

# Marriage NOTEBOOK

## Making Right Choices For a Great Marriage

*By Dr. Edward Watke Jr.*

- Materials taught to a large crowd of adults with wonderful response, Praise God.
- Choices make all the difference, study this together with your spouse with great benefit.

*Written the summer of 1998*

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## Preface

God created, designed, and planned marriage. He then initiated a plan to insure that it would work. That plan is given in the Bible and in the Book of Ephesians it is called the “*walk*” of the Christian.

Biblically, this *walk* is how a Christian walks from day to day, and progressing one obedient step at a time and listening carefully to God’s voice as He speaks through His Word. Apart from that walk -- obeying God in our lives -- a lasting, loving relationship is incredibly difficult to achieve.

Marriages are made up many things -- the beautiful, the difficult, the routine, the humorous, the dramatic.

Marriage is a colossal clydescope of events -- in agonizing adjustments at times, even -- pain and pleasure, delight and demands.

It is a mixture of the mundane and the ecstatic, the commonplace and the romantic.

It comes in waves, ripples, bubbles, and splashes. Or it may be like sunlight, hail, rain, and wind. It can be, at times, like a lovely day or possibly a stormy night.

Its hues can be the rainbow’s spectrum, but possibly the prominent colors or shades of red, purple, yellow, black and gray.

A marriage can be like a quiet melody, an earthly novel, yes, it is to be the greatest show on earth.

**But above everything else -- marriage is an endless series of choices.**

**Choosing to love, to understand, to enjoy, to know, to minister.**

**Yes, it is choosing marriage. . .** that is making marriage what it ought to be out of choice. Do you choose marriage in all that God planned it to be?

-- Dr. Ed. Watke Jr.

# Marriage NOTEBOOK

## Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

By Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

### Lesson One

## “Making Right Choices For a Great Marriage!”

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### Introduction

A good marriage, some people say, has no serious problems, while a poor marriage is one in which there are many problems. **NO SO, I believe.** Problems go along with people -- in or out of marriage. If you don't have problems in life -- you are paralyzed or dead!

- The difference between smooth sailing and shipwreck in marriage lies in what you as a couple do about the rough weather.
  - All marriages have strengths and weaknesses. All marriages are either dynamic or they are deteriorating.
  - The husband-wife combo must either progress or perish.  
(Psa. 32:8; 25:9; Jere. 46:2; Joshua 24:15)
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**Speaking of kissing!** A little girl had a whole repertoire of kisses. She had the eyelash-again-cheek “*butterfly*,” the rubnoses “*Eskimo*,” the starting-at-one-side-around-the-face-to-the-other-side “*sliding*” kiss, and the old fashioned “*smack*.”

Such diversity also exists today in describing marriages, as they range from the “*happy to good to mediocre, to awful, to hopeless*.” But only 3- 15% claim the *happy* label, depending upon who you read or talk to. A few *hope for good*, but most openly admit it is a pretty ghastly marriage-go-round they are riding, so writes Jack Mayhall.

Who would ever choose to have a horrible marriage full of hatred, bitterness, devastation, destruction, and anguish of heart and soul? NO ONE WOULD!

**But. . .**

- What is the source of true happiness? • Why is it so elusive to most people?
- What did you desire from your marriage and home when you married?
- Can happiness be an end in itself?
- Could obedience to Biblical principles bring peace to your marriage?
- Should we seek to have a home based on righteousness?
- Does making the marriage right make the home right?
- Can we have a great and successful marriage without having a GOD honoring home -- a righteous home based on God's plan?

**But HOW? ?**

**Life Is Made Up of Choices. . .**

**This fact we need to examine. . . for we need to understand the power of choice. . . we need to unharness the power of godly choices that make the difference!**

Every lesson in life. . . brings you to a choice!

