

The family

The family

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The Bible version that we are using in this work is the English Standard Version (ESV), when otherwise the version it will be referenced locally in the text.

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Introduction

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; (...) the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; (...) More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; (...) in keeping them there is great reward. (Psa 19:7-11)

How beautiful and precious is the family and how wise and perfect is the counsel of God for her!

This is a new version of the guide about the Family, first released in 1995. Like the first version, it seeks to meet the great necessity of teaching of the Church with respect to this fundamental theme and announce all the beauty and perfection of the truth of God.

We live in a time of grave decline of the family. Men are selfish, crude, absent, and silent; women exchange their homes for professional careers; relationships are destroyed by wrath, hurt, bitterness, and infidelities; the numbers of divorces increase frighteningly; children are rebellious and disrespectful; and parents missing and lost.

The destruction of the family is because man abandoned the counsel of God and adopted human criteria and ideas. God is the creator of the family. He is the only one who has the authority and position to say what is the family, for how it exists, and how it must function.

The success of the life of our families does not depend on luck. God gives us completely detailed instructions, with the typical simplicity of His counsel. Success depends only on having within us a true desire to be husbands, wives, parents, and children according to the heart of God, that created man and the family to express all His glory, beauty, and perfection.

When converting, many arrive with serious difficulties in their families, some with them destroyed. We believe that God needs to put this area in order to fulfill His Purpose in the life of a disciple and of the Church. And all this is not theory. We have seen and lived with various families, who have been living models and constant stimulus to practice this standard.

Once again, we must express our appreciation and gratitude to the brothers of other locations, who has blessed us with their care and example. Especially the brothers of Buenos Aires, who also let us use the guide *La Familia* – Editorial Logos, to help us in this work.

This booklet is part of a set of basic themes for the formation of a disciple. The other booklets are: Elementary Principles, The Eternal Purpose of God, The Life in Christ, Communion with God, The Gospel of the Kingdom, The Character, The Work, The Finances, The Relationship between Brothers, The Church and The Return of Christ.

The Lord is forming a people. A people of solid and stable families, with singles who maintain their sanctity, couples who live together in harmony and fidelity, with obedient children who respect their parents, wives wise and submissive, and husbands loving and responsible. A people who know how to work; study; progress; get married; and raise children, care for their homes with discipline and order, a people of healthy and happy families; where there is love, peace, and joy for the glory of Him who is in all.

Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people". (Deu 4:6)

Salvador, September 2012.

Presbytery in Salvador.

How teaching in the church should be

The disciples who are learning and teaching must be willing to manage simple studies. The Lord commands us to feed “lambs” and not “Giraffes”. Those who have greater capacity should humbly bow down to eat of the plate of the little ones; Jesus exclaimed, *“I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children”* (Mat 11:25).

It is good to remember the example of the first Church in Jerusalem. It is the model for all time. The brethren of that time were simple and many of them could not read or write. There was no printing press or paper. Nor did they have Bibles. Nevertheless, the church was holy and glorious, a model for us.

Looking at the way in which they lived, we note that the apostles used the method of constant repetition (catechism). Those who learned could assimilate and keep the Word in their minds and hearts. They did not walk seeking novelties or inventing things. But the important things they taught were repeated for a long time until everyone had learned well (Php 3:1; 2Pe 1:12-15).

The apostles were well aware of the necessity to transmit the whole counsel of God and not biblical or theological concepts. Each disciple had to be formed in the image of Jesus Christ (Act 20:26,27; Php: 4:9; 2Ti 2:2). The teaching of the apostles basically pointed to three things:

- Reveal the Christ: His person, His power, His promises;
- All the commandments that Jesus commanded us to live;
- All the principles for the functioning of the Church.

We must return to simplicity so that the Whole Counsel of God may be received and absorbed by all the brothers, especially by the most simple.

God will not examine us about our knowledge with respect to contents of the Bible. He will ask us how we lived. The doctrine is practical commandments for the life of the disciples (Tit 2:1-15).

Working with this material

This guide is divided into lessons, to be studied by the disciples alone and in conjunction with their disciplers.

As we do not want to bring the whole teaching already chewed up for the disciple, each lesson has two sections: **Seeking revelation** and **Understanding more**.

Seeking revelation

In this section we want the disciple to have contact with God and with His word, and receive revelation and knowledge of God and His Word, through prayer.

He should read each of the texts indicated in the **Bible Readings**, praying to the Lord to have revelation.

He should also seek to answer the questions of **Help for Meditation** in his notebook, noting everything you have learned as well as any questions you have.

In each lesson, there are some phrases and biblical texts for **Catechism** (learning by repetition). They should be repeated as they are in the booklet, so all disciples will have memorized the texts alike. They were selected from the best translation of that text.

Understanding More

In this section the disciple has the material to deepen and enrich their understanding with respect to the subject that they meditated upon alone.

However, they should only go to this section after carefully having done the previous section – **Seeking revelation** – and having shown their meditation and notes to their discipler. Then they should read together the content that is in this section – **Understanding more**. In the case of the disciple having difficulties of doing the first section alone, the discipler should help him.

Part 1 | **The purpose
of God
for the family**

Lesson 1 | The purpose of God for the family

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Rom 11:36; Gen 1:26–28; Rom 8:28–29.

Help for meditation

- Write in your own words: what is the purpose of God for the family.
- What happens with the family that lives without a clear purpose or incorrect objectives?
- What changes in our attitude when we see that our family should cooperate with the purpose of God?
- How does the family cooperate with the Purpose of God?

Catechism

What is the purpose of the family?

The family was created by God to cooperate with His Eternal Purpose.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it (...).” (Gen 1:27–28a)

Understanding more

The Purpose of God for the Family

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen! (Rom 11:36)

Para For what does the family exist?

Many marry without asking themselves: for what does the family exist? They marry, work, struggle, buy things, have children, but do not know why.

Why did God institute marriage? Why give a wife for Adam?

The creation of man was part of an eternal plan that was in the heart of God before the creation of the world: God wanted a family of many children in His image and likeness¹ (Rom 8:28-29).

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (...) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it (...)." (Gen 1:26-28a)

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Rm 8:29)

From the union of man with his wife, the Earth would be filled with children in the image and likeness of God. The man and the woman would be cooperators of God in the formation of His great and eternal family.

Sin was an intrusion into the Purpose of God. The image and glory of God in man damaged (Rom 3:12, 23). But the purpose of God remained the same. All that was damaged by sin was fully restored by Jesus (Rom 5:17-18), and the family continues to exist to cooperate with this purpose. Like the first marriage and the first family, marriages and families of today exist to cooperate with the Eternal Purpose of God. God is the creator of the family and the family exists for Him (Rom 11:36).

The singles should have in mind that they will unite in marriage to fulfill the same mission that was entrusted to Adam and Eve: to cooperate with the Purpose of God. And the married couples that already exist should remember that God expects to see in every home an Eden, a place to



The family was created by God to cooperate with His Eternal Purpose.

¹ Because of the importance of this issue, in the series Counsel of God there is a guide dedicated to it, entitled The Eternal Purpose of God.


reproduce the image of His son Jesus.

To marry with this purpose, fills life and marriage of sense and pleasure. Those who marriage for selfish purposes of obtaining the benefits of marriage will hardly be happy. Soon they will discover that besides the benefits, there is work, responsibility, struggles, and suffering.

How does the family cooperate with the Purpose of God?

a. In the formation and development of personal life

The family coexistence puts us in ideal circumstances for our betterment. In the family, our character is formed. In it, we learn to practice love, humility, goodness, and meekness. We also learn responsibility, discipline, subjection, service, and respect. We learn to forgive, confess, endure, deny ourselves, exercise authority with love, correct with grace, suffer, pray, and trust in God.


*The family is the
primary place of
formation of our
life in the
likeness of Jesus.*

The home is a training school for both parents as well as for the children. God will utilize family coexistence, more than anything else, to transform our character to the likeness of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:28-29).

Sadly, we know that some do not have a good family environment, sometimes marked by absences of parents, divorces, fights, and violence. These, when they receive the kingdom of God, are formed and transformed to the likeness of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit, in an environment of love and care of the Church, and becomes an instrument of blessing in their family and the middle where they live.

b. In raising children for God

When raising children, we are taking care of those whom God wants to adopt as His children. With this purpose in view, all the work and effort of the family transforms into a service for God, in the service of making disciples. Having children, raising them, educating them, cooking, cleaning, ironing, working for daily sustenance, all this must be for God. We are His collaborators. Alleluia!

And what about married couples that cannot have children? They cooperate with the Eternal Purpose of God dedicating their lives, their homes, and their greater freedom to serve the Lord. They may also have children by adopting them. There are many children who need parents.

And what of those who do not marry? Many are called to cooperate with God and make disciples remaining single. Jesus did not marry, Paul did not have a family, and both delivered themselves totally to the Purpose of God. The Word says that the singles can serve the Lord more devotedly (1 Cor 7:32-34). The fundamental is to know that all who are married and who are not married were created and should live to cooperate with the Purpose of God.

~
Those who are married those who are not married must live to cooperate with the Purpose of God.

c. As the base for multiplication and edification of the Church

This happens when we open our homes so the lost may encounter the life of Christ and the teaching of the Word of God. In the family, everyone, husband, wife, and children should be taken to be and make disciples.

~
Today, the family cooperates with the Eternal Purpose of God by making disciples.

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Mar10:7–9; 1Co 7:39;
- Pro 2:17; Mal 2:14–16; Jer 5:8,9.

Help for meditation

- What is the origin of marriage? Who created it?
- What is the base that sustains marriage?
- Explain the relationship that exists between love and commitment of will within marriage?
- What are characteristics of the bond of marriage? According to the Word of God, what is the only thing that can break it?

Catechism

Who unites husband and wife?

The union of marriage is made by God and is for a lifetime.

'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. (Mar 10:7–9)

Understanding more

The wedding

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. (Mar 10:7-9)

Marriage was instituted by God

The marriage was not established by a human law or invented for some civilization. It is a divine institution, established in creation. It predates every culture, tradition, people, or nation.

Marriage is not a society between two parties, where each one places their conditions. God, who created it, is the one who establishes the conditions, not the man or the woman, nor a common agreement of both, nor the laws of country. Those who marry must accept the conditions established by God. And there is nothing to fear because God is love and infinitely wise.

The foundation of marriage is the pact

In our days, because of the romanticism and eroticism in literature, film, and television, there is a generalized concept that love-feeling is the basis of marriage. Certainly, the love-feeling is an important ingredient of marriage, but is not its base.

God could not establish something so important over a base so unstable like feelings. In reality, much of what is called "love" is disguised selfishness. The love-feeling seeks self-satisfaction or a benefit that they can have through the other.

Several reasons can modify our feelings: problems of coexistence, bad treatment, spousal character faults, the emergence of someone more interesting, etc. After some time, many marriages come to this sad conclusion: "We do not love each other anymore. We should separate".


The base that God established to sustain the marriage is an alliance - a pact of fidelity, care, service, honor and affection, until death. God requires an alliance so that a man and a woman can unite in marriage and constitute a family.

Over the foundation or base of the alliance, one can construct a lifetime of romanticism and affection able to resist the greatest storms.



The base of marriage is the matrimonial pact and not sentimental love.

We cannot always control our feelings, but we can control our will. When feelings "wobble", the marriage will maintain firm by fidelity to the matrimonial pact. Christ is our Lord and our will is subject to Him. In this manner, although we cross difficult moments, the matrimonial unity will not be in danger. Therefore, we can say it is the marriage that sustains the love and not the contrary.


God requires an alliance so that a man and a woman can unite in marriage.

The matrimonial bond is sacred and indissoluble

So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. (Mar 10:8-9)

A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. (1Co 7:39)

(...) LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth
(...) (Mal 2:14)

The texts above show us that:

- a. O vínculo matrimonial é forte. Uma fusão. São “uma só carne”.
- b. The matrimonial bond is strong – a fusion. They have “become one flesh.”
- c. The bond is realized by God Himself. “What God has joined together”.
- d. It is an indissoluble bond while both spouses are alive. “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives”. Only death of one of the two can dissolve it.
- e. God says that He Himself is witness of this alliance and hates the separation and infidelity (Pro 2:17, Mal 2:14-16, Jer 5:8-9). All infidelity and breaking up is an offense to God Himself.
- f. No man or human law can dissolve this bond. Whoever does will be directly rebelling against God.

Because of the importance of this subject, the indissolubility of marriage, it is treated in a more detailed way in Lesson 6 of this booklet.



*Every conjugal infidelity and matrimonial
break is an offence to God Himself.*

Part 2| **The standard
of God
for the couples**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- 1Co 11:3; 1Ti 3:4, 12; Gen 3:17–19; 18:19; Eph 5:28–29; 1Sa 3:12–13; Heb 12:7–9; 1Ti 2:8;
- Gen 2:18; 1Ti 2:15; Pro 31:10–31; Tit 2:3–5; 2Ti 1:5; 3:14–15.

Help for meditation

- What are the roles that God determines for husband and for wife, in marriage?
- Why should the disciple reject the ideas that men and women are equal and have the same role in marriage?
- Summarize what are the responsibilities of the husband, as the head, and of the wife, as the helper.
- Who should provide the sustenance for the home?

Catechism

What are the roles of the husband and of the wife?

The man is the head of the woman and the wife is his helper.

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (1Co 11:3)

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him”. (Gen 2:18)

Understanding more

The roles of spouses

God created man and woman with different physical, emotional and psychic structures, giving well defined roles to each one. Many problems in marriage are caused by the lack of knowledge of the role of each spouse. For there to be harmony in family life, it is necessary that the husband and wife know and accept their own role and that of their spouse.

