

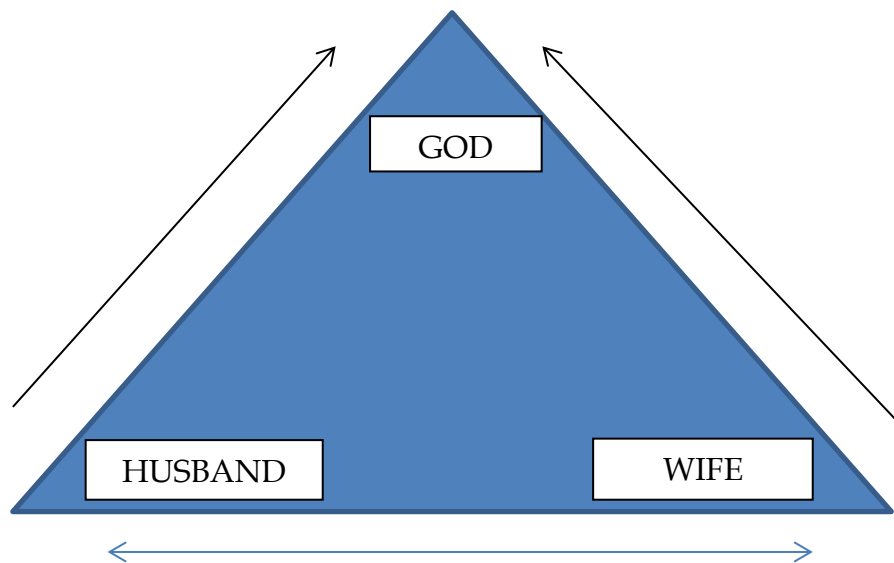


**WHEN THE "I DO'S"  
ARE FINISHED**

*Traveling the Journey to Heaven Together*

*Marriage is 3*

*Designed and Built to Glorify God*



Compiled and edited by:  
Teacher Training Class  
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Eastside Church of Christ  
Bowling Green, KY

Material may be used with "How to Pick a Mate"  
Available on website:  
[www.mightyisthelord.com](http://www.mightyisthelord.com)

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*One Woman's Paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13*  
*Paraphrase by Joe Ann Gravitt*



though I may be educated and knowledgeable about today's world,  
And can speak with authority on many subjects,  
Unless I can show forth God's love in my heart, life and actions,  
I become as clattering dishes or the steady drip of a leaky faucet.

And though I have the knack for planning ahead,  
and the ability keep up with the busy schedules of all the people in my house hold;  
And know all the little things that my family expects me to do to keep them healthy and happy:  
and though I manage to find solutions to most of their numerous and diversified problems;  
If I fail to respond, not only as a wife and mother but as a Christian,  
to my Family's needs, and do not show Christian love and concern in that response,  
***I am nothing.***

And though I donate food and clothing to the poor and needy,  
and sacrifice my time for the thousand and one things my church expects me to do;  
If I don't have a loving and generous spirit,

for some reason I don't seem to receive much personal pleasure for my efforts.  
*Love* puts up with bothersome details and still manages to be patient;  
*Love* puts kindness in place of sarcasm,  
*Love* takes care of my envious nature, helps me take pride in accomplishments of my friends  
*Love* keeps me from feeling superior to those who are less fortunate than I or  
Have not been blessed with opportunities such as mine.

*Love* helps me remember I am being watched, as a Christian and as a woman,  
And I must strive to set a good example  
*Love* helps me consider the feelings of others, control my temper, and search out only the good in others

*Love* helps me turn my back on gossip and  
Keeps me from repeating stories I hear that may be damaging to others  
*Love* helps me seek the truth in any and all situation and strive to be fair-minded in my opinions

*Love* is my strength, my faith, my hope, and my courage. *Love* will never fail.  
Traditions and doctrines may not always be trustworthy;  
There will be times when I will be faced with doubt and indecision.

Because for now I am only a human being, filled to the brim with human faults and failings,  
Though I would prefer the world, see in me only perfection  
When I was a child, I behaved and questioned as a child; now that I'm an adult,  
I must face my responsibilities using my best judgment in whatever decisions are before me,  
I'm sometimes confused because of the circumstances of my life,

But I know someday my heavenly father will explain all the reasons for it, and I will understand.  
Until that day, I am blessed with faith, hope, and love, three of God's greatest gifts,  
***the greatest of these LOVE.***

## Goals for the Class



Now that the “I dos” have been spoken, the vows made, the planning and wedding complete the work of creating a home that will glorify God begins. This includes developing goals for establishing a Christ-centered home. This must become priority **ONE!**

Lesson 1	One Flesh
Lesson 2	What is Marriage?
Lesson 3	What Does She Need From Me?
Lesson 4	Marriage Goals
Lesson 5	Evaluating Your Marriage
Lesson 6	Communication
Lesson 7	Christ-Centered Home
Lesson 8	Trust
Lesson 9	Understanding Romantic Love
Lesson 10	Building a Godly Home
Lesson 11	If Babies Arrive
Lesson 12	Child Training
Lesson 13	Years 1 - 5

## LESSON 1

## ONE FLESH

“Between where we are and where we want to be in eternity the road that must be taken is at times a difficult path through desolate country. God is our guide and His help is our hope but the journey must still be made,” (Gary Henry). GPS is in common use today; however, the real GPS, God’ Positioning System, is in great need as we progress toward God in life as well as in marriage. “For you have need of endurance so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise,” Heb. 10: 36. Endurance keeps us from asking the age-old question, “Are we there yet?” Endurance and commitment keeps us focused on God as He helps us (GPS) along the journey to heaven.

Do you view marriage as a covenant sealed before God? “Yet, you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the Lord has **been witness** between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant,” Mal. 2:14. Over the course of time, society has viewed the institution of marriage as a human-centered arrangement that has removed God after the ceremony. Even in the Christian community, many people view marriage as an arrangement that enables us to resist sexual immortality, have children, and avoid loneliness. All too often, if the relationship is weakened or becomes inconvenient we treat it like a contract, looking into the fine print to find a way out. Remember, marriage is a covenant between man and woman with God as the witness to that agreement!!!

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall **become one flesh,**” Gen. 2:24 & Matt. 19:5. Becoming **one flesh** seems to be a difficult concept for many to grasp. The implication of the verse indicates why some people cannot reach this level in their marriage. Being **one flesh** is having no separate or individual rights, privileges, cares, or concerns. **One flesh** involves husband and wife being equally interested in all things that affect the state of a Godly marriage. When God created woman out of man it became the most intimate union possible because man was to treat his wife as part of himself, to nourish, cherish and support. (Eph. 5:29)

1 in 10 marriages	* successful
5 of 10	* divorce
3 of 5	* stay together because of the children
1 of 2	* spend a lifetime of separateness and apathy
1 couple in 10	* lifelong bond of friendship, understanding, commitment

WHAT COUPLE DO YOU WANT TO BE?