**A. Marriage, Like All of Life, Is Made Up Of Choices.**

1. All of marriage is a choice. One **small** choice follows on the heels of another till the trail becomes clear and well worn.
2. The **right** choices make for intimacy and closeness --- a oneness in marriage that equals no other relationship on the human level.
3. The wrong choices start a couple on the road to
  - a. disenchantment,
  - b. loneliness,
  - c. emotional separation, and potential physical separation.
4. Most of them are so small we scarcely realize we have made them, or why. But life will be different in the tomorrows because of **secret choices** today.
5. Sometimes we call them **reactions** and disclaim any responsibility for them, not recognizing that **our reactions are choices, too.**
6. We are usually not aware of our choices, and also,
  - a. are seldom aware of where our choice are taking us,
  - b. whether that is what we truly want, and we
  - c. don't seem to see that "**no choice is a small thing.**"

**B. Choices have an accumulative powerful effect on life.** (Consider Lot.)

1. In reality, these private choices (made in the heart or thoughts) --
  - a. direct our steps,
  - b. determine our behavior,
  - c. change the quality of our relationships,
2. And in the end, they shape our lives. (Consider Eli.)

**C. Where Are Your Choices Taking YOU?** (Consider Abraham, Samson)

1. Are your secret choices moving you in a positive direction toward a successful marriage?
2. Have you become aware of the choices you are making?
3. Do you see they have a **secret power** in your life? (Consider Achan.)
4. Do you understand that making godly choices gives you power to build the marriage of your hopes and dreams? (Consider Joshua 24.)
  - Within the sensitive setting of marriage these small choices made in life have more power to bless or hurt a relationship than we could every imagine.
  - For all their seeming unimportance, small choices carry long-term consequences and ultimately can make the difference between success in building a love-filled marriage or failure.

**What Produces Your Choices?**

**A. They are produced by your beliefs!**

***Our belief system. . . not the situations in life produces our actions, and reactions. We do what we do out of our beliefs. We build our own belief system, our own inner guide to our own choices in life!***

1. We must have a **Biblical belief system** which provides God's direction for our lives. . . then we will have joy, purpose, unity, and a strong sense of HIS meaning for our lives.
2. We must build an inner heart treasure of truth that guides our choices in daily life. (Matt. 12:33-35)
3. What do we truly **believe? Do we have a belief system that is based on the Word of God?** What do we truly believe about marriage?

**B. Our godly choices should bond us together by something greater than ourselves - - the powerful Word of God - - its principles, truths, and commands as they relate to our lives? (Heb. 4:12; II Tim. 3:16-17)**

1. You choices are based on something? **WHAT?**
2. Are your choices based on your wrong, (sinful, selfish) ideas, beliefs, or thoughts -- or the firm, unchanging Scriptures?
3. What is the basis of your thinking about marriage?
4. Do you see marriage is truly based on choices that come from what you believe?

**Jer. 46:2; Josh. 24:15; Deut. 30:**

*Become aware of your secret choices and discover their power in your life.  
This is the first step in building a great marriage.  
Establish the picture of the marriage God desires. . . and you desire. . . fill in the details.  
. .and keep it fresh in mind to guide your choices.*

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**What Destination Do You Choose?**

**You Need To Build a Strong Mental Picture of Your “Destination” -- the Kind of Marriage God Considers Successful and God honoring.**

**A. There is the *happiness factor!* (Does God want you to have HIS joy?)**

1. Most people want to be loved, understood, cared for by their marriage partner, but this built on a **“Biblical marriage!”**
2. They want their innermost needs met. . . those another human can meet. (Isn't this also what God wants?)
  - a. **So -- Do** we love each other? **Do we feel loved?**
  - b. Do we take care of each other freely and without complaint?
  - c. Are we growing in loving closeness each day?

- d. Do you have daily exchanges of love and nurturing in a climate where there intimacy grows and thrives?

