needs of others (Ephesians 5:21).

### **B. Christ Gives Us the Model of a Godly Leader**

- 1. John 13:1-15 describes what it means to be a leader.
  - a. A leader must have a servant heart.
  - b. A servant's style of leadership is more "relational" than "positional."
  - c. If the husband has a servant heart, he will act like a servant (1 Peter 5:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:4-11).
- 2. Being the leader (head) means that the husband must be the family's biggest servant (Ephesians 5:23).
  - a. The husband must be willing to give his life for his wife, as Christ did for the church.
  - b. The husband's leadership means he must strive to be an example of godliness, holiness, compassion, and devotion to God.
  - c. The husband must have his wife's best interests at heart.

### **C. Christian Husbands Are Called upon to Lead Their Spouse and Family in a Spiritual Manner**

1. The husband must lead the family by the power and authority of a good example.
2. Husbands must strive to be a good example as well as having a “servant heart.”
3. The husband’s leadership and lifestyle must be reflective of spiritual leadership.
4. Paul’s encouragement for husbands is for them to love, nourish and, cherish their wife such as they would do for themselves (Ephesians 5:28-29).



### **CONCLUSION**

Charles Plumb, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, was a fighter pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in a North Vietnamese prison. He survived that ordeal and now lectures about lessons learned from that experience. One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, “Are you Plumb!” “How in the world did you know that?” asked Plumb. “I packed your parachute,” the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, “I guess it worked!” Plumb assured him, “It sure did – if your chute hadn’t worked, I wouldn’t be here today.” Plumb couldn’t sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, “I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform – a Dixie cup hat, a bib in the back, and bell bottom trousers. I wondered how many times I might have seen him and not even said “good morning, how are you” or anything, because, you see, I was fighter pilot and he was just sailor.”

Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn’t

know. Now, Plumb asks his audience, “Who’s packing your parachute?”

This story has a message for all of us. There is almost always someone in our life who “packs our parachute,” in other words, is our support system. For the husband, it is usually his wife, and usually he doesn’t appreciate her in this role enough. The husband must have a servant’s heart when meeting the needs of his wife. This means that the husband must lead from the foot of the table. Jesus is the greatest model of a servant leader. He relinquishes his heavenly role to show us how to serve “down in the trenches,” doing the things of service. The husband should let the examples of Jesus rule in his heart. This is the kind of model that touches the hearts of wives and children and guides the direction of their lives. Husbands must be a good example, because it is one of the most vital elements in spiritual service in the home.

**The Husband must Have a Servant’s Heart!**

**SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE**

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1. The lesson aim listed three qualities that a husband will provide when he is leading the family in a spiritual manner. List these three qualities.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Christ gives us the model of a Godly leader in John 13:1-5. In your own words give a definition of what it means to be a “servant leader.”

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. A servant’s style of leadership is more  
“ \_\_\_\_\_ ” than “positional.”

4. The Bible implores men to \_\_\_\_\_ their wives as their own body and that wives should \_\_\_\_\_ their husbands (Ephesians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:18,19).

5. In Ephesians 5:23-29 Paul instructs husbands to love and be the head of the wife. Draw a diagram that illustrates this concept.

6. Contrast the two views of love held by men and women.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What should be the husband's goal in marriage?

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8. Define "validating.

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## LESSON FOUR

# CONSIDERING A MAN'S NEEDS

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### INTRODUCTION

**T**he story is told about a sea captain, who was renowned for his ability to guide ships safely across the high seas. It was noted that the sea captain did have one very unusual habit as he prepared to set sail. Every morning he would open a small safe, pull out a piece of paper, and look at it. Then, after just a few seconds, he would return the paper to the safe and lock it up securely.

Word of this mysterious ritual spread far and wide. People wondered what could possibly demand his daily attention. A love note? A song? A prayer? Finally, the captain died, and his attorney set a date for opening the safe and revealing the contents of the paper.

As a large crowd gathered around, the captain's profound secret was unveiled at last: it said, "port – left; starboard – right." The lesson? We must never forget the "basics." Though we do not dwell on them, neither do we ever leave them behind.

This story reminds us that men are more rational and goal-oriented than women. Men are problem-solvers and they have this instinctual desire to be right and protect their manhood. They have a greater tendency to stay with the basics and the same routines. Women are more intuitive and challenge men more in the area of creativity and exploration of their feelings. Men are more aggressive and have the tendency to take charge. It is the tendency to constantly prove their macho status, which becomes difficult for the women with whom they have a relationship.

A husband needs a wife whose one desire in life is to please him and make him a successful husband. This is a wife who not only obeys him, but is submissive to him. Her attitude toward him is one of reverence and respect. A husband needs the support of a wife who recognizes his position and who is willing to acknowledge that God has put him in a particular place in the home. This is his place and he has a responsibility that must be taken and shouldered.

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**LESSON AIM:** To show how a wife is important to her husband.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will. . .

1. Learn of the wife's responsibility to her husband.
2. See how strong marriages apply the "honor Christ" principle.
3. Discover how a wife can help her husband be a leader.
4. Appreciate the "Five Love Language" expressions that increases the effectiveness of the communication between spouses.

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### **SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER**

#### **A. God Designed Marriage to Be a Healthy Dependent/Co-dependent Relationship**

1. The wife is to be dependent upon her husband.
  - a. She needs to know that he is dependable and cares for her.
  - b. When this occurs, the wife will feel feminine, protected, and cared for.
2. The husband needs to know that his wife is depending on him for support.
  - a. At this point, the husband feels masculine, needed, and important.
  - b. This mutual care and concern produces a healthy relationship (Ephesians 5).

#### **B. A Home That Lacks this Dependent/Co-dependent Relationship Will Have A Role Reversal**

1. In a "mother - dominant" home, the wife watches out for the husband and he lets her.
  - a. The wife will grow weary of this arrangement.
  - b. The results is a wife that will grow resentful of the husband.
2. Each spouse will compensate for this bad arrangement in different ways.
  - a. Usually the negative compensation is in the form of over-involvement with children, work, or an addictive behavior.
  - b. This family situation will be passed on to the next generation.

**NOTE:** The total effect of Ephesians 5 upon marriage attitudes and practices should be profound. When the relationship between husband and wife is compared with that between Christ and His church there can be no question of the deep, life-long significance of Christian marriage.

**C. Many Women Grow up Learning How to “Wear the Pants” in the Family**

1. Women in this situation lack experience in trusting men.
  - a. To self-protect, these women are attracted to nice, safe men.
  - b. A trait of these men is that they have a less developed masculine side.
2. Men who are under-fathered and less masculine tend to be controlled.
  - a. These men are attracted to decisive, controlling women.
  - b. These women are usually less feminine and under-nurtured.

**D. Principle: A Wife Will Not Respect a Husband That She Can Control**

1. A husband will not love a wife that is in control over him.
  - a. The husband will eventually feel disrespect from the wife.
  - b. The wife will feel unloved by the husband.
2. In a flip-flop reversal of roles neither spouse will be responsive to the other's needs.
  - a. When the wife desires the husband to take the lead, he will not do it.
  - b. When the husband needs the support and respect of the wife, she will not do it.
3. Each spouse will grow apart in their relationship.
  - a. The husband will withdraw through a variety of means: sports, work, church work, drinking, fighting, carousing, etc.
  - b. The wife will cease her pursuit and might threaten separation or divorce.
4. The husband will sense the wife's emotional distance and will make a surprise turn around.
  - a. The husband will promise a great reform, including the moon and even guarantee the impossible.
  - b. The wife may feel good about this reform initially, but inner feelings of repulsion begin to surface.
5. The couple may draw together for a brief time because things

appear to be better.

- a. A “cat and mouse” interaction will begin again.
- b. Each cycle brings the marriage into further deterioration.
- c. In time, the relationship will break down.

#### **E. The Importance of the Family Systems from Which Both Partners Came**

1. Research shows that family origin, the relationship between mother and father, parent to child, can influence individual selection of a partner.
  - a. This pattern is passed from one generation to another.
  - b. Some develop the mentality that they are a victim (Ezekiel 18).
2. The inability of couples to love each other may have roots that go back over years (Exodus 20:5).
  - a. Research suggests that had both parties not married each other, they still would have married a spouse with the same traits.
  - b. Additional research suggests by the age of eight, every person has a “love map” that leads them to the certain kind of spouse.

#### **F. The Answer to Developing Strong Spiritual Marriages Is to Apply the “Honor Christ” Principle**

1. Paul declares that we should “honor Christ and be in submission to one another” (Ephesians 5:21).
2. The use of this God-given principle will help a couple overcome the “love-hate, can’t live with you, can’t live without you” relationship.

**NOTE:** In Ephesians 5:21, Paul introduces one of the basic principles of Christianity: mutual submission or subjection, based on reverence for Christ. The motivation for this marital submission among Christians is “out of reverence for Christ.” Jesus said “. . . whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26-28).

### **HOW DOES A WIFE HELP A HUSBAND BE A LEADER?**

#### **A. A Passive Husband Can Be Helped with Decision-making Skills**

1. The wife plays a significant role in the development of decision

making skills that a husband needs to become an effective leader.

- a. The wife should be supportive and not overwhelm the husband with making decisions on everything.
  - b. The key is to start small and allow the husband to become accustomed to making decisions for the family.
  - c. As the husband experiences success in making decisions his confidence will become stronger.
2. A Christian wife should understand that the husband should be the leader of the home.
    - a. Wives can be a great support in a husband's life as he strives to be the spiritual leader of the home.
    - b. The wife has to learn to be "dependent" on the husband and he has to learn to be "dependable."

#### **B. The Wife's Support Is Vital When this Final Decision Is Made by the Husband**

1. The wife should not contradict or question the decision of the husband.
  - a. The wife should provide input before the decision is made.
  - b. The wife should always have the freedom to express her opinion before the final decision is made.
2. The wife should have an understanding attitude regarding the decision - good or bad.
  - a. If a bad decision is made, the wife should not hold it over the husband's head.
  - b. The wife should encourage and assure the husband that things will be okay.
3. Some men come from a home where the mother was the dominant figure.
  - a. As we have learned, a man tends to marry a woman who has many of the same characteristics their mother had.
  - b. In this case, the wife needs to learn how to allow the husband to be the leader of the family and develop the skill of making decisions.
  - c. As couples learn each other's roles, greater understanding will occur between them.

### **THE WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HER HUSBAND**

#### **A. Genuine Unity Will Occur in Marriage When There Is a Clear**

### **Understanding of Responsibilities Each Spouse Has**

1. Confusion will exist when there is no clear-cut understanding of responsibilities.
2. This is the kind of confusion and frustration that exists in many marriages because there never has been a sorting out of the responsibilities.
3. Couples must be held together at the center by a holy love which is stronger than their own.
4. A couple who understands that marriage is for someone (Christ) greater than the two of them will discover a secret that will make marriage at its best.
5. When a husband and wife put their lives and marriages into the hands of God, they have taken a big step that will bind them forever.

### **B. Defining Submission**

1. Submission is not merely a concept for women, but for all believers (cf. Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3;4; 1 Peter 5:5).
2. Submission does not mean the wife becomes a slave, but rather she is free to become all God intended her to become.
3. Submission does not mean that a wife never opens her mouth or never gives advice (Proverbs 31:26; Judges 13:21-23; Acts 18:26).
4. Submission does not mean that the wife is a wallflower and allows her abilities to lie dormant.
5. Submission does not mean the wife is inferior to the husband.

### **C. Biblical Submission Is a Positive Thing in the Marriage Relationship**

1. Scripture indicates that it is the wife's responsibility to make herself submissive (Ephesians 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1).
2. The Bible indicates that the wife's submission is to be continuous which can be considered to be a lifestyle.
3. Wifely submission is mandatory and she is to remain with him unless she is physically or sexually abused (1 Corinthians 7:10-16).
4. Wifely submission is a spiritual matter and should be done "as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22).
5. Submission is a positive concept and the wife should view it as being part of her husband's team.

**NOTE:** Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, be subject to your husbands. . ." "Be

subject” comes from a military figure meaning “to line up under.” This apparently is what God has done in the family from the beginning of creation. The man is the head of the family. There is no question that wives are spiritually, intellectually, socially, and otherwise equal to their husbands. Only in the responsibility of serving as head of the home is the husband above the wife.

## **A MAN NEEDS RESPECT FROM HIS WIFE**

### **A. The Husband Has a Responsibility to Be Sensitive to His Wife's Needs**

1. Respect from his wife is deserved by the position God gave him as the husband.
  - a. The husband's action and attitude will help earn adoration for the respected position of the husband.
  - b. In an equal manner, the husband must return respect to the wife.
2. The husband should watch that he does not hurt his wife in words or actions.
  - a. He should not lecture his wife as this is counterproductive.
  - b. The “silent treatment” must not be used because this breaks down communications in a marriage.
3. These types of treatments are usually the norm in marriages.
  - a. Every marriage will experience these problems at some point, but they can be dealt with.
  - b. We all have universal needs and because of this there will be common problems.

### **B. Men and Women Are Totally Different**

1. Understanding these basic differences will help improve relationships.
  - a. The differences are emotional, mental, and physical.
  - b. Each couple must strive to understand their partner in regards to these differences.
2. The woman can increase knowledge of her husband's needs by showing respect for the position he holds.
  - a. Understanding the man's natural tendencies, the wife will help him balance his needs.
  - b. Many hurtful actions by the husband are simply the result of his basic nature as a man and can be corrected.