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (1Co 11:3)

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him". (Gen 2:18)

In His infinite wisdom and love, the Lord God designated man to be the **head** and the woman to be his **helper**.



*Lord God designated
man to be the head and
the woman to be his helper.*

The idea that men and women are equal and have the same role is diabolical and this is destroying the family. This mentality has produced selfish, domineering, silent, and cowardly men; and raunchy, frivolous, independent, and frustrated women.

Men and women are different in many things and therefore complement each other. One is not greater or better than the other. Both have the same value, but different characteristics and functions, like the three persons of the Trinity – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We should not ignore the differences, nor compete, but admire the grace; delicacy; and capacity that God gave the woman, and the vision; strength; and attitudes that He gave man.

The role of the head

Being **head** means to assume the general responsibility for the family before God. The head will be accountable to God for everything that happens in his home. He must struggle for the family be referred to the purpose of God. The man is responsible for:

- a. **To govern the home** (1Ti 3:4,12). To govern with grace and love, to give direction, to lead and to be the representative of Jesus for the family. To express the character of Christ in his conduct and to not use his authority to impose his own whims (Mar 10:43).
- b. **To work to provide the family sustenance** (Gen 3:19).



Being the head means to govern, fulfill, and protect with grace and love. It is to be responsible for the family, before God.

- c. **To support, care, and protect the family** (Eph 5:29). To resolve all the difficulties that arise, with the help of the Lord. To guide the family to a loving and happy coexistence.
- d. **To be the priest for the family** (Gen 18:19). To teach the word of God, to instruct, to encourage, to edify, to rebuke, and to correct. To teach mainly be example.
- e. **To fulfill and meet the needs of the wife.**
- f. **To assume primary responsibility in teaching and discipline** of the children (1Sa 3:12-13; Heb 12:7-9).
- g. **To have the main role in the formation of his sons.** To affirm the values of their masculinity. To teach them abilities and works, to orient them in the professional area, to practice sports, to give sex education, etc.
- h. **To be present and attentive to his daughters.** The education of daughters is not the exclusive responsibility of the mother. The presence, caring, affection, and protection of the father are very important in the formation of the emotions and character of the daughters. A daughter well supplied by a father will be more safeguarded from the attack of unscrupulous men.
- i. **To occupy functions of leadership in church** (1Ti 2:8,12).

The role of the help meet

Being the **helper** means to put yourself to the side and be ready to cooperate with the fulfillment of the mission that God entrusted to her husband. She should recognize that the husband has main authority in the home. She should not compete with him, but help him. God made her suitable, namely, competent and capable to cooperate and not to govern. When a woman governs, it brings serious damage (Gen 3:6,17). What blessing and joy the husbands and the children receive from a wife and mother wise and gracious. In their role, the woman is responsible for:

- a. **To occupy more in raising of children** (1Ti 2:15; 5:14). To be a mother is their primary mission.

- b. **To tend to the family and take care for food** (Pro 31:13-15).
- c. **To take care of clothing of the family** (Pro 31:21-22).
- d. **To take care of the home** (Tit 2:5).
- e. **If necessary, assist in financial support** (Pro 31:16-18; 24). Only if this is necessary and if possible, avoiding leaving the home.
- f. **To teach the Scripture and also to take care of disciplining the children** (2Ti 1:5; 3:14-15).
- g. **To care for the integral formation of the daughters.** To teach them about: character, femininity, social behavior, domestic tasks, manual abilities, conduct with boys, sex education, etc.
- h. **To be present and attentive to her sons.** The raising of sons is not the exclusive responsibility of the father.
- i. **To instruct young women how to perform their role of wife and mother** (Tit 2:3-5).



Being the helper means to put herself beside her husband and cooperate with the fulfillment of the mission that God has entrusted to him.

Wrong attitudes of men

- a. **Not to assume his role as head.** When this is so, the house is helpless and the wife becomes burdened by the weight of many family obligations beyond their role.
- b. **To annul the woman.** Some want to do everything alone. They do not converse with their wives nor seek their opinion. The woman becomes frustrated and bitter.

Wrong attitudes of women

- a. **To take the place of the husband.** Some women assume leadership of the family and annul the husband. The woman was not made by God to lead this charge. Thus, she breaks the order of God.
- b. **To be independent of the husband.** There are women who make the decisions of their life and home despite their husbands. Some seek the own realization and give priority to their profession.

The support of the house and the work of the woman

And to Adam he said, “(...) in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life”. (Gen 3:17)

Yet she will be saved through childbearing (...). (1Ti 2:15a)

Since the creation, in Eden, the man received the burden of providing sustenance and protection (Gen 2:15). After the fall of man, the judgment of God did not alter these functions. The man continues to be the provider (Gen 3:17–19) and his woman to be mother and helper (Gen 3:16).

Therefore, it is normal that men occupy the major part of their time at work and the woman with the house and children. If they do not have children, the woman will have more freedom to go out, work, and help economically. But when she is **mother**, her place is the home (Mic 2:9; Psa 128:3). Maternity is the great mission that God gave her, and she should devote herself to the task of raising children.



Any profession that the woman has must be subordinate to her role as mother.

There are extreme situations in which the husband is unable to supply the sustenance of the house. In this case, in which the woman needs to go out to work, this should be seen as a “necessary evil” and never as a standard. In some families, wives have committed the mistake of exchanging the care and attention to their children for a much higher standard of living (housing, car, school...). The absence of the mother is very harmful to development of children and the well-being of the family.

Each one should know and assume their role

The word of the Lord is very clear as to conduct that God expects of each spouse. They are not optional roles, they are determinations of the Lord. The husband is head of the wife, and the wife is his help meet.

Many spouses note the duties of the other, living demanding their compliance, but do not fulfill with their own duties. Within marriage, each one must assume their responsibility, independent of the behavior of the other.

If we put into practice the principles of the kingdom of God in the home, there will be peace, harmony, and good example for the children and their future families.

Lesson 4 | **The standard of God for the wife**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Eph 5:22–24, 33b; Col 3:18; 1Pe 3:1–6;
- Pro 14:1; 31:30; 21:19; 11:22.

Help for meditation

- What is the importance of submission to the authority of the husband to maintain order in the home? What mean to be submissive?
- Describe how the woman, in practice, respects the husband. What are the attitudes that should be avoided?
- Comment on the text of 1Pe 3:3–4.

Catechism

What is the order of God for the wife?

The wife must submit herself to her husband, respect him, and have a gentle and quiet spirit.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. (Eph 5:22–23)

Understanding more

The standard of God for the wife

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Gen 2:18)

The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down. (Pro 14:1)

The Lord, in His Word, gave three commandments for the wife:

To submit to her husband as to the Lord

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Eph 5:22-24 - Read also Col 3:18; 1Pe 3:1-6)

Submission is related to the principle of authority that God established in all the areas of life. Submitting to the husband as to the Lord Jesus means recognizing in him the authority of God. Rebelling against the husband is rebelling against God Himself that established him as authority (Rom 13:1-2; 1Co 11:3).

Aspects of submission:

- a. **Submission is the recognition of established authority.** It is not only an external obedience, but an interior attitude of submission and respect.
- b. **Submission does not annul the woman,** but gives her conditions to fulfill her role.
- c. **Submission does not put down women,** but rather to protect. God is good. He wants that woman to be covered and protected under the authority of her husband. He does not want a woman overwhelmed and nervous, but tranquil and happy.
- d. **Submission of woman does not make her inferior.** Jesus, being equal to the Father, submitted Himself to Him in everything. The woman is not less, or the man more. They are equal, but in different functions, according to the plan of God.
- e. **The woman should be submissive in all things** (Eph 5:24). The husband is overall responsible for all the areas of family life. The



Submitting to the husband as to the Lord Jesus means recognizing in him the authority of God.

woman should only disobey the husband if he gives her an order clearly contrary to the will of God known in Scriptures. If he wants to force her to sin or to leave the Lord, in these cases she should obey God and not the husband; even suffering the consequences of it (Act 4:18-20).

f. **The sisters with unbeliever husbands should be submissive to them.** They should behave themselves in such a way, that when they see their behavior, they themselves will convert (1 Pt 3:1-2).

g. **Submission does not imply that women do not speak, do not give opinions, and have no influence in the decisions of the family.** She does not have to say yes for everything. She is the helper. Therefore, she should give her opinion, agree, disagree, etc. But she should always show an attitude of submission to her husband, and have a disposition to leave the final decision in his hands, without bitterness or interior rebellion.

~
*Submission of
 woman does not
 make her inferior.
 Jesus, being
 equal to the
 Father, submitted
 Himself to Him in
 everything.*

h. **When a wife considers that the husband (believer) is abusing authority, she should speak to him alone, with respect and gentleness.** If he does not listen, she should speak to him again, before spiritual and mature brothers (Mat 18:15-17). In the case of the nonbelieving husband that abuse authority, the wife should seek the counsel of the

church about what to do.

Respect or reverence to the husband

...and let the wife see that she respects (reverence) her husband.
 (Eph 5:33)

Respect (or reverence - in some translations) is to go beyond simple obedience. It is to have a constant attitude of obey and honor, in the presence and absence of the husband.

Respect manifests itself in the form of speaking, in the tone of voice, in modes, gestures, and looking. Also in the manner of answering the husband, of listen to him, and obeying him. It also implicates in not belittling him or scolding him, neither alone, in before the children, or much less before other people. Never speak badly of him to others. The woman is responsible for teaching her children, by her example, to honor and respect the father.

~
*The beauty that
 the Lord gives
 value in women is
 the interior: a
 gentle and quiet
 spirit.*

There is nothing that irritates a man as much as the disrespect of his wife. The arrogance and rudeness make a woman indignant and shameful, but the respectful woman is the joy of the husband. She magnifies and makes him a man honored before others (Pro 12:4; 31:10-11, 23).

Having a gentle and quiet spirit

Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. (1Pe 3:3-4)

A married woman should look to maintain her beauty and attractiveness for her husband. It's good to care for the body, hair, and dress well; but, without exaggeration, like flashy hairstyles, gold jewelry, and luxurious dresses. Neither should she adopt a worldly style of dress.

However, the Lord says that the beauty that he gives value in the woman is the heart, with a gentle and quiet spirit; and the man, too. The best attraction that he can find in a woman is a gentle and quiet spirit – sweet, kind and cheerful.

A restless attitude communicates insecurity and lack of rest. Restless women become inconvenient, demanding, and quarrelsome (Pro 21:9,19). The lack of a gentle and quiet spirit demonstrates lack of faith and brings disruption to the home, instead of harmony and confidence (1Pe 3:5-6).

What will appeal to the husband – a beautiful woman, well-groomed, but nervous, quarrelsome, argumentative, rancorous, bitter, complaining, and nagging? (Pro 11:22; 31:30)

Yet, when the husband has a kind woman, her home is an oasis, where he wants to come back soon. But if the woman is quarrelsome, he prefers to stay in any other place (Pro 25:24). And this is not a question of temperament, but of character. Any woman, introverted or extroverted, can be gentle and quiet, walking in the Spirit each day (Gal 5:22-23).



*How much blessing and peace the wise woman
brings to her husband and children!*

Lesson 5 | **The Standard of God
for the Husband**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Eph 5:25–29; 1 Cor 13:4–8; Col 3:19; 1 Pt 3:7
- Song 7:10–13; Pro 18:22; 19:14; Eccl 9:9.

Help for meditation

- What does it mean to love the wife like Christ loved the church?
- What is it to not treat the wife harshly? How to treat her with dignity?
- What are the practical ways for the man to express his love for his wife?

Catechism

What is the command of God for the husband?

The husband must love his wife as Christ loved the church, treat her with dignity and not harshly.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Eph 5:25)

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. (Col 3:19)

Understanding more

The standard of God for the husband

To fulfill their role, God left three commandments to men.

To love his wife, like Christ loved the church

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Eph 5:25)

The Lord established the highest standard of love for the husband to love his wife: “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”. Nothing could be higher. It is the highest level of love, devotion, and renouncing. It means to lose, for the wife gain; to be ashamed, for her to be honored; to die for her to live.



*To love the wife
is to lose so she
can gain, to die
for her to live. It
is to sacrifice
himself and seek
her well-being.*

The word “love,” that appears in Ephesians 5, in Greek is “agape.” It refers to the love of God. It is a pure love, sacrificial, perfect, and permanent. This type of love is described in 1Cor 13. To love is to be patient and kind. It does not seek its own interests. It is not inconvenient. To love is to be forgiving and to have self-control (1Cor 13:4-8). To love is also to serve, protect, instruct, and sanctify. It is the kind of love that does not depend on sentiment.

This love involves sacrifice in favor of the wife “... gave Himself up for her.” It is to deny yourself, open the hand of tranquility, the comfort, and the pleasure, in favor of the loved one. This is to love. This is what Christ did for the church.

The opposite of this is selfishness. The selfish husband seeks his own comfort. He uses the authority for his own good and always expects to be served. His attitude is of “lord,” not of “servant”. He never renounces of comfort to help the woman. This husband is away from the will of God.

God wants the husband to deny himself, to look like Jesus, and act like Him. He must sacrifice himself for his wife, seeks her happiness and well-being, both in physical like in emotional and in spiritual. The husband should say like Jesus, “I came not to be served, but to serve” (Mat 20:28).

Romance and Affection (Song 7:10-13)

The love sentiment also should be present at the wedding (Song 7:10-13). Everything that we said earlier establishes the solid foundations for

this love to develop and grow. Romance is not just for the honeymoon, but for all life.

The disciple of the Lord should be husbands more “enamored” for their wives. The love of the world perverted itself in selfishness. However, the love-feeling of a Christian husband is born of the true love of God that lives in him. Therefore, the disciples of Jesus should be the best husbands; the most romantic of all.