**B. There is the *contentment factor!* (What is the source of contentment?)**

1. Our ease of mind greatly depends on whether we can function as a good team in the arena of life.
  - a. Is our partnership reasonably efficient, and
    - generally free of bickering, and mutual irritations,
    - of recriminations, and attempts to control one another?
  - b. Do we agree on most things (*oneness*) and adapt and compromise where necessary?
  - c. Do we complement one another, each contributing to the success of our joint efforts?
2. Do we depend on each other, or can we?
  - a. Are we satisfied with the way our life is going ---
    - our finances,           • our social life,   • our careers,
    - our home setting,   • schedules,           • our in-law relationships,
    - our family planning and rearing of children?
  - c. Do we derive real pleasure from sharing our lives, and working together toward long-range goals? (IT IS ALL CHOICES YOU KNOW!)
  - d. Are we building a life of spiritual unity? -- which includes ---
    - united prayer times together   • sharing burdens,
    - Bible read, meditation and study together,
    - consistent church attendance, putting God first.

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***We do make choices, secret choices of the heart, these do give direction and control to our lives!***

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## Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

### Lesson Two

## “Consulting God's Marriage Map!”

“Through **skillful and godly wisdom** is a house (a life, a home, a family) built, and by **understanding** is it established (on a sound and good foundation). And by its knowledge shall the chambers (of its every area) be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.” (Prov. 24:3-4 -- Amplified Bible)

In the pages of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, you can find what you need in order to build a marriage which will bring lasting happiness because it follows God's original design.

**This design is conveyed to us in the form of . . .**

- basic principles,
- many specific instructions,
- clear guidelines,
- vivid examples,
- sobering warnings, and
- wise counsel

Nothing can take the place of God's wisdom in showing you how to build your house -- your marriage, your life, your home, and your family --- to last a life time and to fill every room of your life and marriage together with “*all precious and pleasant riches.*”

In this lesson we desire to lay a foundation for all that is shared over these coming months. This is but a survey of God's wisdom on marriage which will show you what God considers most important in your relationship. After all, He created marriage for our blessing, and He knows best how to make it work! **Right?**

### The Meaning of Marriage

To look into the meaning of marriage, we need to return to the first wedding (a garden wedding) where it all began. (Gen. 2:21-15)

**A. God's action brought about this first marriage ceremony:** “*Made He a woman, and brought her to the man.*”

1. God made the woman to complement Adam perfectly, as an artist producing a masterpiece.
2. We must note the **initiative** in marriage, the **plan**, the **design**, and the **creation** of two human beings for each other -- together reflecting God.

**B. God taught Adam the terms of the marriage covenant He planned for mankind.**

These terms have never been revised, or replaced, and still provide a concise and the most effective marriage counsel ever given: (Gen. 2:24)

1. **Leave all else**, giving your primary and wholehearted loyalty and attention to one another.
2. **Cleave to one another** until you become inseparable, coming together in spirit so completely that you are one and the seam can no longer be found.



3. **Becoming one flesh**, with your oneness in heart, spirit, and shared life symbolized by and expressed through sexual union.

**C. God's plan for marriage rests on two pillars: o n e n e s s and permanence!**

1. We can only know **oneness** with one person. Even our children, no matter how dear to us, must be excluded from the center of this relationship.
  - a. There must be leaving which prepares us for oneness.
  - b. We must leave all else, for other pulls must give up their power.
  - c. Oneness can only be built where there is permanence.
2. **Permanence** means total commitment (cleaving) to the spouse.
  - a. **Cleaving** establishes the fact of permanence in our minds and **reassures our hearts that we are loved and shall be loved tomorrow.**
  - b. But because of the entrance of sin -- oneness and permanence can no longer be assumed and enjoyed without effort.
3. Adam and Eve experienced a **broken unity**, a broken relationship.
  - a. Now because of sin -- they felt **separate** and alone. (Gen. 3:)
  - b. **Selfishness** now dictated their acts and reactions.
  - c. Their love was contaminated with **hostility**, and **blaming**.
  - d. So today we too cope with -- sin -- shame -- selfishness -- separateness -- projectionism and self-centeredness.
  - e. We have the tendency to **withdraw** from one another, to concentrate on our own needs and wants, to live for ourselves, and to **blame** those closest to us when things do not go as we desire.