### **C. Important Keys for the Wife to Understand the Husband**

1. It will be helpful for the wife to learn to express her feelings through three loving attitudes: Warmth, Empathy, and Sincerity.
  - a. Warmth is the friendly acceptance of a person.
  - b. Empathy is the ability to understand and identify with a person's feelings.
  - c. Sincerity is showing a genuine concern for a person without changing your attitude when circumstances change.
2. The wife should learn to use "I" statements when expressing her feelings.
  - a. "I" statements are less defensive.
  - b. Use "I" statement such as, "I feel angry when you are late" or "I get frustrated when you. . ."
3. The wife should learn to wait to discuss a touchy situation so that her anger can subside.
  - a. A cooling off period such as remaining quiet or changing the subject is effective as the wife regains control of her feelings.
  - b. It is best to avoid discussing sensitive issues in the heat of anger.
4. The wife can share her feelings and do it in a positive manner (Proverbs 15:1).
  - a. When the wife has cooled off, she should replace "you" statements with "I feel" statements as she addresses her husband.
  - b. The principle that "a gentle answer turns away wrath" is effective when used in a sincere manner (Proverbs 15:1).
5. The wife can learn to abandon the negative "I told you so" comments from her speech (Ephesians 4:29).
  - a. The "I told you so" comments reflect arrogance and does not promote a healthy relationship.
  - b. The secret to understanding your husband is helping him understand you (Ephesians 4:29).

### **D. The First Law of a Relationship Is Played out in the Two Main Areas of Marriage: "Relational" and "Functional"**

1. The relational part of marriage is the emotional tie that two people have between them.
2. The functional part of marriage has to do with the day-to-day activities such as paying bills, keeping house, and rearing children.



## THE FIVE LANGUAGES OF LOVE

### A. The Use of Love in Our Daily Expressions

1. **Affirming words:** A person feels most loved when they receive verbal affirmation.
2. **Quality time:** This is the undivided attention or “focused time” that is shared between partners.
3. **Giving/receiving gifts:** These are symbols of love and have emotional value.
4. **Acts of service:** This is a person who loves to do things for you - things that require thought, planning, effort and energy.
5. **Physical touch:** This is the physical contact that expresses the thought that “I love you” like holding hands and hugging.

### B. Examples of These Love Languages Are Effective

1. They can be readily understood and help make the communication process more effective.
2. The examples are “relational” aspects of the heart and are ways of saying, “I love you” and “I care about you.”

## CONCLUSION

God designed marriage to be a healthy dependent/co-dependent relationship. The wife is to be dependent upon her husband. He is to rely upon her dependency. He needs to know that his wife depends on him. She needs to know that he is dependable. When the husband shows love and concern for his wife she feels feminine, protected, and cared for. In turn the husband feels masculine, needed, and important. There is a sense of mutual respect and love between the husband and wife (Ephesians 5).

### SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR

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1. What is the one word in Ephesians 5:22-33 that summarizes the wife's responsibility to the husband? Give a biblical definition of this word (Compare also 1 Peter 3:1 and 1 Timothy 2:9-12).  


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2. What do the words "as unto the Lord" in Ephesians 5:22 suggest about the wife's submission?  


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3. According to Ephesians 5:24, how extensive should a woman's submission be?  


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4. List the "Five Love Languages" and give an example of each one.
  - 1) 

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  - 2) 

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  - 3) 

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  - 4) 

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  - 5) 

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5. True or False
 

<hr/>	Submission is a concept for all believers, not just for women.
<hr/>	When a wife submits to her husband, then she is free to become all that God intended her to become.
<hr/>	Submission means the wife is inferior to her husband.
<hr/>	The woman will allow her abilities to become dormant.
<hr/>	Submission means the wife can give her opinion and advice.
6. Give one example of an "I" statement that a wife can use to express her feelings to her husband.  


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## LESSON FIVE

# THE BOUNDARIES IN MARRIAGE

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### INTRODUCTION



One day a man found the cocoon of a butterfly and began to observe it very carefully. He noticed a small opening at one end of the cocoon. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could, and could go no further. So the man decided to help the butterfly, and then it emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened!

In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly. What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives. If God allowed us to go through our lives without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. We could never fly!

As we enter into this lesson, it will be helpful to understand how challenges and struggles can strengthen a marriage. In conjunction with this concept we must understand the concept of a boundary. A boundary is a property line and it denotes the beginning and the end of something. In reality, it denotes the extent to which we will allow someone to influence us and to the extent we will put perimeters on our own behavior. A boundary "defines" who we are, and also gives greater definition of our responsibilities. Boundaries allow us the freedom to be ourselves and empowers us to be responsible for our attitudes and behaviors.

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**LESSON AIM:** To realize that marriage is a life long commitment that involves trust, love, sacrifice and stability.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will. . .

1. Understand with greater clarity that God ordained marriage as a life long commitment.
  2. Learn that certain “boundaries” in marriage help achieve the kind of commitment that God desires for couples.
  3. Become familiar with four ungodly forces that affect marriage in a negative manner.
- 

## **WHAT IS A BOUNDARY?**

### **A. A “Boundary” Defines Our Responsibilities**

1. A boundary denotes a property line, the beginning and end of something.
  - a. Boundaries determine the extent of how we allow ourselves to be influenced.
  - b. Boundaries also allow us the freedom to be ourselves and empower us to be responsible for our attitudes and behaviors.
2. As Christians we have boundaries.
  - a. Christ requires His followers to give up self (Luke 9:57-62).
  - b. Christ wants us to be accountable for our actions (1 John 1:8-10).
  - c. The Bible teaches commitment to our spouse (Ephesians 5:21-30).
  - d. Our commitment is to be a total one, not a half-hearted one (Matthew 19:16-26).

### **B. Boundaries in Marriage Will Help in Achieving Total Commitment**

1. Marriage is based on “boundaries” that must be established in order for a relationship to be successful.
  - a. Marriage success is based on boundaries that give it permanence.
  - b. Marital satisfaction is closely tied to a strong belief in marital permanence.

2. Good marriages require couples to work at making them good.
  - a. A commitment to a lifelong marriage is a great motivator to make things better.
  - b. An attitude of permanence in a marriage encourages constructive communications and sensitivity to the other's needs.
3. Meeting each other's emotional and physical needs is a vital part of developing a close relationship (1 Corinthians 7:1-5).
  - a. This is important because it produces a compatibility and commitment to each other.
  - b. This is the type of commitment that will last for a lifetime and is pleasing to God.

### UNGODLY FORCES THAT AFFECT MODERN MARRIAGES

#### A. Affluence, Easy Credit, Disposability, and the Pursuit of Pleasure

1. Affluence breeds a self-centered attitude of pleasing ourselves at the expense of someone else.
  - a. Marriages are evaluated only on the basis of the pleasure they bring.
  - b. When this occurs, permanence in a relationship begins to suffer.
2. Easy credit allows the pursuit of pleasure to buy whatever we wish so that we can indulge our own passions.
  - a. The danger of easy credit is the desire to indulge our passions.
  - b. This attitude is a lack of concern for commitment, sacrifice, and stability it takes to make a marriage work.
3. Disposability gives the idea that if we get tired of something, we can get rid of it.
  - a. Hidden in this value system is the idea that we can replace "it," whatever it be, with another that is more appealing and suits us better.
  - b. The implications of this attitude: if something is too much trouble, throw it away (i.e., abortion).
4. The pursuit of pleasure is the desire to continually look for things that makes us feel good.
  - a. We become easily addicted to affluence and a high standard of living.
  - b. When we live in plenty, we enjoy pleasures and comforts that are hard to give up.

## **B. The Demise of Ethical and Moral Guidance Principles**

1. The prominent attitude of the day is “if it feels good, do it.”
  - a. Judges 21:25 is an excellent example of this attitude. “In those days Israel had no kings; everyone did as he saw fit.”
  - b. In society today there is more emphasis on individual liberty than on community responsibility.
2. In marriage this has shown up as one’s rights exclusive of responsibilities.
  - a. Lack of trust and commitment is a by-product of this line of thinking.
  - b. Another consequence is our loss of the family as God would have it.
3. “Choice” has become our god and this is eroding the ability of our nation to take a positive moral stance.
  - a. It is now considered that a homosexual “marriage” and family can be ideal if there is love and commitment.
  - b. God ordained marriage, a husband and wife, to be the foundation for the family unit based on His grand design.

## **PRINCIPLES THAT ENHANCE COMMITMENT AND STEPS TO STAYING FAITHFUL**

### **A. Biblical Principles That Will Help Couples Remain Faithful**

1. No conflict is unsolvable. Christian marriages have conflicts, but they are not beyond solution (Philippians 2:12, 13).
2. Persistence pays off. Working through it is harder than walking out, but it is God’s way (Romans 8:28).
3. God demands unselfish commitment. Being committed to one’s mate is not a matter of demanding rights, but releasing rights (Philippians 2:1-5).
4. Commitment glorifies God. The Christian’s ultimate goal in life is not to be happy, but to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

### **B. Steps to Staying Faithful**

1. Recognize that anyone can commit sexual sin.
2. Monitor your spiritual pulse.
3. Safeguard your marriage.
4. Take precautions.
5. Deal with subtle signs of sexual attraction.
6. Back off early.

7. Clear cloudy thoughts.
8. Hold yourself accountable.
9. Guard your mind.
10. Regularly rehearse the consequences.

## **BOUNDARIES REQUIRE OWNERSHIP**

### **A. A Mature Adult Takes Responsibility**

1. The term “co-dependency,” reflects a habit of enabling another individual to continue in irresponsible and self-destructive behavior.
2. Co-dependency is taking responsibility for another person’s problems and not requiring that person to take responsibility for their speech or actions.

### **B. The Greatest Gifts We Can Give to Each Other Is the Gift of Honesty**

1. We grow from honest confrontations (Proverbs 27:6).
2. Requiring responsibility is telling each other the truth.
3. Setting boundaries on one’s spouse is certainly an act of love.
4. When we set boundaries, we learn to take ownership for our behaviors.

## **DIVORCE DAMAGES KIDS**

### **A. Children Are Affected by Their Parent’s Divorce and Continue to Suffer Emotional Repercussions**

1. Current research shows the impact of divorce on children to be both long-lasting and cumulative.
2. The trauma of divorce makes it difficult for children to weather the challenges of early childhood and adolescence.
3. Divorce increases the likelihood of problems.
4. Parents who decide to divorce are doing themselves and their children a big disservice. God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16).

### **B. Couples must Commit to Their Marriage - Points to Remember**

1. Partnership is more important than parenthood.
2. A radiant partnership is necessary for the right marriage example.
3. Marriage is permanent while day-to-day parenthood is only temporary.

**CONCLUSION**

Life itself is not easy – it has many adjustments. The most difficult of all human adjustments is marriage. This is so because it is such an intimate relationship. There is the molding of the life of each individual into that of the other. Satisfactory emotional adjustments are most important. The demands of some couples on each other are sometimes unreasonable. “Adjustment” is the key word for couples as they set boundaries and encourage honest, open communication. There is the need of adjustment in matters of sex, family connections, money matters, etc. We all want others to be loyal to us. We believe in loyalty to church, to home, to community, to state, and to nation. But there is not a more important loyalty (except to God) in all of life than two people, who are willing to be loyal to each other in marriage for the rest of their lives.

**Commit to Your Marriage!**



## SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE

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1. What is a good definition of boundaries as described in this lesson?

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2. List four ungodly forces that can affect a marriage.

1) 

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2) 

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3) 

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4) 

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3. There are four biblical principles given in this lesson that can help couples remain faithful. List the principles and give a scriptural reference for each one.

1) 

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2) 

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3) 

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4) 

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4. Match the following:

a. _____	Regularly rehearse	1. Can commit sexual sin
b. _____	Take	2. Your spiritual pulse
c. _____	Clear	3. Your marriage
d. _____	Guard	4. Precautions
e. _____	Monitor	5. Of sexual attraction
f. _____	Safeguard	6. Off early
g. _____	Deal with subtle signs	7. Cloudy thoughts
f. _____	Back	8. Yourself accountable
h. _____	Hold	9. Your mind
i. _____	Recognize that anyone	10. The consequences

5. How does divorce affect children throughout their lives?

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6. Fill in the Blank


- 1) Partnership is more important than\_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) A radiant\_\_\_\_\_ is necessary for the right marriage example.
- 3) Marriage is \_\_\_\_\_ while day-to-day parenthood is only\_\_\_\_\_.

## LESSON SIX

# THE PURPOSE OF PARENTING

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### INTRODUCTION

hildren in a family bring much joy into the lives of parents. They truly are a blessing from God, especially when they learn to be responsible, caring, spiritual, and committed to the Lord. The Lord ordained that we should “train a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

One of the greatest responsibilities parents have is the discipline they must provide to their children. Discipline is a God ordained responsibility of parents (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Colossians 3:20, 21; Ephesians 6:1-4). God does not condone child abuse or child beating. He does condone corporal punishment with restraint. The proper balance of love, acceptance, and discipline is absolutely vital to a child’s positive self-concept. There are three important ways to show acceptance:

1. Unconditional love (Romans 5:8; 15:7).
2. Healthy communication (Ephesians 4:29; James 5:16).
3. Appropriate discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11; Ephesians 6:4).

Acceptance of the child, no matter what he/she does, is vitally important for the child to feel loved and secure in his/her identity. It helps develop trust and self-worth in the child. Good parenting will help produce children who feel significant, needed, loved, respected, and accepted.

Dr. James Dobson gave some good insight on raising children when he says, “When the child asks, ‘Who’s in charge?’ - tell him! When he mutters, “Who loves me?” Take him in your arms and surround him with affection.” Parents are empowered by the Lord to provide love, discipline, and acceptance to children. They are a treasure to the Lord and the grand purpose of parenting is to build a child’s life for now and all of eternity!

The Bible describes the home as a place where children are to be raised and it dictates the kind of environment where children can grow to be strong and beneficial in their lives. From birth, the desire of every Christian parent should be to lead their children to an eventual position of autonomy and independence. The most important aspect contributing to parenting is the

spiritual feeding that is intended by God to occur within the home.