From the very beginning, God intended marriage to be permanent (Gen. 2:24). Jesus reaffirmed God's intention in Matt. 19: 4-6. God is the ONE who joins the two into one flesh and the only ONE who can sever that union (v.6). For the joining to take place, couples must follow God's marriage laws (Matt. 5:32, 19: 4-9, Mk. 10: 11-12, Rom. 7: 2-3, I Cor. 7: 10-15). The covenant, witnessed and ratified by God, is binding for life and only broken by the death of a spouse, the exception being for fornication (Mal. 2:14, Rom. 7:2, Matt. 19:9). Husbands and wives are to "cleave" to one another because *it is our Christian duty*. The concept of cleaving, to glue, weld, or stick together makes **selecting a mate** of extreme importance!

A man and woman, starting as two separate and distinct individuals, must soon begin the **integration** process: bringing all parts together as a unified whole. Disintegrate, the antonym of integrate, means to tear apart. This is what happens when couples do not understand the concept of **one flesh**. "Teach me thy way, O LORD: I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name," Psa. 86:11. The Psalmist is speaking about himself. However, can you think of a better, more sure way to be **one flesh** than with united hearts before God? "Only when we pursue God with singleness of heart will we find peace," (Gary Henry).

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded," James 4:8, NKJV. To be truly one flesh, both must internalize the meaning and development selflessness. The perfect illustration of selfishness and sacrificial love is when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, John 13. I must emulate Jesus' example of a servant's heart, Mark 9:35. God will help me see the needs of my heart (Heb. 4:12). To develop a strong marriage relationship it is necessary to accept my weak tendencies. Only then, can I prepare myself for the difficulties of joining with my spouse and leaving selfishness behind. It is in the heart of a servant one finds the power of God. (Phil. 2: 1-4). There is no greater joy than to look back on a life of unselfish service (Phil. 2: 17 - 18).



## QUESTIONS



1. What is GPS? \_\_\_\_\_

Give examples of how it can help you in the journey of life.

2. What does, “progress toward God,” mean to you? (I Tim. 4:15)

3. Explain Gen. 2:24.

4. Name ways “joining in marriage” can be demonstrated.

5. What does it mean to “cleave”?

6. Why is the process of selecting a mate so important?

7. Give examples of the “joining together” process.

8. What does the process of integration bring to a marriage?

9. Explain the “love” of John 13 and how it relates to marriage.

## LESSON 2



# *What is Marriage?*

After becoming a Christian, marriage is the greatest decision you will ever make. As Lesson 1 stressed, marriage is the blending of two spouses into **ONE** union, **ONE** flesh, creating **ONE** unit that glorifies God. Although the Bible does not specifically refer to a marriage vow commitment, which underlies a formal vow, it is an essential ingredient in a God-approved marriage. A vow is defined as, “an earnest promise or pledge that binds one to behave in a specific manner,” (Webster). The vow, which seals a marriage, is a pledge of trust and fidelity: pledging sexual fidelity and common spiritual goals and commitments. Eph. 5: 22-23 places an obligation on both parties: the husband is to love his wife as himself and the wife is to be in subjection to the one she chooses as her husband. These relationships, sealed by specific vows and pledges, are based not only on mutual self-interest but also on the model of Christ’s relationship to the Church.

The unreserved commitment to one’s mate is an essential ingredient in the glue that holds the union together. Just living together and trial marriages are not based on Biblical principles of commitment. This leads to the revolving door status of many marriages today.

Marriage is much more than a ceremony attended by well-dressed friends where vows are recited and rings exchange. It is a mutual commitment to your spouse with God, designer and legislator of His laws, serving as witness. There may be failed marriages but marriage itself is not a failure. The vows made between husband and wife are more sacred because God is a witness to their new covenant (Mal. 2:14).

God, the designer of marriage (Gen. 2: 18-24), describes the marriage bed as honorable and undefiled (Heb. 13:4). From the beginning a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife for companionship and to procreate the earth; avoiding fornication (I Cor. 7:2). God is the One who joins a couple together but it is man who breaks God’s law and rips apart the sacred vows. “Know you not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long



as he lives; but if the husband were dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that ; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man,” Rom. 7:1. Marriage is the greatest of all human relationships, so we can see why God hates divorce (Mat. 2:16). God’s laws govern our conduct in marriage and when we violate these laws we ignore His commandments. The results are great: misery and unhappiness, a failed marriage, and souls lost. The obligations in marriage extend beyond our spouse reaching to God. He is there, He is part of the marriage = **Marriage is three!**



## QUESTIONS



Read Genesis 2: 18 – 25

1. Who originally instituted marriage and between whom?
2. List the purposes of marriage.
3. What is God's view of a good marriage?
4. Contrast the differences between the Biblical and worldly views of a helpmeet.
5. List **SIX** behaviors you presently perform in marriage that promote and maintain marriage "**ones.**"
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  - f.
6. List **THREE** of the most important passages upon which you would like to base your marriage. Look beyond Eph. 5: 21-33, I Cor. 12, and I Pet. 3



## LESSON 3

### WHAT DOES SHE NEED FROM ME?

With the wedding day over, comes the beginning of a new life together. Husband learning to love their wives as Christ loved the church is a difficult lifelong process (Eph. 5:25). It is much like our relationships with God, "Be patient, I am a work in progress." The standard is much higher than many men are ready to pursue.

In Rom. 5: 8 - 10, Paul wrote that Christ died for us while we were still sinners, yes-even enemies. This is the standard; *love her even if she is as unlovable as an enemy is!* The kind of love God commands is not an emotional feeling but a way of thinking, demonstrated by actions. "Love suffers long and is kind, does not envy, does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth, bears all things, believes all things, endures all things," I Cor. 13. This is the kind of love God commands us to show our enemies. It should be a deep desire to love our wives in this way. Thinking and acting lovingly toward your wife will produce the tender emotional feeling of deep love that grows naturally because of your behavior.

**F** **reedom from bitterness** - "Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them," Col. 3:19 - NKJV. What is bitterness? A few examples are sharp, unpleasant, and demeaning comments spoken with animosity, and resentment. None of these supports a growing relationship. There is never an excuse for having a bad attitude or behavior! "Yeah, but I am mad! I can say what I want; I am the head of the house!" Because your role as husband is the spiritual head of the family, you have a greater responsibility to exercise **SELF-CONTROL**. **CONSIDER** "Casting down arguments are every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," II Cor. 10:5 - NKJV. Bitterness always causes trouble! If you want to please God, there is **NO** room for bitterness. If you want a successful marriage, there will be **NO** bitterness. (Heb. 12:15)

**S**he needs understanding - (I Pet. 3:7) How do we do that? Again, it is a work in progress and the target is sometimes moving. Study the book of Proverbs to completely grasp the use of the term and then apply that information to enhance your marriage. Begin with *Listening*: men often want to talk about themselves however; learning about any subject begins with listening. What are her interests, fears, desires, plans? Women often hint at things without actually stating the obvious. Men may be on another channel and miss the hint because of unawareness. Peter's clear statement contains a warning to men: pay attention, listen, be sensitive, and understand her. It is not natural, work at it!



**S**he needs security - One of the greatest needs most women have is feeling safe. Throughout the entire world, when Christianity is spread, the security for women is elevated.

*Physical Safety* - Your wife should be free from the fear of harm because of the protection offered by you and her home. Deadbolts and door alarms can be added to increase that feeling of safety from the outside. However, if you are the source of her fear the marriage is a failure and you are guilty of breaking God's law.

