

## Progressing Together



PRAT 203

## The family: The Christian Model



*\*Special Note: As an exception, this course of the program “Progressing Together” should only be taught by group leaders trained or approved by the program staff. Although the supporting materials, exercises, and notes in the manual can be useful in edifying Christian couples, we strongly recommend you contact us so we can organize a one week conference for couples in your region.*

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## Syllabus for PRAT 203 - Family and Marriage (1) Certificate Level

### Course objectives

To help cell groups and churches in newly responsive areas to cultivate healthy, strong, satisfying, and godly marriages in Christian couples; marriages that genuinely reflect the relationship between Christ and His Church to the surrounding community.

### Course description

The course begins by looking at God's plan for marriage as recorded by the scriptures. It explains important characteristics of the marriage relationship, such as leaving one's parents, committing to be faithful to a single partner for life, and being united despite being very different.

The second subject covers the roles of the husband and wife according to the Bible.

The following lessons are dedicated to improving and maintaining the relationship between husband and wife through good communication, effectively communicating love, resolving the conflicts that arise, and controlling one's anger.

The last two topics cover the cultivating of a satisfying sexual relationship, and the Biblical principles for child-rearing.

### Learning Outcomes:

**Content:** By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

- Understand the Biblical justification for both singleness and marriage as honorable positions before God.
- Identify the Christian principles for selecting a marriage partner.
- Explain how the Christian imagery of marriage is associated with other key Christian doctrines of the New Testament
- Describe scriptural role models of husband, wife and children (the code of Christian households)
- Define Christian principles concerning divorce
- Provide a way for Christian families to thrive and be rooted in Christ despite a society hostile to their faith.

**Character:** By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

- Understand and embrace a Biblical lifestyle of sexual purity.
- Express and embrace the Christian value of marital faithfulness.
- Begin to prepare him or herself for marriage, if single, through a healthy understanding of Christian marriage.
- Embrace (and if married, begin to practice) a Christian perspective concerning the relationship within the couple.
- Nurture a Christ-centered identity in the children of a Christian home.

**Competency:** By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

- Develop better communication with other family members.
- Lead a healthier relationship as a couple.
- Be better equipped to raise happy, healthy, and godly children.
- Be able to present these concepts to others in the church as circumstances allow.

## **Course requirements**

### **Certificate Level**

To demonstrate knowledge of course material:

- By answering questions at the end of each section
- By writing a report on applying these questions, or successful completion of the final exam
- By attending 18 of 20 instructor-led sessions (27 physical hours minimum)
- By participating in discussions by listening, contributing as appropriate, and responding to questions
- By reading two books of the student's choice on two different topics (at least 40 pages per book), and writing a one page summary of the points to be remembered for each book. Prepare a 5 minute presentation of one of the books for the class's benefit.
- By Role play. Gather by two's (2 men together, or 2 women). A friend comes to you to seek counsel, because he/she is seeking to divorce. And... action!
- More Role play. Illustrate the principles of communication by role playing. Various members of the class will need to pick different principles to illustrate. Preparing this exercise can be a group or an individual activity.
- By a homework assignment among the following. 1) Create a chart that compares and contrasts the beliefs and practices you were given from your parents, to those you hope to communicate to your children, or 2) Write or tell a story which highlights the consequences of ignoring Christian principles when it comes to selecting marriage partners.
- By using the material learned in class to improve family and marriage relationships. Do not forget the children and parents, if there are any. The student will maintain a journal recording the efforts made and results obtained (both positive and negative) that are observed.

## **Evaluation methodology and scale**

- Execution and student know-how will be assessed using the following scale:
  - 10% for course attendance (the percentage, is equal to the number of sessions to which the student was present, divided by the total number of sessions, and then multiplied by ten).
  - 10% for the student's attitude and participation during class discussions.
  - 20% for reading and preparing the lessons.
  - 35% for homework assignments (20% for reading and presenting the books, 10% in skits, 5% for the story or chart).
  - 25% for the journal or an exam (written or oral).
- The evaluation scale is as follows
  - Satisfactory –70-79%
  - Good – 80-89%
  - Very Good – 90-100%

## **Course schedule**

To be announced by the facilitator.

### **Credits earned**

Successful completion of this course corresponds to 2 hours of credit towards the Certificate in Christian Studies

### **Prerequisites**

(Progressing Together PRAC201 and PRAC202, or equivalent)

### **Necessary textbooks and related materials**

- Required - Progressing Together Manual for PRAC203

*Additional readings may be required at the instructor's discretion*

- Recommended - Book and materials related to marriage, family, and society

### **Course methodology**

The student will work inductively, by reading texts, answering questions related to content, application and presenting analysis, and by drawing conclusions that apply to his/her local context. After answering the questions in each lesson, students will get together to discuss answers and their practical applications. When necessary, the leader will provide additional sessions to reinforce student learning.

### **Policies**

- Cheating (copying answers from someone else's exam or home assignment) and plagiarism (copying or paraphrasing someone else's work without explicitly recognizing this source in writing) will never be tolerated, as it is contrary to Christian teaching and academic integrity.
- Absences in excess of 3 class hours will lead to a reduced grade; no student missing more than 6 class hours will receive credit for the course. Students who show little or no interest in completing course work will first be given a warning, and then asked to leave the course if their conduct does not change.

## Bibliography

### Resources for the Christian family

[Translator's note: it appears that most of the books listed in the original French version of this course were published in English before appearing in French. The course developers probably drew substantially on some of them. Books listed below may be only approximate equivalents, or later editions. The editions listed below were available in 2009. Editions available in the UK may have different publishers.]

Anderson, Neil, *Who I am in Christ* (Regal, 2001)

Adams, Jay E., *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible* (Zondervan, 1986)

Backus, William, *Telling each other the truth: the art of true communication*, (Bethany House, 1985)

Campbell, Ross, *How to Really Love Your Angry Child* (David C. Cook, 2004)

*How to Really Love your Teen* (David C. Cook, 2004).

Chapman, Gary, *The Five Love Languages*, second edition (Northfield Publishing, 1995)

Chapman, Gary, *Anger: Handling a Powerful Emotion in a Healthy Way*, revised edition (Northfield Publishing, 2007). This book was available in 2009 from Amazon in both the UK and the USA.

*Desperate Marriages. . .*, (Northfield Publishing, 2008)

Cloud, Henry, and Townsend, John, *Boundaries in Marriage* (Zondervan, 2002).

*Réussir sa vie.* (Empreinte, 1992) (*Safe People*, Zondervan 1995 ?)

Crabb, Larry, *Understanding Who You Are: What Your Relationships Tell You About Yourself*, (Navpress, 1977).

Dobson, James, *The New Dare to Discipline* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1996)

*Preparing for adolescence*, (Gospel Light, 2005).

Gray, John, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (Harper Collins, 1993).

Houghton, Hohn & Janet, *A touch of love* (Kingsway Publications, 1986).

Lahaye, Tim and Beverly, *The Act of Marriage*, updated edition (Zondervan, 1988)

Hsu, Albert, *Singles at the Crossroads* (InterVarsity Press, 1997). (On celibacy)

Mayhall, Jack and Carole, *Opposites Attack: Turning your Differences into Opportunities* (Navpress, 1009)

Tournier, Paul, *To Understand Each Other*, Translated by John S. Gilmour from *Difficultés Conjugales*. (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, © 1967)



Wright, Norman, *Communication: Key to Your Marriage*, updated edition (Regal, 2000)

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## Lesson 1: Marriage – Singleness

### A. The Definition of Marriage

1. What does marriage represent in society, or within your circle of family and friends?
2. What does marriage represent to you? Provide your own definition of marriage.
3. What is the biblical definition of marriage according to Gn 2:24? (See also Mt 19:5, Mk 10:7, and Eph 5:31)

Marriage is not a human institution; it is a divine institution.

Definition of institution: An organization founded and united for a specific purpose.  
(Concise English Dictionary, Wordnet)

*It is a fundamental institution upon which every aspect of society stands.*  
*J. Adams*

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4. Why did God institute marriage? (Gn 2:18)

*The reason for marriage's existence is fixing the problem of solitude.*  
*J. Adams.*

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5. What did God say after he finished creating the man and the woman? (Gn 1:31)

**Gn 1:27** “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...”

**Conclusion: Marriage is good.**

*Marriage is not an institution created to propagate the human race. This kind of thinking is confusing marriage with mating. Marriage legitimizes and structures sexual relationships. Marriage is neither made up of –nor dissolved by– sexual relations. J. Adams*

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**The Bible speaks of marriage as a Covenant of Companionship.**

**Mal 2:14-16** It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. [...] So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

*Union within marriage places an emphasis on the necessity to give to one's spouse the company that he or she needs in order not to suffer solitude.*  
*J. Adams*

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**Toolbox**

**Rm 12:2** Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**Ps 51:10** Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

“If God had wanted  
woman to lord over man,  
He would have taken her  
from Adam’s head.

If he had wanted her  
to be man’s slave,  
he would have taken her  
from his feet.

But God created woman  
from the man’s side,  
because he wanted her to be  
his companion and equal.”

**Saint Augustine**

## B. Singleness

Since Adam and Eve, everyone has been born single under the authority of his or her parents.

### 1. The problem of misconduct (sexual immorality)

Read 1Cor 6:12-20 to answer the following questions:

- a. The body is made for \_\_\_\_\_

The body is not made for \_\_\_\_\_

God is \_\_\_\_\_ the body.

- b. What has God done for each believer in Christ (according to this passage)?

- c. Consequently, what is our relationship with Him?

- d. As a result, how should we treat our body?

<b>Sexual immorality is an enemy that the believer in Christ should flee.</b>
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### 2. United to the Lord

- a. Reread 1Cor 6:17. Who is “united” to the Lord in this context? (Check the right answer)

Everyone

Every believer in God

Every true believer in Christ

Every single believer

- b. What does Jesus say about our commitment towards Him, compared to the one we have toward our parents? Read Mt 10:37 and complete the following sentence:

Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Jesus requires the believer to leave his parents and follow Him, and unite himself to Him. What does He promise in exchange according to Mk 10:29-30?

- d. The example of Christ. According to the words in Lk 8:19-21, who are his mother and brothers?

e. As disciples of Christ, which of our brothers and sisters should come first and foremost?

3. The gift of singleness vs. the gift of marriage. Paul speaks on this matter in 1Cor 7. Read the whole chapter.

a. The believer in Christ is free to choose. Which gift is more desirable according to this passage?

Singleness

Marriage

Both equally

It depends on the circumstances

It depends on his abilities and personal preferences

b. The problem of sexual immorality. When is it preferable to marry (v1-9)?

c. Paul provides a central principle which applies to every believer in Christ in every social status in v17-24. What is it?

d. How does this principle apply to singles (v25-35)?

What advantages does Paul highlight in singleness?

i. v26:

ii. v32-35

4. Committed to the King's service: The eunuch for the Kingdom (Mt 19:11-12)

a. What is a Eunuch?

b. Why does Jesus call certain single disciples "Eunuchs of the Kingdom" in the context of these verses?

c. In the mission of the Church and of God's kingdom, what ministries rather suit single believers? Can you think of any examples of people who modeled this in the past?

d. Do you consider yourself, or have you ever considered yourself to be a eunuch in the Lord's service? Why, or why not?

**"Celibacy and marriage are gifts to be honored and esteemed." Albert Hsu**

**"Whether we are married or single, we are responsible for the same task: to live a fulfilled life despite many unsatisfied desires." Paul Tournier**

5. Questions for reflection and application:

a. In your current situation, whether single or married,  
i. What do you find is inconvenient or lacking?

ii. What particular opportunities for service are open to you?

iii. As someone who is single or divorced, are you seeking to remarry?

iv. Have you decided to remain single? Why?

v. How does this teaching in 1Cor 6-7 inform your decision?

b. Have you left behind your parental ties by uniting yourself to the Lord?  
i. Concretely, what ties have you left behind?

ii. Have you left everything, or do some ties remain?

What does it mean to leave? How should my relationship with my parents be, as a disciple united to Jesus? In the following lesson we will study these questions in more detail.

***For Further Study***

6. What attitudes and expectations do you encounter concerning marriage and singleness within your circle of relationships?

Civil Status	Behaviors/Expectations		Biblical Teaching
	In Society	In the Church	
Singleness			
Marriage			

7. What lack of understanding do you personally experience from family or friends in your sexual life and marital status due to your obedience to Christ?



## Lesson 2: Leaving – Honoring

**Gn 2:24** “That is why a man leaves his father and mother”

(Jesus quotes this verse in Mt 19:5 and Mk 10:7, and Paul quotes it in Eph 5:31.)

1. What does it mean to leave?

2. Who does God ask to leave?

*Man must leave because he is to become the head of a new household.  
There is always tragedy in the air when a husband places his parents  
above himself (therefore rejecting his own authority as head of household)  
or above his wife (therefore denying her the first place in his life) J. Adams*

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3. What are we leaving?