**The Benefits of Marriage!**

What did God have in mind for marriage? Why this plan, this design, what benefits did He have in mind for marriage? Let's look at the Scriptural evidence.

**A. Marriage was designed to provide security for a "house of love"--**

1. for the enjoyment of romantic fulfillment, (Song of Sol. 2:10, 4; 8:6-7)  
(Prov. 4:18-20; Mal. 2:13-16)
2. intimate friendship, and
3. sexual delights in the permanent setting of a steadfast covenant relationship.

**B. Marriage was designed to "meet needs," such as --**

1. to heal man and woman's aloneness, (Gen. 2:18; Prov. 31:10-11; Eccl. 4:9-12)
2. to provide a suitable helper, friend, and ally to sustain and support the other,

3. to encourage one another in following and serving the Lord.

**C. Marriage was designed to “picture” --**

(Gen. 1:27-28; Josh 24:15; Mal. 2:15; Eph. 5:21-33)

1. the relationship of Jesus Christ and His church -- the oneness -- sacrificial love -- and submission. ***This would also --***
2. give an example of “heaven on earth” to a watching world,
3. provide a place to produce and rear godly families in the setting of love and to train them to serve the Lord.

**Marriage: Two Views**

***Human Perspective***

1. Self-centered; “I” mentality;
2. Temporary; conditional partnership
3. “An experience. . . as long as I like it.”
4. “I’ll try. . .” “Unless I fall in love with someone else.”
5. No direction, or meaning
6. “Divorce is always an option.”
7. “I have to decide what is best for me”
8. Separateness. . . doing my thing!

***Divine Perspective:***

1. Two becoming one; “we” mentality
2. Permanent, indissoluble union
3. A lifetime covenant, “committed no matter what”
4. “I DO!” “Till death do us part!”
5. Purposeful, following God’s plan.
6. “What God has joined let no man put asunder.”
7. “Love means doing the best for my partner.”
8. Togetherness. . . doing God’s plan.

**Checklist for a Good Marriage!**

***Here are some characteristics of a good Scriptural marriage:***

(Consider together the extent to which these things are being lived out in daily life, discuss what to do to change things, to improve, to build a strong Biblical marriage.)

1. YOU are cleaving to one another so that nothing on earth is as important as your walk with the Lord, your spouse and marriage.
2. You both hold a strong view of the permanence of marriage and a steadfast faithfulness to one another.
3. You help each other in all the details of living.
4. You meet each other’s needs and forgive each other freely so that you no longer feel alone.
5. Both partners have left their parents to establish their own independent family unit. Neither is unduly influenced by their families and neither is emotionally bound to them.

## CHOICES IN MARRIAGE

6. You are growing in physical, emotional, and spiritual oneness which includes Bible reading together, united prayer, and church participation.
7. You are both enjoying the delights of romantic love.
8. You relate to each other in mutual love and submission, learning how to love one another by studying the relationship of Jesus Christ and His church.
9. You are building together an atmosphere of love so that your home offers the right setting to rear and nurture children; to minister to others in need of love and encouragement; and to portray to the world something of the love which Jesus Christ has for His people to become a “*showcase for heaven.*”

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***Study the Creator’s original design for marriage, and live by His design.  
This is the second step toward building a good marriage!!***

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Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson Three

**“Who Is At the *Controls* of Your Marriage?”**


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“The last of human freedoms is the ability to choose one's attitude!”  
(so said Vikto Frankl, a concentration camp survivor)

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Every successful marriage depends on the ability of both partners to make good choices. Analyze even one enjoyable day spent together as a husband and wife, and you will see that it happened because both of you chose to respond rightly. Was it a surprise? Or do you both consistently choose the best for your marriage? In other words, *have you learned how to take charge of your choices?*

***To answer this you must focus on the real you. . .***

- that part of you that weighs thoughts, feelings, and beliefs, and
- then, chooses attitudes, words, and actions.