*Financial Safety* - A couple should use good planning and proper budgeting, resist spending on "I wants," and mature in the use of money which leads to God receiving the glory for your success. Money problems are the greatest cause of marital discord, leading to divorce. In many cases, the root cause is selfishness.

*Social Safety* - Husbands, you should help your wife feel comfortable in the company of your friends even if they are not hers. NEVER leave your wife in an uncomfortable situation; be thoughtful - think! She will draw security from you being by her side.

*Emotional Safety* - This involves her feeling closeness, sharing joy and hurts, and understanding you are genuinely interested in her because of who she is - a part of you. One of the great joys of a successful marriage is the feeling of completeness spouses can achieve. Beyond that is joy of having someone to share that completeness.

"For most women, security is not a material thing. It does not come from knowing in our heads that all our needs will be provided for. Security for women is primarily a

heart thing. Our deepest feelings of security come from being loved and cared about.”  
Holly Faith Phillips

The single greatest question that will need to be answered more than once is, “Am I more important than anything in his life?” (Other than obeying God) She feels the most secure when she knows she is valued.

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered,” I Pet. 3:7 – NKJV Giving her honor (of great value, treasured, of great importance) and considering her as a joint heir increases the shared relationship.

#### **WAYS TO MAKE A WOMAN FEEL MORE VALUED:**

- 1.) Show her she is a high priority in your life by thinking, speaking, and doing things that say, “You are valuable in my life.”
- 2.) Show interest in her life, her activities, and her needs.
- 3.) Search for new and creative ways to say, “I need you and value you.”
4. Never, ever take her for granted. This is the single greatest insult!



**he needs to feel connected** – Connecting is about creating an experience of *intimacy*, bridging the gap between her and yourself. *Intimacy* is about sharing emotions on a number of different levels, it is not just sexual. Recreational *intimacy* is just having fun activities that you both enjoy. Social *intimacy* is spending time together with mutual friends, as part of your shared activities. Intellectual *intimacy* is the sharing of ideas, seeking input from each other.



**he needs to feel accepted** – She wants to be accepted today, tomorrow, and every day by YOU. You were her irresistible man who attracted, wooed, and wowed her while dating. Now that you are married, continue to wow her by being the spiritual leader God desires you to be. Be the godly person who allows her to say continually, “Yes, I made the right choice in a husband!” Not only accept her daily but also continue to elevate her beauty, her work, her dignity, and most of all her spirituality. As a result, you continue to be her irresistible man who is leading her to heaven.



## QUESTIONS



1. What is one of the hardest lessons for men to learn in the relationship?
2. What does love mean to you?
3. List some ways we prove we love another person.
4. The word “understanding” is used 53 times in the book of Proverbs. What are we to understand and why?
5. How important is understanding your spouse to achieving a great marriage? Why?
6. On a scale of 1-10 how important is security to your wife? Why?
7. Husbands, name ways you give honor to your wives.
8. Discuss the importance of intimacy.

## LESSON 4

# MARRIAGE GOALS



Without positive goals in life we have a tendency to wander, much like a drive in the country where it doesn't matter where you are because you have no peculiar destination. To have a successful marriage we must have a goal or purpose we are striving for, or we will wonder how we got where we are.

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not deny himself with the portion of the King's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself," Daniel 1:8 - NKJV. With deliberate intentions Daniel used determination and perseverance to reach his goal. He did not allow external circumstances to dictate the choices he would make. His goal was to serve God and he executed the plan toward that goal with purpose. The Apostle Paul also had a goal, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," Philippians 3:14 - NKJV.

Setting a goal to have a happy marriage is however, too broad. Our goals must be specific, well defined, and attainable while placed in a time frame. "Someday I want to grow closer to God," does not help us achieve that goal because we have not made a specific commitment. "I plan to study a chapter of the Bible every day for three months," is a specific, measurable plan for reaching the goal of growing closer to God.

Before the "I Dos" are said, there should be mutual agreement on specific goals that will help your marriage grow and mature. After goals have been written, a plan for attaining the goals will be developed. The SMART process can be very useful when setting spiritual and marriage goals.

Before you say, "I Do," there should be mutual agreement on specific goals that will help a marriage grow and mature. After you write your goals, develop a specific plan for attaining them. The **SMART** process can be a useful tool when setting spiritual and marriage goals. Time spent together in mutual goal setting and decision-making is vital to the continuing integration process.

## SMART PROCESS

**S** = Specific & Sincere

**M** = Measureable (standards allowing you to know when goals have been met)

**A** = Attainable (unreachable goals can bring disappointment)

**R** = Relevant & Realistic

**T** = Target Date for completion

Let us consider the following areas for goal setting.

**Spiritual Goals:** Leading your family to Heaven

**Time Goals:** Balancing job, family, and spiritual matters

**Financial Goals:** Sustaining a debt-free life

**Physical Health Goals:** Protecting your body, the temple of God

**Marriage Health Goals:** Guarding your marriage against destructive influences

**SHORT TERM GOALS:** 3 - 6 months with weekly scheduled revisions to gauge progress and make adjustments

**LONG TERM GOALS:** 1 - 6 years with reviews every 4 - 6 months



Take time to write down the concrete steps needed to reach each goal using God's word as the guide. The results will be a content life with God as the priority and Heaven the ultimate goal. William Author Ward sited the following Four Steps to Achievement: plan purposefully, prepare prayerfully, proceed positively, and pursue persistently.

In order to reach any goal real commitment must be present or you just have a dream. Robert Morehead gave the clearest expression of true commitment needed to achieve personal goals: "My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, diluted, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of my enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in a maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, shut up, let up, or slow up."



## QUESTIONS



1. Why was Daniel successful?
2. What is the relationship between II Cor. 11:24 & 25 and Philippians 3: 12 - 14?
3. When should a couple begin setting goals? Why?
4. List the elements of the SMART Process.
5. Compare goal setting to the integration process.
6. List the **FOUR** steps that assist in goal setting.
7. Explain the attitude demonstrated in Robert Morehead's quote.

## LESSON 5



# EVALUATING YOUR MARRIAGE

As you approach your second anniversary, pause and examine your first year of marriage. Have you spent time together? What kinds of changes have occurred? How do you feel about each other? Evaluation is part of measuring the effectiveness of our goals.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such, there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," Galatians 5:22-25 - NKJV.

Begin by using the characteristics of the Fruits of the Spirit. Using a scale of 1 - 5 (1 weakest and 5 strongest) rank yourself and then share with your spouse. As you reflect on your scores think of ways to improve in the areas of weakness.