4. What does the verse in Ex 20:12 mean (or Dt 5:16): Honor your father and mother? (This verse is quoted six times in the New Testament: Mt 15:4 and 19:18; Mk 7:10 and 10:19; Lk 18:20; Eph 6:2.)

a. Does this mean I need always obey or submit to my parents? Why?

b. Does the commandment to honor my parents allow me to say: “I will never physically leave my father or mother”?

c. Does this grant parents unlimited rights?

5. How can we leave, yet still honor our parents?

6. Questions for parents:

- a. Are we raising our children to hold them back, or prepare them to leave?
- b. With whom should I share my most intimate sentimental relationship?

***The parent-child relationship is temporary. The union between husband and wife is permanent. J. Adams***

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7. Personal questions

- a. Have I truly left my father and mother?
- b. What spiritual heritage did our families leave us?
- c. Are there currently ties that need to be forsaken?
- d. How do father and mother influence our marriage, even from afar?

## Lesson 3: Being united and divorce

### A. Being United

Definition:

In Greek, the verb “to unite” portrays the image of two pieces of paper whose whole surfaces are glued together, so that they cannot be separated without being torn.

It takes time and effort.

1. How much time does God think is necessary for two newlyweds to get to know each other?

**Dt 24:25** If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

2. How do we unite with our spouse? What does it require?

*In the Bible, the commitment of marriage was established by the engagement. In the event of adultery, an engaged person would obtain the same sentence as someone who was married. This was not the case for singles. (Dt 22:23 and Mt 1:16-25)*

*The betrothed are called husband and wife. The marriage of Joseph and Mary, initiated by their betrothal, does not begin with a sexual union, yet Joseph can only terminate it through a divorce.*

*According to the Bible, marriage is fundamentally a contract, not a sexual union. Marriage is a legal agreement –a covenant– between two people, to become lifelong companions for one another who will love each other.*

*J. Adams*

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*There is adultery when a third party comes on the scene to ensure companionship (generally sexually, but not necessarily) in place of the husband or the wife “of youth”. J. Adams*

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**Mt 19:6** Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.

***For Further Study***

3. What does the Bible tell us about polygamy?

**1Tm 3:2** Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife...

**Ti 1:6** ...appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife...

1Cor 7:17, 20, 24. Each person should remain in the situation he or she was in when they were called by God.

4. How should we handle friendships outside of the marriage?

***When some relationship threatens the stability of commitments we have made to those who are most dear to us, it loses any right to exist. Understand the power of your eyes. Keep penetrating looks for one person alone. Mayhall***

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5. What are the reasonable boundaries for jealousy?

6. What happens if we try to separate two spouses?

Marriage implies  
A full commitment,  
Of a whole person,  
For their whole life.

## A. Divorce

### 1. What is the Biblical stance towards divorce?

**Mal 2:16** “The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the Lord, the God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect”

**Jer 3:8** I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries.

*God hates that which causes divorce; he hates the consequences of divorce; he hates divorce that is wrongly obtained; But God Himself is a divorced Being!*

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**Mt 12:31** And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven...

*Even someone who has obtained a divorce stained with sin can be forgiven. J. Adams*

---

### 2. What is divorce?

**Dt 12:1-2** If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man...

**Mt 19:8** Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.”

### 3. For what reason could a man divorce his wife?

### 4. Why did God allow divorce?

### 5. What is the exceptional reason which enables Christians to divorce?

**Mt 5:31-32** “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

**Mt 19:9** I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

*Jesus says we commit adultery, unless we divorce our previous wife due to fornication. The divorced wife and her second husband are warned that they will commit adultery if the divorce was not caused by fornication. Jesus declares fornication (porneia –sexual sin) to be the motive allowing a letter of divorce to be written because fornication covers incest, bestiality, homosexuality and lesbianism, as well as adultery. In such cases, the Bible does not require divorce, but allows it. J. Adams*

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**Eph 5:22-23.** *The biblical standard of Christian marriage is found in the relationship between Christ and His Church.*

### **The Christian divorce toolbox.**

6. In 1Cor 7:10-16, what two potential divorce situations are presented?

#### **I - Divorce between believers**

**1Cor 7:10-11** To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

*In the New Testament, the words “separation” or “repudiation” refer to legal separation by divorce;  
The modern perspective of separation is an anti-biblical substitute to the Biblical requirement of reconciliation or (in some circumstances) of divorce. It is deceiving because it provides a temporary feeling of relief (which is often mistaken for peace). But it does not fix anything.  
Modern separation is nothing more than a way to run away from problems rather than resolving them as God has shown us. It only magnifies the challenges. Jay Adams.*

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a. What is the double commandment found in 1Cor 7:10-11?

Reminder: According to the Lord this commandment applies to the desire for divorce, except for sexual sin.

b. To what particular situation of women is Paul speaking?

c. Why would this woman have divorced?

- d. What two options remain for a Christian woman divorced from her Christian spouse?

*Although the motives for divorce can be illegitimate, divorce itself is not.  
The term “always married in the eyes of God” is non-biblical. Divorce ends  
a marriage.  
Jay Adams.*

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## **II - Divorce between a believer and an unbeliever.**

**1Cor 7:12** To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord):

This verse is just as inspired as the previous one. What Paul means by it is this:  
To married believers, the Lord had already laid out the principles concerning divorce. When he did so, the believers/unbelievers group did not yet exist. For these, Paul will address the issue himself, with divine inspiration, of course.

**1Cor 7:12-16** If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

- a. What is Paul's purpose for laying down the requirement: let it be so?
- b. Which spouse in the couple takes on this responsibility?
- c. In this case, is the believing spouse free to remarry?

**1Cor 7:39** ...he must belong to the Lord.

- d. Can we remarry after divorce?

**1Tm 4:3** They (hypocritical liars) forbid people to marry...

**2Cor 6:14** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.



*Someone who has divorced according to the exception Jesus provided (Mt 19.9) is free to remarry, because this exception (except in the case of "sexual sin") does not only apply to the phrase "whoever repudiates his wife" but also to "and marries another". J. Adams*

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**1Cor 7:27** (*Literally*) Are you tied to a woman? Do not seek to free yourself. Are you freed from a woman? Do not seek a woman.

### Conclusion

*Christians should be able to marry, divorce, and remarry, only if, when, and how, God says they can do so without sin. J. Adams*

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### For Further Study

#### People with a difficult past

How can we help someone who is distressed by a difficult past to see himself in Christ and accept his forgiveness? Here are a few verses:

**David** was guilty of adultery and murder.

**2Sm 12-13** Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."

**Ps 51:1-3** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

God ended up blessing this marriage. Jesus is called son of David.

**1Cor 6:11** And that is what some of you were. But you were washed...

**Rm 5:20** But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

**2Cor 2:7-8** Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

It is clear that God forgives the most disgraceful sexual immorality, murder, etc.  
The community of believers in Christ must do the same!

Let man not separate  
what God has united!

Let man not condemn  
that which God has allowed!

Let man not despair  
of that which God wants to  
heal!

Henri Blocher

**A few major hurdles in marriage:**

- 1) Ignorance or unrealistic expectations;
- 2) Unwillingness or a lack of commitment;
- 3) Poor communication.

**The seasons of marriage.**

“Each season of marriage carries its own challenges, and requires the couple to take specific measures.”

- 1) The honeymoon.
- 2) Organizing life together as a couple.
- 3) The children’s arrival.
- 4) Organizing life for the long term.
- 5) Old age.

**Questions for personal reflection**

7. Is my life in line with the Word of God, or do I have other beliefs that keep me from changing?

8. Do I want help?

9. Would I like to talk about it?

## Lesson 4: Becoming one and Differences

### Introduction

*“My husband treats me just the way his father treated his mother, and I react just the way my mother reacted to my father. The problem, of course, is that my father and his mother are not married” -Jack and Carole Mayhall*

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**Pr 24:16** Though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again.

### A. Becoming one flesh.

1. What does it mean to “become one flesh”? Is it limited to sexual union?
2. Let’s think a moment: what is our first sexual organ?
3. Will a couple have the desire for sexual union in the evening if they were torn apart during the day?

**Eph 4:3** “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

We need to learn to resolve conflicts, forgive, and ask for forgiveness. Becoming one is not easy... especially when the other is different.

## B. Unity requires differences

**Lv 18:22** “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.”

## C. Let's talk about differences

*If each person created in the image of God is “something new under the sun”, a marvel, then the only conclusion is that two people joined in marriage are also spectacular. If someone does not think his (or her) spouse is different, the only alternative is to believe he is wrong. Mayhall*

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1. Provide at least five differences between you and your spouse concerning your tendencies, personalities, preferences or beliefs.

2. Do I complement my spouse well by my differences? How so?

To complete each other! Doesn't that mean to become one? (1Cor 12, the body)

*To think alike is not a valid goal. If two people think alike, one of them is unnecessary. Mayhall*

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3. Do I really want to change?

4. When we have a disagreement or an argument about something, in what ways are we different from each other? Is it a difference in the way we think, the way we feel about something, the way we communicate, or the way we act? Do these differences come from our personality, culture, education, or beliefs?

5. How is this difference valuable for a couple?

**“The success of a marriage does not depend on whether or not we have found the right person. Rather, it depends on the ability of each spouse to adapt to the person his or her spouse truly is, the person we inevitably discover our spouse to be once we marry.”**  
**John Fischer**

### **D. What does the Bible say about differences?**

To lead a balanced life as a couple, it is crucial to view our sexual identity in light of Biblical truth.

On what foundation have we based our beliefs? Merely on what we want to believe?

What does God, the creator, think about the differences between man and woman?

#### ***I - The difference in nature.***

**1Pet 3:7** And you husbands, give thought to your way of life with your wives, giving honor to the woman who is the feebler vessel , but who has an equal part in the heritage of the grace of life (The Bible in Basic English. The translation ‘women are weaker beings’ is not the best)

The Greek word skeuos can refer to a vessel such as a jar or vase, or to the body.

**1Th 4:4** ...each of you should learn to control his own body [skeuos] in a way that is holy and honorable.

**2Cor 4:7** But we have this treasure in jars [skeuos (in plural)] of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

Answer the following questions in the light of 1Pet 3:7:

1. What difference of nature is referred to here?
2. How do we treat a fragile vase?
3. In light of this, how should a man treat his wife?

#### ***II - The difference in responsibility in marriage.***

God entrusts to a husband and wife two different responsibilities . This topic is the topic of the next lesson (5a & 5b).

### ***For Further Study***

#### **When we exchange roles.**

What happens in a couple when the wife “takes the wheel”? How do we proceed when the woman is more qualified to lead?

What should our attitude be in these particular cases?

#### **1Sm 25: The case of Nabal and Abigail.**

Here is a summary in three verses:

**1Sm 25:17** “One of Nabal’s servants told Abigail what had happened, and said, “Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.”

**1Sm 25:32-33** David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. . . .”

**1Sm 25:37** The next day, when Nabal was sober, Abigail tells him what happened. “...his heart failed him and he became like a stone.” He dies not long after this.

This man refused to listen to anyone. The day he was forced to hear his wife out, he died from it. He was a fool.

Put yourself in Abigail’s shoes. As a Christian woman, how should you respond?

What difference does it make whether or not the husband is a Christian?

#### **Jg 4. Barak et Deborah.**

Summary:

Deborah was a judge in Israel. She was in a position of authority, providing direction. She gives Barak an order from the Lord to go into battle. Barak is not very confident.

He tells her,

—“If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I will not go.”

She replied,

—“Very well, I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.”

In Jg 5:24, Barak et Deborah sing: “Most blessed of women be Jael....”

Deborah tried to give Barak the honor. This is what any woman who has a gift of leadership should do.

## Lesson 5a: The Wife's Responsibility (For Sisters)

### Christian Submission

#### Introduction

**Eph 5:21-24** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

**Col 3:18** Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

**1Pet 3:1-2** Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

#### A. Definitions

1. What does submission mean?

a. Give your own definition using synonyms.

b. Is submission the same thing as obedience?

**1Pet 3:6** They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham.

c. Is submission the same thing as respect?

**Eph 5:33** Each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

2. To whom should a married women submit?

3. What is the difference between our relationship with our parents and children, and our relationship with our spouse?

4. Can we become the complete person God wants us to be while rebelling and resisting?

**Mk 3:25** If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

**Jn 6:38** For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

**Jn 10:30** I and the Father are one.



5. Whose responsibility is it to submit within the couple?

**Submission to our husband can mean:  
Choosing to obey our husband and respect him  
above any other person in our lives;  
or still:  
“A woman shall leave her father and her mother and hold fast to her husband,  
and they shall become one flesh.”**

6. Why submission? Or what is its purpose?

Since the meaning of marriage is the same for both man and woman, why does Paul redefine it in terms of submission for the woman?

a. Is submission a result of the fall?

**1Cor 11:9** Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

**1Tm 2:12-13** I do not permit a woman to . . . exercise authority over a man; . . . For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

**1Cor 14:33** For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

**1Cor 14:40** But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

**Gn 3:16** Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.

**Ph 2:3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, rather in humility value others above yourselves.

b. Does this mean the wife is inferior?

**Ph 2:6-8** [Jesus] though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped [...] he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

c. Is this order the result of some inequality between man and woman?