***God Gave You the Power To Choose!*****A. This is seen at the very beginning of Genesis and the creation of mankind.**

1. God created us with the *amazing* capacity to make our own choices.
2. Amazing, because ***willpower*** is power indeed.
3. This independent self ***called the will*** sits in the place of personal authority and responsibility,
  - a. with power to decide, and
  - b. to control even the most essential matters of faith and life.

**B. God made a world of men and women in His own image with the freedom to choose whether they would love Him or not.**

1. He created us in His image as rational, morally aware, and morally responsible human beings.
2. This is a fact with great impact and relevance to us personally.
3. It means we make our own choices, and then must live with the consequences.
4. But so often, we tend to ignore and overlook this truth. We forget that every choice has its consequences, or we try to escape those consequences by saying, “*Don't blame me. It's not my fault. It's just the way I am.*” or “*Someone else is to blame!*”

**Mankind Lost the Ability To Make Good Choices!**

**A. Adam and Eve faced these facts. They failed the test of choice!** God gave them specific direction and statements as to the consequences of their sinful actions. (Gen. 3: Rom. 5:12-19)

1. Because our first ancestors rebelled at God's gracious design for their lives, that same rebellion we inherited -- in our minds and hearts.
2. The sinful heart is naturally rebellious, self-centered, fearful, hateful, and full of every kind of corruption and degradation. (Eph. 2:1-3)
2. The control center within us, which was meant to be in charge, is under attack on all fronts.
  - a. We are **besieged** by our sinful hearts, and determined self-will;
  - b. we are often held **captive** by our emotional responses,
  - c. **threatened** by our fears,
  - d. **tricked** by our lust and desires,
  - e. **lied** to by the enemy of our souls (who promises that sin will bring us peace and pleasures),
  - f. and **sabotaged** by outside influences which can do us no good.

**B. So who needs to be at the controls of YOUR life?**

1. This is a very vital question for anyone who desires to have a good, godly, success marriage.
2. A good marriage cannot happen accidentally, or automatically because we are poorly equipped. . . because --
  - a. our control center cannot be depended upon to make good choices,
  - b. good choices cannot be made by a sin-filled heart. (Jere. 17:9)
3. Our self-efforts for self-control are all doomed, they will bring nothing but defeat, sinful action and failure in every way.  
**But do we believe this? . . . that is the question!**

**C. On the battlefield of our minds we have an array of enemies/obstacles.**

1. They include:
  - a. fears,
  - b. lusts and selfish desires,
  - c. deceptions,
  - d. distractions,
  - d. distractions,
  - e. doubts, confusions,
  - f. pressures from outside,
  - g. pressures from within our hearts.
2. And we have a disturbing inability to operate decisively, correctly!

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*You willingness to behave responsibly needs to be coupled with God's power. In yourself. . . you will only fail miserably. This is the third step in your quest for a godly, fulfilling marriage!*

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**God Has Made Every Provision For Us To Live  
By His Victorious Power and Care!**

If we can't control our own choices then why write out them? God, who gave us the human will and the power of choose, has not left us helpless before our enemies, whether within or without. **God has met our needs.**

Heb. 13:5b *"I will never leave you, nor forsake you!"*

God is saying, *"I will in no wise desert you or leave you alone on the field of conquest or in a position of suffering without my support or presence. I will in no wise let go, lose hold of my sustaining grip."*

**A. Our Heavenly Father has committed Himself to be our strength.**

1. He has the loving kindness to do this for us, (Rom. 8:32; 8:37) and
2. He has the authority and power to accomplish it, (I Cor. 15:57) so
3. We can take charge of our choices through His energizing and by His guidance. (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:13)