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**LESSON AIM:** To study the purpose of parenting and the responsibilities that parents have in bringing up children in the instruction of the Lord.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will. . .

1. Learn some basic purposes of discipline.
  2. Realize the responsibility of parents to provide the proper balance of love, acceptance and discipline.
  3. Gain a deeper appreciation that God has allowed parents to be stewards of their precious children.
  4. Learn how a child's character is shaped early in life by the parent's love and guidance.
  5. Read and examine Biblical principles that empower parents to be effective in raising children according to God's desire.
- 

## THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE

### **A. Discipline Is a God Given Responsibility of Parents**

1. Many scriptures provide guidance in the important area of disciplining children (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Colossians 3:20, 21; Ephesians 6:1-4).
  - a. God does not condone child abuse.
  - b. God does condone corporal punishment with restraint.
2. The proper balance of love, acceptance and discipline is absolutely vital to a child's self-esteem. Three important ways to show acceptance are:
  - a. Unconditional love (Roman 5:8; 15:7).
  - b. Healthy communication (Ephesians 4:29; James 5:16).
  - c. Appropriate discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11; Ephesians 6:4).
3. One of the most powerful contributors to positive parenting is proper discipline.
  - a. The Hebrew writer said, "For the Lord disciplines him who he loves" (Hebrews 12:6).
  - b. There is a bond between loving children and wisely disciplining them.

## **B. Acceptance and Discipline are Important for a Child to Feel Loved and Secure**

1. Acceptance helps develop trust and self-worth in a child.
  - a. Acceptance means the parent “agape” loves the child.
  - b. “Agape” is an unconditional love.
  - c. This unconditional love will motivate a child in positive ways.
2. We have a beautiful example of how God parented David.
  - a. David committed terrible sins of adultery and murder.
  - b. God still accepted and loved David unconditionally.
  - c. This unconditional love motivated David to repent (2 Samuel 11 & 12; Acts 13:22).
3. Discipline should be seen as a learning process for the child.
  - a. The word discipline has the meaning of instruction or learning.
  - b. Parents who are primarily punitive risk establishing a bond between discipline and anger that can build resentment rather than positive learning.
  - c. Rules should be clearly understood and consistently enforced.

## **C. Discipline must Be Coupled with Love**

1. Effective discipline will involve some suffering or pain (Hebrews 12:7-11).
  - a. Children need to know the consequences of violating the laws of God, man, and nature.
  - b. Discipline administered with love will help children grow up to be responsible.
2. Parents need to have a consistent approach to discipline.
  - a. Parents do not have the right to abuse children verbally, emotionally, or physically.
  - b. Children need to understand the purpose of discipline and that parents still care for and love them.
3. If it is a rule today, it will be a rule tomorrow.
  - a. Consistency is important when raising children because they need structure in their lives.
  - b. Consistency is what makes a good time piece.
  - c. Consistency in discipline will help a child’s behavior.

## **PARENTS INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR**

### **A. Parents Adversely Affect a Child’s Behavior in the Following Ways**

1. Lack of parental affirmation and acceptance of the child.
2. Being over-protective and not requiring responsibility from the child.
3. Lack of attention or showing favoritism.
4. Too much permissiveness and lack of parental firmness.
5. Not providing boundaries for the child.
6. Inconsistency in dealing with children.
7. Inappropriate child/parent relationships that distort proper roles.

**B. Five Rules for Disciplining a Child**

1. As parents, agree on the forms of discipline you will use together.
2. Be consistent.
3. Be willing to accept the child while not condoning the behavior.
4. Be sure that expectations of the child are understood and realistic.
5. Discipline should shape the will without damaging the spirit.

**DISCIPLINE IS THE KEY TO A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT**

**A. Healthy Personality Development is Related to a Child's Self-esteem**

1. A child must have a close unbroken attachment early on in life.
2. Discipline must be coupled with love to be effective in raising children.
3. The stronger the parent's will to discipline, the weaker a child's desire to test that will.

**NOTE:** Dr. Jack Raskin, Child Psychologist at Children's Orthopedic in Seattle states, "The key to a healthy personality development lies in the child's close unbroken attachment in the early months to the people who care for him. If you give your children consistent love and discipline until the age of six, you'll find most of your work done."

**B. Effective Use of Non-abusive Spanking**

(Proverbs 13:24, 22:15, 23:13, 14: 29:15)

1. It should be used as only the "last resort."
2. The parent should use self-control when spanking.
3. It is reserved for willful acts of defiance.
4. It is administered in private (not on the face).
5. It is always followed by love and acceptance.

**C. Use of Spanking at the Adolescent Stage Is Ineffective**

1. At this age spanking does very little to discipline adolescents.
2. Appropriate discipline for adolescents is to set boundaries and restrain privileges.
3. Adolescents will respond to limits and expectations set by the parents, if they are done consistently.

**PROPER BALANCE IS NEEDED****A. Many Today Go to the Extremes When Disciplining Children**

1. God never condoned child abuse.
2. As equally important God has never condoned parental permissiveness.

**B. Paul Gives Ground Rules for Parents and Children**

1. The child is to be taught to honor father and mother (Ephesians 6:1-4).
2. Parents must see to it that children are raised in a responsible manner (1 Samuel 2:22-36).

**C. Love Is Not a Simple Substitute for Good Parenting Skills**

1. Yes, love is important, but discipline must be consistent.
2. Yelling and nagging can be a bad habit for parents to use.

**D. Parents Are Stewards of Children (1 Corinthians 4:2)**

1. The purpose of discipline is to develop character.
2. Parents must show the child guidance, acceptance, and love.

**E. God Ordained Corporal Punishment, with Appropriate Restraints, as a Means of Discipline**

1. One research study confirms that corporal punishment administered correctly is appropriate discipline (Dr. Diana Baumrind, Psychologist, University of California at Berkeley).
2. Spanking is a time honored concept that is biblically mandated.

**GOOD PARENTING BUILDS CHARACTER****A. Children Need Boundaries**

1. Boundaries help build character because character counts!
  - a. This concept teaches that as parents we can help children take

- ownership for their lives.
- b. Parenting is the process of preparing children for the future.
- 2. Character is a person's moral make-up.
  - a. This involves a sense of responsibility.
  - b. It involves the ability of a child to function in relationships.

### **B. Inner Strength Is Built from Character Building**

- 1. When a child lacks character building, poor patterns are set.
  - a. Lack of strong character will produce weak inner strength.
  - b. Character counts in the development of strong inner strength.
  - c. Children are born without boundaries, therefore they need instruction and guidance from the parents which begins with character development.
- 2. Character building must start early in a child's life.
  - a. In the sense of a child's character, the future is now!
  - b. Parents help create a child's future because character is almost everything.
  - c. Parents must realize that character is always formed in a relationship and the strongest relationship is between a child and parent.

## **THE PAIN OF IRRESPONSIBILITY**

### **A. Parents Have an Awesome Responsibility Raising Children**

- 1. Parents are the bridge to the outside world for their children.
  - a. They help define boundaries for their children.
  - b. Parents must realize that children react to their style of parenting.
- 2. Parents need to interpret a child's behavior as a response of their own.
  - a. This requires a "paradigm" shift because the parent needs to look at their parenting style.
  - b. Children's behavior is "reactive" rather than "proactive" because they respond to the parent's actions.
- 3. Children have no idea how to handle life so that it works right.
  - a. Young children do not have the necessary skills to deal with situations.
  - b. Parents must provide the structure and guide them to maturity.
  - c. That's why God provided parents for children.



**B. Children Will Mature to the Level the Parent Structures Them**

1. The parent's role is vital in guiding a child toward maturity.
  - a. This is a biblical concept and is to be done by the parents (Colossians 3:21).
  - b. Children need guidance in order to develop a positive self-worth.
2. Children need to feel the pain of irresponsibility (Hebrews 12:7-11).
  - a. The purpose of parenting is to build character.
  - b. Parents must be willing to set boundaries and allow children to experience consequences.

**PARENTING THAT EMPOWERS****A. Effective Parents Know That They Have the Power to Build Character in Children**

1. Parents have been granted the power to raise children.
  - a. This power should not be given up or delegated to others.
  - b. When parents give up this power, their families are in trouble.
2. Parents are to raise their children "in the way they should go."
  - a. Parents need to realize that they are preparing their children for the future, not just enabling them for the present.
  - b. Jesus is our great example in this regards. He submitted to the power of His parents (Hebrews 5:8).

**B. Jesus Is Our Model in All Aspect of Life**

1. Jesus is a model of submission.
  - a. Christianity is most significant in that the Son of God came to this earth to model how we should live.
  - b. He modeled for us that submission leads to strength in dealing with adversity.
2. When a problem occurs among siblings, parents need to ask, "What was my part in creating this problem?"
  - a. This process may be painful, but necessary.
  - b. It will require parents to look at the "plank" in their own eye as well as the "speck" in the child's eye (Matthew 7:1-5).

## PREVENTIVE MEDICINE THAT EMPOWERS

### A. Love Is a Powerful Tool to Motivate

1. God is love and that's what draws us to Him (John 3:16).
  - a. God motivates by His great love to each one of us.
  - b. God "so" loved us! That is the drawing power that motivates us to do what is right.
2. This same principle can help motivate children just as powerfully.
  - a. Love is what motivates a child to do right.
  - b. This principle is useful when we are dealing with children.
  - c. If love is what motivates us to do right, surely it will motivate children just as powerfully.

### B. Children View a Parent's Love in Two Ways - Love and Perceived Love

1. To make the most out of the motivating power of love, we must understand the difference between love and perceived love.
  - a. A parent may love their children with all of their heart and express that to the children in a verbal manner.
  - b. Until children actually believe they are loved, all is in vain.
  - c. This love must "walk the walk" in words, deeds and action.
2. Children must see perceived love in action for it to be a powerful force in their lives.
  - a. Children must see true love working for their good and this love must be unconditional.
  - b. A child's perception of a parent's love will make all the difference in the world as the child responds to this active, unconditional love.
  - c. When expressing love it should be done in a sincere manner and be backed by actions so the child receiving the love will know it is genuine.

### C. The Combined Effects of Perceived Love and Perceived Trust Is Powerful

1. Researchers tell us that the combined effects of perceived love and perceived trust can help children overcome negatives in a child's life.
  - a. A major negative influence on a child is peer pressure from other children.
  - b. Conflicts with mom and dad can also impact children in a

negative way.

- c. A child who has love and trust from parents will have a strong antidote to overcome negatives they are confronted with.
2. The combined effects of love and acceptance will help children develop a healthy self-esteem.
  - a. Children will see the rules as boundaries because of the unconditional love that is expressed to them.
  - b. The trust and acceptance that parents express to the children will help them understand that rules and boundaries are for a purpose.
  - c. Children will know that beyond any rules there is a sincere love that is actually the reason for the rules.

#### **D. The Kind of Love That Motivates Is “Unconditional”**

1. This kind of love is not performance oriented.
  - a. Parents must guard against love that is based on the actions of the child. The child must experience unconditional love.
  - b. Unconditional love is expressed when a parent loves the child regardless of what the child does.
  - c. The combined effects that love and trust has on a child is extremely powerful and will motivate a child to do right.
2. Trust is just as important as love.
  - a. You cannot have love without trust. They depend on each other and both must exist when dealing with children.
  - b. A parent that expresses trust is sending a powerful message of acceptance to a child.
  - c. Such trust allows a child to be himself and shows he is accepted regardless of any situations.

#### **F. High Expectations Is Another Way to Motivate Children**

1. High expectations are powerful because these reveal a parent's belief that the child will succeed.
  - a. Children will respond to high expectations because of their desire to please their parents.
  - b. The agony of knowing that they would disappoint their parents is very effective in motivating children to do the right thing.
2. Expectations must be realistic and attainable to be effective.
  - a. Parents should never expect their children to be anything beyond what they are capable of being.
  - b. Parents should provide opportunities for children to pursue

their interests and develop their talents.

### **G. Giving the Child the Feeling of Significance Is a Great Motivating Tool**

1. Children are pleased to know that they are an important part of the family.
  - a. When children do not feel a sense of belonging and significance, they will find self-destructive ways of behaving in order to draw attention to themselves.
  - b. Children will do anything within their power to get noticed and feel like they are needed and wanted.
2. Coupled with the feeling of belonging, children like to be contributors to the family.
  - a. Parents need to give their children responsibilities appropriate for their age.
  - b. A family is a system, a unit, and works best when all its members feel significant, needed, loved, respected and accepted.

### **CONCLUSION**

“Christian parents are baby sitters for God.” This simply means that Christian parents are responsible to God for their own children, since children are gifts from God. Therefore, parents should handle them carefully and prayerfully; for they are precious. Someone else has stated, “as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined.” Christian parents are “twig benders,” pointing their children in the right direction – toward Jesus Christ.

God has provided the information that can help parents in this great responsibility. Throughout the Bible we can see God’s instructions for parents. When parents take the inspired instructions and apply them to their family, there is great purpose in how they raise children. Children are arrows intended to be aimed at a specific target. The purpose of parenting is to show the child guidance, acceptance and love. This is what every child needs more than anything else, and no one on this earth can give it to children better than loving, responsible, Christian parents! God has allowed parents to be stewards of their precious children.

**Good Parenting Builds Character for Life and Eternity!**

**SELF EXAM QUESTIONS FOR LESSON SIX**

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1. Our lesson aim states the purpose of parenting. What is the main purpose of parenting?

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2. What are the five rules needed to discipline a child?

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4) 

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5) 

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3. List three ways that non-abusive spanking is most effective.