**Gal 3:28** There is neither [...] male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**1Pet 3:7** Husbands, [...] treat [your wives] with respect as [...] heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.

d. In that case, is it due to some difference?

**1Pet 3:7** Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.

**2Cor 12:10** When I am weak, then I am strong.

e. Does God require submission simply for the love of order, as a divine quality to be developed?

## **B. The apostle Paul, an example of submission according to Ac 22-26**

1. Practically, what does it mean to submit oneself?

2. Who ruled during this time?

3. What does Paul ask? Read Rm 13:1-7.

a. How did Paul submit to an evil, repressive authority?

b. What was Paul accused of? What had he done to deserve detention?

**Ac 21:28** False things.

**Ac 22:21** True things: he had gone afar to the Gentiles.

**Ac 23:1** “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.”

**Ac 23:6** “I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.”

**Ac 23:29** The Roman commander Claudius Lysias said that Paul was accused of violating the religious law of the Jews, but that “there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment.”

**Ac 24:5** "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and even tried to desecrate the temple" The high priest and the elders.

**Ac 24:16** “I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.”

**Ac 25:7** The Jews who followed Paul from Jerusalem brought “many serious charges against him,” but they could not prove the charges.

c. Paul could have offered Felix money. What did he do instead?

**Ac 24:25** Paul speaks about “righteousness, self control and the judgment to come”

d. So then, who is in the position of authority? And who is in a position of submission?

**Ac 25:8-11** "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar. If [...] I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

e. Who was the Caesar at the time?

f. Did Paul really know what he was doing?

Paul testifies before Festus, who tells him:

**Ac 26:24** “You are out of your mind!”

**Ac 26:25** “I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and reasonable.”

4. What qualities are expressed in Paul’s submission to authority?

5. Do I recognize myself in some of these qualities?

6. What are the consequences of Paul's submission?

We can wonder: "Is it fair?"

7. Why should I submit? What's the purpose?

**Ti 2:5** [Younger women to] be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the Word of God.

**1Pet 3:1-2** So that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

8. When we marry a man, do we really know what we are doing?

### **C. Two biblical examples of womanly submission**

1. Abraham and Sarah, Gn 21:8-13.

a. In 1Pet 3:5-6, how does the Bible describe Sarah in her role as a wife?

**1Pet 3: 5-6** For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord (Gn 18:12). You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

b. In Gn 21:10, in her determination for Abraham to send away the son of the servant,

i. Did she make a request?

ii. Did she give an order?

**Gn 21:11** The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son.

iii. Did Sarah have the right to require this? Why?

iv. Was Sarah submissive in asking this? Why?

### **Toolbox of healthy submission**

The elements in Sarah's submission:

- She understood the will of God.
- She communicated her understanding to Abraham.
- She allowed time for her husband to receive a response from God.
- She entrusted her husband to take responsibility for her actions.

c. What was the result of Sarah's submission (for Sarah and for Abraham)?

## **2. Rebekah and Isaac. Gn 25 and 27**

a. When Rebekah disguises her son Jacob from Isaac, is Rebekah showing submission?

b. What is the result?

#### **D. Practical aspects**

1. What obstacles are there in true submission?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Are some of these obstacles present in my life now?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. I would like to change these things. What can I do?

#### **Conclusion**

I am now in a position to ask myself whether I will have enough love and faith to submit myself in all circumstances, to the very end, in a manner that will give glory to God.

A person's relationship to authority is a reflection of his relationship with God. Joseph, David, Daniel, Jesus, and Paul are wonderful examples.

*The example of Joseph in front of his brothers, who sold him into slavery:*

**Gn 50:19-20** "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

Do we believe like Joseph that no matter what happens to us in life, no matter how bad the injustice we suffer, our God is capable of using it for good? How does this change our attitude and behavior towards our husband?

Do we realize God is above all authority?

**Pr 21:1** In the Lord's hand the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him.

**Rm 8:27** (Literally) "The Spirit of God mixes all sorts of things together for the ultimate moral good."

What we believe about God will determine our behavior in submission.

### *For Further Study*

Submission is a voluntary decision to seek the good of the other, in honor of Christ.

**Submission to human authorities should stem from a decision,  
the decision to obey an authority intended by God.**

If, on the other hand, we submit because we feel controlled or guilt-tripped, we will always keep some sort of resentment or rejection towards the authority.

If we say “yes” to God or to someone else, when really we are thinking “no”, our submission is false.

A person in submission respects the other’s position, though he is imperfect, as having been established by God and does not seek to overthrow it.

**Submitting to authority is submitting to God, not men.**

The person in submission takes his role towards the other person into account, and acts accordingly by following the instructions of God’s love.

One can remain in submission to an authority without necessarily obeying that authority, when one is ready to accept the consequences of his response with reverence.

**In abusive situations, it takes a lot of faith and courage to submit to someone without  
letting them control you.**

In such circumstances, the Church (the brothers and sisters in Christ) is responsible for being a safe haven for the victims of abuse, even to the point of providing a safe place of refuge for victims until the danger has been removed, or the abuse has ceased. Christ desires to make manifest His loving presence and protection to those who are oppressed through his people, his body, the Church.

## **Lesson 5B: Man's Responsibility (For Brothers)**

### Submission and Authority

#### **Introduction**

#### **Questions for discussion in small groups**

1. What is the role of the husband in marriage? What is the wife's role?
  - a. What does it mean to be the "head" of the family?
  - b. What does it mean to "submit"?
2. How do I feel when my wife does not follow my guidance, or does not submit to me? What bothers me?
3. How do I react when I feel like my wife is not submitting to me?



## A. The Relationship Between Man and Woman at Creation

### Read Gn 1:24-31: The 6<sup>th</sup> day:

v24-25 God said: Let the land produce living creatures...animals  
God saw that it was good!

v26 God said;  
a. Let us make man in our image”  
b. and let them *rule over sea/air/earth*

v27 God created man in his own image  
c. In the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.  
d. God blessed them and said to them, “...increase in number; fill the earth  
i. rule over sea/air/ground v28-29  
ii. God said to them, “I give you every seed bearing plant...fruit

To all the beasts of the earth and birds of the air ...I give every green plant... v30-31  
God saw that everything was very good!

### Observations on the relationship between man and woman

First, what do we learn on who they are, and secondly on what they do, according to Gn 1:26-29?

Similarities with God in activities and authority

Unity in diversity:

Equality:

According to Genesis chapters 2 and 3

Order:

**B. The Relationship between the Divine Persons of the Trinity**

## 1. The Relationship between the Father and the Son

<b>Bible Passage</b>	<b>Role/Relationship of the <u>Father</u> towards the Son.</b>	<b>Role/Relationship of the <u>Son</u> towards the Father</b>
<b>Ph 2:5-11</b>		
<b>Jn 3:35-36</b>		
<b>Jn 5, verses 17-23, 30, 36-37</b>		
<b>Jn 8:28-29</b>		
<b>Jn 10:29-30</b>		
<b>Jn 11:41-42</b>		
<b>1Cor 15:27-28</b>		

**Synthesis:**

The Father

The Son

2. The Relationship between the Holy Spirit, the Father, and the Son.

a. Jn 14:26

b. Jn 16:13-15

c. Mt 12:31-32

**Summary:**

**C. Application to the role of husband towards his wife.**

1. What differences are there between God the Father and man (the husband), in their ability to exercise authority?

We will need to listen and learn, and frequently, follow her initiatives.

2. In what ways should the husband resemble God in his relationship to his wife?

**D. Submission of the Husband according to Eph 5:22 - 6:9**

1. Reciprocal submission applied to three relationships.

**Eph 5:21** Submit yourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ.

<b><u>Wives</u> to their husbands 5:22-24</b>  <i>*Submit</i>  <i>*Respect (v33)</i>  <b>as to the Lord</b>	<b><u>Children</u> to their parents 6:1-3</b>  <i>*Obey</i>  <i>*Honor</i>  <b>in the Lord</b>	<b><u>Slaves</u> to their masters 6:5-8</b>  <i>*Obey</i>  <i>*Serve</i>  <b>as to the Lord</b>
<b><u>Husbands</u> to their wives 5:25-33</b>  <i>*Love</i>  <i>(save, give yourself up for her, make her holy, make her appear radiant, nourish, care for her)</i>	<b><u>Parents</u> to their children 6:4</b>  <i>*Do not exasperate them</i>  <i>*Bring them up (correct/warn) according to the Lord.</i>	<b><u>Masters</u> to their slaves 6:9</b>  <i>*Treat them in the same way.</i>  <i>*Do not threaten them.</i>

2. The Definition of Submission

Submission is a voluntary decision to seek the good of another person in order to honor Christ. It is not a sign of inferiority, but a very valuable quality which reflects the nature of God himself.

The one who submits himself/herself respects the position of the one in authority as having been established by God (while recognizing his imperfection), and does not seek to overthrow him. He/she takes his/her specific role in the relationship into account, and obeys the commands of God's love.

One can remain in submission to an authority without necessarily obeying that authority, when one is ready to accept the consequences of his response with reverence.<sup>1</sup>

**In a few words, how does a husband submit to his wife?** (We will further develop these elements in the following section, section D.)

3. How does Christ exercise his authority over the Church? (Eph 6:23-29)

a. Christ saves her.

b. Christ **gives himself up** for her.

<sup>1</sup> See Ac 4:18-20 ; a study on Paul's submission to authority is being presented at this time to the women.

c. Christ purifies her, sanctifies her, and makes her radiant.

d. Christ feeds her

e. Christ cares for her.

The husband is called to do the same thing for his wife!

### A few strategies for application

\*He saves her

—by protecting her from all kinds of threats (physical, emotional, spiritual)

He gives himself up for her

He purifies her

...to present her to himself (she is his pride, his glory)

\*He nourishes her; he takes care of her.

## E. Authority

1. The biblical definition of authority:

*WordNet English Dictionary definition: “the power or right to give orders or make decisions”*

*A biblical definition of authority: Bernard Ramm*

*Generally for a believer in Christ, authority is the right and power given by God to someone for exercising an assigned role or ministry for the benefit of those under his care.*

**The husband**, as the “**leader**” or “**head**” of two equal partners of a marital union, bears the fundamental responsibility for leading the couple in a direction that glorifies God.

**The wife** is responsible to help, advise and support her husband in his role of spiritual leader.

“The authority of the husband as head, must not be confused with male domination, in which the man forces his will upon his wife without regard for her equality, her rights, or her value.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Note: Items marked with \* are taken from Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, Ed. John Piper & John Grudem.

**Mk 10:42-45** Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

2. Facets and responsibilities of authority.

a. Protection

**1Pet 3** Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

b. Order and coordination

c. Guidance, orientation, motivation

**1Tm 3:4-5** He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

d. Flourishing

**Toolbox for exercising authority**

3. Two pitfalls (dangerous traps) husbands should avoid when exercising authority in their role as spiritual leader:

- a. authority degenerating into male domination.
- b. yielding his leadership role by being absent or passive.

🕊 **We need to fear God and depend on Him entirely!**

**Conclusion: Questions for group discussion:**

4. What should a husband do when his wife will not submit to him?

5. How can I best emphasize biblical equality and order in my home, particularly in family decisions?

6. How can I (better) love my wife/ sacrifice myself for her? How can I (better) submit to her as a husband?

## Lesson 6: Communication

### I. The Art of Verbal Communication

**Translation from the lyrics of a French song, *Pas D'accord?* [You don't agree?].**

*by Den - Isa*

Between what I think, and what I want to say  
What I think I am saying, and what I really say

What you want to hear, [and] what you hear  
What you think you understand, [and] what you want to understand

And finally, finally, what you understand

There are nine possible ways to disagree  
There are nine probable ways to not understand each other

Between what you think, and what you want to say  
What you think you are saying, and what you say

What I want to hear, and what I hear  
What I think I understand, and what I want to understand

And finally, finally, what you understand

There are nine possible ways to disagree  
There are nine probable ways to not understand each other

Yet there remains a possibility still, to agree with each other,  
There is still a probability of reaching an understanding.

## Introduction

### Verbal communication is an art.

1. Where should we learn the art of communication?

The Bible contains a wealth of advice about communication.

2. Read the following verses, and answer the questions below.

**Ph 4:8** Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

**Lk 6:45** For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

**2Cor 10:4-5** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

- a. What is the beginning of all verbal communication?
- b. What should we do if a thought is not true?
- c. What should we do if an unkind word comes to our thoughts?
- d. Does this mean we should abstain from any sad or painful thoughts?
- e. What should we do with all the hurtful words, criticisms, judgments, and guilt-trips we have been victims of, and which crowd our spirit?



## II. Three pillars of verbal communication

### Introduction

Generally speaking, communication specialists have reached a consensus in recognizing three pillars of healthy communication. We find these three pillars in the following verses. Identify them below.

**Eph 4:15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

**Ja 1:19** My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

### A. The Truth: Telling the Truth

#### 1. What is truth?

*God alone perfectly knows the truth. The truth we understand through observation and reasoning must be open to correction from the Word of God. When man tries to use his faculties and sense of reasoning to judge the Word of God, he slips into a pit of false ideas and erroneous convictions. Backus*

To tell the truth is to say what I really mean.