**B. Because of His provisions, we can succeed.**

1. We can make good choices, stick by them, and live them out in our marriages.
2. This is not by self-effort, but by linking our willpower (willingness to yield to Him, to behave responsibly) with God's enabling, His indwelling power. (I Cor. 6:19-20; Phil. 2:13; 4:13; I Thess 5:24; Eph. 5:18)
3. We can be what we need to be, make the choices we need to make
  - a. by the infusion of His power and ability, (Phil. 4:13)
  - b. by our yieldedness to Him, (Gal. 2:20).
  - c. By *"working out our salvation with fear and trembling. for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* (Phil. 1:12b, 13)

We do not work for our salvation, it is a free gift. Instead we *"work out"* this salvation He has put within us, expressing what God has given us by His Spirit; putting it into practice in our daily living through our actions, thoughts, words, and attitudes. We are to do this with a sense of awe and responsibility.

4. God has never counseled us to do something impossible. ***What is our responsibility?*** It is our ***response*** to His ***ability***.
  - a. We do have God-given ability to respond as we ought.
  - b. Right choices are truly up to us.

**C. It is through a renewed, surrendered mind that we make right choices.**

How do we learn what is God's best for us? By consistently referring to the Bible as our guidebook for daily living. As we do this, God is able to direct us and change us by renewing our mind and replacing old, harmful ways of thinking with a fresh, biblical viewpoint, which will bless us as individuals and benefit our marriage beyond description.

1. Don't be conformed... **but be transformed.** (Rom. 12:2)
2. This word, *metamorphosis*, means a change from the inside out, and it is an ongoing process... "*keep on being transformed. . .*"
3. The key to this change is always our mind, the control center of:
  - a. our thoughts.
  - b. feelings,
  - c. actions, d. attitudes,
  - e. and the building of our *belief system*.
4. This takes place as we:
  - a. ". . .*put off the old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.*" (Eph. 4:22)
  - b. ". . . *be made new in the attitude of your minds.*"
  - c. ". . . *put on the new man, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*"

**D. So who is at the controls of YOUR life?**

1. The Holy Spirit through the Word of God can and will make your life over anew. . . as the truth of His Word flows through your mind while you spend much time in prayer and meditation.
2. Attitudes, thinking, and choices are quietly changed as you allow the Word of God to lodge deeply in your heart.
  - a. God's will is best for us,
  - b. God's plan and desire is best for us,
  - c. God's way for us is best as He tells us the consequences of certain actions, and attitudes -- as well as our choices.
  - d. I remain, but not the old self-will. (Gal. 2:20)
3. As YOU allow the Lord to control your life effectively, to listen to Him and His directions for you, then you can change -- and make choices aligned with His plan and will for your life.

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***Keep your mind renewed and fill with the Word of God so that you can learn how to respond in every situation of life according to His good counsel. . . . this is your choice. . . make it!***

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Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson FOUR

**“Choosing Communication or Confusion!”****Introduction:**

- Good communication is the key to a successful marriage.
- Pastors and marriage counselors often have couples come to them with what they suppose is a problem regarding money, child training, sexual intimacy, etc. Yet the real problem is that the couple can't properly talk about their situation.

**Communication is not only the “key” to correcting problems, but it the center core of the whole matter.**

- > It is the basis for problem solving,
  - > building intimacy,
  - > having precious friendship, and
  - > every aspect of openness in marriage.

Communication is the area that holds the key to a successful marriage. Other than the personal salvation of each spouse, **nothing** is more important to the quality of the marriage relationship than good communication.

**The Tongue's Place In Marriage:** (Gen. 2:18-25)

In order for us to see the prominent place of communication in marriage we must again consider God's plan for marriage.

**A. God designed marriage for companionship.**

(Gen. 2:18 *“It is not good that the man should be alone.”* )

Human beings need companionship. No one lives unto himself, etc. (Rom. 14:7) The intimacy of the marriage relationship provides an answer to this need.

**B. Secondly, God designed marriage to bring completion to each spouse.**

Genesis 2:18b declares, *“I will make an help meet for him.”*

Our mate is to be our complement.