## SELF-EVALUATION

### Love

I put my spouse first, before my own needs and desires (Phil. 2:1-8). 1 2 3 4 5

I see loving my spouse as a way of loving Jesus (Matt. 22: 37-39). 1 2 3 4 5

I try to understand my spouse and what pleases them (Eph. 5: 28-29). 1 2 3 4 5

### Joy - a state of happiness in the Lord

I feel joy when serving my spouse (Mark 9:35). 1 2 3 4 5

### Peace - a state of tranquility

I can live in peace because God is with us (II Cor. 13:11) 1 2 3 4 5

I am a good listener (Prov. 18:13). 1 2 3 4 5

When I am wrong I will quickly make correction (James 5:16). 1 2 3 4 5

### Patience - longsuffering (Eph. 4:2)

I can control my anger when we disagree (Prov. 15: 18, 29:22). 1 2 3 4 5

I rarely major in the minors (Prov. 17:14). 1 2 3 4 5

I have control of my tone even when I am upset (Prov. 15:1). 1 2 3 4 5

### Kindness - tender mercies (Col. 3:12)

I find pleasure in exhibiting kindness (II Pet. 1:7) 1 2 3 4 5

I show my spouse kindness when we are with others at church, work, and family. 1 2 3 4 5

<p>I show kindness by sincerely listening when my spouse describes their day (Prov. 20:12).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>Faithfulness – steadfast in affection (II Thess. 3:3)</b></p>	
<p><i>Husbands:</i> I am faithful to keep my vows made before God to love my wife as Christ loved the church and to love my wife as my own body (Eph. 5:21, 25, 33).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><i>Wives:</i> I am faithful to keep my vows made before God to submit to my husband as the church submits to Christ (Eph. 5:21-24, 33).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>My faithfulness is to God, regardless of my spouse’s actions. (Lam. 3:22-23).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>Meekness - quiet and a gentle nature (II Cor. 10:1)</b></p>	
<p>I do not allow my selfishness to control my actions or tongue. I act on God’s will not emotions or passions. (Matt. 5: 38-42).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>In financial decisions, I put the needs of family before my desires. I prayerfully discuss these issues with my spouse (I Pet. 3:1-7).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><b>Self-control – restraint over one’s desires and impulses (I Cor. 7:9, I Tim. 2:15)</b></p>	
<p>I have eliminated idols from my heart such as lust, porn, overspending, obsessing, and anger (I John 5:21).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>I use regular Bible study and prayer to control my passions (I Cor. 10: 12-13, II Cor. 10:5).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>I have developed self-control by looking to Jesus as the finisher of my faith (Heb. 12:2).</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>

Some of these qualities are building blocks of faith. Review II Pet. 1:5-10 focusing on how it can help you overcome Satan’s roadblocks to Heaven.

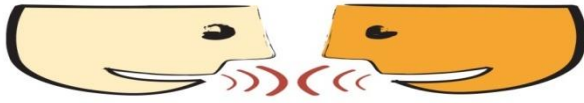


## QUESTIONS



1. What is the value of periodically evaluating your marriage?
2. List areas of your marriage that will benefit from periodic evaluations.
3. Name some hazards of not evaluating your goals regularly.
4. Review Lesson 3 for the definition of love, restate.
5. In your own words, define peace.
6. How do the Fruits of the Spirit bring you closer to God and your spouse?
7. What did you learn about yourself from the self-evaluation?
8. What did you learn about your spouse when you shared your results?
9. How will you use the results of the evaluation to grow as a Christian and spouse?

## LESSON 6



# COMMUNICATION

Communication is another major ingredient in a successful marriage. “Let your speech be always with grace, having been seasoned with salt, that you may know how you out to answer each one,” Col. 4:6 - NKJV. A marriage without good communication, not just words but also an exchange of thoughts, is like potatoes with no salt. Productive communication requires neither loud volume nor many words, refer to Col. 4:6. So learn the skill and be effective!

How do you define communication? No matter how you define the word, it is impossible to have a meaningful relationship without the process of sharing ideas. There are two elements to conveying an idea, the presenter, and the receiver. The presenter may be a sign, a magazine, or a social network but for our study let us just focus on a spouse as the presenter. The second element is the receiver who has an equal share in completing the process of effective communication.

Communication is to a successful marriage what blood is to the body. It is VITAL; you cannot be successful without it!

There are three components in every message: the actual content, the tone of the message, and body language. By changing the tone or nonverbal components, we can almost completely change the message. Body language includes facial expressions, posture, and actions. These components complement each other or they show a conflict in the intended message. Research indicates the following effectiveness of each element:

Content	15%	Tone	50%	Nonverbal	35%
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The same research indicates we normally use five different levels of communication:

**Level 1: Safe or Small Talk.** How are you? How was class today? Other questions asked that require no personal information or sharing of ideas. You stay safely behind your line of defense.

**Level 2: Just Reporting the Facts.** Content that conveys what others have said and possibly embellished with a little gossip. You do not invest personally by omitting feelings or opinions.

**Level 3: Ideas and Judgment.** Real communication begins to take place when you are willing to risk sharing ideas and thoughts. Be cautious because if there is a hint of rejection you will retreat behind the line of defense. All too often, if this pattern continues social behavior will be adversely affected.

**Level 4: Feelings and Emotions:** Now you begin to share your judgments about facts and ideas. You are willing to reveal some deeply buried feelings. For you to share yourself completely with your spouse you must reach this level of openness.

**Level 5: Complete Emotional and Personal Communication:** All deep relationships must be based on an absolute openness that is wrapped in honesty (Heb. 14:13). This may be difficult for you to achieve because it involves the risk of rejection. Almost no other element will hinder the growth of a relationship as much a deficiency in this area.

"Hear this now, O foolish people, without understand, who have eyes and see not and who have ears and hear not?" Jer. 5:21.

"For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear," Mt. 13: 15-16

#### **TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

✓ **Commitment to positive communication**

✓ **Speak with truth (Eph. 4:15, 25)**

✓ **Openness, no secrets (Mark 4:22)**

✓ **Avoid words of blame**

✓ **Avoid "never" statements (Peter was guilty of this)**

✓ **Learn to listen, the majority are poor listeners**

**Most failed communication is due to what was never heard.**

**"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," Jas. 1:19.**

✓ **Remember: Words have great power (Prov. 18: 21, Matt. 12: 36-37)**





## QUESTIONS



1. Why is effective communication vital to a successful marriage?
2. Name the **TWO** elements of effective communication.
3. How effective are you at communicating with your spouse? Explain.
4. How did Jesus illustrate the consequences of, "ears that are hard of hearing?"
5. How can death and life be in the power of the tongue?

## LESSON 7



## A CHRIST CENTERED

The most important component to a loving successful marriage is summed up in a single phrase, Christ-Centered Home. Without this vital component, you can be on the road to failure. A Christ-Centered Home is focused on the Bible as the foundation (I Cor. 3:11). The perfect instruction manual on the home is God's word. Eph. 5:23-6:4, Deut. 6: 4-9, Prov. 31 and other passages aid in the building a home. Morphing two distinct individuals into one flesh is based on the integrity each brings to the union. Character comes from making bad decisions, taking responsibility, and making corrections that leads to making wise decisions.

Promptly removing those things that frustrate hinder, or delay the integration process will hasten the joining together process and lessen the negative effects on the union. Hindrances are often "leftovers" of your single-life habits. The more self-centered our desires the more frustrated your response when your desires are hindered.

"Where do wars and fights come from among you? **Do they not come from your desires for pleasures that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask,**" James 4:1. Most of the time our frustrations are the result of selfishness that is opposed to with God's will. You must build your house around Jesus Christ to truly enjoy the best God offers you.