The disciple must be a romantic husband.

Cultivate in your heart this love. Fall in love with your wife, valuing; appreciating; and complimenting her. Be expressive with her. Show your feelings, sending her flowers, chocolates, and cards. This will make your wife happy and you as well! And God will participate in this joy.

The man who treats his wife with love makes a good for himself and strengthens the unity of marriage. He who mistreats his wife destroys himself.

Do not treat the wife with bitterness

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them (roughly). (Col 3:19)

This appears to be a common error of husbands in the exercise of their function. Many times, when they get angry, husbands treat their wives harshly. Others are harsh all the time.

Not treating with bitterness means always treating with kindness, gentleness, and kindness and never with harshness and rudeness. This tenderness for his wife should be practical in words addressed to her, in various situations that involve daily dealings.

a. Kindness and affection

The woman was made with different emotional characteristics than man. This is not a weakness, but a characteristic given by God, for example, to perform their noble function of mother, in order to raise the children with tenderness and delicateness. The husband should understand this and not neglect her sensitivity and not treat her like she was men. There are husbands who are loving to others and reckless and hard with his wife. This is hypocrisy, incoherent, and a lack of intelligence. The wife treated harshly ends up brutalized. God wants the husband to treat the wife with tenderness, respect, gentleness, patience, affection, sweetness, delicateness, kindness, and love.

b. Firmness and tenderness

Being loving does not mean being loose. The man will have to be firm to correct errors or to make decisions. Many times the rough treatment is the lack of correct firmness. The husband should be firm and tender – firm in decisions and tender in treatment. When this does not happen, frequently he turns loose and rude – loose in decisions and rude in treatment.



*The husband should be firm and tender:
firm in decisions and tender in treatment.*

When the husband realizes that he mistreats his wife, he should fix this immediately, confessing his error, with humility and repentance.

c. Understanding

The husband should also know and understand his wife. It is necessary to attentively listen to what she says. Listening skills is one of the most valuable qualities that one can have. When the husband understands what the woman thinks and feels what are her loads, he can encourage her, lead her, and protect her with wisdom. A hug and a loving word and tenderness shows the woman that she has someone that understands and loves on her side. A woman who feels understood and attended by her husband, will hardly be rebellious and oppositional.

Some men have difficulty being affectionate because they do not have this custom. It is necessary to break with the barriers and see that this is the will of God for the relationship with the woman.

To treat the wife with dignity (honor)

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1Pe 3:7)

Dignity is equal to respect and honor. It is not only the wife that must respect the husband. Both are equally children of God. The verse above says that, if the husband does not treat the wife with dignity, his prayers are interrupted.

To treat with dignity, as the more fragile part, means to honor the wife, to care for her, to protect her, and not overload her.

The man must have a real and practical care and protection with his wife. She needs to feel safe and confident in her husband. When he does not fulfill his role, she finds herself unprotected. Helplessness and worries overburden and agitate the woman. Man should assume their role, meet the affairs of the house, resolve all the problems of which he is responsible, and not pass them to his wife. The woman should be able to say, “my husband is my shepherd, I lack nothing”, as the church says of Christ, “The Lord is my shepherd...”.

To treat her with dignity is also to admire her and have her in the utmost consideration, like the gift of God for him (Pro 19:14; Eccl 9:9). It is to make her feel special and unique every day. In the book of Ezekiel, God refers to the wife of the prophet like “the delight of your eyes” (Ez 24:15-18). The wife is a demonstration of the goodness of God to man.

He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD. (Pro 18:22)

Man must represent Jesus in the home

The man is responsible for:

a. To manifest the life of Christ in the family

As Christ is the image of God, the man must be the image of Christ in the home. He should walk in the Spirit, being holy, manifesting constant joy, giving thanks for everything, letting flow the love, the grace, and the peace of the Lord.



*All authority
subject to Christ
should act with
firmness, but also
with lovingness
and humility.*

b. To establish the rule of Christ

The man is the head of the woman and Christ is the head of all man. However, the man should establish the authority of Christ in the home and not his own. If a man is not subject to Christ, how will he govern over the wife and children? When the Lord delegates authority to man, he does not give “carte blanche” to do whatever, but establish specific and concrete criteria.

All authority subject to Christ must act with firmness, but also with lovingness and humility. Without making undue concessions, but with a disposition to talk and listen. It is important that



*To treat with
dignity, as the more
fragile part, means
to honor the wife, to
care for her, to
protect her, and not
overload her.*

he know to discern the will of God and take care so that it will be fulfilled in the home.

c. To minister the saving grace of Christ

The man should exercise the priesthood in his family. Not just blessing them with superficial prayers. He must care for each one. He gives time to each one, knowing their necessities, struggles, and afflictions. He gives each one of his children particular attention. Constantly helping the wife to see the great and eternal dimension of her function as wife and mother, and caring for that she is not overwhelmed by her tasks that sometimes seem trivial and insignificant.

d. To indoctrinate and edify his family

It is important to use the occasional circumstances of life to teach, but this is not sufficient. The man is responsible for teaching the whole truth of God, in an orderly and methodical manner to his wife and children. They are his first disciples. There must be determined concrete times to sit with them and share the word (family worship). There must be room for the participation of everyone and everything should be full of prayer.

The man should consider his wife as a helper for this. He should not annul her, but neither should he pass to her all the responsibility for the edification of the children. They should work together.



*What grace and security
a loving and wise husband
brings his family.*

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- . Jas 1:19; Pro 18:13, 15:23; Eph 4:15, 25–27, 29, 31; Col 3:13;
- . 1Jo 1:7; Pro 25:28.

Help for meditation

- . Why is communication so important in marriage?
- . Is the communication in your marriage good? What is missing?
- . Name principles that cooperate with good communication.
- . What practices hinder the dialogue?

Catechism

<p>What is necessary for good communication?</p> <p><i>It is necessary to listen with patience and speak in love.</i></p>	<p>Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. (Jas 1:19)</p> <p>Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. (Eph 4:15)</p>
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Understanding more

Communication in Marriage

The relationship of a couple is very beautiful and pleasurable, when there is love and respect, when each one gives their life for one another and there is an understanding between them, when there is intimate trust reflected in all areas of life – this produces a profound harmony. A relationship thus strengthens and prepares the couple to face the struggles of life, because it forms in each a force, courage, and faith.

The communication in marriage is a fundamental element. It is an ingredient of sustaining the relationship. We have seen many serious problems between various couples that could be solved or even avoided if there was a relationship of openness, transparency, and friendship. The lack of good communication generates misunderstandings, friction, pain, and wounds between the couple.

Friendship and transparency

It is fundamental that this is the most profound relationship that each spouse has. Before everything, the matrimonial bond is the most solid joint and ligament in the Body of Christ. No other relationship is connected by a stronger commitment – to the end of life, no other reaches such a level of intimacy – to be one flesh. Husband and wife should be the best friends of each other.

To achieve this it is necessary to give time and a place of prominence in our priorities for the relationship with our spouses. After fellowship with God, this is the highest priority.

We cannot expect a profound friendship to emerge by itself. It is necessary that we take strong and conscious measures to promote it. We should dedicate time and separate special moments for long and calm conversations. This is the way to deepen a relationship and cultivate openness and trust. So many issues are treated, avoiding misunderstandings and future frictions. This brings each other closer to one another and makes one a participant of the life of the other.

In this relationship, we must seek to achieve a good level of knowledge of the spouse: knowing their tastes, necessities, feelings, difficulties, opinions, goals, etc. Knowing one another well, we can avoid many conflicts and be a channel of blessing and provision of God for the other.

Developing communication

When we improve our communication in our conjugal relationship, we have a marriage growing and walking towards maturity. Most of us, because we speak since our childhood, believe that we know how to converse; this is not true. Communicating is much more than speaking. It is to listen, speak, comprehend, and to be understood.



Dialogue =

*speaking +
listening +
understanding +
being understood*

Let us see some principles for effective communication within marriage.

a. **Listen, listen in love**

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. (Jas 1:19)

The first step to communicate well is to be ready to listen.

Principles to listen:

- Do not interrupt the conversation. Pay attention to the words of the other person entirely.
- Do not deviate your eyes from the other person. Give total attention. Do not answer the phone and turn off the television or the computer.
- When listening, do not be anxious, thinking in that you will answer.

If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. (Pro 18:13)

- Force yourself to comprehend and value what the other is saying.
- Ask questions to better understand what you are hearing.
- If you disagree, do not make faces or shake your head.

One of the key to having a successful marriage is to desire to listen and comprehend what your spouse is saying. Knowing that we are heard leads us to love our neighbors even more.

I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy. (Psa 116:1)

How tremendous if we all could say the same in relation to our spouse. “I love my wife, because she has heard my voice”. “I love my husband, because he has heard my voice”.

b. Be slow in speaking

Think and pray before speaking. Do not be rushed. Give an adequate response. In this way, it is easier that the other comprehend what you are saying.

To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is! (Pro 15:23)



*The way you say things
is as important as what you say.*

c. Speak the truth in love

Always speak the truth. Do not convolute; do not disguise. Do not exaggerate or diminish. Be sincere. But speak with grace, wisdom, and love. The way you say things is as important as what you are saying, sometimes even more. That is why, Paul tells us that, “*speaking*² the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ”. (Eph 4:15)

Let all that you do be done in love. (1Co 16:14)

Before we say anything, we must gauge our hearts and ensure it is in the correct place. Everything that we say should be approved and directed by the Holy Spirit. Be careful! Some people, with the pretense of sincerity, vomit bitterness and carnality. This is a false sincerity and destroys relationships.

d. Use good words that edify

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Eph 4:29)

e. Do not leave for tomorrow what you can and should talk about today

Do not go to sleep without being at peace with your spouse.

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. (Eph 4:26)

² In the original we find the expression “*aletheuo*” that means say: say, teach, or profess the truth (COE-NEN, Lothas and Brown, Colin. International Dictionary of theology of the New Testament. Sao Paulo, Vida Nova, 2000. Pg. 2615).

f. **Disagree, yes. Disrespect, never**

It is possible to not agree with what other is saying, but we cannot strike him or disrespect him.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.
(Eph 4:31)

g. **Confess your error, forgive your spouse**

Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (Col 3:13)

Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends. (Pro 17:9).

h. **Pray for one another and with one another**

All communication will grow insofar as there is prayer, intercession, and supplication to one another. Together, before God, all differences of temperament, ideals, and tastes enrich the marriage.

Blocking communication

- a. **The lack of communion with God.** Our communion with one another is linked to our communion with God. **Solution:** To walk in the light (1Jo 1:7).
- b. **Coded messages, half and indirect words.** **Solution:** To speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15, 25).
- c. **The explosion.** This occurs when they disagree with us or they touch our defects. This is the work of flesh and sin, fruits of pride. **Solution:** To repent, confess to anger, and control yourself.
- d. **The tears.** Tears can be a self-defense or self-pity. This is more common to women. **Solution:** Seek self-control (Pro 25:28). The tearful must remember that he has the Holy Spirit and that, therefore, can control himself. And, thus, not hinder the relationship. The husband, in turn, should not despise the tears of his wife. He should discern, since some tears are legitimate and lawful. He should be respectful and patient, without bending before illicit crying. Wait for the wife to calm herself and return to the conversation.
- e. **The silence.** This is used by some as being an educated and Christian conduct. However, at times it is an escape or blackmail. It is a more common behavior among men. **Solution:** Even if he does not want to talk about it, the silent must deny himself and speak the truth in love.

- f. **The criticism.** Excessive criticism destroys relationships.
Solution: To compliment.
- g. **The television, the computer, the telephone, and other technologies that occupy time.** These things rob the little time that we have for our relationship with God and one another.
Solution: Make the best use of the time.
(Eph 5:15-16).

The standard of God for the couple is elevated because it is heavenly and divine. However, husband and wife found in Christ all grace and capacity to live His will. Gracious is the Lord.

Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God. (2Co 3:5)

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- 1Co 7:3–4; Heb 13:4
- Pro 5:18–19; Ecc 9:9; Song 4:12, 16, 7:10–12
- Gen 18:12, 24:67, 24:5.

Help for meditation

- Who created sex? For what purpose was it created?
- What does it mean that neither the man nor woman has power over their body?
- What are the precautions for a satisfactory sexual intimacy?

Catechism

What is the purpose of sexual intimacy?

Sexual intimacy was created for procreation and pleasure of the couple. And each one must seek the satisfaction of the other.

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. (1Co 7:3–4)

Understanding more

Sexual Intimacy

A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed. (He, Son 4:12)

Awake, north wind, and come, south wind! Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread everywhere. Let my beloved come into his garden and taste its choice fruits. (She, Son 4:16 - NIV)

Some are surprised when they discover that the bible has many references to sexual relation. This occurs because we live in a society totally influenced by dirty and sinful sex, uprooted of beauty, of purity, and of holiness with which it was created. This is an area created by God, that the enemy wants to distort and that God wants to fill his holiness and beauty.

Let us see what the Word tells us about sex.

God is the author of sex

God created man and woman. Therefore, He is the author of sex and sexual relation. He determined the differences between man and woman; He also established the mutual attraction, with the objective to reach His eternal purpose. But He reserved sexual relation, as an **exclusive experience for the marriage**. The sex within the marriage is holy, pure, and blessed by God.

The fact of two people love each other, does not give them the right to have sexual intimacy. To fulfill the purpose of God in sexual relation, it is necessary a pact and delivery in marriage. All sexual intimacy outside of marriage is impure, sinful, and offensive to God.