1) 

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2) 

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3) 

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4. Give two results that good parenting has on building character in a child.

1) 

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2) 

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5. Give a short definition of “unconditional love.”

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## LESSON SEVEN

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FATHERS

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### INTRODUCTION



God has uniquely made man for the fathering role (Genesis 3:16-19). God has given fathers the responsibility of being the spiritual and moral leader of the home. The Bible tells us that God gave fathers for the purpose of “nurturing” their children (Ephesians 6:4 [KJV]). Fathering is the key to strong families. It is apparent that the Bible is saying that as the father goes, so goes the family, and as the family goes, so goes the nation (Malachi 4:6; Luke 1:17).

Research shows that nurturing fathers are extremely important in their children’s development of a healthy self-worth and an avoidance of deviant behavior. Several major research studies show how the father has an impact on families. One study states, “a wealth of child-development research indicates that a secure male identity and a normal psychological adjustment is fostered in boys by fathers in the home who are affectionate and actively involved in child-rearing. The Bible tells us that fathers have the purpose of “nurturing their children. In Ephesians 6:4 Paul states, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

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**LESSON AIM:** To consider the significant role of nurturing and supportive fathers and the impact they have on families?

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will. . .

1. Look at current research and scriptures that point to the impact fathers have on the family.
2. Learn about the negative impact that fathers have when they are absent from the family.
3. Note how fathers have a great impact on the stability of their children.

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Paul Harvey has an interesting description of a father as “a person who is forced to endure childbirth without an anesthetic, a person who growls when he feels good and laughs very loud when he’s scared, a person who gives daughters away to other men who aren’t good enough so that they can have grandchildren that are smarter than anybody’s.”

## **NURTURING FATHERS**

### **A. The Power of Nurturing Fathers and Supportive Parents**

1. Research shows that fathers are important to the family.
  - a. Fathers are especially important in the nurturing of their children.
  - b. Child development studies show that fathers have a great influence on the development of a child's personality.
  - c. The father's role in the family helps define a boy's sense of masculine identity.
2. A "nurturing parent" is one who cares for, loves, and accepts their children.
  - a. Parents who demonstrate "warmth" tend to have children who are attached to them in a greater degree.
  - b. Other studies show that children who receive praise and affection from their parents have higher self-esteem.
  - c. This research reinforces the truth found in the scripture (Ephesians 6:4).

### **B. The Father's Affect on a Daughter's Self-Worth**

1. Research rarely mentions the affect that a father's absence has on daughters.
  - a. American culture makes it easier to be a good mother than a good father.
  - b. Research shows that the father's lack of connectedness to his children opens the door for a child to experiment with drugs.
2. As the daughter approaches puberty, she changes physically and emotionally.
  - a. This time is important because she will turn to her father for guidance in understanding her role and how to react to the opposite sex.
  - b. The father must respond to his daughter in a nurturing and loving manner and provide guidance during this important time of her life.

### **C. The Tendency of Daughters to Marry a Man Like Their Father**

1. Demanding fathers accept their daughters only on the basis of performance.
2. These daughters tend to marry a man just like their father.
  - a. Subconsciously they select husbands with this same

- demanding trait, hoping for love and acceptance.
- b. Daughters “transfer” these feelings to God the Father.
  - 1) They view God as strict and demanding.
  - 2) They see God rejecting them because they feel they cannot meet God’s expectations.
- 3. Daughters in this mind set will experience challenges.
  - a. They lose hope for love and acceptance.
  - b. This condition can lead to depression.
- 4. Trust in God can help overcome these feeling of insecurity.
  - a. God does indeed love everyone (John 3:16).
  - b. We are worthy of God and His great love.

## **FATHERING - THE KEY TO STRONG FAMILIES**

### **A. Our Culture’s Perception of the Father’s Role Is What the Media Portrays Him to Be**

1. Media portrays the father as a spineless, mindless boob without a role.
  - a. The father has been maligned and ridiculed.
  - b. This is not God’s plan for the father.
2. God has uniquely made man for the fathering role (Genesis 3:16-19).
  - a. God has given fathers the responsibility of being the spiritual and moral leader of the home.
  - b. Modern psychological studies demonstrate need of the father’s role in leading the family.
  - c. Families are stronger by having two caring and cooperative parents.
3. Research done on “mother-only” families shows a significant impact on children.
  - a. Adolescents are more likely to be sexually active.
  - b. Children are more susceptible to low grades, alcohol and drug abuse.
  - c. Families in this situation tend to have more teen pregnancy.
  - d. The unique challenge for the church is to provide a support system for single-parent families.

## **ABSENT FATHERS**

### **A. The National Center for Fathering Identified a Chief Trait of**



### **Gang Membership**

1. In homes without a father, boys tend to join gangs.
  - a. Gangs would fill the void left by the absence of the father figure at home.
  - b. When the father was absent from the family, boys would look for other ways to have their needs met.
2. Gangs provide a sense of protection, acceptance, love and commitment they lacked without a father figure at home (The Wounded Healer, Henry Nouwen, 1970).
  - a. Many other research studies point to the characteristics of boys who joined a street gang and there was a common element in each study, the lack of a father in the home.
  - b. Fathers do play an important part in the development of the family and they have a significant role to play in the lives of children.

### **B. Research Clearly Shows That Adults Favor an Enduring Commitment in Father-child Relationships**

1. In the face of pessimistic headlines that the family is endangered, two truths emerge (National Center for Fathering, June 15, 1997).
  - a. Research shows that there is a strong desire for a fulfilling family life today as it was 50 years ago.
  - b. Effective family life does not just happen, it is the result of deliberate intention and practice.
2. Families desire the strong presence of fathers to help raise children.
  - a. Research from child development specialists perceive that fathers are more powerful than historically given credit for.
  - b. Children from father-absent or father-neglect families are at tremendous risk (Booth & McLanahan, 1989).

### **C. Historical Research Shows the Impact of the Absent Father**

1. The Industrial Revolution gave men the responsibility of being a financial provider which substantially removed them from the home.
  - a. This absence by fathers had a big impact on the children.
  - b. The result has been a sense of inwardness, and a sense of fatherlessness in the homes of America.
2. Mothers have taken the main responsibility of raising children and this resulted in less influence by fathers in the home.
  - a. A father's role was relegated to being a financial provider.

- b. The other impact was the lack of discipline that could be provided by the father.

**D. Current Views of the Father See Him as Being Involved with the Family**

1. Bringing home the paycheck will not be sufficient fulfillment of the fathering role (Deuteronomy 6:4-7).
  - a. Fathers are expected to be more involved and nurturing.
  - b. The role of the father is involvement and support in raising children.
2. Much pressure will come from the working wives for the father to have a greater sense of accountability.
  - a. They will not allow their children to experience the same neglected childhood they had.
  - b. This sense of accountability is growing in respect to the father's role in the family.

## THE RISING EXPECTATIONS OF FATHERS

**A. The Bible Tells Us That Parents Are Created for the Purpose of “Nurturing” Their Families**

1. Normal development of children depends on a warm sustained relationship with both parents.
  - a. Fathers need to spend quality time with the children to help them grow and mature into confident adults.
  - b. The challenge for fathers is to balance the pressures of work and family commitments.
2. Children with disorders have experienced the absence of an accessible parent because of death, divorce or a time demanding job.
  - a. The research is very clear that a strong father figure in the home will help children adjust to life in a positive manner.
  - b. As a family of God, we need to support and promote effective family structures and God's plan of fathering.

**B. Research Indicates That a Secure Male and Female Identity Is Fostered by Fathers Who Are Affectionate, Nurturing, and Actively Involved in Child Rearing**

1. Boys readily identify with their fathers when the interactions are rewarding and affectionate.

- a. Fathers have a direct impact on the male identity of their sons.
- b. Normal psychological adjustment is fostered by fathers who take an active role in parenting.
- 2. Girls, secure in their femininity, have fathers who encourage their feminine adjustment.
  - a. The same principle holds true for daughters when the father is supportive and nurturing.
  - b. Girls adjust in psychological development better when the father provides leadership in child-rearing.

## CONCLUSION

The greatest need in our world today is for fathers to be fathers, accepting and fulfilling the responsibilities that God has given them. It is not an accident that the Bible refers to God as Father. He is the perfect father and an example to all men as to how fathers ought to be. God has given this responsibility to fathers and they must use love and common sense as they raise their children for the Lord. Fathers truly make a significant difference in the family!

The following nostalgic little piece appeared in the Danbury, Connecticut, "News-Times" sometime back that was translated from a Dutch magazine. It traces our thoughts of dads through the years:

4 years	My daddy can do anything.
7 years	My dad knows a lot, a whole lot.
8 years	My father doesn't know quite everything.
12 years	Oh, well, naturally Father doesn't know that, either.
14 years	Father? He is hopelessly old-fashioned.
21 years	Oh, that man is out-of-date. What did you expect?
25 years	He knows a little bit about it, but not much.
30 years	Maybe we ought to find out what Dad thinks.
35 years	A little patience. Let's get Dad's assessment before we do anything.
50 years	I wonder what Dad would have thought about that. He was pretty smart.
60 years	My Dad knew absolutely everything!
65 years	I'd give anything if Dad were here so I could talk this over with him. I really miss that man.

**May God bless every man that is in the  
role of being a caring, loving father!**

**SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN**

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1. How would you describe a “nurturing” father?

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2. How do fathers have an influence on a daughter’s femininity?

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3. Research shows that “mother-only” families have significant problems. List three problems that the adolescents in these families face.

- 1) 

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- 2) 

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- 3) 

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4. What is the psychological effect on kids who have absent fathers?

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5. What are the rising expectations of fathers in America today?

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6. List the main points found in Deuteronomy 6:4-7 that relate to the instruction of the family.

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## LESSON EIGHT

# BIRTH ORDER AND PARENTING

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### INTRODUCTION

**M**ost parents start out in their parenting wanting to treat all their children equally. Yet, there are Christian parents who are unaware that they may be causing their children to break the most basic of commandments, “Honor thy father and mother.” These parents sometimes set up their children to be too close to them. Researchers know that when one child is too close to one of the parents, another child will become distant. Some children are favored while others are less favored. A favored child is often more dependent, relational, but often less productive. A less favored child is independent, less social, but productive – a survivor.

Researchers tell us that what causes the differences in behavior, according to birth order, is the way each sibling sees himself, the expectations the parents place on him and the differences in the treatment of each child. The economic, religious or ethnic background of the family does not matter because the expectations and the perceptions of each child held by the parents is basically the same in all countries and nationalities.

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**LESSON AIM:** To see the impact that “birth order” has on the dynamic of the family and how parents can support each child so they feel loved and accepted.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will. . .

1. Become familiar with some current research on “birth order.”
  2. Learn that the relationship between parents and children is fluid, dynamic and all important.
  3. Discover some useful keys to successful parenting.
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No two children are alike. Each child is unique like fingerprints or snow flakes. Parents must never see each child as having the same characteristics or abilities as big sister or to be “cut from the same mold” as big brother. Each child in the family is unique and special. Wise parents are aware of the individual traits of each child. They learn to appreciate and discriminate individual uniqueness and meet specific needs of each child.

## TEMPERAMENT AND BIRTH ORDER

### A. The “First-Born” Child Is a New and Exciting Event

1. A parent’s hopes and dreams for the future are wrapped up in this new born child.
2. Typically, first-born children are pushed to be the best and the smartest.
3. If the child survives this type of pressure, they could become a compulsive independent and perfectionist individual.

### B. When Middle Born Children Come Along, the Parents Feel They Are “Old Pros”

1. At this stage of development parents know what they are doing and face child rearing with renewed confidence.
2. Middle children develop behaviors that tend to have them search for a unique place to fit in and to feel significant.

### C. The “Last-Born” Child Is Viewed in a Different Way by the Parents

1. Last born children are usually discouraged from the maturing process by the parents.
2. These children tend to receive more time and attention by the parents.
3. Typically, these children develop behaviors, either good or bad, so that time and attention is assured from the parent.

## MOTHER’S ROLE

### A. Parents Definitely Have a Strong Impact on a Child’s Formative Years

1. It is a common belief among professionals that the mother has more influence on children in the early years of development.
  - a. 80% of a child’s personality is formed by the age of six or seven.
  - b. Fathers generally have more of impact in the later years of development.
2. A mother’s nurturing in the formative years can offset the distinct differences the birth order instills in a child.
  - a. Mothers nurture better and are more effective than anybody else.

- b. A mother's influence will shape and mold a child early on.

**B. The Longer a Child Spends in Day Care, the More Likely They Are to Become Aggressive**

1. Several studies conclude that the lack of early influence by mothers does affect the behaviors of children.
  - a. Daycare is linked to aggression in children.
  - b. Children would display cruelty, explosive behavior, an argumentative attitude and demand a lot of attention.
2. The Bible has already established the importance of each parent when it comes to raising a child (Proverbs 29:15; Titus 2:4,5).
  - a. Paul instructs parents to love each other and care for the family.
  - b. Solomon's advice is to "raise children in the way they should go."

## THE PERIL OF THE FAVORED CHILD

**A. Most Parents Want to Treat All Their Children Equally**

1. Christian parents may not realize that they are treating their children differently.
  - a. Research shows that when one child is too close to parents, another child will become distant in the relationship.
  - b. A favored child is more dependent, but often less productive.
  - c. A less favored child tends to be independent and less social, but productive.
2. Healthy bonding occurs when a child identifies with the same sex parent.
  - A. Especially harmful to children is cross-gender identity.
  - b. This is when the father favors his daughter and the mother her son.
  - c. When this occurs, sex role confusion usually will happen.
  - d. A small portion of these children may later enter into a homosexual lifestyle.