### Components God Provides for a Successful Marriage

**Prayer** is vital. I Thess. 5:17 instructs us to pray without ceasing. Prayer creates a relationship with God and James 5:16 tells us great things come from the prayers of the righteous. The joint prayers of a husband and wife create a spiritual connection, accountability, and a bond that supplies strength and stability we find nowhere else. Prayer of this type is the gift that keeps on giving as you hold hands while speaking with your Father. It is powerful enough to bind you together.

**Regular Worship** gives you the opportunity to experience the best of what God has to offer to your marriage. Unlike any other source it provides greater strength and stability which leads to lasting harmony. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in

order to stir up love and good works not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching," Heb. 10: 23 - 25.

**Faithful Service:** "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate on these things: give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you," I Tim. 4:12-16.

**Lifelong Commitment:** "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate," Matt. 19:6 In a survey where couples were asked about the marriage commitment, two responses were given:

- 1) Marriage is no enchanted fairy-tale. However, you can create an oasis of love in the midst of a harsh world by grinding it out and sticking in there.
- 2) Perfection does not exist. You have to approach the first few years of marriage with a "learner's permit" working out your incompatibilities.

These views do not sound particularly romantic do they? However, they do carry the wisdom of experience. Even gears with multiple cogs and rough edges must be honed before they work smoothly. It takes commitment for a marriage to survive this terrible sinful world. Building a bond between you and your spouse includes saying, "I love you." It should mean ...

- ♥ "I promise to be there for you all my days."
- ♥ "I'll be there when you lose your job, your health, your parents, your looks, your confidence, or your friends."
- ♥ "I'll build you up, overlook your weaknesses, forgive your mistakes, put your needs above my own, and stick by you when the going gets tough."

*"This kind of commitment will hold you steady through all of life's difficulties."  
Edwin Crozier*

"Then Mary said, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her," Luke 1:38 - NKJV. Mary's statement reflects the depth of her selfless character. She put herself at God's disposal for His purposes and without reservation, demonstrating her ultimate respect for Him. She did not place any terms or conditions on God. Although she did not know what the outcome would be, there was no grumbling, murmuring or complaining. She exhibited a sacrificial nature of serving God. She did not have a self-pitying spirit saying, "if they just knew how much I do for the Lord." Her pride did not give her a pat on the back. Model her character and see how it affects your marriage.



## QUESTIONS



1. What is the most important component for a successful marriage? Explain
  
2. What marriage instructions does God give in Eph. 5: 23 - 6:4?
  
3. List **FOUR** things that inhibit the "joining together into ONE flesh."
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  
4. How do our "leftovers" create marriage problems?
  
5. Why is prayer important in a marriage relationship?
  
6. What roles do worship and faithful service play in marriage?
  
7. What does saying, "I love you" mean to you?
  
8. From the list of components God has provided for a successful marriage, choose one and explain why you feel it is important.

## LESSON 8



“Love...always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves,” I Cor. 13:7 - NIV. The question of trust is often present in the early stages of any relationship: business, dating, or the most serious state of marriage. Sometimes we may not be aware that the question is there, but even so, the way we answer has everything to do with how successful we will be. When you substitute love with fear and insecurity the results can be disastrous.

### **Trust is earned over time.**

Trust begins with God. Only when husbands and wives have fully committed to living for God can they establish a deep and abiding bond of trust. With great confidence, we can give our hearts to our spouse when we know they genuinely seek to follow God’s word. “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you,” Matt. 6:33 -NKJV A relationship that is dominated by fear and insecurity will NEVER reach its highest potential; marriages founded on **mutual trust** will flourish and grow into *one flesh* that glorifies God.

One way to earn trust is through edification. “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers,” Eph. 4:29. You should never speak in a cruel, joking, or embarrassing manner to your spouse. However, the most effective way to establish trust in your marriage is with your actions. “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,” Eph. 5:15. Build a reputation of choices and deeds that prove you can be trusted at all times, eliminating any doubt. Integrity is the basis of trust. Character is not about our successes, possessions, accomplishments, or awards. When integrity is part of our commitment to serving God, our public and private lives will demonstrate that agreement. Without integrity, life is worth very little because we are not dependable.

Build a wall of protection around your home by having honest discussions with your spouse about your interactions with people of the opposite sex. Establish guidelines that are sensible and sensitive and NEVER violate the parameters.

A Few Things to Avoid:



Lunch with a co-worker of the opposite sex



Traveling with a co-worker of the opposite sex



Meeting behind closed doors with a co-worker of the opposite sex



Working on projects with a co-worker of the opposite sex (without others)



Working late hours with a co-worker of the opposite sex

“Abstain from every appearance of evil,” I Thess. 5:22 – NKJV. Agree on reasonable and godly guidelines and be committed to them. Repairing a relationship damaged by a violation of trust is often difficult. It requires painstaking work and even then, it is difficult to remove every single bit of doubt that a broken trust causes. Following an incident of distrust one looks for evidence to answer haunting questions: “Will it happen again?” “Can I fully trust until I’m sure?” “Are there hidden activities I am unaware of?” The list can be never-ending.

THINK: How does God feel when I violate His trust in me?



## QUESTIONS



1. How do you develop trust in any relationship: work, school, or marriage?
2. Do you earn or inherit trust? How?
3. What role does integrity play in developing trust?
4. Why is integrity so critical to a healthy relationship?
5. How can the wall of protection around our home aid us in dealing with workplace problems?
6. How do you feel when your spouse leaves to go to work or school? Why?

## LESSON 9



### UNDERSTANDING ROMANTIC LOVE



Just the word, “romance,” brings to mind multiple images of how love should look. Our expectations vary greatly, which brings us back to “integration,” unifying the whole. Women are inclined to describe romance, as actions taken or words spoken by their mate that makes them feel loved, protected, and respected. Men on the other hand, often rely on their senses. This may require training in ways to love your wife as Christ loves the church. For many this could be a long-term project.

To understand deeply God’s desires for a Christian marriage, we must remove the worldly view of romance and return to God’s word for instruction. Without God’s guidance, our marriage will never reach its potential.

The Song of Solomon provides insight into the idea of romantic love. For those seeking a successful marriage and ways to keep the honeymoon alive, read Solomon’s song.

<b>T</b>	* Intimacy and emotional excitement: “ <u>and God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good,</u> ” Gen. 1:31. Song of Solomon 2:16, 5:4 describe the sexual delights of martial love.
<b>I</b>	
<b>D</b>	*A desire and complete appreciation for one another is a thing of beauty and delight (Song of Solomon 4:1, Heb. 4:12).
<b>S</b>	* Pursue of the object of your affection and the desire to be with them. (Song of Solomon 3:1).
	* Limited public displays of affection (Song of Solomon 2:4).

“So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her,” Gen. 29:20 – NKJV. Consider Jacob’s attitude toward seeking Rachel. His love for her was so strong that seven years seemed like a few days. Gary Henry wrote, “What faith makes possible, love makes easy.” This is the difference between serving because you have to and because you want to.



“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome,” I John 5:3. God’s commandments regarding marriage should not be burdensome.

These and other passages describe the level of commitment for which we are to strive. We seek to be noticed, wanted, and then pursued until we become the center of another’s attention. Most couples maintain that sense of romance throughout their dating relationship and into the early stages of marriage. As time, family, careers, illness, and responsibilities mount those romantic ideas will be overwhelmed and fade because of lack of effort, care, and concern.