The purpose of sexual relation

The purpose of God in sexual relation of couples involves 3 aspects:

a. To seal the matrimonial union

God instituted sexual relation to seal the union of man with his wife. In this way the marriage is consummated.

b. Procreation of the race

This is directly related with sex, because it is by sexual relation that we procreate. To have children is a blessing of God (Psa 127:3-5; 1Ti 2:15). However, there are two wrong attitudes that can be taken:

- Not to want to have children for selfish motives and;

- To have many children irresponsibly (without taking into account the resources that you have and the health of the woman).

c. The pleasure and intimacy of the couple

Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. (Ecc 9:9)

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. (Pro 5:18-19)

It is important to observe that sex was not created solely for procreation. God established human sexuality with the objective of giving pleasure and joy to the couple. Let us look at some examples: Abraham and Sara (Gen 8:12), Isaac (Gen 24:67), and the newlyweds (Deu 24:5). Sexual relation is a gift of God that blesses the marriage.

Men and women are not their own masters

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. (1Co 7:3-4)

When they married, men and women lost the dominion over their own bodies. Each one belongs to the other. Each must seek the happiness of the other. There is no space for selfishness. When each one is concerned first with the other, both are supplied.

One should not deny the other the satisfaction of sexual desire, nor either to abuse. There are situations of extreme tiredness or illness where there should be understanding.

The sexual relation

In the sexual relationship there can be observed 3 distinct phases: preparation, intimate union, and relaxation.

d. Preparation

The sexual relationship does not start in bed. The whole relationship during the day will be determinant to sexual relation. The husband should dedicate special attention to his wife. She has to be loved, caressed, kissed, and encouraged with words and declarations of love. The man must create a climate where his beloved feels unique and exclusive.



*When each one
is concerned
first for the
other, both are
supplied.*

Demonstrations of affection, love, and desire, during the day, predisposes the couple to good sexual relations and good sexual relations provide the couple a full day of affection and care.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. (Song 1:2)

Most women like to be wooed and conquered. The man should show his love, by the way with which he approaches her, and not a demand of sex. The husband should take care not to be rushed, rude, or mechanical. Giving time is very important. Spending as much is necessary to physically awaken one another. Taking a bath, shaving at night, brushing teeth, take care of underwear and perfume before going to bed is a demonstration of love and respect and an expectation of intimacy.

e. Intimate union

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. (Song 2:6)

Hugs, kisses, and caresses are not only in principle, they are followed during all of sexual intimacy. Using creativity the couple can enjoy an intense and pleasurable intimacy. Create a romantic ambiance where they can give themselves one another, without interruption and with total privacy.

They should not have any hurry to get to the end. The husband should not be quick. The wife should take the time that is necessary so that she can, also, enjoy the pleasure.

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (Heb 13:4).

The intimate relation, within marriage, should also be pure. There are sexual practices that are perverse and impure. There is no necessity of any kind of impurity to have a fully satisfactory sexual relation. God made man and woman perfect and able for total satisfaction. There must be mutual respect and all details should be discussed no to assault the sensibility and modesty of the spouse.

f. Relaxation

At the end of sexual intimacy, comes an atmosphere of beauty and tranquility. This moment, more than ever, a woman needs the security and tenderness of her husband, stay close together, holding each other and simply enjoying the presence of one another.

I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go out into the fields (...) see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love. (Song 7:10-12)

Marital intimacy is a gift of the Lord for the couple, the fountain of grace, blessing, and pleasure.

Part 3 | **Raising Children**

Lesson 8

|

The responsibility and example of parents

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Pro 22:6; 2Ti 3:14–15;
- Gen 18:18–19; 1Sm 2:12–17, 22–24, 28–30; 3:13;
- Rom 5:12; Psa 51:5; Gen 8:21; Pro 22:15;
- Mat 7:28–29; Mat 23:2–4; Php 4:9.

Help for meditation

- What is the responsibility of parents?
- What was the condition to that Abraham received the promise of God in Gen18? What happened to Eli and his sons? Why? (1Sa 2, 3)
- Why do children disobey and make mistakes? (Rom 5:12; Psa 51:5)
- What is the basis of authority of parents to teach their children? How was Jesus (Mat 7:28–29)? And the scribes and Pharisees (Mat 23:2–4)?

Catechism

<p>What is involved in raising children?</p> <p><i>Raising children involves: Example, Friendship, Instruction, and Discipline.</i></p>	<p>Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Pro 22:6)</p>
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Understanding more

The responsibility and example of parents

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Pro 22:6)

Parents are responsible for their children

Raising children is among the most sublime and challenging tasks of this land. The children are not ours, they are the Lord's. And what they are for God in the future directly depends on what way we conduct now (Pro 22:6; 2Ti 3:14-15). What a tremendous responsibility!



Parents are responsible for the future and eternity of the children.

The future of all our descendants depends on how we raise our children now. We can bring blessing or curse for our home. Abraham and Eli were men whom God made promises (Gen 18:18-19, 1Sm 2:12-17, 22-24, 28-30; 3:13). But these promises were conditional on raising their children. It is impressive to see how the obedience of Abraham guaranteed the fulfillment of the promise and brought blessings, and how the negligence of Eli annulled the promise and brought a curse.

The nature of the child and the task of the parents

All men are born descendants from Adam (Rom 5:12). Therefore the children, from little babies are not inclined for good, “(...) *for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth (...)*”. (Gen 8:21).

The Word tells us that “*Folly is bound up in the heart of a child (...)*” (Pro 22:15). With all the innocence of children, they are selfish, lie, disobey their parents, and practice all kinds of evil (Psa 51:5).

Therefore, the children need to be taught, formed, and disciplined by their parents, to practice well and keep the way of the Lord.

How do we raise children?

We can define the task of raising children in four fundamental points: example, friendship, instruction, and discipline.



*Raising Children = Example +
Friendship +
Instruction +
Discipline*

In this and in the next lessons, we will address the four points above.

The example of parents

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Php 4:9)

Children learn everything with the behavior of their parents. The example teaches more than words, orders, or threats. The example is the fundamental basis for the formation of character in children. They imitate their parents in what they say and in what they do.

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. (Mat 7:28-29)

The scribes and the Pharisees, (...) not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. (Mat 23:2-4)

Why was the teaching of Jesus different from the scribes and the Pharisees? Because Jesus practiced. For this the multitude marveled at his doctrine. From there came the authority of his teaching.

The common phrase that parents say “Do as I say and not as I do” is foolish and incoherent. It was an attitude of the Pharisees, repudiated by Jesus. Teaching and charging without example generates confusion and rebellion in the hearts of children.



The example gives authority to the teaching.

It is useless for parents to charge their children that they give thanks for everything, if their parents complain every hour of life, of heat, of food, and of government. What is not taught with example is not taught.

That children may have in their parents a visible model of the life of Christ. That, upon reaching adult life, may say, “My parents are in the likeness toß Jesus”.

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- . Pro 4:3–5;
- . Deu 6:4–9; Sl 78:3–4.

Help for meditation

- . What can parents do to be friends of their children?
- . What does God commands to parents of family in Israel (Deu 6:4–9)?
- . In what way can you practice the word above?
- . In what areas must we instruct our Children?

Catechism

What do children need?

Children need time, attention, and affection.

What does instruction produce?

Instruction leads children to know God and His will.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deu 6:6–7)

Understanding more

Friendship and Instruction

The friendship of parents

When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live. (Pro 4:3-4)

a. To give time and attention

Children are the priority in the lives of parents. They are your most important ministry. They should know of the value they have for the parents, and of the pleasure that they give.

Some parents are only concerned in giving sustenance, shelter, food, study, clothes, health, and presents. And they believe that they are fulfilling their roles. The children do not have only material needs, they need their own parents, which cannot be substituted by presents, day care, or nannies.

When they are little, children have much desire for a relationship with the parents. But, if the parents are not present, they will be supplied by other people. Thus, when they are big, they may not like to be as much with their parents.

b. To give ears

Parents must dedicate time and patience to listen their children, their long stories, their questions, their discoveries, what they feel, get acquainted to what they converse with their colleagues. Finally, parents should gain a total openness, to the point that those children feel free to tell them their whole lives.

c. To make declarations of love

This is a very simple, but very important practice – to tell our children how much we love them – expressions like, “I love you,” “You are very important to me,” “I thank God for your life,” and “You are God’s gift to us” are simple and produces great fruit. We can call home just to speak with them, send cards, and telegrams. Everyone likes to know that we are loved.



*Children
need time,
attention, and
affection.*

d. To give kisses, hugs, and caring gestures

Words often times fail to express everything; gestures are needed. A hug, a caress, passing a hand over the head, holding hands with caring, kissing, carrying in arms, carrying on the back, rolling on the

floor, running together, playing catch, and hide and go seek. These things may be expressions stronger than words, even for older children.

e. To give praise and words of encouragement

Parents should praise their children when they do something good or when they, at least, try to do well. They should not only criticize and complain when they make mistakes. Many times a compliment helps as much as a reprimand. The praises helps to correctly form the character of our children. Praises also break complexes of inferiority.



Praises help to correctly form the character of children.

f. To give simple gifts

Nowadays it is very common to buy industrialized and expensive toys. Parents have lost much of their creativity. Creative gifts, made by their own parents (scrap carts, kites, tents, airplanes, horses, etc.) have a much higher value. The children like it and feel loved. Take care not to want to trade the care and attention for expensive presents.

g. To play

Even though our children have many friends, no play compares to the play with the father and mother. We have to take the time to sit in the floor and play with our children – running, playing, telling stories, in the end to play what they like. This we should do with children of all ages.

h. To leave together

As much as possible, we should take our children with us when we leave. They should walk with us. Above all else, when we are doing the work of the Lord. They should know us, to see our behavior, to see our work, to see our relationship with people. They are not an inconvenience in our lives. They are our most valuable good on earth.

This set of actions will make parents accessible to children and children to parents. This friendship and access will be indispensable in times of crisis of the children.



Children do not hinder our work. They are our main work.

The Instruction of parents

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Pro 22:6)

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them **when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise**. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deu 6:6-9)

Whereas the **example** is the fundamental basis for the formation of the life and values of children, the **instruction** directs and orders this formation. To instruct means to teach, to indoctrinate, to form, to educate, to communicate. Children do not only learn by seeing and imitating, they need to be instructed in all the aspects of life.

Our children are bombarded every day with an immense variety of worldly and sinful information and influences. They are literally catechized by a system of "anti-God" lies, in classrooms, in conversations with colleagues, in music, on TV, on the internet, in magazines, books, etc. We have to free our children of deception.

To face this influence of the world, we have to be very present and diligent in teaching. We have to teach them always, every day, and everywhere. We cannot miss any opportunity. It is indispensable we practice what is commanded in Deu 6:4-9. A child is like an empty suitcase. The luggage that will load for the rest of his life depends on the parents.

We also need special meetings during the week with our children, reserved for them to speak to them about the Lord and teach them the truth. Instruct them with the word, tell them stories, and counsel them.

It is important that our teachings are very gracious and inspired, to reach the hearts of children. For this, we depend on the Holy Spirit, praying, seeking grace and power to communicate the truth to them. We must also be kind, wise, simple, and practical. Not excessively long. The content and language should be adequate to the age of each one. When they are kids, the teaching should be permeated with illustrations and stories. When they grow up, that is full of their participation.



Discipline without instruction can produce a child obedient to the parents, but not a God-fearing child.

And we have to know well what to teach. We cannot be inattentive. We form children for God, for His service in this world. For this it is necessary to have a plan, without leaving out anything important. We must teach our children in the following areas:

a. Personal relationship with God

To teach faith and trust in God. The love of God. The submission and obedience to the word of God. Prayer and dependence on God in everything. To pray when you hurt, when you need some clothes, shoe, or toy. To teach them to give thanks for everything.

Speak of the love of God for us and of His deeds (Psa 78:3-4). We speak of His power and His greatness. Let us count about the person of Christ, his love, his emptying, his obedience, his death, and his resurrection.

We teach of the Purpose of God, the fall of man, and the forgiveness and life that we all need through Christ. Let us tell our children the true stories of the works of the Lord instead of the typical children stories of the world.

b. Character

To teach them to not to be proud, lie, be selfish, fearful, fastidious, or lazy. Teaching also to be meek and submissive to authorities; teaching to be humble, truthful, generous, courageous, responsible, hardworking, studious, and organized; teaching to be careful in speech, honest, just, forgiving, and pure in dealing with sex; teaching to say no to the pressure of friends and colleagues; to have good self-esteem (not to be boastful nor complexes), to have self-control, to use time well, and professionalize themselves.



*We depend on the Holy Spirit,
seeking grace, power,
and wisdom to teach our children.*

c. Relationships with people

Teaching to love others, to serve, and to have compassion for those who suffer. Teaching also to be kind, gentle, to greet people, to respect others, especially older and disabled people, and to be polite – expressions like “excuse me”, “please”, and “thank you”. Teaching to treat everyone well and not to make partiality, to be friendly, to make friends, to honor others, and praise them; to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep, to rejoice when others are

honored and presented. Teaching them to know to suffer injustice, to acknowledge mistakes, and to ask forgiveness to the offended.

d. Higiene Hygiene and personal habits

Teaching to have good nutrition, eating everything, politely; teaching to be hygienic, brushing your teeth, taking bath, etc. teaching also to care of cleaning, not to dirty the floor, to care for and organize your things (toys, books, and clothing); teaching to dress with decency and without vanity.

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Pro 22:6)

Let us practice the commandments above and believe in its fruit.

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- . Eph 6:4;
- . Pro 3:12; 13:24; 22:15; 23:13,14;
- . Pro 19:18; 20:30; 29:15,17.

Help for meditation

- . What does a father that loves his son?
- . Why is necessary to discipline?
- . What are the fruits of discipline?
- . What are the consequences of not disciplining the children?