**B. The Expected Pattern of the Family System Affect Birthing Order**

1. Christian families can have favored and less favored children.
  - a. These parents do not do it because of choice.
  - b. Normally the family is following an established pattern.
2. Family systems are passed from generation to generation.

- a. If the system is not checked, poor parent-child bonding will occur.
- b. Children from these family systems marry into families with similar unhealthy patterns.

**C. Note the Case of Jacob and His Twelve Sons (Genesis 37)**

- 1. The father created a situation that did not help his son Joseph.
  - a. Joseph, the favored son became the hated brother.
  - b. Because of this unwise favoritism a chain of events occurred that created unjust consequences.
- 2. Parents can also fall into this trap if they are not aware of the impact birth order has on a family.
  - a. Favoritism will cause children to disobey the basic commandment.
  - b. The far reaching results of this unjust favoritism will create problems for the entire family.

## ADJUSTING TO BIRTH ORDER

**A. First-Born Children Have Particular Needs**

- 1. They need to know what the rules are exactly.
- 2. Parents should recognize the first-born's first place in the family.

**B. Middle Children Provide a Different Dynamic to the Family Setting**

- 1. With middle children, parents have a tendency to feel they do not need to spend as much time as they did with the first child.
- 2. It is important for middle children to have quality time for communication with their parents.

**C. The Last-born Children Have Some Very Special Problems to Overcome**

- 1. Parents tend to be less critical and less demanding of their last-born children.
- 2. Last-born need their fair share of discipline and responsibilities.

## KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL PARENTING

**A. Every Child Has Both a "Spirit" and a "Will"**

- 1. The "spirit" is fragile and can break and bruise very easily.



2. The “will” is like steel and is tough and stubborn.

**B. Provide Children with a Sense of Acceptance**

1. Acceptance involves both verbal and body language communication.
2. Even with discipline the child must receive a message of acceptance.

**C. Successful Parenting Is Showing Appreciation**

1. Praise is a reward and very effective when done with sincerity.
2. When needed, discipline should be applied with the outcome of shaping the will without damaging the spirit.

**CONCLUSION**

The birth order of the child has such an effect on the temperaments that the traits taken on by the child remain with them long after the child reaches adulthood and leaves the family. The results of birth order can be observed in adulthood. This molding and refining process occurs within the person and has the ability to magnify some of the strengths and weaknesses of his/her temperament.

One of the most important aspects of good parenting is to give the child a sense of acceptance regardless of their position in birth order. This appreciation can be expressed by parents and involves hundreds of little and big messages which say to the child, you are important and very valuable. Even when the parent disciplines the child, there must be the message of acceptance. Successful parents effectively show acceptance, affection and appreciation for their children.

**SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT**

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1. Name two significant characteristics of the first-born, middle child and the last-born child.

First-born: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Middle child: \_\_\_\_\_

Last-born: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. True or False

\_\_\_\_\_ The birth order of a child will impact his/her traits for a life time.

\_\_\_\_\_ Middle children are usually perfectionists, individuals and always reaching for that illusive achievement.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parents of last-born children tend to give these children much more time and attention.

\_\_\_\_\_ Research on daycare centers show no significant impact on children's behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_ Joseph became the favored son because of Jacob's unwise favoritism.

\_\_\_\_\_ The last-born child has some very special problems to overcome.

3. Many social scientists believe that 80% of a child's personality is formed by the age of \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

4. The longer a child spends in daycare the more likely they are to become

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5. What does “temperament” have to do with “birth-order?”

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6. Why do well-meaning, loving, careful parents favor a certain child?

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7. How will the favored child face difficulty in his/her adult life?

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8. Describe the affects that Jacob’s favoritism had on Joseph.

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## LESSON NINE

# THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HOME

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### INTRODUCTION



Perhaps the biggest difference between a functional and dysfunctional family is the ability of its members to problem-solve and come to solutions that are best for everybody. Too often anger and fear are emotions that rule the hearts and minds of dysfunctional family members every day. The primary criteria that qualify families as dysfunctional are: a lack of personal identity of individual members, a lack of communication skills and a lack of problem-solving skills to deal with everyday problems that arise in interpersonal relationships.

The “dysfunctional family” is a model of angry responses to perceived threats. It is a model of a false belief system. These false belief systems create a survival mentality that adversely affect the entire family. It affects their interpersonal relationships and creates an inability on the part of the family members to communicate their feelings and to develop problem-solving skills.

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**LESSON AIM:** To note some characteristics of a “dysfunctional” home and see the differences between a functional and dysfunctional family.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will . . .

1. Take a close look at several “survival behaviors” that are developed by dysfunctional families.
2. Become familiar with what it takes to fulfill a family’s needs and develop a sense of self-worth for each member.
3. Discover the chief components of a family system that produces a strong and united family.

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Someone has said that home is the place where we are treated the best and complain the most! In his poem, “The Death of the Hired Man,” Robert Frost says, “Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.” Homes are made of people who experience their daily struggles of life together. Some homes have a tendency to grow together, to become stronger and more beautiful others become battle grounds. The welfare of the children rests more on parental unity than on any other factor.

## THE DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

### A. Definition of the “Nuclear Family” View Concept

1. Family systems model show the family as a basic “nuclear family” concept.
  - a. The family is seen as a rule-governed organism.
  - b. It has a dynamic which transcends that of the individuals in the family.
2. Definition of a “system”
  - a. A “system” can be defined as a group of interconnected parts which mutually interact across time.
  - b. Systems have distinct characteristics that are made up of different parts, but do have a relationship to each other.
  - c. The system is greater than the sum of the individual parts and is characterized by an “interdependency” which includes how the parts influence each other.

### B. Dysfunctional Behavior in a Family

1. A family member’s dysfunctional behavior, under the systems theory, reflects a family system that is dysfunctional.
  - a. If a family is dysfunctional it will be noted by the “troubled member’s” behavior.
  - b. The dysfunctional family is a “closed system” and to understand what the family is all about, each member must be looked at from the influence they have on each other.
2. The “troubled member” reveals a family in distress and needs help.
  - a. The family’s relationship that supports the “troubled member” must be dealt with or long term change is very unlikely.
  - b. There are no insignificant members of the family because all members influence each other, especially in a closed system.

## CO-DEPENDENCY ISSUES AND SURVIVAL BEHAVIORS

### A. Descriptive Term for a Dysfunctional Family

1. The most common term to describe the symptoms of a dysfunctional family is “co-dependent.”
2. This term came from “family systems thinking” theory that showed the “whole” family as co-dependent.

### B. Every Dysfunctional Family has a “Primary Stressor”

1. Each member of the family adapts to the stress created by the stressor in an attempt to control and appease the stressor.
2. Family members will become involved in adapting to the stressor as long as the stress exists.
3. Members of the family will become co-dependent on the stressor and respond with “survival behaviors” that may include denial, dissociation, repression or anger.

## **SURVIVAL BEHAVIORS**

### **A. Survival Behaviors Are Actual Responses to the Violent Behavior of the “Primary Stressor”**

1. The adult child of a dysfunctional family learns to survive by developing certain patterns of behavior.
2. As an adult, these survival behaviors continue even though they are disconnected from the original stressor.

### **B. Survival Behaviors in Adults Are Counter-Productive**

1. These developed behaviors are very hard to change because they were so useful as they were growing up.
2. The individual with the “survival behaviors” will develop a dependency on things outside themselves to the point of self-neglect.

## **THE VICTIM MENTALITY**

### **A. The Individual Who Possesses a “Victim Mentality” Is Lacking in Having Their Needs Met**

1. A person with this mentality believes this identity lives outside himself in a substance, activity, or another person.
  - a. This person has sold him/her-self out and they are not their own person.
  - b. The result of this is the development of a “survival belief system.”
2. A “survival belief system” produces programmed responses that are counter-productive.
  - a. Self-debasing
  - b. Anti-social behaviors
  - c. Distrust of others
  - d. Habitual lying

- e. Anger

## **B. Traits of Co-dependent Children**

1. They give up their own identify to take care of their parents or the family system.
  - a. These children live a life in fear and develop survival techniques.
  - b. Explosive anger is always the underlying emotion for these children
2. Co-dependent individuals will do whatever it takes to be loved or feel significant.
  - a. They believe they are not worthy of love and must always strive to please others.
  - b. God created in us the desire for basic needs (Romans 12:9-18).
3. Neglecting our basic needs is not healthy spiritually, emotionally or psychologically.
  - a. Meeting a basic need is to be of service to others and it should be an act of the will (Philippians 2:3,4).
  - b. Co-dependant individuals need to learn to depend on God for love and acceptance (1 Peter 5:7).

## **SELF-WORTH AND IDENTITY ISSUES**

### **A. Parents with High Self-Worth Produce Children with High Self-Esteem**

1. An accurate, healthy identity is founded on realistic self-knowledge (Romans 12:3).
  - a. God desires that individuals have a balanced self-esteem.
  - b. Research shows families with a high level of self-esteem produce the development of high self-esteem in children.
2. At birth we are enrolled in an effective education system known as the family.
  - a. The family curriculum teaches the child either truth or error.
  - b. Part of the family curriculum is designed to help develop the personal identity of a child.

### **B. In Dysfunctional Families, Neither Parent Is Emotionally Available to Provide Loving Acceptance**

1. Dysfunctional families offer little emotional support.
  - a. The family tends to be a “closed” and rigid system.

- b. There is little emotional nourishment from the parents.
- 2. As the children become adults, they develop an inaccurate performance based identity.
  - a. Studies show that unhealthy self-concepts in families, will produce low self-esteem in children.
  - b. These children will develop survival tactics to deal with their lack of confidence, security, and self-worth.

## **FULFILLING THE FAMILY'S NEEDS**

### **A. All Families Have Basic Needs**

- 1. A family has specific needs.
  - a. Needs such as security, responsibility and spiritual growth are very important for a family to have.
  - b. There is also a need for challenge, stimulation and productivity.
- 2. A family also needs a mother and father who are committed to each other.
  - a. When parents are committed they seek to meet the needs of the family.
  - b. God has provided the design of the family as a means to meet each individual's needs as well as that of the whole family.

### **B. Everyone in the Family Is Affected by Mom's and Dad's Relationship**

- 1. The parent's relationship does affect each member of the family.
  - a. As the family interacts, interpersonal relationships are developed.
  - b. Parents must understand that their interaction does influence each member of the family as well as their spouse's.
- 2. This concept is illustrated by the "homeostatic principle."
  - a. This principle is like a mobile that is touched in one place and causes all the parts to move. There is a ripple affect within the family.
  - b. In a "closed" family system members become rigid and inflexible.
  - c. In an "open" family system members interact and are fluid in their relationships which are warm and loving.



## CAUSES OF LOW SELF-WORTH

### A. God Created Within Us the Ability to Develop a Healthy Self-concept

1. God desires that we have a balanced self-esteem (Romans 12:3).
  - a. If we think highly of ourselves, we become arrogant and are filled with pride (James 4:6).
  - b. If we think lowly of ourselves we become ineffective for God.
2. We must believe that God will reward those who diligently seek Him (Hebrew 11:6).
  - a. A healthy self-esteem is based in a strong belief in God.
  - b. Individuals with a balanced healthy self-esteem realize their worth.

### B. We Are Products of Our Own Thinking

1. Our parents and “significant others” help shape our self-concept.
  - a. The development of one’s self-concept is created by the feedback received from others.
  - b. We become “conditioned” by the interpretations and perceptions of what is said about us.
2. We are conditioned by self-talk.
  - a. If our self-talk is negative, our minds will believe this negative self-talk.
  - b. Our belief system then influences our behavior.
  - c. If we tell ourselves we must please people to be liked, we set ourselves up for disappointment.

## THE PEOPLE-PLEASERS

### A. People-pleasing Is a Result of Low Self-worth

1. Children from dysfunctional families develop low self-worth.
  - a. People-pleasers feel their value does not come from within but from without.
  - b. They feel they have worth only when they perform well and others accept them.
2. People-pleasers live in a constant state of flux because they are influenced by the moods, emotions, and opinions of others.
  - a. These people are always trying harder so that others will like and accept them.
  - b. The “people-pleaser complex” is developed early on in life with an attitude of “not letting others down.”

## **B. People-pleasers Usually Are Involved in Blaming Themselves**

1. They usually look for someone they can please and take over the relationship to make it work.
  - a. When pleasers get married, they look for someone they can please and then take over the relationship to make it work.
  - b. The pleaser is adept at taking charge and may look like a controller.
  - c. In reality, what they are doing is trying harder to gain acceptance from their spouse.
2. The people-pleaser's concept of God is one of the "big policeman in the sky."
  - a. They view God as ready to zap them if they make a mistake or have a shortcoming.
  - b. They live in fear and develop an unhealthy attitude toward God.
3. People-pleasers are burdened by low self-esteem and are always trying to have others accept them.
  - a. There is nothing wrong with being a pleaser as long as the individual does not feel totally unloved and unappreciated.
  - b. The pleaser must experience acceptance and have a balanced attitude in their relationships with others.

## **C. Changing the Perception of a Pleaser Can Be a Major Challenge**

1. The initial step they face is the challenge that they can change.
  - a. The pleaser must realize how they have been programmed to believe the lie of always trying to please someone else.
  - b. Their lifestyle is based on a distorted picture of reality.
2. The pleaser needs to learn that God loves them regardless of their situation.
  - a. The pleaser must learn that people should accept them no matter whether they please others or not.
  - b. The pleaser should realize as long as they do their best and treat people right, their acceptance will be based on who they are, not what they do.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is a stark contrast between families who are functional and those who are dysfunctional. We have seen that the chief component in the family system is the marriage relationship. Good functional marriages are dependent on each partner's relationship with their spouse. When the home functions well the

environment is created for children to develop and grow into well adjusted individuals. There are some things that can be done to support the development of a functional family. Here are ten rules that provide the basis for a functional family:

1. Members can be different.
2. Roles are individually chosen.
3. Problems are acknowledged and resolved.
4. Members express themselves without fear.
5. Communication is direct, clear, sensitive, and sincere.
6. Members are accountable and parents discipline with love.
7. The atmosphere is fun and spontaneous.
8. Members are of equal value.
9. All mistakes are forgiven.
10. Each member gets needs met.