This is the time to REFOCUS – REMEMBER – RETURN to the subject of intimacy.

Proverbs 5 explains that intimacy is for pleasure **within** the marriage; however, it is unclean outside the marriage bond. Song of Solomon 5:10-16, 7:1-9 describes the bride and groom. These are expressions of unrestrained passion and pleasures in marriage.

Intimacy requires unselfish affection; **it is not a “me” moment** (Phil. 2, I Peter 3:7, I Cor. 7:4). Without this understanding of God’s word, there will be difficult times ahead when patience and understanding regarding intimacy are required. Sickness or emotional struggles dampen our desires. Prayer should bring a couple together building strength and courage.

Take time to review Lesson 5 regarding how to evaluate your marriage. Examine how things are working and consider the unexpected. How well did you react to those things? How did it affect your life? Are you in a rut? Are there any other questions that come to mind? All of these things can be roadblocks to the higher levels of intimacy.

Revisit the little things that created the close relationship when you started dating. Continue and look for new ways to fan the flames of an understanding romantic love.

Remember, you can be the one couple in ten that is successful in your marriage by sharing a lifelong friendship practicing understanding and being committed. Remember, this can help you build a stable and intimate relationship that will withstand the storms of life. Make the right choices and trust in the Lord.



## QUESTIONS



1. Explain what the term “romantic” means to you.
2. Why is a study of romantic love vital?
3. How long can a “honeymoon” last? Explain.
4. How effective are you in maintaining romantic love?
5. What most often damages the romantic feeling?
6. Explain your understanding of I Cor. 7:4.
7. How does I Peter 3:7 connect to this lesson?
8. Contrast the world’s view of romantic love versus God’s view.
9. Is romantic love more about sexual gratification or companionship? Explain.

## LESSON 10



## BUILDING A GOD- DESIGNED HOME

“There a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh,” Gen. 2:24 - NKJV. This is the beginning of the family relationship that we call the home. It was instituted and designed by God for the benefit of mankind and the purpose of glorifying God. When built on God’s will it is a win-win situation.

Before there was ever a government, school, church, or business there was a home. The very foundation of society is built on the home. As mankind degrades the family home society declines. Historians have documented the rise and fall of many nations by the purity and stability of the family home. Satan is very aware that his success is based on the destruction of faith and the family.

“Prov. 24: 4 describes the foundation of the home. “By wisdom, (seeing with discernment) it is built; by understanding (responding with insight) it is established (set in order) and by knowledge (perceptive learning) it is filled (overflowing) with precious and pleasant riches,” (Robert Harkrider). The home is a greenhouse where Christians, elders, deacons, godly wives and husbands, and gospel preachers are planted, nurtured, and grown.

### Growth Provided by the Family Home

**1. Spiritual Growth:** A family unit can foster spiritual development by daily prayer and Bible study; providing an opportunity for faith building that can spread through generations (I Tim. 1:5). One writer stated, “Some attitudes are caught and some are taught.” Create the habit of turning off electronic devices and sitting down with your Bibles for a period of study. Then pray together, discuss what each has learned and instill this knowledge in your minds and hearts. Allow God’s word to become the life-guiding principle of righteousness. The results will be the bond of perfection (Col. 3:14). The home provides the place to demonstrate our Christianity in the way we walk, talk, and treat each other. As life unfolds, the family will nurture the physical, emotional, and spiritual elements needed to complete the home.

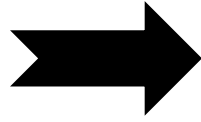
**2. Emotional Growth:** When couples marry by following the **picking process**, they bring love into the home. Affection satisfies some of our basic needs: to be loved and accepted. A strong bond of love can support us through any disaster even the death of family members, demonstrating how vitally important deep love is in every home. There is nothing on earth that provides us a place of security, refuge, and stability from the chaotic unstable world like our family. The knowledge that someone truly loves me provides great assurance that adds to the security of the home.

**3. Personal Growth:** From a very young age, we are developing our potentials; who we are to become as a person. This development begins in the home where the greatest influence is present; whether positive or negative. The experiences we encounter in life, including outside the home, shape who we are. The home should help shape our character by providing a positive influence of training, example, discipline, and attitude, seasoned with love. Following the early years of Jesus we can see the pattern of growth, “So the child grew and became strong in spirit,” Luke 1:80. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men,” Luke 2:52. I Cor. 13:11 instructs us to leave the things of a child. God commands us to mature into a faithful Christian, thus finding favor in God’s sight. (Eph. 4:15, I Peter 2:2, 3:18). Without the stability of the home, it is more difficult for a mature Christian to develop.

**4. Financial Growth:** We need to learn how to earn and control finances. Without the proper controls God has provided, great harm can be inflicted on the family. In order to provide the necessities of life the family must have a source of income. The home can become a place of financial security while avoiding the sin of materialism by following the principles of Matt. 6:19-34, “seek God first avoiding the sin of covetousness.” Remember, poor individuals can be covetous as well as the wealthy. It is about the desires of the heart!

If our focus is on spiritual growth, the other areas will grow as well and the home, family, and church will benefit.

Examine the following passages and determine how you can use each to promote financial growth while being pleasing to God.



Eph. 4:28  
Acts 20: 35  
I Thess. 4:11  
II Thess. 3:8, 11-12  
I Cor. 16: 1-2



**QUESTIONS**



1. List the four areas for growth and explain how the home can promote each one.

a.

b.

c.

d.



God created one male and one female and from them, “every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth will come,” Acts 17:26. “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth,” Psa. 127: 3-4, NKJV. With such a gift comes responsibility as described in Ephesians 6:4, “And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” The next chapter will address this topic in depth.

Procreation is a part of being one flesh, “be fruitful and multiply,” Gen. 1:28 & I Tim. 5:14. God also provides a great blessing through children: Deut. 28:1, 4a, I Sam. 2: 1-10, Gen 21: 6-8. Scripture records incidents of joyful births. Eve was the first to know the joy and pain of childbirth; others were Sarah in her older years, Hannah, Jochbed, Elizabeth, and Mary. Children can help stabilize the home and add a sense of permanence but only to those who have properly prepared for the arrival.

**Correct time:** Most couples need an adjustment period after the wedding to join two lives into one flesh; establishing unity in the relationship and the new home. A couple needs to decide the appropriate time for adding to their family. As part of the decision making process remember that a baby deserves to be wanted, loved, and given the care and guidance of a Christian home. They must be able to grow as Jesus, described in Luke 2:52: In wisdom (mentally), in stature (physically), in favor with God (spiritually), and in favor with men (socially).