🗣️ “Say what you think and think what you say.”

**Ps 17:3** Though you probe my heart, though you examine me at night and test me, you will find that I have planned no evil; my mouth has not transgressed.

#### 2. According to the following verse, should the woman be quiet in the house?

**1Cor 14:35** If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home.

3. How should we communicate within the couple?

Read Eph 4:25-32, and write down the elements that should mutually be practiced between spouses.

In the previous list of recommendations, highlight those which convey the importance of truth.

*It is better to tell the truth in a clear and straightforward manner, and tell ourselves the truth, rather than remaining silent by suppressing our feelings until they may explode.  
A relationship deteriorates when two people do not tell each other the whole truth, and even more so when the truth that is exchanged is done without love. Backus*

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**Toolbox for Telling Truth:**

4. There is nothing wrong with saying “I”.

Answer the following questions by providing at least one example from the gospels.

*In (French) school, we were taught to avoid using the pronoun “I”, because it was supposedly better manners to speak of others rather than ourselves.  
Backus*

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a. Did Jesus avoid using the “I” pronoun?

5. Did Jesus avoid expressing his needs and desires?

a. Did Jesus avoid expressing negative feelings?

6. Ask, and you will receive. How should we ask? To provide inspiration for your answer, read Lk 11:5-13.

*An erroneous concept of spontaneity: “I should never have to ask for what I desire, because that ruins everything.” Backus*

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7. The freedom to say “no”.
- If we have the right to make requests, are we also allowed to refuse them?

**Mt 5:37** “All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.”

- Did Jesus know how to say no? Provide an example.

8. Rejecting legalism. How many commandments did God give?

*God only gave Ten Commandments (summarized in two); but we have managed to increase them by developing our desires into genuine teachings, and compelling others to submit to them. In Christian slang, this is called legalism. Backus.*

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9. Understanding guilt-based manipulation. What are the three most common terms used by manipulators?

*The level of authenticity of our daily interactions is determined by this goodwill to admit that in the requests we make to others, we are simply expressing a personal desire and not the eternal will of God. Backus*

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10. Receiving criticism. Are the criticisms we receive valid or justified?

*The best way to defuse these criticisms involves accepting and agreeing to them as honestly as possible. Our objective is not to belittle ourselves, but rather to eliminate controversy and remove the satisfaction the other person might gain if we become defensive. Backus*

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## **B. Love: Truth with Love**

**1Cor 13:4-7** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

### **Toolbox for Communicating with Love: Three Important Obstacles to Avoid.**

1. What shame!

#### **Integrity or hypocrisy**

a. What is hypocrisy?

b. What verses from 1Cor 13 oppose the hypocrisy reflex?

Hypocrisy ≠ Integrity

**Pr 20:7** The righteous who walks in his integrity— blessed are his children after him! (ESV)

c. What is integrity?

2. What an idiot!

#### **Judgments**

a. Can we improve the attitude of our spouse or child by reproving or humiliating them?

No! What really happens is the person receiving our sarcasm becomes irritated or wounded by our comments. Instead of trying to make changes, the person will react in a way to protect himself by either retorting in the same way, or by mulling over our statement.

b. What does Jesus say to those who judge and place negative labels on their neighbors?  
(Rewrite in your own words)

**Mt 7:1** Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

**Mt 5:22** Anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

c. Encouragement and encouraging words. How does Jesus reinforce Nathaniel's positive behavior in Jn 1:45-51?

**1Cor 8:1** But knowledge puffs up while love builds up.

*Instead of hurting others through our criticism, we can reinforce their positive behavior and replace mocking, threats, humiliations and injuries by constructive words: compliments, thanks, smiles, reminders of good, past actions. Backus*

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d. Teasing. How can teasing hinder good communication?

3. What fear!

Courage to confront. In Mt 18:15, Jesus tells us: “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you.”

a. Why is the previous verse one of the most difficult ones to put into practice?

b. How can the following passage, in 1Jn 4:17-20, help us?

“This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar.”

### C. Listening: “The Art of Understanding”

**Ja 1:19** Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

#### Toolbox for Listening.

1. Link each of the following verses to one of the sentences provided below. The first verse is provided as an example.

**Pr 1:5** Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.

**Pr 18:13** To answer before listening— that is folly and shame.

**Pr 20:5** The purposes of a person’s heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.

**Pr 21:28** A false witness will perish, but a careful listener will testify successfully.

**Ec 3:7** A time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak.

a. God created us with one mouth and two ears!

- b. An effort of concentration is necessary: we must summon our will and purposefully fix our attention on our neighbor's words.
- c. As we listen to our neighbor, it is important to get a sense of our own feelings.
- d. Among the various communication practices, the one that procures the most satisfaction is reformulating, for it frees us from the anxiety which comes from needing to find an answer.
- e. Reflecting involves showing the speaker we have properly understood his message and heard his distress by restating what we have understood from his words.

### **The results**

**Pr 1:5** Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.

(d) Among the various communication practices, the one that procures the most satisfaction is reformulating, for it frees us from the anxiety which comes from needing to find an answer.

**Pr 18:13** To answer before listening— that is folly and shame.

**Pr 20:5** The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.

**Pr 21:28** A false witness will perish, but a careful listener will testify successfully.

**Ec 3:7** A time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak.

<b>Listening is a beautiful gift of love to offer.</b>
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### ***For Further Study***

**There are different levels of intimacy in communication.**

- 1) Utilitarian or formal conversation, such as greetings.

“I'll get home from work at six this evening.”

“Could you pass me the salt, please?”

- 2) Reporting provides factual information about other people or things.

“The mailman already came by.”

“Mrs. Smith had a heart attack.”

3) Presenting personal ideas and value judgments.

“She shouldn’t work so hard.”

“He should be married at his age.”

4) Sharing feelings and emotions.

“I’m glad you came.”

“My son doesn’t come to see me any more; it makes me quite upset.”

5) Total and authentic communication which involves the entire person.

A person reveals what is in the very depths of his heart, his personal identity.

2. Classify the following passages by assigning them with one or more of the corresponding numbers in the levels of communication.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mt 16:13-14.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mt 16:15-20 (16 and 20).

\_\_\_\_\_ Lk 18:18-19.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lk 19:41.

\_\_\_\_\_ Jn 8:53-58.

\_\_\_\_\_ Jn 11:35.

\_\_\_\_\_ Jn 14:5-11 (19-20).

3. Questions for Personal Reflection

a. In your opinion, at what level should a married couple be able to communicate?

b. What level would you estimate your communication with your spouse to be?

c. Are there circumstances in your life where you have tried to hide from yourself, others, and God?

Share these experiences with your spouse and pray together.

### III. The Love Languages

This study is inspired from the book “The 5 Love Languages” by Gary Chapman.

#### D. Discover the Five Love Languages.

1. What is the love language used in the following verses?

*Pr 12:25 A kind word cheers it(the heart) up.*

*Pr 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath.*

*Pr 15:23 How good is a timely word!*

*Pr 18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death.*

*Pr 25:11 Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a ruling rightly given.*

*Mt 25:21, 23 “Well done, good and faithful servant! [...] Come and share your master’s happiness!”*

**Language 1 = \_\_\_\_\_**

a. What are its alternatives?

*Ac 18:27 “The brothers and sisters encouraged him”*

*Jos 1:9 Be strong and courageous.*

*Mt 9:2 “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.”*

*Mt 9:22 “Take heart, daughter, [...] your faith has healed you.”*

*Jn 16:33 ‘But take heart! I have overcome the world.’*

*Gn 50:21 And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.*

*1Th 5:14 Encourage the disheartened.*

*1Cor 14:3 But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.*

*1Th 5:11 Encourage one another and build each other up.*

*Eph 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

Alternatives:

**Key verse: Jn 1:47 “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”**

2. What is the love language expressed here?

*Mt 26:6-13 The woman pours the jar of perfume on Jesus’ head.*

*Lk 7:36-47 The sinful woman pours oil on Jesus’ feet.*

*Jn 2 The water changed into wine at the wedding in Cana.*

*Jn 6:11-13 The multiplication of bread.*

*Jn 10:17-18 I give you my life.*

*Jn 10:28 I give them eternal life.*

*Jn 11 The resurrection of Lazarus.*

*Jn 12:1-8 Marie pours perfume on Jesus.*

*Jn 15:13 There is no greater love than to lay one’s life down for one’s friends.*



*Jn 16:7 Jesus promises to send the Advocate.  
1Cor 12:4 Spiritual gifts.*

**Language 2=** \_\_\_\_\_

3. How did Jesus prove his love in the following passages?

*Mt 20:26-28 The Son of Man came to serve.  
Mt 27:55 Many women had followed Jesus to care for his needs.  
Jn 13:1-17 Jesus showed his love and washed the disciples' feet.  
Gal 5:13 "serve one another in love"*

**Language 3=** \_\_\_\_\_

4. What language of love did Jesus use in these instances?

*Mt 8:3, 15 He touched the leper.  
Mt 9:29 He touched the eyes of two blind men.  
Mt 17:7 He touched three disciples when they were terrified,.  
Mt 20:34 Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes.  
Mk 7:33 Jesus touched the man's tongue (and ears).  
Mk 9:36 Jesus took a little child into his arms.  
Mk 10:13-16 Jesus took little children into his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.  
Lk 24:39 After his resurrection, Jesus invited the disciples to touch him.  
Jn 13:23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.*

**Language 4=** \_\_\_\_\_

5. How did Jesus show his love in the following narrative passages?

(Note: Many of these passages involve complex, often intense communication; they could be discussed for hours.)

*Mt 5:1-2 His disciples came to him and he began to teach them.  
Mt 8:22 "Follow me and let the dead bury their own dead."  
Mt 14:25-33 When Jesus walked on water.  
Mt 17:1-13 The transfiguration.  
Lk 5:1-11 Calling of the first disciples, with a miraculous catch of fish.  
Lk 10:38-42 Martha and Mary.  
Lk 19:5-6 Zacchaeus.  
Lk 22:15-16 The Last Supper.  
Lk 24:13-32 The road to the village of Emmaus; at a table in the village.  
Jn 3 The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus.  
Jn 4 The Samaritan woman.  
Jn 8 The woman caught in adultery.  
Jn 10 (with Ps 23) The Good Shepherd.  
Jn 21 Jesus appears to some disciples on the shore of the lake of Tiberius/Galilee.*

**Language 5=** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key verse:**

*Rm 1:11-12 (emphasis added): I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be **mutually encouraged** by each others' faith.*

### **E. Discover your love language**

List the five main love languages and answer the following questions.



1. Among the languages Jesus used, which one resonates most with you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Sort the languages in the order of importance for you personally, from most important to least important.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is it that hurts you most deeply, among the things that your spouse does or says (or fails to do or say)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What have I most often expected or asked of my spouse? What would I like him or her to do for me?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How do I myself express love to my spouse?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What is my spouse's preferred love language?

*For Further Study*

**To love when we do not feel love—is it possible?**

Read Lk 6:27-36

Jesus commands us to love our enemies. In fact, we do nothing remarkable when we only love those who love us. If this is the case, we should not expect any kind of special recognition. But how can we put this commandment into practice?

1. What does the verb “to love” mean in this passage? (What practical forms does love take or what other terms are used?)

2. Where do we find the strength to love our enemies according to Lk 6:35-38?

3. Is it hypocritical to perform acts of love towards someone we do not love?

4. What love language should we use?

**Mt 7:12** “...do unto others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets.”



**Love is a conscious choice which requires effort!**

## Lesson 7: Managing Anger

*Anger: Handling a Powerful Emotion in a Healthy Way*, by Gary Chapman, was used as the main reference for the following teaching on anger.

### A. Definition and the origin of anger

#### 1. Definition

Anger is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction.

... a violent dissatisfaction accompanied by aggressiveness.

*Synonyms:* wrath, fury, ire, rage, indignation. (Weaker synonyms: exasperation, irritation.

Anger is a negative emotion (an unpleasant one) which everyone experiences; it is a universal emotion.

#### 2. What is the origin of anger?

***The human ability to become angry is rooted in God. The word anger is found 455 times in the OT; in 375 of the instances, it refers to a divine anger. G. Chapman***

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##### a. God's anger

**Ps 7:6-11** Arise, O Lord, in your anger;...God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.

**Rm 1:18** The wrath of God is being revealed [...] against all the godlessness and wickedness of people

**Rm 2:5-8** God in his wrath will give to each person according to what he has done.

**Eph 5:6** ...God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

Jesus became angry.

**Mk 3:1-5.** *In a synagogue, Jesus looked at the Pharisees with anger because they were so hardened that they opposed healing on the Sabbath.*

**Jn 2:13-17.** *Jesus drove out the sellers and money changers out of zeal for the Lord's house.*

***When God sees evil, He is irritated. It is His natural reaction to injustice and sin. Chapman***

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God wants man to do what is right in order to enjoy his blessings.

**Dt 30:15-16.** *God tells the people to observe his commandments that they might live!*

**Jn 3:35-36.** The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

Out of love, God displays his wrath on those who despise his Son.