These rules will ensure that a family develops a sense of self-worth, security and productivity. A family where the parents are committed to each other will feel complete and have a dependence on God and His love as the source of all true self-worth.

**SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON NINE**

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1. How would you describe a dysfunctional family?

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2. List two traits of co-dependent children.

1) 

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2) 

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3. Why is “open” communication in a family so important?

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4. A person with a “victim mentality” will develop programmed responses called “survival behaviors.” List at least two “survival behavior” traits.

1) 

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2) 

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5. True or False

\_\_\_\_\_ Co-dependent children give up their own identity to take care of their parents.

\_\_\_\_\_ A dysfunctional family tends to be an “open” and flexible family system.

\_\_\_\_\_ Research shows families with a high level of self-esteem produce the development of high self-esteem in children.

\_\_\_\_\_ The “people-pleasing” complex is a result of high self worth rather than low self-worth.

## LESSON TEN

# COMMUNICATION THAT CARES

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### INTRODUCTION



Someone has compiled a list of Kid's Instructions on life. Some of these are quite insightful:

- “Wear a hat when feeding seagulls.” – Rocky, age 9
- “Sleep in your clothes so you'll be dressed in the morning.”  
– Stephanie, age 8
- “Don't flush the john when your dad's in the shower.” – Lamar, age 10
- “Never ask for anything that costs more than \$5 when your parents are doing taxes.” – Carol, age 9
- “Never tell your mom her diet's not working.” – Michael, age 14
- “Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat.”  
– Joel, age 12
- “When you get a bad grade in school, show it to your mom when she's on the phone.” – Alyesha, age 13
- “Never try to baptize a cat.” – Laura, age 13

Those children's instructions about life seem very good and maybe as adults we can learn from our kids by listening to them more intently, even if at times we don't understand them.

There are some things we will never understand. That's the first thing we need to learn in our communication with others. There is a lot in this world that we do not comprehend, but it is our responsibility to try to understand other people who are trying to communicate with us.

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**LESSON AIM:** To understand that positive and caring communication is vital to the success of the family structure

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will. . .

1. Investigate things that can hinder good communication.
  2. Learn several good techniques that will promote good communication.
  3. Discover how to achieve “communication that cares.”
-

Positive communication is communication that “cares.” When you care what other people are saying and you “validate” their feelings, you are creating positive communication. To validate is to give credibility to the feelings of the other person communicating with you, even if you don’t agree with him/her. To validate is to say to the other person communicating with you, “I care about your feelings and your opinions.” It says that other people’s feelings matter to you.

## **COMMUNICATION BLOCKS**

### **A. The Bible Gives Instructions on Positive Communications**

1. Paul provides instruction for good communication in Ephesians 4:29-32.
2. Parents should teach and model communications that “cares.”

### **B. We Learn How to Distort Our Communications**

1. We confuse our communications so we do not have to deal with issues head on.
2. We must realize that distorted communication is caused by distorted thoughts.

### **C. Distorted Communications Can Be Changed**

1. Sensitize your mind to be able to recognize distortions when they appear in your communication.
2. Confront each distortion that you recognize, and challenge its accuracy.
3. Replace each distorted thought with a truthful and accurate thought.
4. Communicate a truthful and accurate message along with an appropriate apology for the distorted message.

### **D. Examples of “Communication Distortion”**

1. **TUNNEL VISION** - This is when you see only what fits your attitude or thinking.
  - a. A person will use a small detail to make an overall interpretation of a situation.
  - b. Example: a couple has a fight and one says, “you ruined the whole day because of the fight.”
2. **ABSOLUTE STATEMENTS** - These statements contain such words as “always” or “never” or “can’t.”

- a. These kinds of statements categorize events as “awful” or “terrible,” whereas in reality its implications are only mild or moderate.
  - b. Example: If a spouse forgets to do something the response may be, “you always forget to do...”
3. **POLARIZED THINKING** - In this kind of thinking, everything is, either black or white, good or bad, with no other possible explanations in between.
- a. This is called “all-or-nothing” thinking and a person using this thought process sees only the two extremes.
  - b. Example: A request is made by a spouse and if he/she doesn’t follow up on the request, then the person uses the “all-or-nothing” thinking process.
4. **SHOULD AND OUGHTS** - This form of distortion is when a person operates from a list of inflexible rules about how one should act.
- a. With this distortion there is a feeling of rigidity and control.
  - b. Example: A couple is discussing a particular situation and one spouse responds with the statement “should do this or you ought to do that.”
5. **MIND READING** - This is a distortion when you expect the other person to know what you are thinking, wanting, or expecting.
- a. This distortion sets up unrealistic expectations that can disrupt relationships.
  - b. Example: A couple is assuming that the other person knows what they are expecting or thinking and the communication is distorted.
6. **PERSONALIZATION** - This distortion is a form of paranoia because the person believes that actions of others are directed toward him in a negative way.
- a. People with low self-esteem have a tendency to personalize what other people say to them and it causes them to feel defensive and vengeful.
  - b. Example: The wife may reason that her husband is doing something to deliberately irritate her and she will internalize this feeling which will become destructive to the relationship.

## **COMMUNICATION REQUIRES OPENNESS**

### **A. Many Relationships Can Be Maintained with Open Communication**

1. Rarely do two people talk openly about their reactions to each other.
2. Most people will hold their true feelings because of fear of hurting the other person.

### **B. We must Also Be Aware of How Our Behavior Affects Other People**

1. Many relationships fail under the accumulated load of tiny annoyances and misunderstandings.
2. We must seek to talk openly about feelings, including our own.

### **C. Openness Stems from a Desire to Improve Our Relationships with Others**

1. Openness is not an end in itself but a means to an end.
2. In open communication one should strive to convey how important the relationship is.

### **D. There must Be a Willingness to Have Open Communications**

1. Communicating with others usually involves risk.
2. Willingness to risk being rejected by others depends on the importance of the relationship.

## **THE ART OF SHARING**

### **A. Information Shared Should Have a Positive Result**

1. The attitude should be one that will make the relationship more productive.
2. Disturbing situations should be discussed as they occur and not stored up for a big encounter.

### **B. The Use of “I-messages” Give the Opportunity to Be Non-accusative**

1. To understand the other person’s comments, paraphrase often.
2. Check to make sure the other person understands you as you intended to be understood.



**C. Five Basic Rules of Communication**

1. Be willing to listen and understand others (James 1:19,20).
2. Be willing to compromise but not on basic convictions (James 3:13-18).
3. Be willing to validate the feelings of others (Romans 15:7).
4. Be willing to be vulnerable with your feelings (James 4:6-10).
5. Be willing to admit when you are wrong and apologize (James 5:16).

**THE POWER OF WORD PICTURES****A. Word Pictures Are One of the Most Powerful Forms of Communication**

1. Words pictures are capable of activating a person's emotions, which allow a person to change.
  - a. Before puberty, children experience change through simple teaching and instruction.
  - b. After puberty, life changes will occur through important events, such as death, marriage, birth or a religious conversion.
2. Word pictures create in people emotional, intellectual, and psychological reactions by creating images in the mind.
  - a. Emotional word pictures help couples find common ground for communication.
  - b. Word pictures can help couples discover intimacy and illustrate feelings of love one for another.

**B. Word Pictures Will Help a Marriage Thrive**

1. Like the memory of a moonlit walk, word pictures linger long after they've been spoken.
  - a. In nearly every home, major problems can surface because men and women have markedly different ways of thinking and talking.
  - b. Emotional word pictures help couples find common ground for communication.
2. Word pictures will help a marriage overcome a stagnant stage that can occur.
  - a. The change will require consistent work on the part of each couple.
  - b. When couples work hard at discovering intimacy through the

language of word pictures, then the feeling of love will grow!

## **THE POWER OF BODY LANGUAGE**

### **A. The Power of Body Language Can Influence a Response From Another Person**

1. Well-chosen and articulate words can have a negative affect when the body language is sending another message.
  - a. A flat, negative, demanding tone will over-shadow the well-chosen statement.
  - b. An indifferent look, frown or even the lack of expression can sabotage a request.
2. Counseling can help couples achieve open communications.
  - a. This should be done in the presence of a counselor so each spouse can have the opportunity for feedback.
  - b. Awareness by both spouses will increase the chance for positive communication

### **B. The Bible Tells Us How to Achieve “Communications That Cares”**

1. How the desired behavior is communicated will probably influence the response from the partner.
  - a. Each partner must be aware of the other’s needs.
  - b. When this attitude occurs, then “communication that cares” will be in place.
2. Paul gives basic guidelines for communication in Ephesians 4:29.
  - a. Paul says that no unwholesome words should be spoken.
  - b. The type of words Paul says should be spoken are the words that will edify and build up the other person.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Bible tells us how to achieve “communication that cares,” and what our attitude toward one another should be. The apostle Paul said, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29). The following are examples of helpful statements:

Statements are more helpful if they are. . .

1. Specific rather than general: “you bumped my cup;” rather than, “You never watch where you’re going.”

2. Tentative rather than absolute: “You seem unconcerned about Jimmy;” rather than, “You don’t care about Jimmy and you never will.”
3. Informing rather than ordering: “I hadn’t finished yet;” rather than, “Stop interrupting me.”

The most helpful kinds of information are. . .

1. Behavior descriptions: These report specific acts of the other person that affect you. “I felt like you cut in before I had finished my sentence.”
2. Descriptions of your own feelings: “I like what you just said,” or “I feel blue.”
3. Perception-checking responses: “I thought you weren’t interested in trying to understand my idea,” or “Are you feeling discouraged?”

The least helpful kinds of statements are...

1. Generalizations about the other: “You never pay any attention.”
2. Name-calling, trait labeling: “You’re too rude,” or “You’re a phony.”
3. Accusations, imputing undesirable motives to the other: “You enjoy putting people down,” or “you always have to be the center of attention.”
4. Commands and orders: “Don’t talk so much,” or “Stop laughing.”

Poor communication is the number one problem in marriage. A lack of communicating in positive and caring ways is a major defect in dysfunctional families. On the other hand, open communication is positive and stems from a desire to improve relationships with others.

## SELF EXAM QUESTIONS FOR LESSON TEN

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1. What are four results of poor communications in organisms and organizations?
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. List the five basic rules of communication, providing scripture for each one of the rules.
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Mix and Match.
 

a. _____ Polarized thinking	1. A form of paranoia
b. _____ Absolute statements	2. You expect the other person to know what you are thinking.
c. _____ Shoulds and Oughts	3. Everything is either black or white, good or bad.
d. _____ Tunnel vision	4. You see only what fits your attitude or thinking
e. _____ Personalization	5. A person operates from a list of inflexible rules.
f. _____ Mind reading	6. Contains words as “always, never or can’t.”
  
4. Define “validation.”

5. What is the value of “word pictures” in communication?

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6. What are six examples of “Communication disorders” discussed in this lesson?

1) _____	4) _____
2) _____	5) _____
3) _____	6) _____

## LESSON ELEVEN

# BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES

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### INTRODUCTION



One day, the young son of humor writer Erma Bombeck surprised her with this question: “Mommy, are we rich?” This was Bombeck’s answer: “You’re rich when. . .

- . . . you can have eight people for dinner and don’t have to wash forks between the main course and dessert.”
- . . . your television set has all of the knobs on it.”
- . . . you can throw away a pair of pantyhose just because it has a large hole in it.”
- . . . your dog is wet and it smells good.”

We may disagree with the humorous Erma Bombeck answer, but from the standpoint of a Christian family, we can experience the blessings of participating in “building a strong family.”

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**LESSON AIM:** To appreciate the value of a strong family that has a purpose grounded in God’s pattern for the home.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will. . .

1. See the significance of families that are united in purpose.
  2. Be inspired to see the positive impact that strong families have on children.
  3. Discover that a basic trait of healthy families is the ability to show appreciation to each other.
- 

Families that are strong and healthy seem to be so because they have a purpose to be so. These families intentionally desire to work toward being Christian in conviction and purpose. Intentional is the opposite of haphazard. Intentionally means, “knowing what you want and aiming precisely to get it with all diligence.” This characteristic is one of the most essential ingredients to raising strong families. This concept, if integrated into your parenting style, could change the future of your family. It is truly one of the most valuable

secrets of success for building a strong vibrant family woven into every strong Christian family. Paul expressed it so well when he said, “All things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

## **WHAT MAKES A FAMILY STRONG?**

### **A. Families Are Decaying Because of Lack of Emotional Connection with Others**

1. Young couples are starting families without ever having learned what a family should be.
  - a. Young families lack emotional support from the family they came from.
  - b. Young families also lack the skills and resources to build strong families.
2. A common factor among new families is their lack of knowing what makes a family strong.
  - a. New families come from homes that lack a strong foundation.
  - b. These families have many challenges that can prevent them from building a strong family.

### **B. Healthy Families Are Not Without Problems**

1. Strong families have positive guidelines and each member knows the guidelines.
  - a. The home is viewed as a pleasant, positive place where love and support exists.
  - b. Each family member can count on each other in times of need.
2. Strong families see themselves as a “unit” or as a “team” (Together Everyone Achieves More).
  - a. They have a sense of belonging – a sense of “we’re in this together,” is the prevalent attitude in the family.
  - b. Each family member is encouraged to develop their potential.
3. Characteristics of strong families.
  - a. They are effective problem solvers.
  - b. They seek a proactive solution to problems they are confronted with.
  - c. The home is a place for comfort, development and regeneration.
  - d. They unite to meet challenges – they pull together to pull

each other through.