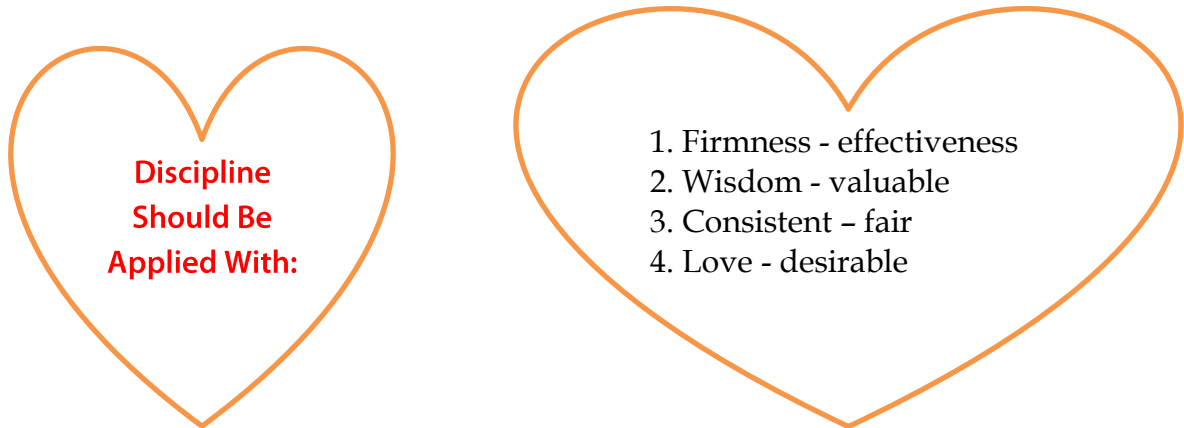
Children are expensive; the average cost of a hospital delivery is \$7,800 and that is just the beginning. Add to that the cost of diapers, milk, doctor visits, clothes, education, etc. so financial planning becomes a very important part of the process.

When the first child arrives, the greatest handicap is the inexperience of the parents accepting their new roles. Let us consider three stages in a child’s life:

1. Glamor Stage: Everything is new and shiny, flowers received, new clothes given, and photos by the thousands. Now that pains of labor have passed, everything is wonderful!

2. Change State: Home from the hospital is a real serving of reality about parenthood, loss of sleep, diapers, bottles, laundry, new schedule, new center of attention. By week two things settle into a routine and the joys of parenthood begin to be part of daily life.

3. Growth Stage: The constantly changing excitement that a baby brings into the home, the great joy, the rapid development of their personality are all a marvel to watch, however things will never be the same as they were before. The period from birth to kindergarten is a very exciting and important time. Rapid changes in all phases of development are astounding to behold. As babies grow into toddlers, they should experience a deep and consistent love that is expressed in words and deeds. The home should reassure a child they are wanted. Fighting and quarreling can produce insecurity in the child. Discipline must be present and always applied fairly; including corrective and instructive elements. When properly applied discipline will produce obedience in purpose and fact. Parents become the first teachers in a child's life, giving them verbal instructions and living examples of a child of God (Gen. 18:19, Deut. 4: 9-10, 6:7, 11:19, Ezek. 16:44).



Christ is exemplified in love for the child and success is assured when discipline is biblically applied, (Prov. 22: 6). Undisciplined children will lead to sorrow and failure in the home and in the generation to follow (I Sam. 3:13). Failure in the home can bring many problems the church must deal with also. A majority of member-problems elders encounter come as a result of undisciplined children who grow into troublesome adults.

Children have a right to spiritual nourishment. They reflect what they see in their parents, church family, and the world. They develop attitudes about criticism, commitment, and service from what they see and hear. A good home in which to raise a child should include cleanliness, love, and unity, a place where Christ dwells. The goal is to lead the child to a life devoted to Christ.



## QUESTIONS



1. What does every child have the right to expect from parents?
2. Name the **TWO** duties of parents given in Eph. 6:4?
3. In your own words, define “discipline.”
4. Discuss the **TWO** types of discipline.
5. List **THREE** passages that refer to the importance of proper discipline and summarize their meaning.
6. Why does the success of a future family depend upon the individual success of a parent?
7. List the **FOUR** elements of a good home.





## LESSON 12

### Training Children

Parenthood is one of the greatest blessings given by God (Psa. 127: 3-5, Prov. 23:24, John 16:21). God has entrusted precious souls to parents for care and training. Mothers and fathers have the responsibility of providing physical and emotional needs of their children, while also teaching them to serve God and prepare for their heavenly home. This is not a casual endeavor; it takes love, patience, consistency, and devotion.

God has always maintained high expectations for parents. When choosing a man to be the father of His people, God chose Abraham. He knew Abraham would, “command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice,” Gen. 18:19. So often, parents take a hands-off approach to child rearing and allow their children to do and get whatever they want, whenever they want. As a result, many children are conditioned to ignore the needs of others and strive only to satisfy selfish desires. The consequences of this lazy approach to parenting are dire. Because they are raising a “generation who does not know God,” Judges 2:10, Psa. 78:1-4, Prov. 29: 15.

Consider the following examples:

#1: I Samuel 3: 1-14 – Eli and his sons

#2 II Kings 1: 5-10 – David and Adonijah

*It is easier to build strong children  
than to repair broken men.  
Frederick Douglass*



## QUESTIONS



1. What does God call Eli's refusal to restrain his sons (I Sam. 3:13-14)?
2. Compare and contrast Eli and David's poor parenting.
3. Why might parents choose to take a hands-off approach to raising their children?



3. What impact would inconsistently teaching our children about God have on them?

4. Explain how training a child in the way that he should go is different from the way that he wants to go.

*"Train up a child in the way he should go:  
Even when he is old he will not depart from it."*  
*Proverbs 22:6*

### Godly Discipline:

"Whoever spares the rod hates his son,  
But he who loves him is diligent to discipline him," Prov. 13:24

"Do not withhold discipline from a child;  
If you strike him with a rod, he will not die.  
If you strike him with the rod,  
You will save his soul from Sheol," Prov. 23: 13-14

*Say, "Yes," as often  
as you can – and  
when you say, "No,"  
mean it!*

"Discipline your son, for there is hope;  
Do not set your heart on putting him to death," Prov. 19:18

"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,  
But the rod of discipline drives it far from him," Prov. 22:15

"The rod and reproof give wisdom,  
But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother," Prov. 29:15

"Discipline your son, and he will give you rest;  
He will give delight to your heart," Prov. 29:17

1. According to these verses, why does God expect parents to discipline their children?

2. Could the rod involve something other than spanking? Explain

3. According to Prov. 13: 24, how does a parent express love? Hate?

4. Why do parents often not discipline their children as God instructs?

**Godly Fathers:**

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” Eph. 6:4

“Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged,” Col. 3:21

1. Why do you think the admonition, “do not provoke your children,” is addressed to fathers?

2. List examples of how a father might provoke his children to anger.

3. Why would God be concerned about children becoming discouraged?

4. What do “discipline” and “instruction” mean? How would a father accomplish this command?

*“To give children good instruction, and a bad example, is the same as pointing out to them the way to heaven, while we take them by the hand and lead them down the road to hell.” Tillotson*

**Godly Mothers:**

“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well,” II Tim. 1:5. (Acts 16:1, Rom. 10: 17, II Tim. 3:15

1. How did Timothy’s mother and grandmother influence his devotion and faith to God?

Good parenting does not happen by accident! Childrearing is a fulltime, 24/7, job without breaks or holidays. It requires consistent dedication, intentionally teaching a child to be pleasing to God. The fact that God commands parents to train their children implies there are specific things that must be taught. As is always the case, God has provided everything needed to accomplish this (II Tim. 3:16-17, II Peter 1:3). Though not an exhaustive list, below are several concepts that children must learn.