The wrath of God flows from his holiness and love.

b. Human anger in the image of God

**Gn 1:27. God created us in his image; we are moral creatures. Anger is the emotion which comes from what we perceive to be wrong. It is not tied to our fallen nature, but rather it proves that we are created in the image of God and have a sense of right and wrong despite being fallen. G. Chapman**

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Try to remember the last time you were angry. Ask yourself: “Why did I get irritated?” There is a good chance you felt like you were responding to an injustice. G. Chapman

**Tell me what irritates you, and I will show you what matters to you.**

## **B. The causes of anger**

### 1. What are the causes of anger?

- Injustice
- Biochemical disorders
- Hereditary factors (learned from parents)
- Demonic influence
- Frustration resulting from undesirable circumstances, being unable or prevented from obtaining something we desire to have or achieve.
- Threat or injury to my self-esteem when I am put down, humiliated or ignored.
- Human error: Lack of another person to do (or not do) what I expect
- Learning: People from different cultural backgrounds are often angry about different things. Television teaches us what “should” make us angry.
- Pr 22:24-25 speaks of the influence of those we “hang out” with.
- According to Jer 17:9 (Read it) The flesh: The wickedness hiding in our hearts.

### 2. Do you think anger is always justified?

- a. Jn 4:1-11
- b. 2Ki 5:10-15
- c. Gn 4:4-7

### 3. In each of the previous examples, what makes the anger unwarranted?

4. What questions can I ask myself to determine whether or not my anger is justified?

5. If it is unwarranted, then where is the wrong?

6. Try to remember a situation where your anger was unjustified.

a. What made me angry?

b. What was I thinking, and how did I feel?

c. Was a real offense committed?

d. Where was the problem?

e. How did I come to understand my anger was illegitimate?

f. How did I manage it?

7. How can unjustified anger be avoided?

**Ja 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

**1Cor 13:7** Love always trusts.

***We can start by assuming the other person did not mean to do harm. He made our life more difficult, but has not committed an immoral act.***

***G. Chapman***

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**Rm 8:28-29** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

*Our anger serves as a guide to discover our most intimate needs, beliefs and priorities. It informs us when too much of ourselves is compromised by an important relationship. Harriet Goldhor Lerner*

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Trust your anger to God (whether it is justified or not), and thank Him for His forgiveness. This enables emotional and spiritual healing from past sufferings.

## C. Managing Anger

### Reactions to Anger

1. How do I react when I am angry?

*Sometimes our identity is still poorly defined, and therefore difficult to affirm. Women often fear that a well defined sense of self threatens the relationship, so they avoid asking specific questions out of fear of making the other uncomfortable. When they feel intimidated, tears, guilt and confusion often replace verbal expression. Few things can increase anxiety more than learning to affirm oneself, to preserve one's identity, and to hold one's ground within an important relationship, despite the other's reactions. Harriet Goldhor Lerner*

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**Eph 4:31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

2. How does God react when he is angry?

**Ex 34:5-9** “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger”

**Ps 103:8-9** The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

**Jn 4:2** I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger...

**Mk 3:4-5** He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts

**Jn 2:13-17.**

### 3. How does the Bible ask me to react?

**Ps 4:4-5** Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah. Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD. (ESV)

**Pr 16:32** Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

**Pr 29:11** A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back. (ESV)

**Ec 7:9** Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.

**Eph 4:26-27** In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

**Eph 4:31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

**Col 3:8** But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

**Gal 5:19-26.**

**Ja 1:19-20** My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

### 4. Why does the Bible ask this?

**Pr 14:17** A quick-tempered person does foolish things, and the one who devises evil schemes is hated.

**Pr 14:29** Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

**Pr 15:18** A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.

**Pr 19:19** A hot-tempered person must pay the penalty; rescue them, and you will have to do it again.

**Hb 12:15** See to it that [...] no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

### 5. What good is it when I explode in anger? Does it change something?

### 6. Who is responsible for my reactions?

**Ps 62:12** "...and with you, Lord, is unfailing love"; and, "You reward everyone according to what they have done."

**Mt 16:27** For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.



*Each one is responsible for his or her own actions: We are not responsible for the reactions of others, and they are not responsible for ours. Beware! The game of "Who's fault is it?" is a vicious cycle without a beginning or an end, which only feeds the confusion. To argue and accuse the other is sometimes a way of protesting and protecting the status quo at the same time. Neither side is willing to change. If anger reveals an issue, becoming angry does not resolve it. In fact anger is a double-edged sword: on the one hand it preserves our identity, on the other, it does not resolve our problems. We take distance from a fruitless struggle when we let go of the belief that we can change or control the other. Harriet Goldhor Lerner*

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Expressions of anger that are condemned in the Bible need to be set aside.

### **Toolbox: What should I do with my anger?**

- a. I recognize my anger honestly by stating the fact aloud.

**Eph 4:26** *Literally:* In your anger do not sin.

*"I am angry. Now how will I react?" These few words help us make a distinction between anger and action. They prepare us to think reasonably about our behavior instead of being carried away by our emotions. It's an important first step. G. Chapman*

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- b. Delay any immediate reaction.

**Pr 16:32** Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.

*This pause in the action should give me the necessary time to control my emotions. This is also the time to pray and think. G. Chapman*

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- c. Find out why I am angry. What offense has the person made against me?

*Reacting to a trivial offense and a major attack in the same way is a poor way to manage your anger. G. Chapman*

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- d. What is the best course of action?

*— Is it constructive and helpful? Can it correct the problem and restore our personal relationship?  
— Is it inspired by love? Does it seek the good of the person I am angry with? Does it build up or tear down?*

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*Faced with these legitimate and noble objectives, a Christian has two options:*

*a. I can accept the wrong done to me.*

*This is the way of patience and forbearance.*

*Pr 19:11 A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*

*b. I meet with the person with a desire to find a solution that will bring us together. This is the way of communication. Jesus also reacted this way. G. Chapman*

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**Is 53:7** He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth...

**1Pet 2:21-23** To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

**Rm 12:19** Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

**Mt 18:15-17** "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

**Mk 8:33** But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

**Lk 9:54-56** When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.

7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both solutions?

***For Further Study***

**How do I manage my anger?**

8. Answer “True” or “False”.

- a. \_\_\_\_ The results are what matter.
- b. \_\_\_\_ Who I am is what really matters.
- c. \_\_\_\_ I look for solutions to my problem.
- d. \_\_\_\_ I accept that others are different from me.
- e. \_\_\_\_ I argue.
- f. \_\_\_\_ I consider the magnitude of the offense.
- g. \_\_\_\_ I try to change the other.
- h. \_\_\_\_ I prevent the other person from reacting, thinking, or feeling as they do.
- i. \_\_\_\_ I leave.
- j. \_\_\_\_ I assume the other person meant me no harm.
- k. \_\_\_\_ I accuse the other person of being responsible for my reaction.
- l. \_\_\_\_ I clearly express my thoughts.
- m. \_\_\_\_ I define my position.
- n. \_\_\_\_ I remain silent.
- o. \_\_\_\_ I try to understand.
- p. \_\_\_\_ I feel responsible for the other’s reaction.
- q. \_\_\_\_ I insist the other person do things my way.
- r. \_\_\_\_ I describe my feelings to the other person.
- s. \_\_\_\_ I ask the other person to make changes.

## Lesson 8: Understanding Conflict

### A. The root of conflict

Areas of difference.

- The cultural setting or environment
- Parental role models
- Education
  
- Beliefs and ideas
- Values and priorities
  
- Psychological background
- Personality, temperament
- Gender differences (mental, emotional, physical, sexual, etc.)
  
- Tastes, qualities and talents
- Opportunities and the development of one's career
- Objectives and lifestyles
- Approaches and expectations

### Question for personal reflection:

1. What differences are at the root of many conflicts we have as a couple?

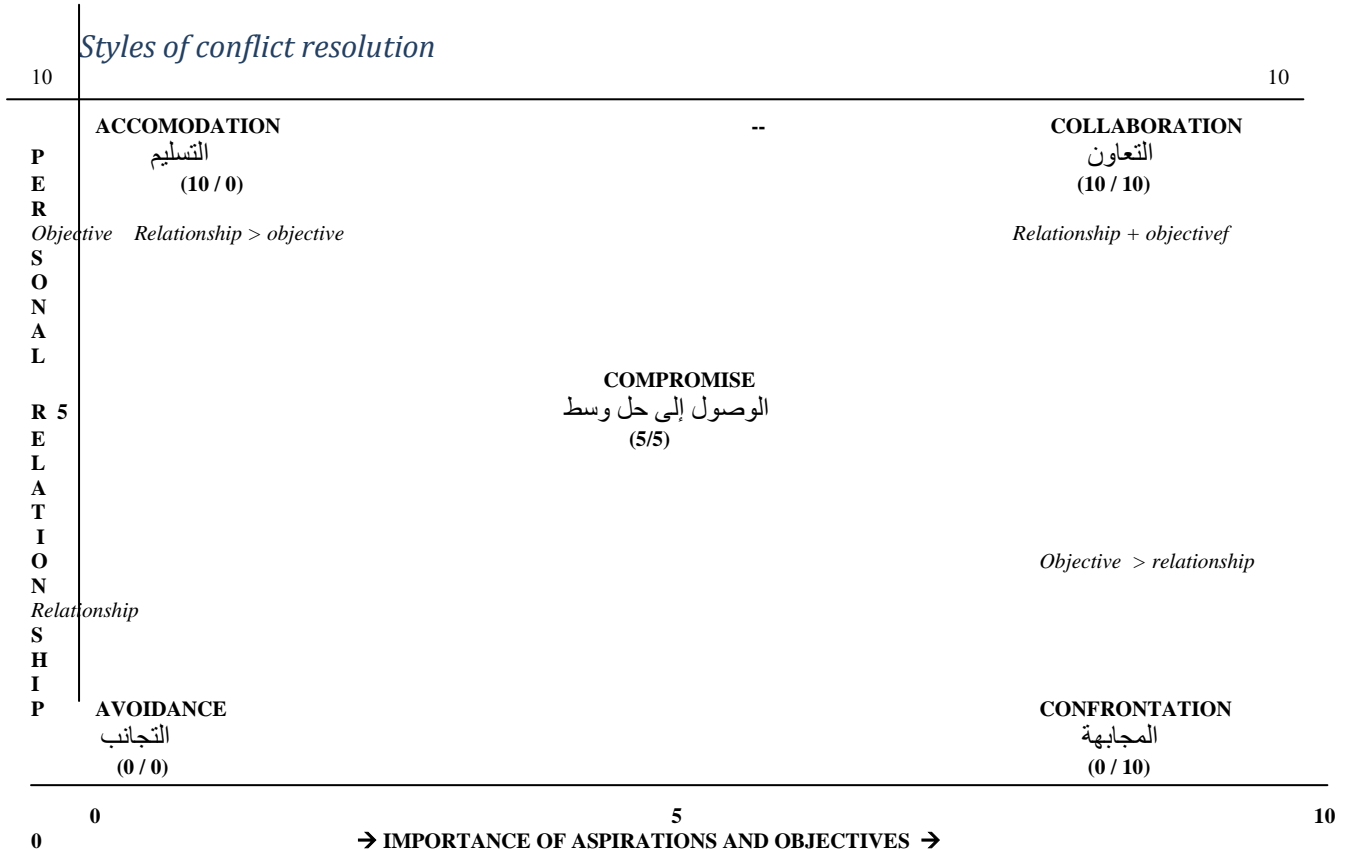
Conflicts offer two things:

- 1) A danger of tension and separation between partners.
- 2) An opportunity to deepen understanding, harmony, and mutual commitment in the couple.

Everything depends on how we handle them.

## B. Conflict resolution styles

We categorize five behaviors for facing conflict that are learned within the family setting.



We experience (at least) one of these behaviors during a conflict.

- 1) **Avoidance (التجنب)** : Avoidance is a lose/lose behavior (0/0).
  - What is the underlying belief with this behavior?
  - What is the need?
  - How can I grow my self-confidence?

**The antidote to shame:**

- 2) **Accomodation (التسليم)**: In order to preserve the relationship, I accept the solution or objective offered by the other, yet do not necessarily agree (10/0).
  - What is the underlying belief with this behavior?
  - What is the need I am seeking to meet?
  - How can I be freed from the fear of being rejected by others?

**The antidote to the fear of rejection**

- 3) **Confrontation (المواجهة)**: We insist on following our own line of action for the solution, even if the other person disagrees, or risks getting hurt (0/10).
  - What is the underlying belief with this behavior?
  - What is the need?

- How can we be freed from a fear of failure that produces anger?

### **The antidote to anger**

- 4) **Compromise (الوصول إلى حل وسط):** We yield on some matters so we can obtain satisfaction from others. It's a give/give (5/5).
- What is the underlying belief with this behavior?
  - What is the need?
  - How can we be freed from legalism?

### **The antidote to salvation by works:**

- 5) **Collaboration (التعاون):** Both parties express their views and make a joint effort to find a new solution which takes everyone's objectives into account (10/10).
- What is the underlying belief with this behavior?
  - What are the advantages?
  - Where can we learn the art of communication?