## WHAT IS A FAMILY?

### A. God Defines a Family

1. A family in God's eyes ideally includes a Mom and Dad.
  - a. The family consists of all those people acquired by birth and adoption.
  - b. Any definition of family needs to be inclusive rather than exclusive as long as it acceptable to God.
2. Conventional thinking of the day is contrary to God's way for the home.
  - a. Some would proclaim a homosexual couple constitutes a family.
  - b. This arrangement is forbidden (Romans 1:24-27).

### B. What a Family Involves

1. A family involves "two or more who are committed to each other."
  - a. This family will share intimacy, resources and values.
  - b. This definition is very general in description and does not quite identify the quality that makes relationships in a family different in other areas of life, such as work.
2. A good definition of a family includes three important ingredients.
  - a. Unconditional love that cares for each other, regardless of the circumstances.
  - b. The rock solid commitment that each family member has to each other.
  - c. A good family is made up of committed people who care for each other.

## FAMILIES WITH A PURPOSE

### A. Strong Families Have a Purpose

1. Families with a purpose work towards being Christian in conviction and purpose.
  - a. These families intentionally work at being a Christian family.
  - b. These families "know what they want and aim precisely to get it with all diligence."
2. A family with a strong purpose will produce a strong family.



(Romans 8:28).

- a. This concept, if integrated into a family, will change the future of it.
- b. This is a great Bible teaching that is woven into every strong Christian family.
- c. Purpose in a family brings commitment to each member.

**B. When Families Establish a Mission in Life, They Become Focused**

1. A family that has a purpose can have more joy because life has meaning.
  - a. When a family is focused it has meaning and will function with a mission.
  - b. The family that has a master plan will have the traits of a strong Christian home.
2. Jesus tells us that we must count the cost when considering a plan to build.
  - a. A strong family will have the conviction to “count the cost” and develop a purpose to sustain them.
  - b. A purpose and master plan will help a family meet the challenges they will face and help them remain strong for the Lord!
  - c. Parents understand that no matter what their children got into or out of, they would never, *never* give up.

## WHAT IS A FUNCTIONAL FAMILY?

**A. A Healthy Family Is One Where All Members Are Fully Functional**

1. These families use their collective and individual needs to functions as a team.
2. Each member will contribute to the overall success of the family.

**B. A Functional Family Is the Healthy Soil Out of Which Individuals Can Mature**

1. The functional family is a cohesive unit with a common moral system and religious preference.
2. The functional family allows each member to be an individual.
3. The functional family members are encouraged to express themselves properly and develop problem solving skills.
4. The functional family supports each member in his/her individual

- gifts.
5. The members of a functional family are disciplined properly without preference and proper boundaries are in place.
  6. The functional family is a place where a healthy self-esteem is encouraged.
  7. The functional family is a unit of survival and growth.
  8. The functional family is a place where socialization is encouraged.

## THE FAMILY CYCLE

### A. The Analogy of a Family and a Hypnotic State

1. Some authorities in family therapy see the family as a group of people in a hypnotic state (trance).
  - a. A hypnotic state is actually a trance.
  - b. When we daydream most people go in and out of a trance many times during the day.
2. Once a trance is in effect, all one learns in that state operates like post-hypnotic suggestions. This concept can occur in a family.
  - a. Parent's expectations will influence a child's perception of themselves.
  - b. If a parent tells a child they will never be as smart as their brother or sister a message is sent to the child until the trance is broken.
  - c. The trance is broken when the child leaves the home and grows up and the bond with the parent is broken.
3. The trance is created by the parent's interaction with each member of the family.
  - a. The father's behavior impacts the mother and vice versa.
  - b. Children develop a mind set on the basis of how they see Mom and Dad interact and solve problems.
  - c. This interaction will become the norm in the family cycle.
4. For example, Mom may nag Dad because he will not take out the garbage.
  - a. Dad will not take out the garbage because he says he is being nagged about.
  - b. This process becomes a circular hoop and the cycle takes on a life all of its own.
5. Children begin to form beliefs (a trance) on the basis of how they see Mom and Dad fight and solve problems.
  - a. The children develop beliefs systems in reference to

disagreements and fail to learn how to properly problem-solve disagreements.

- b. The entire family is now part of the trance and all members will participate in it.

**B. Belief Systems Are Developed in Relation to this Trance**

1. Part of every family trance is how members deal with emotions and solve problems.
  - a. The entire family is a part of the trance and all participate in it.
  - b. This family cycle continues as the trance is modeled in each generation.
2. Families that are functional are capable and solve problems in a positive way.
  - a. Disagreements between parents are resolved through “communication that cares.”
  - b. Healthy problem solving practices are used and the needs of the family are met.
  - c. The lack of communication and problem-solving skills are the two main deficiencies in the dysfunctional family.
  - d. Functional families have good communication skills and have good problem-solving skills.

**STRONG FAMILIES GIVE KIDS AN EDGE IN SCHOOL**

**A. A Readers’s Digest Study Supports Strong Families**

1. Study was designed to see why students succeed in school.
2. The study was administered to 2,130 high school students.

**B. The Poll’s Top Findings**

1. Students who lived with two parents scored higher on tests than the students that were from single parent homes.
2. Today’s youth are optimistic about their future and their ability to make things better for others and themselves.
3. The parent’s education level does have an impact on their children.
4. Boys generally scored higher than girls.
5. Whites tended to score higher than blacks.

**C. The Overall Conclusion Revealed by the Poll Was That, Within**

**Each Group, Strong Families Were a Significant Factor** (Readers' Digest, October 1994, pp 49, 50).

1. Strong families would have several of the poll's top findings.
2. Families can use this study to strengthen their child's success in school.

## **STRONG FAMILIES HAVE BOUNDARIES**

### **A. Boundaries in Families Are Needed and Very Necessary**

1. Lack of boundaries will result in spoiled children who have no true identity or sense of responsibility.
2. Boundaries are necessary for children to have a sense of self-worth and feel secure in their relationships.

### **B. Recent Studies of Strong Families Indicate Necessary Ingredients**

1. Strong families have boundaries that help children understand where their responsibilities begin and end.
2. Boundaries define who a person is and what he/she is responsible for.

## **EMPOWERED THROUGH STRONG FAMILIES**

### **A. Praise and Criticism of Children Does Affect Their Physical State**

1. Psychologist Henry H. Goddard did a study on the energy level of children using an instrument called the "ergograph." (This instrument measures the energy level of an individual.)
  - a. The study shows some interesting facts of praise on children.
  - b. The instrument was able to measure results of positive and negative statements.
2. He found some fascinating things about the energy level when these kids were given praise or criticism.
  - a. When the children were given praise, the ergograph showed a surge of new energy.
  - b. When the children were criticized and discouraged, the instrument showed that the energy level took a nose dive.
3. These findings can apply to adults.
  - a. When adults are praised our energy levels go up.
  - b. When we are criticized our energy level goes down.
4. Strong families will empower each member by encouragement and sincere praise.

- a. Using the analogy of a fox hole, members of the family can team up to face issues of life together, because it is better to team up against the enemy.
- b. There's something strengthening about having someone to lean on while in the foxhole because of the support of each person provides. The same is true in a family.

## **B. Development of Children as Responsible Adults**

- 1. To empower children does not mean parents will leave kids to their own devices.
  - a. Children still need the guidance and counsel of loving parents.
  - b. Parents will provide a healthy balance of empowerment and guidance as the child matures.
- 2. To empower children means that parents will give them support and guidance so they can be all they can be in life and in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4).
  - a. The Bible is very clear that support from parents is necessary to help children grow up.
  - b. Parents will teach children to obey as well as provide the necessary discipline and instruction as the Lord desires.

## **MEMBERS OF STRONG FAMILIES SHOW APPRECIATION**

### **A. Strong Families Have the Basic Trait of Appreciation**

- 1. Families that practice showing appreciation encourage a child to do the right thing.
  - a. Parents are to model the art of appreciation in front of their children.
  - b. Showing appreciation enhances the sensitivity that children have toward others.
- 2. Appreciation goes a long ways towards salvaging a person's life.
  - a. No human interaction has greater impact on the lives of children than early family experiences that show appreciation for each other.
  - b. A child is a little video camera on legs and when parents model appreciation they will imitate this trait.

### **B. The Biblical Principle of Showing Appreciation Is Rooted in Luke 6:38**

1. To express appreciation is the right thing to do.
  - a. Just as Jesus taught this principle, appreciation towards others will multiply in words and deeds.
  - b. Jesus is also teaching the golden rule which is so powerful in building positive relationship with others.
2. To express appreciation requires the initiative to begin and follow through by showing appreciation to others.
  - a. When parents model appreciation they are showing initiative in building strong relationships in the family.
  - b. Being consistent in the demonstration of appreciation is application of the basic principles of Christianity.

### **STRONG FAMILIES ARE UNITED**

#### **A. Strong Families Show Unity**

1. Families are united in one cause.
2. The cause revolves around the love, support and sacrifice that family members have for one another.

#### **B. The Family Was Originated by God to Be an Organism**

1. An organism's members are interdependent and requires unity to function.
2. Unity is required for members of the family to function just like the church (1 Corinthians 12).

#### **C. When the Family Is Not United, It Is Dysfunctional**

1. A family in this situation lacks the basic commitment to its very existence.
2. When the family unit breaks down into "individual parts" it will not function as a family.

### **STRONG FAMILIES ARE OPEN**

#### **A. Members of a Strong Family Appreciate Each Other**

1. We are to be valued for the special and unique person we are.
2. When appreciation is demonstrated we gain a sense of ourselves and our value as the whole person God intended us to be.

#### **B. In Each Stage of a Child's Life There Is the Need for Acceptance by the Parents (Romans 15:7)**

1. Strong families appreciate others and express that to one another.
2. There is healthy communication and self worth (Romans 15:7).

**C. Openness Means Each Family Member Will Be Self-Actualized**

1. Strong families allow feelings to be expressed without fear of criticism.
2. Strong families accept by modeling the acceptance that Jesus provides.

**D. The Essence of the Christian Home Is the Reality of the Worth Each Member has in the Eyes of God (Romans 5:8)**

1. The Christian home relies on a genuine faith in Jesus.
2. The home is striving to incorporate the teaching of Jesus into their family.

**CONCLUSION**

We need to be valued for the special person we are. We each need to see ourselves in the eyes of our families as we interact with them. Members of a strong family appreciate each other and they are open to feelings of one another. This openness is vital to healthy communication and self-worth. Openness means that each member of the family is becoming self-actualized. Each member of a strong family is accepted on the basis of being a part of the family. This environment is created by showing acceptance and appreciation.

To express appreciation is to swim upstream and it requires initiative to begin and to follow through. The biblical principle is: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38). The essence of the Christian home is the reality of the worth of each member in the eyes of God (Romans 5:8). The Christian homes relies not only on a genuine faith in Christ, but on the very traits and characteristics that make a strong family. When a family put first things first, all other goals will be easier to accomplish. May God bless strong families, which are so vital to the building of Christian homes.

**Values – the Foundation of Strong Families!**

**SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN**

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1. Give two main reason why young families have problems.
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. List three ingredients that make a family strong?
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. How would you define a “family?”  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Why is it important for a family to have a purpose?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. How do strong families give kids an edge in school? Cite references from the Reader’s Digest research.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Describe the lessons learned from Luke 6:38 and how this Christian principle builds strong families.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_




## LESSON TWELVE

# THE HOME OF THE SOUL

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### INTRODUCTION

hristian homes are built on faith and prayer. They are also built on the belief that the Bible is the word of God and that a family that prays together stays together in the Lord. Members of a Christian home know where the power for living comes from and though they face trials and tribulations as others do, they trust in the Lord to get them through life.

An unknown author puts it into perspective with this heartfelt prayer: Lord Sometimes...

You allow Breakages, so You can Rebuild;  
You allow Wounds, so You can Heal;  
You allow me to Walk in Darkness, so that I see Your Light;  
You allow me to be Perplexed, so I seek Your Truth;  
You allow me to be Empty, so You can Fill Me;  
You allow me to be Lonely, so I can see what a Friend You are;  
You allow me to Learn hard Things, so I can be a gentle Teacher;  
You allow me to be void of Feelings, so I learn to walk by Faith;  
You take away my future Plans, to Teach me to Live one Day at a Time;  
You allow me to suffer Pain, so I may be Sympathetic to the Hurts of Others;  
You allow me to see the Futility of Life, so I will see Everything is Loss,  
Compared to the Excellency of Knowing Your Son, Jesus.

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**LESSON AIM:** To impress on the student that the Christian home is ultimately the place to prepare people for the heavenly home.

**LESSON PREVIEW:** You will. . .

1. See God's intention for the home is to teach, to train, and to prepare family members for a better life here and beyond.
  2. Appreciate the Christian home as a refuge against the abuses and evils of the world.
  3. Discover that strong families have their roots in God and the power of His eternal word.
-

Most homes can be improved, and even those that are considered Christian homes can grow and develop into the kind of homes God desires for His children. The home is the most conducive place for improvement. The environment of a good home – especially the Christian home – is that of rest, peace, love, patience, understanding, attachment, and joy.

## **HOME AND HEAVEN**

### **A. The Expression “Heaven on Earth” Is Used in Reference to the Home**

1. The Christian home has the capability of being a great experience.
  - a. This relationship of heaven and home is not accidental.
  - b. It is another example of God’s grand design for the home and His children.
2. The original Garden of Eden is a type of Heaven (Revelation 2:7; Genesis 2 and 3).
  - a. It was a place without sin - Heaven will be a place without sin.
  - b. Heaven is the place of paradise and there life will be lived to its fullest and best.
  - c. The home is to be a place where family members can experience the abundant life.