✓ **To Love God:**

Deut. 6:5, Josh. 22:5, 23: 11, Mark 12:30

✓ **To Love Truth/Bible:**

Psa. 1: 1-2, 119: 97 & 113, John 8:32

✓ **To Have Faith in God:**

Rom. 10:17, Heb. 11: 1 & 6

✓ **To Fear God:**

Deut. 6:13, Pro. 1:7, Eccl. 12:13-14

✓ **To Obey/Submit to Authority:**

Rom. 8: 6-8, Heb. 13:17, Jam. 4:7

✓ **To be Morally Pure:**

I Tim. 4:12, I Peter 3:16

✓ **To Always Do Their Best:**

Eccl. 9:10, I Cor. 10:31, Col. 3:17 & 23

✓ **To Teach the Lost:**

Matt. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Jn. 14:6

✓ **To Worship God:**

John 4:24, Matt. 4:10

✓ **To Hate Sin:**

Prov. 6: 16-19, Psa. 5: 4-6, Isa. 59: 1-2

✓ **To Study God's Word:**

Hosea 4:6, Psa. 119: 160, II Tim. 2:15

✓ **To Pray:**

John 14: 13-14, Phil. 4: 6-7,

I Thess. 5: 17-18, I John 5: 14-15

✓ **To Pray:**

John 14: 13-14, Phil. 4: 6-7,

I Thess. 5:17 – 18, I John 5: 14-15

✓ **To Follow Christ's Example:**

Mark 10:21, John 8:12, I Peter 2:21,

I John 1:7

✓ **To be Honest:**

Prov. 6: 16-19, 12:22, Rev. 21:8

✓ **To Choose Good Friends:**

Psa. 119: 63, Prov. 18: 24, I Cor. 15:33

1. What would you add to the list of things children need to learn? Include scripture to support your response.

2. Choose one from the list above. On a separate paper, develop a plan for how you would consistently teach that concept to your child at each level of development (toddler, pre-school, grade school, adolescent, etc.).

*"Fathers, you must lead the way, daily teach and with them pray. And the mothers too with tender hand, kindly guide them lest they stray."  
From "Train Your Children" by Huey Hartselle*

## LESSON 13



## THE MARRIAGE YEARS: 1 - 5

The newlywed status no longer applies; you have been married a few years. Just as you are getting to know each other and becoming comfortable with living together, things begin to happen. Life happens.

You are stressed with your job, home issues, and raising young children. Daily pressures make you feel as if time is running short and so is your temper. Your time is monopolized with the little necessities of life so other important responsibilities are neglected. The train seems to be coming off the rails and you do not know how to prevent it.

*Anxiety does not empty tomorrow  
of its worries and sorrows; it  
only empties today of its  
strengths.*

Slow down, stop, and remember who you are and where you are going. Do not lose sight of these things:

**PROBLEM:** Mounting responsibilities at work causes daily stress. You are now far enough into your vocation that pressure is mounting for promotion.

### **Duties of the husband ...**

- provide the necessities of life – II Cor. 12:14
- a man who fails to do so is worse than an infidel - I Tim. 5:8

1. Should obeying God produce stress in your life? Explain.

2. Explain how work can interfere with spiritual concerns.



**PROBLEM:** Issues at home are causing extra stresses. Perhaps both spouses work, causing additional duties at home.

**Husbands, treat your wife with ...**

- love and obedience – Titus 2: 4-5
- understanding, honor, tenderness, and as fellow heirs – I Peter 3:7

1. Explain what the scripture means when it says to treat your wife with understanding.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Husbands, list ways you can demonstrate understanding, love, honor, and cooperation.

*Worry is the interest paid on trouble before it falls due.*

**Wives, response to your husband with ....**

- love and obedience – Titus 2:4-5
- submission, as the church is to submit to Christ – Col. 3:18, Eph. 5: 22-24

1. Wives, list ways you can treat your husband with love and obedience.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. In your own words, explain why God has given everyone specific roles.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. “If we do these well, things will be well.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain why or why not.

*Under stress, if we do not bend we will most certainly break.*

**PROBLEM:** The enormous demands of raising young children add to your stress.

**Fathers, raise your children ...**

- without provoking them to wrath – col. 3:21, Eph. 6:4a
- in the nurture and admonition of the Lord – Eph. 6:4b
- with proper discipline – Pro.13:24, 19:18, 29:17, Heb. 12:7-10

**Mothers, raise your children ...**

- with love – Titus 2:4
- as homemakers, managers of the home – I Tim. 5:14, Prov. 31:10-31

1. What do you consider the most important aspect of raising your children? Explain.

2. List ways you can accomplish # 1.

3. What is the appropriate age to begin teaching your children about God? Why?

**Children, treat your parents with ...**

- obedience – Col. 3:20 Eph. 6:1
- honor – Eph. 6: 2-3, prov. 31: 28

How do you obtain the above results from your children?

**Dedication to serving God...**

- having a genuine faith from one generation to another – II Tim. 1:5
- with devotion to the Lord that surpasses devotion to others – Matt. 10:37

1. Explain what your ultimate goal is for your family.

2. List steps necessary to reaching your goal.

*When the mind is distracted by many pursuits, it derives but little benefit from any of them.*

**PROBLEM:** The daily stresses cause you to feel time is running short thus so is your temper. Minor necessities of life monopolized your time so you may neglect important responsibilities. The train seems to be coming off the rails and you do not know how to prevent it.

**Trust in God ....**

- replace insecurity with a secure feeling – Prov. 3: 21-26
- replace helplessness with God’s help – Rom. 8:31, Psa. 27:5
- replace anxiety with complete confidence in God’s ability to deal with anything that may threaten you – John 14:1, Phil. 4:13, Deut. 31: 7 – 8, Rom. 8:31
- use the avenue of prayer to request God’s help – I John 5:15
- replace anxieties with God’s promise of peace of mind – John 16:33, Phil. 4:6-7, I Pet. 4:19

*We have the tendency to allow relatively unimportant cares to distract us leaving little time to focus on the things of greatest importance. Matt. 13:22*

### Practical Steps:

#### Read Your Bible

- ◆ Committing yourself to God's safekeeping requires growth in your knowledge of Him and deepening your love for Him.
- ◆ Vital for your spiritual growth are studying the scriptures, praying, and meditating on God's promises - Rom. 15:4.

#### Be Flexible

- ◆ Change is inevitable; you must be resilient, adaptable, and willing to adjust – Phil. 4: 11-12
- ◆ Our faith must be in Him who changes not

#### Focus on Good Cares, Minimizing the Unnecessary

- ◆ The Bible describes good and bad cares  
Good: I Cor. 12:25, II Cor. 11:28, Phil. 2:20  
Bad: Matt. 13:22, Phil. 4:6, I Peter 5:7
- ◆ One necessity – Luke 10: 41-42, Matt. 6:33-34

#### Learn Contentment

- ◆ Paul's Example – Phil. 4:11-13
- ◆ Rejoice in the Lord, continually counting our blessings – Phil. 4:4-6
- ◆ See the sliver lining in the darkest cloud

*"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."*

*Genesis 2:24*