### **Toolbox for disagreements**

What is the key in an argument with my spouse?

**1Cor 7:5** Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again...

### **Questions for personal reflection:**

1. What kinds of conflict resolution did Abraham and Sara use in Gn 21:8-13?
2. For each of the previous behavior types, provide a Bible story which illustrates it and determine whether or not the response was appropriate.
3. What style of conflict resolution is most common:
  - a. Among the husband's parents \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Among the wife's parents \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. In your household \_\_\_\_\_
4. What style(s) do you want to avoid? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What style(s) do you want to adopt? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What will need to be done to make the desired changes?

**In a marital conflict, there are either two winners, or two losers. It is impossible to win alone.**

*Quote from J-J and S Langlois and FJA (Focus on the Family)*

7. What can we do when old, unresolved conflicts are buried with anger?

### **C. How do I forgive?**

We need to recognize and affirm the following:

#### **1) Yes, I am hurt.**

Forgiving does not mean excusing the other person. *(Its not his fault!)*

Forgiving does not mean that we minimize the offense either. *(Its no big deal!)*

Truth is our friend.

Forgiving means “returning a debt”.

***Forgiving is deciding to live with the consequences of someone else’s sin. The reality is, we have to live with the consequences of the offender’s sin, whether we forgive him or not. N. Anderson***

#### **2) You hurt me.**

You are responsible for the harm you did to me.

#### **3) Today, I am responsible for what I do with my wounds.**

#### **4) In obedience to the Word of God, I choose to lay down the arms of revenge.**

**Rm 12:19** Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.

Forgiveness is an act of faith in the justice of God.

**Gn 50:19** But Joseph said to them, “Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?”

#### **5) I also, have sinned.**

#### **6) I want to live in the truth.**

**Forgiveness implies a decision and a process.**

Me must take time to grieve. As we realize little by little the full extent of the offense, we are brought to forgive repeatedly.

**Forgiveness is an act of courage and faith.**

### ***For Further Study***

#### **Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

As much as possible, we seek to restore the friendship.

**Mt 18:15-17** If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

1. How should a Christian behave himself toward heathens?

2. What can we do when the guilty party refuses to repent?

**2Tm 4:14-15** Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.

3. Should we forgive to escape personal bitterness?

4. Who should take the initiative of reconciliation?

**Mt 5:23-26** Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

#### **Conclusion**

Forgiveness is necessary for reconciliation, but reconciliation is not always possible. This can be because the other person refuses to, or because he is dead, or it may simply not be desirable. We need to respect his emotional state and let the Holy Spirit intervene.



LORD,  
  
GIVE ME PEACE  
  
TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I  
CANNOT CHANGE,  
  
COURAGE  
  
TO CHANGE WHAT I CAN  
  
AND WISDOM  
  
TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE

## **Lesson 9: “One Flesh”**

### **The lesson plan:**

- A. Creation of Sexuality**
- B. Sexual Purity**
- C. The Case of Extra-Marital relations**
- D. Responsibilities and Privileges of Spouses**
- E. Toolbox: The Art of Loving**
- F. Knowing One’s Body**
- G. Spacing and Limiting Births**
- H. Conclusion: A Life of Love**

### ***For Further Study***

**Fact or Fiction? (Questions)**

**Annex 5 at the end of the booklet**

## A. Creation of Sexuality

### 1. Who created sexuality?

**Gn 1:27** So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

In Mt 19:4 and Mk 10:6, Jesus repeats the same words: the Creator made them male and female.

### 2. Is sexuality good?

**Gn 1:28** “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth.”

**Gn 1:31** God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

**Gn 2:25** Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

### 3. What structure has God established for practicing sexuality?

**Gn 2:24** That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

**Mt 19:6** So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

**Ex 20:14, 17** You shall not commit adultery... You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.

**Hb 13:4** Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

The book of Proverbs warns against binding to the wayward woman (the prostitute), and in contrast encourages man to find his joy in the woman of his youth.

*Nothing compares to the attraction between a man and a woman.*  
*John and Janet Houghton*

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## B. Sexual Purity

**1Th 4:3-8** It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God;

Read also 1Cor 6:12-19.

1. What sin should we flee? Why?
2. What is sexual immorality?
3. Who give themselves up to sexual immorality?

*It is sad to see so many people frequently living miserable lives due to rejecting God in their pursuit of joy and sexual freedom, while Christians, who are despised by these same people for their moral stiffness, enjoy the very things non-Christians seek. The key to happiness taught by the Word of God demands that we learn and follow divine principles.*  
*Tim and Beverly Lahaye*

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*Love is giving ourselves to the one we love forever, without holding anything back. The purpose of physical union is to express the fusion of our lives. If this is not the case, the sexual act loses a lot of its meaning. We affirm that we are one, but our lives and actions prove otherwise. It is hypocritical. A merely sexual act is self-satisfaction in disguise.*  
*John and Janet Houghton*

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4. Is sexual purity required from both men and women?

**Pr 5:3-14.**

**Jb 31:1-2** "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman. For what is our lot from God above, our heritage from the Almighty on high?

**Mt 5:27-28** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

### C. The Case of Extra-Marital relations

1. What two responses are offered in the law of Moses, to deal with two young people who jump the gun?

**Ex 22:15-16** If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife. If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins.

**Dt 22:28-29** If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay her father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the young woman, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.

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*In response to the question: "If you had to relive your life, share one thing you would do differently." By far, the most common answer was: "I would not have had sexual relations before marriage." Survey by Tim and Beverly Lahaye*

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*Sexual relations before marriage short-circuit the development of the relationship between two lovers. Therefore, a Christian couple will wait to have sexual relations until they are married. This decision gives the lovers a feeling of security and increases their respect for one another. When lovers respect one another, self-control and strength of character become a part of their lives, and this fruit of the Spirit will always be of great help to them. John and Janet Houghton*

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2. What happens in a case of adultery?

**Dt 22:22-27.**

**Mt 1:19** Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

**Mt 5:29** If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away.

**Jn 8:3-11** "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

*Many people let themselves get caught up in the irresistible flow of sexuality's waterfall, either because they under-estimate its power of attraction, or because they over-estimate their ability to swim. John and Janet Houghton*

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3. What about masturbation?

*In my opinion, masturbation is not a very important matter in God's eyes. It is a normal part of adolescence that doesn't involve anyone else. It does not cause any diseases, produces no babies, and Jesus did not mention it in the Bible. Dr. James Dobson*

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*Two reservations when it comes to a regular practice of masturbation:  
-We are using for ourselves a gift which is destined to another.  
-This practice is generally accompanied by erotic fantasies.  
Only compulsive masturbation may cause problems in an introverted and anxious adolescent.  
The greatest service we can do for our children is to show them the holiness and beauty of our own marriage. John and Janet Houghton*

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## **D. Responsibilities and Privileges of Spouses**

1. How should man love his wife?

**Pr 5:15-19** Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well... and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer— may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love.

**Eph 5:28-33** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself...

2. How should the wife love her husband?

**Eph 5:33** The wife must respect her husband.

### **Read the following passage and answer the questions.**

**1Cor 7:1-6** It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each

woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command.

3. Is it good to seek satisfaction for our sexual needs outside of marriage?

4. What is the only way to satisfy our sexual needs?

5. To whom belongs the body of a spouse, man or woman?

6. What is the responsibility of each spouse?

**1Cor 7:3-5.**

*The quality of our sexual life will be determined by the way we live together the rest of the time.*

*A few obstacles:*

*-Unresolved conflict.*

*-Poor communication.*

*-Television. Talk about it together.*

*-Tiredness, stress and anxiety. Go to bed earlier, take a vacation.*

*-The fear of a pregnancy or the lack of intimacy. Find a suitable solution.*

*John and Janet Houghton*

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*God created us the way we are so that we could share mutual joy and pleasure...*

*Our survey revealed that Christians truly experience loving relationships that are mutually enjoyed, and that they give themselves to each other more frequently and with more satisfaction than non-Christians in our society. Tim and Beverly Lahaye*

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7. In what circumstances can spouses deprive one another?

**1Cor 7:6-7.**

8. Is your spouse your best friend?

9. Is your spouse also your brother, your sister?

**Song 4:9** You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride.

To find out how to treat our sister/brother partner, read Ph 2:1-5.

10. Can we publicly display our affection for one another?

**Song 3:4** Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go.

### **E. Toolbox: The Art of Loving**

1. How much time does God think newlyweds need to learn to know each other?

**Dt 24:5** If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

2. In the couple, which spouse should behave with more delicacy?

**1Pet 3:7** Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner.

3. Is sexual union a naturally simple performance?

**Song 4:12** You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain.

*If you do only what naturally comes to you during the sexual act, you will almost always be in error. Dr. Ed. Wheat*

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4. What appeal is found in the following verse?

**Song 2:7** Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you [...] do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

*There is a big difference between the way in which men and women react sexually. With men, desire comes quickly and falls just as quickly after the act. For women, it climbs slowly, and then declines slowly afterwards. John and Janet Houghton.*

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5. What essential element of love is introduced by the Song?

**Song 1:2** Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine.

**Song 4:10** How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine.

6. How is man aroused to love?

**Gn 2:23** The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

**Song 4:9** You have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes.

*Adam saw Eve and was captivated by her beauty. John and Janet Houghton*

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7. How is woman aroused to love?

**Gn 2:23** The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

**Song 2:8** The voice of my beloved! (ESV)

*From the beginning, women seem to have been more sensitive to what they hear than to what they see. Eve heard Adam and was seduced by his words. Do not tire from telling your wife over and over again that she is beautiful and you love her. John and Janet Houghton*

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8. How is an orgasm (pleasure) reached?

9. What outcome should we hope for?

*This is not difficult if two people love each other with a true love, and want to control themselves to learn to give the most affectionate and physical satisfaction possible to their partner. Tim and Beverly Lahaye*

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10. How frequent can sexual relations be?

*The frequency depends on a number of factors including age, health, social, financial and work constraints, grudges or guilt, communication problems and many other things. However, according to two surveys on sexuality, frequency is not nearly as important as the degree of satisfaction. Tim and Beverly Lahaye*

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## **F. Knowing One's Body**

**Ps 139:13-16** For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

## G. Spacing and Limiting Births

### 1. Why raise children?

**Gn 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”

**Ps 127:3-5** Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.

*Those who deliberately decide to not have any children bypass a fundamental part of God’s plan for their marriage. John and Janet Houghton*

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## The Problem of Infertility

*According to estimates, 10% of married couples are not able to have children, and 15% have less than planned because they have problems conceiving. John and Janet Houghton*

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### 2. What methods of birth control do you know?

### 3. Are there advantages and disadvantages to each?

## Conclusion: A Life of Love.

*Most people who get married intend to remain together for the rest of their lives. For many of them, this dream does not work out in the end... With God’s help, it is perfectly possible to overcome the ups and downs of communal life. The uncertainty and inexperience of young couples will progressively develop into an increasing assurance and know-how. Most married women fully blossom sexually in their forties. John and Janet Houghton*

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Nothing will ever replace the exclusive learning within the couple. Each couple blazes their own unique path, scattered with forgiveness.

### ***For Further Study***

**Fact or Fiction?** Questions to assess common ideas.

Test your knowledge on sexual love.

Answer the following questions with “True” or “False”

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ In the Bible, the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, and the original sin, was sexual intercourse between Adam and Eve. (Implication: sex is bad.)
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ According to the Bible, procreation is the only legitimate objective of sexual intercourse. (“fill the earth”).
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Pleasure in sex is mostly for the husband’s benefit.
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ In the physical expression of love, the main goal for each partner is to give the other as much pleasure as possible.
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ By far, the thing couples say they regret most is by far that they had sexual relations before they were married.
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ It is good for men to have experience with sexuality before marriage.
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_ The best sexual experiences in marriage are at the very beginning.
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_ The first penetration is rather painful for women.
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_ The first penetration inevitably causes a flow of blood in women.
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_ Adults who are deprived of sexual relations are at risk of becoming mentally disturbed.
- 11) \_\_\_\_\_ Having sexual relations once a week is normal.
- 12) \_\_\_\_\_ Christians have sexual relations more often and with greater satisfaction than non-Christians (according to a survey in the US cited by LaHaye, *The Act of Marriage*, page 116).
- 13) \_\_\_\_\_ Generally speaking, the husband makes love to feel loved; while the wife makes love because she feels loved.
- 14) \_\_\_\_\_ It is not good for women to initiate the physical expression of love.
- 15) \_\_\_\_\_ The husband tends to reach an orgasm (the moment of greatest pleasure) before his wife.
- 16) \_\_\_\_\_ Succeeding in the expression of sexual love is a learned process.

- 17) \_\_\_\_\_ The wife is not fertile during the four or five days that immediately follow her monthly period.
- 18) \_\_\_\_\_ It is dangerous for the baby when parents make love while the mother is pregnant.
- 19) \_\_\_\_\_ Certain birth control methods can cause permanent sterility.