Catechism

<p>What are the fruits of discipline?</p> <p><i>Discipline gives wisdom, removes foolishness, leads to obedience, and delivers from death.</i></p>	<p>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. (Pro 23:13–14)</p>
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Understanding more

The Discipline

Eph 6:4; Pro 3:12; 13:24; 19:18; 20:30; 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:15,17.

Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. (Pro 13:24)

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. (Pro 22:15)

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. (Pro 23:13-14)

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. (Pro 29:15)

The example, the friendship, the affection, the instruction, and good conversation of parents do not eliminate the necessity of discipline. The children need discipline when they disobey.

The relationship of a child with Christ prospers insofar as he obeys to the parents. Jesus lives and works in the life of an obedient child.



Discipline is a commandment of the Lord. It gives wisdom, strips foolishness, leads to obedience, and frees the children from death.

Obedience is not optional, nor is it limited to what the child considers just, it happens in all situations. The authority of the parents was given by God to form and discipline their children and has all of His support.

The major problem in being human is the rebellion against legitimate authority. Parents should not permit rebellion in his home. It is the responsibility of the parents to free their children of rebellious attitudes.

Some modern psychologists say that discipline leaves trauma in child. This is a false and unfounded affirmation. They confuse discipline with beating. The child needs to know its limits and learn to obey. What makes trauma is anger, aggressive words, and bitterness of parents who have lost control, and do not know more what else to do with rebellious and spoiled children.



Who loves, discipline.

Consequences of lack of discipline

- It brings the judgment of God – 1Sm 2:22-23; 3:13-14. God charges the parents for the omission of discipline.
- It brings suffering, perdition, and death for the child – Pro 23:13-14.
- It brings shame to the parents – Pro 29:15.
- It provokes anger and bad behavior in parents and in children Eph 6:4. The father or mother that yells at their children, generally, is a father that is already tired because of their disobedience and not applied the discipline when the children needed it.

When to discipline?

- a. Whenever the child disobeys an instruction or order given.**

Discipline must be applied in each disobedience. It is not the ultimate measure, when shouts and threats do not solve. In truth, there should be no shouting or threats. The child must learn to obey all the order in the first word of their parents, without the parents having to yell, and without the child complaining. We can teach our children to obey the first order, only in the second order, only screaming, or never.

- b. Whenever the child has wrong attitudes of rebellion.**

The rebellion goes beyond of refusing to obey a directly order. The attitudes of rebellious such as “tantrum”, “stalling”, “faces of protest”, “pouting”, murmuring against the order of the parent, disrespect, backtalk, alteration of voice with parents and insistences must also be disciplined.

What are the steps to discipline?

The correct discipline should include five steps:

- a. Explanation.** The child should know the why of discipline.
- b. Application of discipline.** The intensity should be proportional to the offence.
- c. Prayer.** The child should confess his sin and know that the blood of Christ cleanses his heart.
- d. Forgiveness.** They should know that from that time there is no more guilt for what occurred and that they are loved by their parents.
- e. Reconciliation.** This means leaving hugged and kissed by the parents. This should also be oriented to repair offences, to ask

forgiveness, to restitute petty theft and restore broken friendships.

How to discipline?

The discipline should be:

- a. **Immediately.** The discipline should be administered immediately after the offence or disobedience. It should not be delayed. The formation of our children is more important than any other domestic work or care to disciples. The discipline should only be delayed, when we are not in the home, and the location is inconvenient.

Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.
(Ecc 8:11)

- b. **Without anger.** The discipline applied with anger will not be a correct expression of love of the parents. It is necessary to calm yourself before applying any discipline. The discipline has the objective to correct the child and not unload on them our hassles (Jas 1:20).



*The discipline should be immediate
and without anger.*

- c. **In particular.** The objective is to correct and not to humiliate or ridicule the child publicly.
- d. **Without yelling of the child.** The child must accept and submit themselves to discipline. Crying is perfectly acceptable. But there is no room for that child to scream, kick, run away, or protest.
- e. **Without sorrow or threats of the parents.** The parents should not utter expressions of bitterness, resentment, or hostility against their child. The love of parents does not change with the circumstances. The forgiveness of the parents should be guaranteed.
- f. **With unanimity.** The parents have to show unanimity in discipline. The woman should have the care to not contradict her husband, and the husband should support his wife, especially in the presence of the child.
- g. **Proportional to the offense.** There are offences of different gravity. Disobedience to an old order, which was forgotten, should be disciplined with less seriousness than a “face to face”

resistance. There should also be more seriousness for lies and the concealment of errors.

Discipline is an act of faith. We must do so in total dependence of the Holy Spirit.

All aspects of the Council of God for raising children are a treasure that we must keep and practice with fidelity. However, we must keep clear that it is not us that do the work in the interior of our children. Jesus said, “*Apart from me you can do nothing*” (Joh 15:1b). And Psa 127:1 says, “*Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain*”.



*All our faith and
trust are in the
Lord and in the
action of his Spirit
in our children.*

In these texts, the Lord is not dispensing us of doing our part and fulfilling our responsibility. The workers must build the house and the watchman should oversee the city. However, we cannot put our trust in ourselves and in our capacity. We have no way to transform and convert our children. This is work of the Holy Spirit.

This reality also points us to apply ourselves to daily prayer and intercession for the children, with zeal and dedication – it is a fundamental part of our mission. Let us be faithful and obedient and put all our faith and trust in the Lord and in the action of his Spirit in our children.

Lesson 11 | **The care of adolescent children**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Psa 127: 3–5;
- Eph 6:4; Col 3:21;
- Ecc 11:9, 12:1.

Help for meditation

- What are the biggest difficulties that parents of adolescent children feel?
- What is the mission of parents in this phase?
- How can parents maintain a good, cheerful, and pleasant relationship with their adolescent children?
- What do you do when the adolescent disobeys?

Catechism

What do adolescent children need?

Adolescent children need direction, firmness, friendship, and the affection of parents.

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. (Psa 127:3–4)

Understanding more

The care of adolescent children

Adolescence is a step of many changes, both in body and mind. In this time the youth begins to develop independence, both emotional and with the protection of the parents. This makes part of the path to maturity. But, in this time, there is also discovery of the world, the increasing temptations of the flesh with their passion and of conflicts of rebellion against all types of authority, including the parents.

This time is also covered by special importance because, generally, it is in it that the youth takes their personal decision to be a disciple of Christ for the rest of their life. It is a time of leading the children to think in God and in the future of their lives in a mature way.

Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. (Ecc 11:9)

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them". (Ecc 12:1)

From the age of 18, the youth continue under parental care, but begin to have a more independent life. Parents will need to learn to "hold the reins" slowly and in the right measure, trusting in the formation they gave their children during the previous years.

Also in this time, some children that yield to temptation are inclined to hide the truth from their parents and the church, thus commencing a dangerous path of lies and hypocrisy.

For all this, it is very important that the parents are not surprised with this phase of their children, and not have wrong reactions. It is the moment, more than ever, to depend on God and seek His wise counsel.

Firmness and affection

It is the time to be very firm and very affectionate with the children. The most common error that we encounter in parents of adolescents is the contrary of firmness and affection – it is looseness and roughness.

This error manifests itself when the children, suffering the pressures of this world, question, “Why can’t I go to the movies with my colleagues?”; “Why can I not use this fashion?”; or yet, “But, is this sin?” They want God, but also like the things of this world. In this moment, many times, the parents err: not prohibit the children, nevertheless becoming upset with them. In truth, parents should, with all firmness, affection, and grace, put the necessary limits for keeping their children from the dangers and evils that they do not see.

Parents should not be afraid to set limits. If they are loose, they will be upset with their children, become rough with them, and the children will be lost to the world.



Adolescent children need the direction, firmness, friendship, and affection of the parents.

Clear direction for life

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. (Psa 127:3–5)

The youth need worthy models and clear and firm direction for life. The adolescents are very preoccupied about living in the present. They do not perceive that youth is a time of sowing. They do not know to place long-term goals. It is up to parents the responsibility of giving direction. They are like arrows in the hands of a warrior (Psa 127:4). The warrior, before releasing the arrow, directs with precision, and then releases it in the exact moment, not before, not after. While the arrow is in the hand of the warrior, he can guard it and influence it. After he release it, he can just observe and intercede for it.

Areas to be directed

It is necessary to seek the help of God to form, with real depth, these areas in the lives of children, not simply by parental impositions. Everything with grace and wisdom.

- a. **Relationship with God and with the Church.** Before everything, teach them to love and create a profound relationship with God, through prayer and the Word. The child should also be taught to commit himself and involved with the Church. They should learn to respect the leaders and the other brothers, participate all the events and cooperate with the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

- b. **Family relationship.** Teach them to develop good habits and cultivate a good relationship with other family members, to be respectful with everyone and to assume personal responsibility in domestic tasks, in care for and maintaining the family property.



*Children are like
arrows in the hand
of a warrior. They
need precise
direction in all
areas, before being
released.*

c. **Study and work.** Guide them to study and prepare themselves for the future, even if they do not like to study. The young can learn to control themselves and overcome discouragement that leads many to abandon their studies. They need to have in mind that this is preparing them for the future. The parents should direct them to be a diligent worker, punctual, dutiful, honest, and well-disposed; not lazy and accommodated.

d. **Character.** Form in them fundamental values of character – to be truthful, honest, courageous, pure, respectful, subject to authorities, meek, humble, organized, disposed to serve, and that use their time well. To be abiding of the commitments and complete their tasks. Warn them against the influence of the world – fashion, music, films, magazines, friendships, and conversations.

A joyful and relaxed environment

With all this firmness and direction, parents should take care not to transform the house into barracks. Everything should be showered with



*It is fundamental
to give the Word of
God to the youth.
Prophesizing and
ministering with
faith.*

much affection and relationship. It is important that there is an environment with play and relaxation. This does not diminish the authority of the parents; on the contrary, it brings the children closer to the parents. Who bears to live in a sad and heavy environment? The youth are joyful by nature, they like to laugh and play. It is something legitimate that parents should also seek, promoting much laughter and healthy jokes. The life with the Lord is a joyful life (Rom 14:17; Gl 5:22).

...The joy of the LORD is your strength. (Neh 8:10)

Parents should not impose their tastes upon their children. Tastes are different than principles. When possible, it is good to comply with the tastes and preferences of the children (evidently, nothing that offends the Lord). This gladdens and exercises

them, in a healthy way, to discern between good and evil. (Eph 6:4; Col 3:21)

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

Instruction with the Word

The youth receive daily, through school, friends, neighbors, television, the internet, the thoughts and lies of the world – rebellion, sensuality, materialism, and pride. It is necessary, therefore, to fill the mind and heart of children, in the same way, daily with the Word of God. Lead them to know the Lord and to love His truth.

It is fundamental to minister the Word of God to the youth, read the Scripture together, prophesying and ministering with faith. It is interesting having a curriculum of studies, studying the booklets, and meeting together for prayer and instruction. Without this, they will not have the faith necessary to position themselves as a disciple of Christ, when the moment to do so arrive.

Alternative correction of adolescent children

Children should know that disobedience will always be treated according to what God determined. If children are not corrected, God will correct the parents (1Sm 3:13-14). Older children, uncorrected, will grow distant from the parents, and the parents from them. This marks the beginning of the growth of the seed of rebellion in the heart of children.

The correction of adolescent children can pass through different instances, which we deal with below.

a. Verbal admonishment

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

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend (...) (Pro 27:5-6a)

This is a first instance. It is not about yelling nor arguing, it is leading a child to comprehend their error. It can go from a serious advice to a strong reprimand and it must be something coated of seriously with wisdom and grace of God. Appeal to the fear of God and point to the love for justice and to what is right and true.

b. Admonishment with the removal of something that they like

This type of measure has the objective to bring greater reflection in their error. Whenever possible, the privation must be related with the evil that the child has committed (e.g. restricting leisurely outings, internet, etc.). Be careful not to cut something that involves their spiritual or intellectual formation, for example, prohibiting going to commitments to the church or to school. Also, do not put as a punishment a job or a normal task, to not transmit the idea that work is punishment.

c. Physical correction

Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. (Pro 13:24)

A man of great wrath will pay the penalty, for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again (...). (Pro 19:18)

This type of discipline, in adolescent children, still is a possible measure, when necessary. However, once the adolescent normally no longer disobeys much, it will eventually be less used.

The older the child, the more careful should be the moment of disciplining. It cannot be a fight, it should be a gracious moment, without anger, with a good word, followed by repentance, prayer, forgiveness, and reconciliation – a true encounter with God.

However, with adolescent children who were not disciplined as children, this correction may not be the most adequate measure. In these cases, there are other disciplinary measures that can be applied. The parents should depend of God and seek advice.

d. Discipline in the church

For children already baptized, besides domestic discipline, in accordance with the error practiced, there is the need to take things to the church, so the child is disciplined as a disciple. Parents cannot solely administer the sins of converted children. They have a commitment to the church.



Admonition is not yelling or arguing. It is leading a child to comprehend their error, with seriousness, wisdom and grace.



Parents cannot solely administer the sins of the converted children. They are part of the church.

To cultivate friendship and openness with the children

To develop with the children a sincere friendship should be a priority. The communication and the instruction will have much more effect within a real and sincere friendship and it will provide an environment of trust for they are always sincere and transparent with their parents.

For this, dedication is necessary – go out together for walks, beaches, pizza, sports, etc. The father and the mother individually go out with each son and daughter. Time together is fundamental for having openness and good conversations. Gifts and cards also help to demonstrate feelings and cultivate friendship.

It is very important to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:25) and talk about everything with them. Listen to the children with calmness, attention, and comprehension. All questions should be answered, always being sincere.