### **B. The Comparisons Between the Home and Heaven Can Be Seen in the Relationship Between God and Man**

1. It can be seen in the family relationships that will occur in heaven.
  - a. God will be our Father and we will be His children.
  - b. Heaven is a place of no tears and no pain.
  - c. The Christian home is a place that offers comfort from the wear and tear of the world.
2. In Heaven we will have security, acceptance and support.
  - a. Heaven is a place where there is unbelievable love and acceptance.
  - b. The home should strive to be a place of great love.
  - c. In the home the family can find support and security.

## **A CHRISTIAN HOME PREPARES FOR HEAVEN**

### **A. The Ultimate Purpose of an Earthly Home Is to Prepare the Family for a Heavenly Home**

1. God's intention for the home is two-fold.
  - a. To teach.
  - b. To train.
2. The home is a social unit where the family can engage in the process of teaching and training.
  - a. It is part of our everyday life (Deuteronomy 6:5-9).
  - b. Within the framework of the home instruction can occur that will last for eternity.

**B. Teamwork Between Christian Parents Is an Awesome Force**

1. The strength and guidance of a Christian home is powerful.
  - a. Parents should use Heaven as a specific model for their home.
  - b. The lessons of Heaven can be applied to the home.
2. The Bible encourages individuals to spur each other on to greater works.
  - a. Children will react to the proper example of their parents.
  - b. Doing things as a family adds strength to a family.

## DRESSING MODESTLY

**A. In the Bible, Moral Issues Fall into Three Categories**

1. Things that are "right" because God commands them.
2. Things that are "wrong" because God forbids them.
3. Things that may be right or wrong according to circumstances, conscience, influence, or moderation (Romans 14:21-23).

**B. God Has Always Had a Standard for Dress**

1. After Adam and Eve sinned, they realized they were naked (Genesis 2:25).
  - a. God provided them clothes, because the fig leaves coverings were not adequate (Genesis 3:7, 21).
  - b. God has since required modesty in dress for both sexes (Deuteronomy 22:5).

**C. Dressing in a Modest Manner**

1. With regards to the sins of the heart, the Bible is clear that it is wrong for a man to look upon a woman with lust.
  - a. The Bible is also equally clear that a woman should not dress in a manner that will sexually excited a man to sin (Matthew 5:27, 28; 15:19, 20).

- b. If we dress in a manner that causes others to sin, we are responsible (Luke 17:1,2; Phillippines 4:8,9; Proverbs 11:22).
  - c. The person provoking evil thoughts is guilty of sin (Genesis 9:20-27).
- 2. It is wrong to cause another to stumble (Romans 14:21; 1 Corinthians 8:13).
  - a. The emphasis of the Christian life should be the opposite of the one provoking others to sin (Exodus 20:26; 28:42, 43; Romans 13:14).
  - b. One should ask, “ Why do I dress the way I do?”
  - c. Dress should always be in accordance to the principles found in the Bible.

**D. The Christian Home Should Be the Place Where These Bible Principles Are Taught and Modeled by Parents**

- 1. Modesty is the Christian principle that should guide all clothing worn by Christian men and women.
- 2. Clothing is a symbol of character.
- 3. Our clothing reveals our attitudes just as an artist’s painting reveals his mind.
- 4. A person who dresses to emphasize sexual attraction is a reflection of lustful intent (James 1:13-15; 1 Peter 3:3,4).
- 5. Proper dress is described and defined in 1 Timothy 2:8-12.

**E. It Is Imperative That Parents Provide Guidance for Their Children with Regards to Dress**

- 1. God is interested in the development of the heart.
- 2. Parents must emphasize a spiritual walk.

## ENTERTAINMENT

**A. The Subject of Dancing Is an Area That Parents must Be Mindful of When Guiding Their Children**

- 1. In the Old Testament we have instances of dancing as an expression of religious enthusiasm or rejoicing over some victory (Exodus 15:20).
  - a. Jephthah, returning from his victory over the Ammonites saw his daughter dancing (Judges 11:34).
  - b. David danced before the Lord when he brought the Ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom ( 2 Samuel 6:14).

2. Dancing can also be a vehicle to express what is suggestive and lewd.
  - a. When Moses came down from the mount, he observed the sins of the people (Exodus 32:19-26).
  - b. Bible scholars believe that the Israelites were dancing in a lewd and lustful manner.

**B. Dance Is Characterized by the Obscenity Often Associated with Heathen Practices**

1. Another example of lewd dancing is the daughter of Herodias.
2. Because of her lewd dancing, Herod promised her anything she may ask.
3. She acted on her murderous mother's suggestion and asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter (Matthew 14:6-12; Mark 6:24).

**THE SIN OF LASCIVIOUSNESS (SENSUALITY)**

**A. The Modern Concept of Dance Is Condemned in the Bible (1 Thessalonians 5:21, 22).**

1. Children of God must not engaged in any form of dance or entertainment that arouses sexual desire from another person (Matthew 5:27, 28).
  - a. The Greek word for "lasciviousness" means "excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency."
  - b. School dances can never be successful because of the evil that is inherent in the situation.
2. The purity of the Christian life and the Christian home, is dependant on the examples set by parents.
  - a. Parents set the moral tone by the standards found in the Bible.
  - b. They must help children understand what is "righteous" behavior.

**B. People in the World Will Admit the Basic Appeal of the Dance**

1. What do these people think when they see a Christian engaging in the same practice but professing no harm in it (1 Corinthians 8:9)?
  - a. The Christian is to be the "light of the world."
  - b. Engaging in the practice of dancing will dim this light in a significant manner.

2. Paul says that we should be, “innocent about what is evil” (Romans 16:19).
  - a. The whole world lies in evil and the Christian must guard against this evil (1 John 2:15-16).
  - b. Using the Bible as our guide we can think “Christianly” about the world.
3. Families must insulate themselves from the pressures of the world.
  - a. If families are not on guard, the children can be caught up in promiscuous behavior or leave the church (Hebrews 2:1-3).
  - b. Paul gives particular instructions regarding the kind of fruit that a Christian is to bear (Galatians 5:19-21).

### **CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A LICENSE**

#### **A. Christianity Has Never Been a License to Do Evil (Galatians 5:13)**

1. Evil does not become righteousness because a Christian does it (Romans 6:1-4).
2. A Christian should not engage in behavior that the world knows is wrong (1 Corinthians 5).
3. A Christian is being hypocritical when he says one thing and lives another.

#### **B. A Christian Must Be Mindful of Their Influence on Others (Matthew 5:13-16)**

1. Christians must strive to be a positive influence on other (1 Peter 2:11,12).
2. A Christian cannot impress or influence the lost while conducting themselves like one of them.

#### **C. A Christian Must Give Careful Consideration to the Influence of Movies and TV**

1. Many times the rating system allows unacceptable behaviors and language.
2. This is a sign of a nation in trouble and one that is degenerating morally (Romans 1:18-32).
3. As Christians we must not become accustomed to the darkness of this world (Ephesians 5:10, 11).
4. When we watch movies or TV that exploit sex or foul language, we have a tendency to accept it as normal behavior (Hebrews

5:11-14).

## **PORNOGRAPHY**

### **A. Pornography Is Prevalent in Our Society**

1. Pornography gives the impression that moral standards are no longer valid.
  - a. It undermines the standards of those involved with pornography.
  - b. Pornography is degrading because it treats people as objects.
2. Pornography is degrading to families.
  - a. It can become a sinful habit that leads to practices that Christians must not be engaged in.
  - b. The Bible is clear on the affects of pornography, both in terms of influence and conscience.

### **B. Pornography Harms Families by Destroying Relationships Within the Home**

1. Like other sins, it is addictive and progressive.
  - a. It is harmful because of the illicit fantasies that accompany it.
  - b. Pornography has a correlation to rape, wife abuse and other felonies.
2. It is a self-destructive sin.
  - a. It will destroy the home by destroying the relationship between a man and woman.
  - b. It will also destroy the influence of the parents as a role model for their children.

### **C. Word Pornography Comes from the Greek Language**

1. “Porneia” meaning fornication; illicit sexual behavior.
2. “Graphe” meaning “writing” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
3. Pornography applies to illicit sexual behavior portrayed through the media (ex. the internet).
4. Paul condemns the activity of the Gentiles who had rejected God because they were filled with sexual immorality (Romans 1).
5. Biblically, pornography can be defined as “media presentations, which implicitly produce a sexual arousal in a person, which then creates illicit sexual thoughts and behavior.”

### **D. In Our Society Pornography Is Determined by the Culture’s**

### **Majority Opinion**

1. Christians must realize that majority rule does not determine “right” from “wrong” (Matthew 7:13, 14).
2. Decisions based on personal taste will cause confusion.
3. The nature of God and His will are the only criteria for absolute moral judgement (Isaiah 55:7-9).

## **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

### **A. The Bible Tells Us Not to Put Ourselves under the Influence of Anything That Can Become a Bad Habit**

1. Alcohol is a habit-forming drug and should be listed with narcotics.
2. Prolonged drinking can destroy the life of an individual (Proverbs 23:29-33).
3. The estimated number of teens engaged in drugs, alcohol and smoking is staggering.

### **B. The Christian must Reject Anything That Affects Our Ability to Function**

1. We should be mindful of our behavior and our health (1 Corinthians 6:12, 19, 20).
2. The Bible is very clear that drunkenness is sinful (Galatians 5:19-21).

### **C. Excessive Drinking Weakens the Moral Sensitivities of Individuals**

1. Israelite priests were not to take strong drink or wine (Leviticus 10:8,9).
2. Rulers of Israel were warned against strong drink (Proverbs 31:4,5).
3. Excessive drinking can often lead to sexual promiscuity (Esther 1:10, 11; Habakkuk 2:15).
4. Alcohol does not make people able to do things better, but it does make them less ashamed of doing them badly (Isaiah 5:11).

### **D. Many Christians Struggle with Social Drinking**

1. Some will refer to the occasion of Jesus and his miracle of changing water to wine (Matthew 11:19; John 2:1-11).
2. Some will reason that one's use of wine cannot be wrong as long



- as it does not cause one to be intoxicated.
3. This line of reasoning is not sound, because the wine referred to is not fermented.

**E. We must Be a Good Example and Not Cause Someone to Fall (Romans 14:21; 1 Corinthians 8:9)**

1. Today's wine, with its strong alcoholic content, falls into the category of "strong drink."
2. "Strong Drink" is always forbidden in the Bible (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-33; Isaiah 5:11).

**F. Parents must Ask Themselves the Following Question, "Are You Going to Allow Drinking or Drugs in the Home?"**

1. In view of the destructive nature of alcohol and drugs ,will you allow this behavior in your home?
2. Studies on substance abuse reveal that if parents are engaged in this behavior, then the children have a greater chance of becoming addicted to these substances.

**CONCLUSION**

The Christian home is a refuge against the abuses and evils of the world. It is to be the home of the soul of man. God designed the home to be a bastion of righteousness and civility. He intended for parents to train up their children in the ways of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6). If Christian parents today believe that they have no responsibility for their children's future moral character, if they believe that the home has no responsibility for their child's destiny, they are sadly mistaken. The Christian home truly is the home of the soul, because it has more of an influence on the destiny of the human soul than any other institution in existence.

## **SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE**

1. In what ways can a home be like heaven?  
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 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why is dressing modestly so important to a person's character?  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why is the home so important in preparing people for heaven?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. What are two fundamental purposes of the home as it prepares family members to experience the abundant life.  
 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 2) \_\_\_\_\_
5. The word "pornography" comes from the Greek language and is made up of two Greek words. List the Greek words and give their definition.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. True or False  
 \_\_\_\_\_ God has always had a standard for dress.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ The way a woman dresses will not cause a man to lust after her.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Modesty is the principle that should guide all clothing worn by Christian men and women.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ The emphasis of the Christian life should be the opposite of the one provoking others to sin.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dance is characterized by the obscenity often associated with heathen practices.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Christians should not be concerned about the influence of movies on their children.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Alcohol is a habit-forming drug and should be listed with narcotics.

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# Study Guide

## Ken Wilson

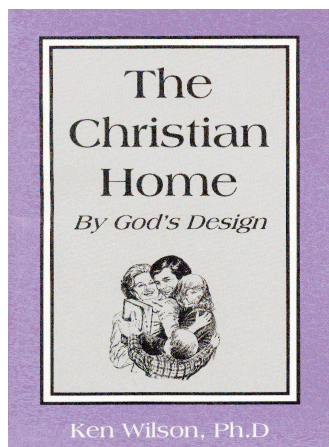


Ken Wilson has been a minister and family counselor for over 30 years. He earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Bethany Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Cornerstone University in Clinical Pastoral Counseling. He is a licensed Pastoral Counselor with National Christian Counselors and a Certified Marriage and Family Therapist with American Society of Christian Therapists. Dr. Wilson is a registered Marriage and Family Counselor in the state of Washington.

He has spoken at workshops and seminars in numerous states. He has also written Bible study guides on vital subjects including: "Basic Doctrines of the Bible," "Christian Ethics," "Keys to Victory Over Anger," and "Keys to Successful Parenting." He is also the authored the book entitled, "The Power of Biblical Thinking."

He has served as a minister for the Lakeview Church of Christ in Tacoma, Washington for over twenty years. Dr. Wilson is also the director of the Lakeview Bible Institute. He teaches counseling and Bible courses at the Institute.

He and his wife Sandy have been married more than thirty-five years and have four children and eleven grandchildren.



☞ "The Christian Home" is a companion to this Study Guide.



### External Studies

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