## Lesson 10: Raising Children

### A. The parental role

<b>God's plan for family is for parents to model Him to their children.</b>
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And now here is the other side of the coin:

***A child gives divine characteristics to his parents: what they say is Truth, what they ask is Law, and the way they treat him is Love. Jim Craddock***

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### B. A Biblical model of a thriving family.

What kind of a family did God want for each of us? To answer this question and the ones that follow, determine the key idea in the following biblical passages:

1. What is a child's responsibility towards God (his heavenly father)?
  - a. **Ec 12:1** Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"
  
  - b. **Ps 119:9** How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.
  
  - c. **Ps 148:12-13** Young men and women, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord.
  
2. What is the child's responsibility towards his parents?
  - a. **Pr 1:8-9** Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.
  
  - b. **Pr 3:1-3** My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

c. **Eph 6:1-3** (Ex 20:12) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

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

*Evidently, it is easier for a child to be authentic, respectful and obedient in a stable and loving family. However, even if the parents did not provide this kind of setting, the child is still responsible to be obedient, respectful and honest towards his parents. Robert McGee<sup>3</sup>*

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3. What is the spiritual responsibility of parents towards their children?

a. **Dt 6:5-9** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

b. **Ps 78:3-4** Things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.

c. **Dt 29:29** The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

d. **Pr 22:6** Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

e. **Eph 6:4** Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert S. McGee, Pat Springle, and Jim Craddock, *Your Parents and You* (W Pub Group, 1990)

4. What means do we have for building the spiritual identity of our children?

5. What is the financial responsibility of parents towards their children?

**2Cor 12:14** After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

6. What are the material and physical needs parents should provide for?

7. What is a child weaned from his mother looking for?

**Ps 131** I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.

8. What comes first in the life of a church leader, church or family?

**1Tm 3:4-5; 5:8** He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) [...] Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9. How do we prepare children for independence?

a. Social preparation

b. Intellectual preparation

c. Economic preparation

10. Create a summary of the biblical model for a thriving family (What is it that you want to remember from the biblical teaching presented above).



### C. A few parental characteristics

**Bible study:** Read 1Th 2:6-10.

According to this passage, what are some parental characteristics?

1. The mother (v7-8) – 3 qualities:

“Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.”

2. The father (v11-12) – 3 actions:

“For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”

3. Both parents (v9-10):

All we have learned up to this point concerning verbal communication, including the love languages and anger, can also be applied to our children.

### D. The parents' toolbox

1. Unconditional love

In order to help us understand the unconditional love of God the Father, Jesus told a story of the father and his prodigal son. Lk 15:11-31.

Parents have the responsibility to reflect God by loving their children no matter what happens, and regardless of what they do.

a. Speak the five love languages to your child. What are they?

**Col 3:21** Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

b. What love languages do your children have?

These languages allow parents to fulfill their child's fundamental needs. In particular to reassure them of:

- i. Their value
- ii. Our acceptance
- iii. Their belonging: they have a well-established identity.

## 2. The angry child

**Eph 6:4** Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

*The main reason for anger in children is the feeling they sense in their heart that they are not loved enough. Children do not know how to explain it, nor are they able to express it, but they instinctively know that they need unconditional love to live happily, and that this should come from their parents. The truth is few parents know how to communicate the love they feel in their hearts, to the heart of their child...*

*Parents quite simplistically believe that their children should just know that they are loved. But children do not believe anything simplistic. What they do know, is how they feel.*

*Many parents today experience way too much stress, and in no way have the necessary energy to handle normal childish behavior calmly. Family life is therefore sacrificed...*

*When their children are very young, parents have no trouble accepting when they act their age (eating, speaking, playing, etc.). But they make an exception when it comes to anger.*

*Many parents have anger issues themselves. They feel frustrated when their child becomes irritated, and just when the child needs love and acceptance, they withhold it from them. As a result, the child becomes even angrier because he is being treated harshly. Dr. Ross Campbell*

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### a. Be a role model.

*The principles to be applied are easy to understand, but difficult to apply. Let us love our children unconditionally, and speak the five love languages to them. In doing so, we remove one of the main causes for childhood and adolescent anger. Gary Chapman*

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### b. Guide the child.

*If he yells at you in anger, listen to him. Try to understand. Focus your attention on the source rather than the manner of his anger.  
-By nature, a child is immature. He is in the process of becoming. He has not yet perfected his anger management.*

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*-Parents, who are older, have had the time to mature. If they have not yet been able to find a more suitable response to anger, they should at least admit this is their problem, and not their children's problem.  
Gary Chapman*

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c. Teach the child.

*Use the stories of Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, Jonas and God, Jesus and the money exchangers in the temple. Memorize key passages in Proverbs: Pr 14:17, 29; Pr 29:11, 22; Eph 4:26-27. Gary Chapman*

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*The two greatest gifts parents can give to their children are loving them unconditionally, and teaching them to handle their anger with more and more maturity. Dr. Ross Campbell*

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### 3. Discipline and correction

#### a. The "rod"

**Pr 13:24** Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

**Pr 19:18** Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death.

**Pr 22:15** Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away.

**Pr 23:13-14** Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death.

**Pr 29:15** A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom, but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother.

**Pr 19:17** Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.

<p><b>Physical correction of a child is a parent's privilege.</b></p>
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The goal of discipline is to train up the child in personal discipline and responsible behavior; to help him recognize the way of the Lord and develop his desire and habit to follow Him.

**Hb 12:5-11** ...because the Lord disciplines the one he loves...

(This text is quoting and commenting Pr 3:11-12) My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Discipline is good for the child who receives it.

*There is no need to reject a method entirely just because it is improperly used. Hitting babies or children less than fifteen to eighteen months of age is inexcusable.*

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*Most corporal punishment should be over with by the time the child enters primary school. They should grow more and more scarce from that point on, and be completely ended between ten and twelve years old. Spanking should be reserved only for those times of greatest rebellion.*  
**James Dobson**

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<p><b>According to the Bible, the worst sin a child can commit is deliberately or provocatively showing a lack of respect to either of his parents.</b></p>
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*Respect must go both ways.*  
*An attitude of resistance on behalf of the child always contains a message for the parents, one they need to decode before they respond. The art of good parenting relies on interpreting the hidden messages behind a child's behavior.*  
*The crucial objective in discipline is to obtain and keep the child's respect.*  
**James Dobson**

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The rod should inspire respect, but not fear or terror – love casts away fear!

**1Jn 4:18** There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

The goal of discipline is **not primarily to punish** –for an offense committed **in the past**, but to **remediate**– to avoid the child repeating the offense **in the future**.

It is important to show the **correlation** between the offense and the correction.

**Ps 103:13** As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

b. Structural elements of good discipline

i. A well-established routine

ii. Firmness and faithfulness

iii. Understanding.

iv. Dignity.

v. Grace and justice.

vi. Forgiveness

vii. The “evangelical code” trap.

viii. Our example

ix. Encouragement

x. Prayer

#### 4. Blessing

Just as God blesses all men (Gn 9:1) and in particular his children –those who have faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:14; 4:6-7), parents should bestow their blessing onto their children.

Jacob gathered all his children to solemnly bless them before his death (Gn 49:28). At the end of his life, Moses did the same thing, tribe by tribe, for all of the children of Israel (Dt 33:1).

The elements of blessing are:

- a. Prayer – Invoking God’s grace and assistance onto the person.
- b. Encouragement – giving him the confidence to face life with God’s help.
- c. Through words of prophecy – predisposing him to hope and success.

How painful it is for a child when the father’s blessing is withheld. Esau cried bitterly following the deception of his brother Jacob, and the refusal of Isaac, his father, to bless him (Gn 27:34-38).

What do we call our children?

**Ps 127:3-5** Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.

***For Further Study***

5. In order to better model God the Father, let us ask ourselves the following questions:

- Have I been affected by a negative family atmosphere?
- What has God done for me?
- How does the Lord want me to respond to my parents now?
- What are my parents' love languages?
- What do I want to change for my children?
- What are my children's love languages?
- How would my heavenly father treat me in certain situations?
- Am I the father or mother God wants me to be?

6. Give the elements of a strong education.

Parents are responsible for teaching the child about God, his own identity, life, and the behavior to imitate, and to prepare him for living independently in the world.

7. For further study, read:

- Dobson, James, *The New Dare to Discipline*
- Campbell, Ross, *How to Really Love Your Angry Child*
- *Preparing for adolescence*, James Dobson (for teenagers)
- *How to Really Love your Teen*, Dr Ross Campbell
- *Father Hunger*, Robert McGee
- *Your parents and you*, Robert McGee
- *Réussir sa vie (Safe People)*, Henry Cloud (especially the section 'How to Become an Adult')
- Etc.

## Annexes

### Annex 1: To Become One; Divorce

#### ⊗ Group work. The marriage covenant according to the Bible, or according to culture?

On the French family license, respective rights and responsibilities are thus presented:

- The spouses owe each other mutual faithfulness, help, assistance.
- They are bound to communal living.
- They ensure together the family's moral and material direction. They provide for their children's education and prepare their future.

American spouses promise each other to be faithful and loving...

#### ⊗ Comparison of the Bible with the code in groups.

#### **Commitment and the Algerian family code.**

Compare Algerian laws with the following Biblical teaching. What can we keep from this code, and what should be changed? Rewrite the code by correcting (only) the texts that are in conflict with the Biblical teaching.

The Algerian Code	The Bible	The corrected Code
<b>Art. 2.</b> Family is the basic unit of society. It consists of people who are united by the bonds of marriage and kinship.		<i>Correct, no modifications</i>
<b>Art. 4.</b> Marriage is a contract that is made between a man and a woman through legal action. Its purpose is among others to establish a family on the basis of affection, leniency (gentleness and tolerance) and mutual assistance, to morally protect both spouses and preserve the family bonds.	<b>Gn 2:24</b> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. <b>Gn 1:27-28</b> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.	<i>Marriage is a <b>full commitment</b> to establish an <b>intimate</b> and <b>exclusive</b> relationship (and even <b>inseparable</b>) between a man and a woman. Good elements: affection, protection, mutual help; but more than just this!</i>
<b>Art. 31.</b> A Muslim woman cannot marry a non Muslim.	<b>2 Cor 6:14</b> Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. <b>1 Cor 7:15</b> But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such	<i>Neither a man nor a woman should make a covenant with a non-Christian. (On the other hand, a covenant with a non-believer</i>

	<p>circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.</p> <p><b>1 Cor 7:39</b> ...she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.</p>	<p><i>must be honored by the Christian spouse as long as their partner remains faithful. 1 Cor 7:10-20)</i></p>
<p><b>Art. 36.</b> Both spouses have the following obligations:</p> <p>1) To protect the marital bonds and duties of communal life.</p> <p>2) To contribute together to the safety of family interests, the protection of the children, and their wholesome education.</p> <p>3) To maintain good relations and the bonds of kinship with parents and relatives.</p>	<p><b>1 Cor 7:5</b> Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.</p> <p><b>1 Tim 5:8</b> Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.</p> <p><b>Gn 2:24; Matt 15:4</b> For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'</p>	<p><i>Overall acceptable. A word of caution should be added for the need to set limits to the bonds of kinship, in order to protect the couple's union.</i></p>
<p><b>Art. 37.</b> The husband is responsible for:</p> <p>1) Providing for the ongoing care of his wife to the extent of his ability, except when it has been established that she has permanently left the marital residence.</p> <p>2) Acting fairly with his wives when he has more than one.</p>	<p><b>Eph 5:33</b> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.</p> <p><b>Ti 1:6</b> An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife...</p>	<p><i>The husband's responsibilities are much greater than mere financial support—he must love her and seek her interests first. He is allowed one wife! He should also respect his in-laws (and educate/raise his children).</i></p>
<p><b>Art. 39.</b> The wife is responsible for:</p> <p>1) Obeying her husband and granting him honor as head of the family.</p> <p>2) Breastfeed her children if she is able to do so and raise them.</p> <p>3) Respect her husband's family, parents and relatives.</p>	<p><b>Eph 5:22</b> Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.</p> <p><b>Eph 5:33</b> Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.</p>	<p><i>Pretty close at first glance. Beware of the difference between obedience and submission! She is her husband's helper, which implies commitment and direct collaboration. It is also not required to breastfeed children.</i></p>
<p><b>Art. 41.</b> A child is traced through his father's line by means of legal marriage, because of probable marital</p>	<p><b>Ps 27:9-10</b> Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject</p>	<p><i>Even if the relationship to a child is tense or cut off, parents forever retain their parental status towards their</i></p>



relations, unless there is a disavowal of fatherhood according to legal procedure.	me or forsake me, God my Savior. Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. <b>Heb 13:5</b> Because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”	<i>children.</i>
<b>Art. 46.</b> Adoption (Tabanni) is forbidden by sharia and the law.	<b>Gal 4:4-5</b> God sent his Son [...] to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.	<i>Biblical adoption is the belonging to a new family and its identity to the fullest extent.</i>
<b>Art. 47.</b> The termination of the marriage ensues from divorce or the death of a spouse.	<b>1 Cor 7:37</b> A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.	<i>Death terminates the marriage. The Bible strongly discourages divorce, but recognizes its legitimacy in terminating a marriage.</i>
<b>Art. 48.</b> Divorce is the termination of a marriage. It occurs as the result of the husband’s will, by mutual consent of both spouses, or at the wife’s request within the limits of the provisions found in articles 53 and 54.	<b>Matt 19:9</b> I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” <b>1 Cor 7:10</b> To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.	<i>Yes, divorce is a termination of marriage. It can occur in the event of unfaithfulness (adultery and remarriage) or by the initiation of a non-believing spouse.</i>
<b>Art. 55.</b> In the event where one of the spouses permanently leaves the marital residence, the judge will grant divorce and the right to compensation to the party suffering the offense.	<b>1 Cor 7:15.</b> But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.	<i>The important thing is not winning the case, but living in peace and shunning evil.</i>
<b>Art. 77.</b> Providing for the elderly is the offspring’s responsibility and vice-versa, according to the abilities, needs, and the degree of kinship held in the order of succession.	<b>Mk 7:11-12</b> But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. <b>2 Cor 12:14</b> After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.	<i>Provision for one’s offspring rests upon the elders until the house is left. Providing for elders is the offspring’s responsibility within their means.</i>

\*Extracted and translated from “*Codes de la famille, de la nationalité et de l’État Civil*” Berti Éditions, Alger, 2004.