When parents err, it is essential to confess and recognize their mistakes before their children. They are no longer kids and realize when the parents err. This recognition does not diminish the authority of the parents, on the contrary.

Another aspect is not to speak of children to others – do not expose their mistakes; do not recount their feelings, passions, secrets, and opinions; do not embarrass them. Parents, also, should be sensitive and praise your children. This will cheer them up to continue.

The raising of children, goes beyond our natural capacity. But if we accept this task with faith and in dependence on God, we receive all the grace needed to realize it. And we will lead our children on the eternal way. Alleluia!



*If we accept the task of raising
children with faith and in dependence on God,
we will receive all the grace to realize it.*

Part 4 | **The standard
of God
for singles**

Lesson 12 | **The standard of God for the children**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Eph 6:1–3; Col 3:20;
- Exo 20:12; 21:17; Deu 21:18–21; 1Ti 5:4,8; Pro 23:22;
- Pro 1:8; 6:20; 13:1; 15:20; 19:26; 30:11, 17.

Help for meditation

- What is submission? What does it mean to honor the parents?
- What does it take to develop a good relationship of friendship with the parents?
- Cite ways as children can honor their parents.

Catechism

What does God expect from children in relation to their parents?

That the children obey and honor their parents.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” (Eph 6:1–3)

Understanding more

The standard of God for the children

In the beginning, God had created the relationship of parents and children to be an elevated relationship of love, affection, and care. Children happy, supplied and parents joyful with the life of their children. However, like all areas in the life of man, this also was spoiled by sin.

Many of the youth today are disobedient and disrespectful to parents, this is a tendency in the present world. It is written that in the end times, man would be *“disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless”* (2Ti 3:1-4). But God wants conduct the family life of a disciple, providing him everything that is necessary for him to live his role of child after His heart.



The will of God for the children is to obey and honor their parents.



God sees the rebellion and disrespect of children to their parents as being against Himself.

This subject is very important to God. We can see that He showed His will for the children right in the ten commandments (Exo 20:12); there, He did not say anything for husbands, wives, or parents. But, for rebellious children, He had established a most severe penalty – death (Deu 21:18-21; Exo 21:17). This expresses the seriousness with what God sees this subject. Although, in these days, the rebellious children no longer are stoned, God feels Himself equally offended and He will judge these children. The Lord sees the rebellion and disrespect of children to their parents as a direct offense against Himself.

The will of God for the children, in relation to their parents, basically involve 3 aspects – obedience, honor, and the resulting promise.

Obedience

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (Eph 6:1)

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (Col 3:20)

Submission is a decision, result of own will, through which we subject ourselves to the government of another person. This is already the attitude of everyone who is born again. It, now, is required, once again, so that the will of God is realized. Obedience to parents is fruit of this attitude.

There is not any humiliation about it, but the recognition of an authority that God put in our life, for care and guidance. Jesus, being the Lord, when young, was obedient and submissive to His parents (Luk 2:51); why we, His servants, not subject ourselves to our parents? The difficulty in submitting ourselves has origins in the heart of Satan, in the root of pride and rebellion.

God declares that it is right that the children obey their parents (Eph 6:1) and it is pleasing to Him (Col 3:20).

The testimony of the life of Christ through the life of disciple cause much more impact in his parents than mere words.

It is important to emphasize that obedience is not exclusive to children of converted parents. The principle is general, applied to children of parents disciple or not. The fact that some parents had not yet surrendered themselves at the feet of the Lord, does not give children the right to disobey. The only situations in which the disciple should not obey their parents are those where the order of the parents contradicts the will of God expressed in the Bible – for example, if the father commands them to lie or practice sexual immorality (Act 4:18–20). In a case like this, the child cannot obey their parents, although suffering the consequences for this.

Honor

Eph 6:2–3; Exo 20:12.

“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” (Eph 6:2–3)

The will of God is that the children have their parents in highest consideration. They should consider the wisdom and experience that they have not acquired in school, but rather in life-long learning. Missing and hitting, winning and losing, evaluating and correcting, they are going to aggregate elements of their experience to lead others (Pro 1:8; 6:20).

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching. (Pro 1:8)

What peace and blessing enjoyed by the children that honor their parents! What joy savored by the parents of a child wise and respectful! What glory the Lord receives of a child after His heart!




*It is right the
children obey
their parents.*

*Obedience must
be in everything.
This is pleasing
to God.*

A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother. (Pro 15:20)

Children should learn to be grateful for their parents. This will make it easier to honor them. They must learn to put greater weight in the virtues than in the weaknesses of their parents.

It is important to note that the commandment of God is that the children honor their parents, independent of their being admirable or not. Do not confuse honor with admiration. There are parents that cannot be appreciated because of all the injustice that practice: some practice coarse sins; others already offended their children in various ways; there are even those who are criminals. These parents may not be admired, but God requires that his children honor them as parents. When a disciple of Jesus forgives and honors a father or mother, the name of Christ is honored and glorified.



*When a disciple
forgives and
honors a parent,
the name of Christ
is honored and
glorified.*

The honor by parents is manifested by cordial, kind, and respectful treatment. The lack of is expressed through gestures, rudeness, arrogance, haughtiness, and disdain (Pro 13:1; 19:26; 30:11), attitudes very common in the world.

The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures. (Pro 30:17)

Many parents, when they reach an advanced age, are abandoned and considered as a weight in the lives of the children. Especially when they are sick and need special care. The word of the Lord urges the children that, when the parents come to be old, not to despise them, but rather care for them and reward them (Pro 23:22; 1Ti 5:4,8).



*A disciple honors their parents
respecting, serving, and loving.*

It is necessary to develop a loving relationship with their parents, expressing the love in gestures and words. It is good for a father or mother “to hear” expressions of love on the part of their child. Many times the children let pass opportunities to demonstrate their affection and care. As practical attitudes we have:

- Tell them how important they are;
- Speak well of them to others;
- Present them special dates outside;

- Provide them, spontaneously, little services that they are in need;
- Spend time with them;
- Talk about what they like;
- Prepare them a special food;
- A flower, a kiss, a gesture, a card, chocolate, are ways to transmit love, gratitude, and appreciation.

For friendship to grow, it is necessary that the children are determined to approach of their parents and create situations in where they may come together to develop companionship and friendship.

The time of youth at home is very short. Therefore, it is important to take advantage these years of youth to secure their friendship well and honor their parents.

The promise

That it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land. (Eph 6:3)

To honor the parents is the first commandment with promise. Whoever does it can be secured that they will reap blessings and will live long.

We should do nothing for interest, what burns in the heart of a disciple is to please God, therefore the promise is not the motivation to obey the commandment. But, yes, it is a blessing of the Lord. Let us enjoy this blessing.

Specific orientations

a. Domestic tasks

From little kids, the children are directed to assume specific obligation. It is necessary that the children pay attention to the orientation of the parents, and do exactly what they ask. With time, these obligations should become more voluntary.

It is pleasing to parents that the children do more than what is asked of them. Not only leaving the room tidy, but also helping in the work of the mother – helping wash clothes, cleaning the house, shopping, and even in the kitchen.

When the children are small, the mother does everything. But it is an injustice to permit that she continue to do so alone. The children can and



*The children can
and should assume
the responsibility
for common tasks
in the home.*

should assume responsibility for common tasks in the home. This honors the parents and the Lord.

b. Studies

Studying is the principal job of children, therefore, they should do it with dedication. Many young people think that it is sufficient to do the minimum necessary to pass. This is mediocrity. It is a lazy attitude. The effort should be to achieve the most of their capacity and achieve all of the knowledge possible.

The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. (Pro 13:4)

c. Work

Although some youth are under the care of their parents until they finish their studies, it is important that they start to work at an early age, even if they are a few hours a day. If they can meet their own expenses, it will be a great help to the parents and bring a feeling of dignity and self-esteem. Work brings maturity.

d. Relationship between brothers

A good relationship between the children also constitutes honoring the parents. *“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”* (Psa 133:1). Should to cultivate, between the brothers, a healthy environment, where the family ties will be strengthened, forming a solid friendship that will last a lifetime.



A good relationship between brothers, honors the parents and forms a solid friendship that will last a lifetime.

For this, we must develop an environment rich in affection, care, service, and mutual respect. We must flee from fights, clashes, and attacks. When there are conflicts, they should be resolved with a humble and forgiving heart, according to the Word of the Lord.

All this also honors and is reason for great joy for parents.

e. Gratitude

While the child is under the parental care, they will enjoy the benefits and natural privileges. Some of these, their parents cannot leave to provide. Others, however, are conceded to the children by an attitude of love, caring, and grace of parents.

It is right that the children recognize and express gratitude for all service and goods that they receive from their parents, throughout their lives.

In addition, the children receive much more than they actually need. However, many do not recognize this, they think that is the obligation of the parents. Parents have an obligation to provide food, clothing, education, and residence while the children cannot get this for themselves. Anything past this is grace.

It would be very good that the children supported by their parents after adulthood, some even helped to attend college, recognize and express a special gratitude for the benefit received.



*A grateful heart of a child pleases the Lord and
brings great joy to the parents.*

Lesson 13 | **The friendship between singles**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- 1Th 4:3–6; Mat 5:28–29; Gal 5:19–21; Col 3:5–6; Joh 17:14–16; 2Co 6:14–15; Pro 15:22.

Help for meditation

- What is dating for the world? What does God think about this?
- What are prostitution, impurity, and lasciviousness?
- How many civil states exist for God? How should the relationship between singles be?
- What is the way for the single to marry? How should the observation be?

Catechism

What is the will of God for the relationship of the single?

To develop good friendships with holiness and purity.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. (1Th 4:3–6)

Understanding more

Friendship between singles

In the way of marriage, there may be three types of relationships among singles – friendship, friendship with observation, and friendship with engagement.

Friendship

The first type of relationship is pure and simple friendship, nothing more than that. The effort of young men and women is to enjoy a healthy relationship, free of any emotional pressure, to grow and mature in the Lord.

The environment produced among young men and women should be rich in friendship. Seek this good communion where young men learn to be gentlemen, gentle, cordial, and polite; and where the sisters learn to be gentle and discrete. And all grow without emotional pressures or ulterior motives.



*The first type of relationship
is pure and simple friendship.*

A relationship as such will produce edification and maturity. They can pray, edify, prophesize, and serve. It is important that there is no on the part of the brethren, single or married, the irresponsible behavior of instigating and pressuring the single to a premature relationship of observation or engagement. This, which we call “organized cheering”, can disrupt the life of many brothers.

In this environment of many friendships, may arise an interest for someone, which later on can be transformed into observation.

The relationship with the world

We must be very careful with the world. We are in the world, but we do not belong to it. We have contact with people of this world, but we do not have communion with them.

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (Joh 17:14-16)

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? (2Co 6:14-15)

Our relationship with the outside should be limited and have the objective for proclamation of the gospel. Not to enjoy a friendship.

Dating in the world

Among the meanings of the word “dating”, that appear in the dictionary, include the following: to flirt, to date, to inspire love or become loving; to fall in love with; to seduce or leave yourself seduced; to attract or feel attracted.

In practice, we find the following meaning for dating in the modern world: it is the relationship between two youth, with the objective of diversion and pleasure, in which, in the majority of the time, exist the freedom for physical contact reserved for married people, without the responsibilities and the commitment of marriage. And, sadly, we find the same practice in the middle of those who declare themselves Christians.

It is necessary, therefore, to reconceptualize dating in the light of the Scripture. For this we see the contrast between the vision of the world and the vision of the Scripture with relation to this subject.

For the world, dating is part of the natural development of the individual, where love is confused with passion and sex, and where motivations are concentrated on the satisfaction of personal desires and needs.

The Holy Scriptures call this dating a sin for being full of seduction, impurity, lasciviousness, fornication, greed, and selfishness (Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5-6). Physical intimacy is exclusive to marriage. The people dating are single. Every physical intimacy in dating is impure and offends God.

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ... that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)

Through all this, we do not use the word dating among us, for consider it inadequate; we call it a commitment. This is the pact assumed between two people that love each other, with the objective to marry and



*What the world
calls dating, the
Holy Scripture calls
sin, to be full of
impurity,
lasciviousness, and
selfishness.*

pursue, as a family, cooperating with God for the realization of His purpose.

In reading the Scripture, we realize that for God there are only three types of civil states – single, widowed, and married. There is not an intermediate condition. The committed are single.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (1Th 4:3-8)



Physical intimacy is exclusive to marriage. Every physical intimacy in dating is impure and offends God.

Passion

Passion is a feeling, an emotion. A feeling emerging is normal; however, a disciple has control over all their passions. Being dominated and directing life by feelings and passions is absolutely wrong. Every passion should be submissive to the will of God and every passion in discord with the will of God should be abandoned.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer 17:9)

Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. (Pro 23:19)

The world says to follow the heart. But the Word of the Lord warns us saying that the heart is deceitful and that we must guide it rightly and not be guided by it.

Friendship with observation

The second type of relationship between singles, we call observation. This relationship also is a simple friendship, but with another ingredient – an interest and a sense of more acute observation with relation to a certain brother/sister. The friendship will be developed and deepened, seeking to better know the observed person.

The observation has two phases.

a. The first phase of observation

The initial phase of observation is a phase in which the young person is not defined by the observed person. Therefore, it is very important that the observation is discrete and invisible. Only the discipler, the companion, and the parents of the youth themselves should be involved to help them observe and discern what is necessary in the other person.

In this phase, the disciple must not give “hints” to whom they are observing. There should not be declarations that compromise or that arouse interest (e.g. I like you, I was just thinking about you, etc.). This is very important for two fundamental reasons – first, because the natural tendency of who is being observed is to create a “mask,” impeding the vision of who observes; second, because it can awaken in the heart of the person observed a feeling or an expectation that may not be met. In this moment, the disciple should not compromise his word (Mat 5:37). We need to be responsible with regard to this matter.

If, during this phase of observation, the disciple reaches the conclusion that it is not the person with which he wants to marry, he should “get out of the observation” without leaving marks. If he acted with the proper discretion, he will not leave injury after the end of observation.

If, during this observation, there arises a real interest by the other person, he can pass onto the final phase.

b. The final phase of observation

The observation should be followed discretely, until there is a real interest and a good level of definition on the part of the one who has the initiative to observe. If the interest materializes, for a confirmation of their convictions, the young person may pass to the final of observation, less discreet.

In that moment, he will solicit the endorsement of the parents, close ties and authorities connected to both the parties, so the relationship can become closer, more visible, to grow in friendship, mutual knowledge, and conviction of decision.

In this phase, both will know the interest of one or of two, however there is still no commitment for marriage. Also, this is not announced publicly and should be of short duration – 3 to 4 months, at most. If any brother asks, he will be informed that they are in the final phase of observation.



The first phase of observation is discrete and invisible. There should be no compromising declarations.

In many cases, the one who took the initiative to observe, may not yet know if it is reciprocated. The other party can request a time to observe and think. If, at the end, there is no interest from the other, it is important that the one that is able to observe has the emotional maturity to endure some disappointment, without getting discouraged, or have his faith shaken.

c. What should I observed?

Observation should be sincere and judicious. Be careful not to be impaired by the feeling of the heart. As the saying goes, “love is blind, but marriage will open your eyes”.

The following, we have a list with important characteristics to observe in the life of all young man or woman. Some of these, although they only appear in one of the columns, apply to both.

YOUNG WOMAN	YOUNG MAN
. Faithful and stable in faith	. Faithful and stable in faith
. Helpmeet and companion	. Loving and unselfish
. Meek and submissive	. Not wrathful
. Good relationship with parents	. Good relationship with parents
. Joyful and grateful to God	. Submissive to authorities
. Not quarrelsome	. Courageous and decided
. Respectful	. Has priorities in order
. Hardworking and responsible	. Hardworking and responsible
. Orderly and hygienic	. Acts by faith and principles, not by impulses
. Discrete and feminine	. Masculine, without “gestures”
. Desire to make disciples	. Desire to make disciples

d. What should I do in the observation?

The disciple is moving to take of the most important decisions of his life; then he should place his knee on the floor and look to God to not be deceived by his heart.

The council is one of the principal elements in this moment. The disciple should talk with their parents, his discipler, companion, leaders and pastors and listen attentively, considering each word. He should not have hurry nor anxiety.

Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.
(Pro 15:22).

This is time to seek conviction before God, to be sure that this is the right person to marry. It is not still time to give your heart wings. Besides, to like is necessary, but not sufficient to marry.

What to do at the conclusion of observation?

If, after critical observation, the conclusion is “yes, this is the right person”, then under council and direction of parents and the authorities in the church, the disciples may declare themselves, assuming the commitment for marriage.

This other type of relationship – friendship with commitment – will be addressed in the next lesson.



*The choice of the future spouse
is one of the most important decisions of life.
Much prayer and seeking of council
are fundamental.*

Lesson 14 | **The Commitment for Marriage**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- 1Th 4:3–6; Mat 5:37.

Help for meditation

- What two principles are involved in the relationship of the committed? Why?
- Who can be committed?
- What is the objective of this relationship? How should it be?
- What care should there be on the question of physical contact?

Catechism

What principles are involved in the relationship of the committed?

The relationship of engagement involves two principles: the commitment to marriage and holiness.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. (1Th 4:3–6)

Understanding more

The Commitment for Marriage

Friendship with Commitment

This is the phase of the relationship between a young man and woman that choose to marry one another. In truth, it is the development of friendship that already existed between them, and now it will grow in the direction to marriage.

This relationship involves two principles:

- **Commitment.** They are committed to one another for marriage. It is not a simple relationship, without responsibility, for personal satisfaction.

Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No';
anything more than this comes from evil.
(Mat 5:37)

- **Holiness.** A relationship without physical intimacy until marriage.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (1Th 4:3-8)



*This relationship
involves two
principles:
commitment and
holiness.*

Who can commit?

In the first place, a disciple to commit should be founded and firm in the Lord. A commitment between a disciple and some that is not converted to Lord Jesus cannot occur (2Co 6:14).

In the second place, they must consider the opinions of the parents, pastors, and discipler, who should evaluate their condition to develop a committed relationship.

And in the third place, the young man should be forwarded with a professional life. In other words, he is already working, finishing college, vocational course, or learning a craft with clear perspective of a future that will leave him able to supply the family (people that are doing high school or prep courses does not fit).

How is the relationship of the committed?

In this phase of the relationship, they should know even more, growing in friendship and in service. They will be one more joint and ligament, so there must be between the two – prayer, edification, goals, etc. They should do the work and to continue cooperating with the purpose of God.

Once committed, disciples continue as singles; therefore, they should not be isolated and, on the contrary, should continue relating with the other brothers and sisters, as before.

It is fundamental that there is a lot of conversation. It is an important time to exercise the dialogue, speaking their minds, agreeing and disagreeing. There must be exhortation, admonishment, and edification, all with love and respect, for the glory of God. Discuss about your plans, values, and ideals for the future together. Prepare for this blessing that is called marriage. But be careful to not exclusively focus on the conversations in marriage, hindering the mutual understanding and service to God.

What type of physical relationship can there be?

Physical intimacy is reserved exclusively for marriage. Before this there should be no more than expressions of care and affection. The committed cannot have more physical intimacy than they would have with any other brother.

Care should be taken in this phase. Demonstrations of caring do not awaken sensuality. **It is necessary honesty and desire to please God.** Both should help one another, in order to maintain a holy and pure relationship before the Lord. If is necessary, one should not have the fear of stopping the other. They never should think they are strong and can walk close to the limit. This is a mistake, a trap that should not fall.



*There must be fear and care
not to defraud one another
and a sincere desire to please God.*

The committed can express their special love and affection, by way of gifts, letters, and declarations, always maintaining a holy language.

The principal is the deep desire to be holy, and the fear and care not to defraud one another. Holiness pleases God and rejoices His heart.

a. What can they not do?

- . Kiss on the mouth;
- . Staying embraced;
- . Exchanging caresses;
- . Staying alone;
- . Talk about things that excite.

Flee from sexual immorality (...) (1Co 6:18a)

b. What can they do?

- . Everything that they do with other brothers.

(...) as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity (1Ti 5:2)

Part 5 | **The Presence of Christ in the home**

Lesson 15 | **The presence of Christ in the home**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Deu 6:6–9; Mar 10:13–16;
- Gen 8:20–22; 12:7–8; Job 1:5;
- Jas 24:15; At 11:12–15; 16:14–15, 30–34.

Help for meditation

- What are the principle characteristics of a home that enjoys the presence of God?
- In what way can parents exercise a spiritual priesthood in the home?
- What is discipleship in the family?
- What can happen in family worship?

Catechism

What should parents do as priests?

Parents should speak of the children to the Lord and speak of the Lord to the children.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deu 6:6–7)

Understanding more

The presence of Christ in the home

A Christian home is the place where the presence of Christ is the strongest characteristic and the principal attraction. Each member of the family has conscience of His presence, government, and direction.

Everything that we talked about in previous chapters is important for putting in order the family, but is not sufficient. What makes the family to be alive and spiritual is the presence of Christ acting within us, transforming us into his likeness.

Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. (Psa 127:1)

Just like the psalmist expresses, without the presence of Christ in the home, all actions, aspirations, and hopes are frustrated. How can we experience the presence of God in the home daily? What is our responsibility to make this happen?

Parents are the priests of the home

Before God established a priestly order in Israel, the parents acted as priests of their home. Let's note some examples: Noah (Gen 8:20-22); Abraham (Gen 12:7,8); Job (Job 1:5).

The function of priest is to present man to God and God to man. Parents (husband and wife) have a daily priestly responsibility before their children. God commissioned them to form and raise them, in order that they are part of the family of God. In this function, the parents need to intercede daily for the children before the Lord and communicate the Word of God daily to the children. All this, in an environment of thanksgiving, praise, and worship in the home.

The constant witnessing of the life of Christ

The presence of Christ should be a noticeable reality in the life of the parents, manifested through:

- Intense love and dependency on the Lord, praying, reading, and reveling in His Word in His presence daily;
- Permanent attitude of praise and thanksgiving, with faith, in all and any circumstances, in joy or difficulty;
- Upright life and a character of integrity;
- Good use of time, money, television, internet, etc.;
- Commitment and submission to the church of Christ;

- Zeal, passion, and involvement in the work of God;
- Expectation and desire of the return of Lord and for all that is eternal.

God also wants to be revealed in a personal and intimate way to each member of the family.



*As priests, parents should
talk of their children to the Lord
and speak of the Lord to their children.*

The children have a great capacity to perceive the presence of God, to believe, and trust in Him. We find examples of this in Scriptures – Samuel had contact with God since he was little (1Sa 3); Timothy was instructed in the faith and in the knowledge of God by his mother and grandmother since infancy (2Ti 3:14–15).

The Lord uses the prayers and testimonies (especially of the parents, but also of children) to bring other members of the family to faith. We can see some biblical cases in which faith of one brings the rest of the family – Joshua (Jo 24:15), Cornelius (Act 11:12–15), Lydia (Act 16:14–15), the jailer of Philippi (Act 16:30–34).

Discipleship and family worship

The relationships in the family are the first joints and ligaments in the Church. The husband should assume the discipleship of his wife and parents, the discipleship of their children. We call these relationships **Family Joints**.

This does not prevent wives and children having other bonds of discipleship in the Church; it is important and recommended. However, husbands and parents should comprehend that they are the primary responsible for the lives of their wives and children, God will call them for accounts.

This discipleship must happen at every instant, teaching at every opportunity, with example and the word. Parents should also separate special moments to meet with their children. We recommend having special moments with each child, for prayer, ministry of the word, conversations, etc.

In the family there should also be the practice of “Family Worship”. Far from being something mechanical and frigid, worship in the family is a great opportunity to enjoy together the presence of Jesus in the home.

Although, at times, the children are not well disposed, parents should persevere.

Some practices of priestly ministry in the family

- a. **Reading the Word.** Always seeking to apply the word to the moment that family is living, whether it be joyous or sad, of prosperity or difficulty. And that is always inspirational, full of faith and ardor. For small children, a reading appropriate to their own age is suggested, with figures and illustrations.
- b. **Repetition and memorization of biblical texts** – Deu 6:6-9. Catechize the family, repeat together the Word of the Lord, attach posters with texts and repeat them. This is a powerful resource to engrain the teaching. You can accompany what the church has practiced, using the catechism of the booklet. And you can also repeat and memorize other texts that are related to the family need.
- c. **Testimonies.** It opens up a space where all can learn about the necessities of one another and cooperate with advice and suggestions. That is very good.
- d. **Prayer.** Prayers with specific objectives help ordering the life of prayer. It is important that family has a common list of prayer and all pray about it. It is a good opportunity for teaching about faith and dependence on God, by example.
- e. **Laying of Hands** – Mar 10:13-16. The laying of hands and prayer blessing, protect and heal our children. By virtue of parental authority (and maternal), in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the family is blessed. It is a living and powerful expression of our priesthood as parents.

Part 6 | **The indissolubility of marriage**

Lesson 16 | **The indissolubility of marriage – 1st part**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Mar 10:2-12; Luk 16:18; Mal 2:14-16;
- Rom 7:2-3; 1Co 7:10-16,39.

Help for meditation

- What did Jesus say about the matrimonial bond? When can it end?
- What does God think about divorce?
- How does God see someone that abandons their spouse and remarries? And if the abandoned person (the victim) marries another?
- The firm decision of the spouses to never separate or divorce will produce what effect within the marriage?

Catechism

What is the character of matrimonial bond?

The matrimonial bond is indissoluble. Whoever divorces and remarries commits adultery.

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.
(Luk 16:18)

Understanding more

The indissolubility of marriage – 1st part

This subject was already announced in lesson 2. However, due to its value and also the strong present attack on the matrimonial bond, we consider it important to dig a little deeper, although we have no way to exhaust it in this booklet.

We know that it is a delicate subject, because it touches the lives of many couples, some of the church and others that are out, some who are together with problems, others that are separated and others who are already remarried.

And it is with profound love that we expose what the bible teaches with respect to marriage, knowing that, even that someone suffers by doing the will of God, certainly will be saved taking the path of life and will be supplied and loved for Him.

Let us see some principles that were exposed in lesson 2.

Marriage was instituted by God in creation

But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Mar 10:6-9)

Jesus said, *"from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"*. Right at the beginning, God established marriage. It is a creational law. It was not established by a human law, nor invented by some civilization. It is before any culture, tradition, people, or nation. It existed even before the Law of Moses and before the emergence of the Church.

Marriage is not a partnership between two parties, where each one puts their conditions. God, who created it, is who establishes the conditions; not the man or woman, nor both in agreement and nor the laws of the country.

The laws and customs about marriage change from one country to another. And, within the same country, the laws change with the passing of time. But the principles of God and His will are immutable and eternal.



God created marriage.

Therefore, He is the one that can establish its conditions; not man, not woman, not the laws of the land.

The House of God cannot be guided by social customs and human laws. The Scriptures say that it is the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation (impregnable fortress) of truth (1Ti 3:15).

Characteristics of matrimonial bond

a. The union between the man and woman is made by God

And the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. (Mar 10:8-9)

(...) the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth (...) (Mal 2:14)

The word of Jesus with respect to the union of husband and wife is, “*What therefore God has joined together...*” It was not simply a man and a woman that unite themselves. When they unite in marriage, this bond is made by God. God united them. It is no longer a simple earthly and human connection.