## Annex 2: Becoming One and Differences

### *For Further Study*

1. Who should do what?
2. How can we take advantage of the differences within our couple?

Read “Mayhall, Jack and Carole, *Opposites Attack: Turning your Differences into Opportunities* (Navpress, 1009) (260 pages)

3. Differences between men and women. What has helped you better understand your spouse?

The book “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus” by **John** Gray is helpful in understanding there are differences between men and women.

## Annex 3: Communication

### Snowball game for thirty participants

1. You each have five minutes to find five words that define communication.
2. Gather into pairs. You have ten minutes to find, between the two of you, five words which define communication.
3. Make groups of four, and do the same thing in ten minutes.
4. Make groups of eight, and redo the activity in the same amount of time.
5. Make two large groups of 15 people each.
6. The whole group is led by the teacher.

Note: You will often find different words that mean more or less the same thing. Lump them together, and choose one.

### Assessment of the snowball game

1. How did we come to this conclusion?
2. How was your personality expressed in this discussion? (How do I picture myself in three to five words?)
3. Choose one or two people, and write them a letter telling them how you saw their personality expressed.
4. How do I feel when I tell others how I perceive them?
5. How did we choose the others?
6. How did it feel to hear someone else express how they perceive me?
7. Some participants did not receive any letters. How did it feel?
8. What happens when we do not communicate, or when we communicate poorly?

“How can they get along if they don’t speak to each other?” *Françoise Dolto (Translated)*

## Annex 4: The Challenge of Anger

### How can we manage our anger towards God?

**Eph 4:26.** When you become angry *towards God*, do not sin. Anger towards God is always an illegitimate, unjustified kind of anger. God never does us anything wrong.

**Ph 4:7.** Divine peace comes from the certainty that the difficulties that I am going through in no way mean God has abandoned me. We will come to a stage of acceptance when we believe God is sovereign and benevolent, and that he makes no mistakes.

Expect a new mandate from God.

**Jer 29:11.** “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

As long as we live, God does not give up on us.

### How should I respond to someone who is angry?

Don't copy the same angry behavior! It is already bad enough that one person has lost control.

**Ja 1:19-20.** Pray along the lines of this verse.

An individual who gets so infuriated that he loses control does not need an opponent in battle, but rather, a friend who will lead him through the nebulous clouds of emotion back to the cause of his irritation.

It is easier to put out a fire when we do not add more fuel.

**Pr 15:1.** A gentle answer turns away wrath.

This is how a Christian should react when confronted to an angry person. The goal is to help the irritated person adopt healthy and constructive solutions to his anger.

### What is a relationship triangle?

A “triangle” occurs when we reduce our anxiety in one relationship by turning our attention towards another. The result is that hidden problems in one relationship will feed the fires of other relationships.

An example of such a triangle would be:

—Mother and son form an exceptionally close relationship to compensate for a marriage in which the partners are distant from each other, and keep the father out of the family circle.

Wife/Mother-in-law; Husband/wife

Which relationship legitimately is the priority?

Such triangles are used to cover up the problems which are provoking anxiety. Children for instance are very sensitive, and may attempt to help the family by drawing everyone's attention to themselves. Focusing our attention on a “problem child” is wonderful for reducing our awareness of problems we have with a spouse or a parent.

Triangles take many forms. They may grow over several generations, and are found in all types of human relationships. A harmless triangle may gradually harden into something like a cast, where the harder it is, the harder it becomes to escape. It usually involves someone who is weaker than the others and greatly increases the chances of more serious aggression. People may

shift around their position in the triangle, but it remains nonetheless. Usually, members describe it as an alliance formed for a good cause rather than a coalition formed against the third person.

### How can we escape a family triangle?

When we become aware of the problem, we need to apologize to the third person and try to stay out of the triangle.

Abstain from counseling, helping, criticizing, giving reproach, or even cutting off the relationships. Do not take sides.

### Learning how *not to help*

When we do not put energy into resolving our own personal problems, we take on the problems of others as if they were our own burden. It is difficult to keep our distance from others who need time to face their own suffering, and resolve their own problems.

### What can we do?

Taking some distance and allowing others to struggle with their own problems is not the same as emotionally withdrawing. “That is not my problem” is a reaction of emotional distance. It is difficult to maintain emotional ties when we have initiated a change in the relationship. It takes effort because we must overcome the resistance of our own anger.

It involves being present, but allowing others to struggle and confront their own emotions.

Another way to help others is to share our own struggles and vulnerabilities. We can ask the other person what they think about our problem.

Finally, learning not to help involves recognizing that we do not have the answers or solutions to another’s problems. In fact, we do not even have the answers to all of our own problems. We can only offer our advice when we recognize that it may or may not be useful to the other person.

When a triangle is destroyed, the real problems surface.

Children will inherit unresolved problems from previous generations.

We are all vulnerable to intense and futile reactions of anger in our current relationships, if we do not first resolve our own families’ emotional problems. This is especially true when it comes to loss or separation.

Staying out of a triangle means we remain calm while being emotionally present. We can offer the other person the blessing of doing what is best for himself or herself.

We focus on our own individual personal relationships. When our anxious, angry energy is no longer used up on someone else, we have a lot of energy left to spend on ourselves. Then we will be able to ask ourselves: “From now on, what do I want to do with **my** life?”

⊗ **Groupwork: How to leave a family triangle**

Reply using “true” or “false”.

**I should:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - help the two other opposing parties.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ - counsel.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ - cut off my relationship with one, or even both of them.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ - rebuke.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ - distance myself emotionally by saying “that is no longer my problem.”
6. \_\_\_\_\_ - not talk about my personal struggles.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ - offer solutions.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ - become angry.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ - be doubtful the other two are able to solve their problems without me.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ - stay calm.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ - not help.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ - take some distance.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ - criticize.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ - be present.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ - let the other person struggle and learn to face his or her own emotions.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ - ask the other what he or she thinks about my problem.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ - remain humble.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ - give my opinion.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ - ask myself, “What do I want to do in **my** life?”

## Annex 5: One Flesh

*Everything that follows has been taken from “The Act of Marriage” by Tim and Beverly Lahaye*

### I - For wives only

- 1) Maintain a positive attitude or state of mind

**Pr 27:19** “As water reflects the face, so one’s life reflects the heart.”

The brain is the control center of physical love for the woman.

Three important types of thought can affect the success or failure of the wife:

- a - What she thinks about sexual intercourse.
- b - What she thinks of herself.
- c - What she thinks of her husband.

- 2) Relax!
- 3) Forget your inhibitions.
- 4) Remember that men are stimulated by what they see.
- 5) Do not yell, do not criticize, and never ridicule your husband.
- 6) Remember that you are the one who responds.
- 7) Practice daily intimate hygiene.
- 8) Communicate freely.
- 9) When everything fails, pray.

**Jn 16:24** Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

### II – The unsatisfied wife.

Some causes, and remedies for the inability to have orgasm:

- 1) Ignorance.
- 2) Resentment, and a desire for revenge.  
This resentment can come from a poor relationship with her father or other men, despite her husband being very kind.  
This kind of a spirit is not only destructive to our spiritual lives but also to interest in sexuality.
- 3) Feelings of guilt.  
The guilt is often associated with sexual experiences previous to marriage.
- 4) Fear is no doubt the greatest challenge.
- 5) Passivity.
- 6) Love takes time.
- 7) Fatigue.

8) Illness; certain medicines

9) Obesity

10) An angry [active, dominant, pushy, easily angered if frustrated] temperament.

In a female orgasm, the sexual excitement comes from the act of giving ourselves up.

11) Weak vaginal muscles

### **III – The key to feminine response.**

The vagina can be a source of sexual satisfaction, despite the fact that it has virtually no nerve endings. The muscles just below the mucous membrane of the vagina are, on the other hand, well supplied with nerve endings.

#### Kegel exercises

According to LaHaye:

When the P.C. contracts, it prevents the flow of urine. The weaker external muscles also help prevent the flow of urine. When the knees are spread apart, the muscles also spread, so that when urination has started, it takes more of an effort to stop the flow.

The Kegel exercise consists of tightening the P.C. muscle and maintaining the tightened position for about two seconds. After learning to control the P.C., it is recommended that women repeat the exercise five or ten times a day, before getting up in the morning. In the beginning, the exercises should also be practiced each time one urinates. Then, the general advice is to repeat this exercise six times a day, doing about ten contractions each time.

*The most important part of these exercises can be done anywhere—sitting, lying down, or standing, with the legs held a little apart. At first, concentrate on doing the exercise correctly. It will help at first to do it when you go to the toilet, with the legs held well apart. First contract the muscles that control the anus, then those which surround the vagina. Contract them as if you were trying to hold back the flow of urine. Count to four, then relax the muscles. Repeat this movement ten times. Carry out the exercises several times a day, for instance while you are washing the dishes. Continue for at least three months, as often as possible. If you do the exercises correctly, you will soon be able to introduce a finger into the vagina and then hold it by contracting the muscles. Your husband will surely notice the difference. John and Janet Houghton*

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### **IX – For husbands only**

1) Learn as much as possible.

2) Exercise self-control.

**Ph 2:4** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. A husband can obtain satisfaction in a matter of seconds.

A wife needs more time to warm up than her husband. She needs about 10 to 15 minutes of stimulation in order to achieve an orgasm. The husband must learn to control the timing of his ejaculation so as not to do it prematurely.



- 3) Focus on your wife's pleasure.
- 4) Remember that the things that excite a woman are different from those that excite a man.  
A husband is stimulated by the sight of his wife.  
A wife is stimulated by what she hears: her husband's voice, his words of love; and also by soft touch and gentleness.
- 5) Protect her private life.
- 6) Beware of unpleasant odors.
- 7) Don't suddenly hurry into making love.  
The husband desiring to be a good lover must learn to fully enjoy the preliminaries. Depending on the culture, its duration varies between two and thirty minutes.
- 8) Communicate openly
- 9) Love your wife as a person.  
If the husband can convince his wife that their intimate relations are the expression of his deep love for her, she will become much more cooperative.

## **V – The impotent husband.**

### What are the causes of sexual impotence in men?

- 1) A decline in vital energy.  
The need for sexual satisfaction is the greatest between 18 and 22 years old in men.
- 2) Anger, bitterness and resentment.  
A domineering mother may be a contributing factor.
- 3) Fear  
Fear of being rejected, fear of being unable to satisfy one's wife, fear of being compared to other men, fear of losing one's erection, and fear of being unable to reach the point of ejaculation.
- 4) Ridicule.
- 5) Guilt, particularly due to extra-marital relations
- 6) Unreasonable expectations about one's sexual vigor
- 7) Obesity
- 8) Poor physical condition
- 9) Smoking
- 10) Emotional tension
- 11) Depression
- 12) Using alcohol, drugs, or certain medications
- 13) Masturbation
- 14) If the wife has weak vaginal muscles
- 15) A passive wife
- 16) Disapproval
- 17) A domineering wife
- 18) Premature ejaculation
- 19) Delayed ejaculation

The problem is rarely caused by just one of these factors.  
If a man suspects even one of these factors, he should make every effort to get rid of it. If he changes his attitude towards the problem and anticipates success, he has every chance of overcoming this impotence.

He may also find the most effective help directly from his wife. She will need to consider the problem as a challenge they must overcome together, and therefore take initiatives sexually. An important part of her contribution may be keeping her P.C. in good condition.

Nevertheless, it is essentially an issue of masculinity, and the answer ultimately lies with the husband:

- Pray about this.
- See your medical doctor, and follow his advice.
- Speak honestly about it with your wife.
- Read good material on the subject.
- Begin a physical exercise program.
- Lose weight if necessary.
- Don't try to make love when you are tired.
- Don't hastily start making love.
- Don't give up!

If he chooses to do so, almost any man can rediscover a satisfying sexual life, until he is quite old.