This is independent of the couple knowing God and having conscience that God is uniting them. Independent of faith or religion. Independent of the wedding ceremony celebrant, if he is a judge, a pastor, a priest, or tribal chief. God is witness of this alliance and He is uniting them.

b. The marriage bond is indissoluble

So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. (Mar 10:8-9)

A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. (1Co 7:39)

Again, we hear the words of Jesus with respect to this subject, “*So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate*”. And the apostolic word, “*A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives*”.



The only thing that can break the matrimonial bond is the death of either spouses.

Jesus said that the husband and wife are no longer two, but one. They are not two joined. Two joints can be separated. One does not. And then Jesus adds, “*What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate*”. What authority does man have to separate what God united?

The apostle Paul declares, “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives”. What is the only thing that can break this link of woman with her husband? Death. Not problems, nor divorce, nor human law, neither infidelity; because it is not written that she “is bound to her husband as long as he is faithful”. Therefore, the matrimonial bond is indissoluble during the life of the couple. It is impossible to be broken.

According to Scripture, to know if a man and woman are still married, although not living together, we should just ask, “are the two alive?” If they are alive, they are married.

Elements that constitute the marriage

This is also an important aspect. For someone to be married, there are two indispensable elements:

a. The mutual pact

This is the alliance that a man and a woman make between themselves, before to take one another as husband and wife. It is not any deal to join together, it is a voluntary and specific pact to marriage.

This pact should be verbalized by way of **vows**, in the moment they get married. There is no point one of them say that, in his heart, he consider himself married with the other. This would become a dubious and subjective pact of marriage. The verbalization is necessary. A vow has date, locale, and is expressed verbally.

*The two
indispensable
elements that
constitute a
marriage are – the
mutual pact and
the physical union.*

Although a public ceremony is not required, biblically, this pact was not something secret and restricted to the couple. It involves, at least, the parents of the engaged (Gen 24:2-4, 50-51; 1Co 7:36-38).

Nowadays, there are many couples together, without marriage. Sometimes they already have children, but, this is not marriage. They joined circumstantially and remained together until now. There is no pact of marriage.

In each society, there has always been ways by which this commitment was expressly assumed. In ours, the vow of marriage is established by civil law, must be publicly verbalized, and carried by the authorities of the country. All disciple of Christ should marry civilly, although, biblically, this was not a condition to be married.

b. The physical union

This is the sexual act. It is what consummates a marriage. Without the sexual union, it is not complete.

Separation, Divorce, and Remarriage

In the previous texts we see that, before God, the bond between husband and wife is indissoluble – cannot be broken, as long as they both live. As a consequence of this, we will see what the Scripture says about separation, divorce, and remarriage.

a. Separation

To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. (1Co 7:10–11)

- God says **no** for separation. Neither a husband should separate from his wife, nor should a wife leave the husband.
- If, by chance, the unbelieving spouse separate (1Co 7:12–15), the options of the believing spouse is to be alone or be reconciled.

b. Divorce

Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant... Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away (...). (Mal 2:14–16, KJV)

The text affirms that:

- God is witness of the alliance of marriage.
- He required conjugal fidelity.
- God hates divorce. A shattered marriage is something hateful for God.



God demands loyalty to the matrimonial pact, because He hates divorce.

c. Remarriage

And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.” (Mar 10:11–12)

Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. (Rom 7:3)

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery. (Luk 16:18)

In these texts, once again, God says **no** to separation and divorce. But, this can happen in absence of one of the spouses. If this happens, the word of the Lord says that:

- . If someone divorces, God does not permit remarriage. This is because, although they are judiciously separated, before Him they continue to be husband and wife.
- . When someone divorces and remarries, God does not consider this marriage, but rather **adultery**.
- . Neither the spouse that repudiates nor the one that is abandoned cannot remarry. If they do, they will be committing **adultery**.

We understand that there are situations too difficult to adjust. Our hearts are touched by them. However, we believe that obedience to the will of God is the only and best path. The Lord, with His love and power, is there to supply and empower each one that seeks Him to do His will.

In the next lesson, we will address questions and doubts that may arise in this subject.



*If someone
divorces and
remarries
commits adultery.*

Lesson 17 | **The indissolubility of marriage – 2st part**

Seeking revelation

Bible readings

- Mat 19:3–12; Mal 2:16; Mar 10:7–9; Luk 16:18;
- 1Co 7:10–15.

Help for meditation

- Is there any exception that would allow someone to get married again?
- And how is the situation of someone that is abandoned by the spouse?
- And the case of someone that came to Christ already remarried?

Catechism

Can an abused or abandoned spouse remarry?

No. Independent of the fact that motivates the separation or divorce, a second marriage is not permitted by the Lord.

To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. (1Co 7:10–11)

Understanding more

The indissolubility of marriage – 2nd part

In the previous lesson, we see that, throughout the Bible, marriage is presented as a divine institution and that the will of God is an indissoluble matrimonial union during the entire life of the couple.

In the Old Testament, the Lord declares that He hates divorce (Mal 2:16). Therefore, a marriage that breaks apart is something hateful to God.

In the New Testament, Jesus clearly teaches that divorce is not permitted, “*So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate*” (Mat 19:6; Mar 10:7-9). He declares that one spouse that repudiates and marries another commits adultery.



*The will of God is
an indissoluble
matrimonial union
during the entire
life of the couple.*

Paul, the apostle, also declares that neither wife should leave from her husband, nor the husband should leave the wife. If this were to happen, both have only two options – to stay without marriage or to reconcile (1Co 7:10-11). This is because a simple separation of bodies does not mean the dissolution of marriage.

Here, we want to address the questions and doubts that some can have on this subject.

Are there exceptions?

Some claim to have an exception for the principle of indissolubility of marriage. Those who affirm this utilize the texts of Matthew 19:9. For this, let us study this text in more detail.

Let us read Matthew 19:3-12, and analyze the text.

The situation begins with the Pharisees coming to test Jesus, asking, “*Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?*” (vs 3). Here already we perceive the Pharisees wanting to find a breach to repudiate the wife.

a. Jesus responds to them clearly:

Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. (Mat 19:4-6)

Jesus gives a complete answer to the subject. He says that, from the beginning, the man is united to his wife, no longer two, and that God unites them, and that no man separate. In other words, Jesus is saying, “No. They cannot divorce”. And, for Him, the answer had already finished.



The Pharisees were trying to find a breach to repudiate the wife. But Jesus said to them, “What God has joined together, let no man separate”.

b. But the Pharisees insist: “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” (vs 7). They wanted a doorway for divorce.

c. Then Jesus answered them:

Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. (Mat 19:8)

The answer of Jesus declares, Moses permitted the divorce to you because you had a hard heart, but that this was not God’s will from the beginning. Jesus is again saying: Moses consented, but God does not want divorce.

It is important, also, to understand that Moses had not given an ample opening for divorce. He had permitted a man to repudiate his wife, exclusively, in the case that he discovered, in the nuptials, that he had been deceived and the woman was not a virgin (see Deu 22:13–30; 24:1–5).

It would not fit a disciple to act like this, with the hardness of the heart of the Pharisees.

d. Then, Jesus added:

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (Mat 19:9)

This text allows more than one interpretation. However, any interpretation that is given, cannot contradict other Biblical texts that we have seen about this subject in the previous lesson.

Misguided interpretations

Some, mistakenly, interpret that Jesus was opening an exception here and saying that, in the case of adultery of one of the spouses, the other could remarry.

This interpretation is erroneous for the following three reasons: it contradicts the whole context of what Jesus was saying, contradicts other biblical texts about the subject (which we read in the previous lesson), and is an improper translation of the original Greek verse.

To understand the meaning of what Jesus was saying, we need to observe the words used in the original Greek:

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for **porneia**, and shall marry another, committeth **moicheia**: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit **moicheia**. (Mat 19:9, KJV)

Porneia means any type of illicit sexual relation. **Moicheia** means adultery, that is, sexual sin that a married person commits.

Jesus knew the two words and used them in different senses. If he wanted to direct the sense to make an exception in case of adultery, He would have use the word **moicheia** in place of **porneia**. The text would be like this:

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for **moicheia**, and shall marry another, committeth **moicheia**: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit **moicheia**.

So, this indicates to us that Jesus was not speaking here, that in the case of adultery there can be remarriage.

Correct interpretations

One interpretation, accepted by many theologians, is that the word **porneia** is in the sense of fornication that is the sexual sin of a single. This is one possible meaning of what Jesus was saying. The text could be written like:

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for **fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (Mat 19:9, KJV)

In this case, Jesus was saying that, in the case of a woman having practiced fornication – when single, and her husband finds out, he could divorce. In this way, Jesus was confirming what the law of Moses permitted; that is, to give a certificate of divorce when it was discovered, in the nuptials, that the wife was not virgin.



Jesus is not saying here, that in the case of adultery, there can be remarriage.

However, it seems to us that the most correct interpretation is to take the text with the most ample sense of the word **porneia**, not only fornication. Doing this, the text looks like this:

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for **illicit sexual relations**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (Mat 19:9, KJV)

Thus, Jesus was saying that no one can divorce, except in the case that they are living in illicit relations, in other words, in the case of illicit marriages. This would be the case in which the relationship of the couple itself was unlawful. For example, if a man marries 2 or 3 women. One of them is the spouse, the others are **porneia**, sexually illicit relations. In this case the other wives can divorce and marry another husband. Another example, a man marries a woman who was already married. This relationship is illicit and this man, to separate from this woman, is free to marry another. In these cases, in which the current relationship is illicit, Jesus is saying that you can marry another. Jesus is not opening a door for common divorce. This is a legal annulment of an illicit relationship.

Finally, in this text, Jesus continues the conversation with his disciples:

His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. (Mat 19:10, KJV)

This commentary of the disciples is also illuminating. They did not say, “Ah, what good that the Lord remembered the people who have been betrayed and permits them to marry again”. No. They showed amazement and fear and said, “*If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry*”. Or in other words, “Lord! Is this so? I marry and if I have problems with my wife, I cannot divorce? If it is this, it is better not to marry”. If Jesus had left the door to divorce, the disciples would have been relieved and not frightened. Clearly, once again, by the reaction of astonishment of the disciples, Jesus did not open this exception for divorce.



Independent of the fact that motivates the separation or divorce, remarriage is not permitted by the Lord.

Therefore, in Matthew 19, Jesus is not opening a door for divorce and remarriage. He, in truth, is confirming that marriage is indissoluble and that God does not permit remarriage.

Other questions

- The texts of 1Co 7:15

Do the texts of 1Co 7:15 give an opening for the Christian spouse, who is abandoned by an unbeliever, so he can remarry?

No. The apostolic words are:

But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. (1Co 7:15)


We cannot take the expression “is not enslaved” and twist its meaning as being liberation to remarry.

This would be a contradiction, because the apostle, a moment before, said that the Lord commands that if the woman were to separate, “*she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband*”. (1Co 7:10-11).

The expression “not enslaved” means to say that the situation of life of the unbeliever is impossible to live with, that the unbeliever departs, and the brother is free of having to support this unsustainable situation. But not free for a new marriage.

- What about the person that remarried before knowing Christ?

Some come to the church already remarried and, taking the text of 1Co 7:17-20, say that the Lord wants each one in the state in which God called them, the remarried that they continue remarried. This is a sophism and a misuse of Scripture. Here God is not permitting that someone that comes in adultery remains in adultery.


*The Lord commands
that if a spouse were
to separate, he can
remain unmarried
or be reconciled
with his spouse.*

Others argue with the text of Act 17:30, “*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked.*” “When I separated and remarried I did not know the will of the Lord and God does not take in account the time of ignorance”. This is another deception. The continuation of the verse clarifies the truth, “*but now he commands all people everywhere to repent*”. If someone was a thief, he cannot continue being a thief. If someone was in adultery, it is forgiven; but they cannot follow in adultery.

Final Considerations

Marriage is an institution of God. It is an indissoluble union. Only death can terminate it, according to the teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

The Lord says that the married couples do not separate. However great the family conflicts, seek the help of God and of mature brothers that can guide you. Separation is never an alternative. In case there is adultery of one of the spouses, the first thing that the Lord asks His disciples is that there is forgiveness, fruit of a loving heart.

In case of separation, it is always provoked by the unbelieving spouse. And the spouse, the disciple of Christ, should either remain without remarrying or reconcile with their spouse.

Independent of the fact which motivated the separation or divorce, the second marriage is absolutely prohibited by the Lord. He who marries again, with their first spouse alive, commits adultery.

The fact that the laws of the country permit the divorce and remarriage, in no way changes the principles of marriage. The will of God is immutable and the disciples of Jesus want to be under it.

To our great sadness, part of the church embraces the concepts of this world. This church is also responsible, before the Lord, for the level of acceleration of the degradation of the family. If the church had risen up and said, "This is not the will of the Lord," perhaps we had fewer destroyed families and devastated youth because the parents separated. Each time that the church supports an illicit relationship, it is being complicit in the destruction of this family and of many others to come.

All the cases that involve situations in this area are difficult and delicate. We should be understanding, wise, and merciful, seeking help and aid to those that are suffering and treat them with love and prayer. However, without ceasing to announce, with fidelity, the truth of Christ.

The Lord is not so preoccupied with our earthly happiness. God wants us eternally happy together with Him and cannot have us without separating that which is sin. We obey with faith the will of the Lord.



If someone, comes to convert, was in adultery, the Lord forgives them. But they cannot follow in adultery.



*The Lord is not so preoccupied
with our earthly happiness.
God wants us eternally happy
together with Him.*