**C. Marriage is to be a cleaving union.** (Gen. 2:23-24)

Good communication is a **key** principle for the fulfillment of God's plan for marriage.

**Note :** *Our lesson aim for this class session and for your marriage is:*

1. You will know basic Bible teaching regarding good communication in marriage.
2. You will desire to effectively communicate with your spouse and other family members.



3. You will practice good communication principles.

**Our Focus On the Word!**

*“Let no **corrupt** communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”  
(Eph. 4:29)*

**Corrupt** means: “rotten, unfit for use, worthless”

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**Consider These Hindrances to Good Communication!**

***(Discuss This As Homework)***

***Do you practice any of the following?***

1. Failure to listen,
  2. Failure to want to listen,
  3. A tendency to filter what is heard through our preconceived feelings.
  4. The tendency to second-guess a mate before hearing what is said.
  5. A bad self-image; hence a fear of rejection or being hurt by someone’s disagreement. Some have such negative self-worth that they feel they have nothing to offer by communicating.
  6. Previous experiences that lead to the attitude “it won’t do any good.”
  7. Harbored hurts and wounded spirits.
  8. One talkative partner and one private partner.
  9. An emotional explosion, which intimidates the other partner and makes him/her think, “I will never mention that again.”
  10. Tears, degrading criticism, or silence.
  11. Destructive words such as “you never,” or “you always.”
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**The Tongue’s Potential In Marriage** (James 3:3-18)

**A. The power to direct.** (3:3-4)

1. Your speech can change the course of your life; nowhere is this truer than within the bonds of marriage.
2. Hurt feelings, harbored bitterness and bad self-image often are traceable to the unkind words of a critical marriage partner.

**B. The power to destroy.** (3:5-8)

1. The influence of the tongue is not only evident by its power to direct, but also the power to destroy.
2. The tongue is like a **spark** that can ignite trouble in the home. Words often spark chain reactions.

**C. The power to deviate.** (3:9-12)

1. Verses 9 and 10 describe the terrible deviation of praising God with our tongue and then criticizing our fellow man.
2. Children are very quick to pick up parent’s inconsistency of talking spiritually at church and treating each other as enemies or as adversaries at home, or outside the church.

**D. The power to defile. (3:13-18)**

1. Worldly wisdom (from which we so easily speak) brings strife, confusion, and every evil work.
2. Everyone is born with a sin nature, capable of conceiving and committing the most heinous crimes known to mankind.
3. We desperately need to walk in the godly wisdom as listed in James 3:17. *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”*

**The Tongue’s Purpose In Marriage.****Consider, what are the goals of communication?**

1. to meet needs,    2. to be a blessing, (edify)
3. to share life,    4. to be understood,
5. to build a Christ-centered, godly home.

***Now, How Was That?***

Mr. Jones was late for work and gets stopped by a policeman. Upon arriving at work, he chews out the sales director, who in turn, jumps on the secretary for failing to send out five letters. The secretary then bawls out the switchboard operator, who goes home and throws a fit at her husband for failing to hang up his coat. The husband goes out and kicks the cat.

In reality, Mr. Jones should have gone to switchboard operator’s home and kicked the cat because that is where the effect of his words ended! *Wow, talk about the effect of words!*

**For . . .**

1. Once words are said, they cannot be retracted.
2. The writer, James, was trying to help believers to avoid personal and marital shipwreck by urging them to control their tongues.
3. Should we have good and evil coming from the same mouth? “. . . *my brethren, these things ought not so to be.*” (3:10b)

**Here Are Four  
Important Keys to Good Communication.**

1. *Put yourself in the other person’s place.* Feel what he is feeling; think from his viewpoint.
2. *Restate what you think he said in your own words.* Misunderstandings can be cleared away.
3. *Lay aside emotions.* Many times intense feelings cause us to react instead of act. Discuss how you feel, but do not let that feeling cheat you out of communicating.
4. *Watch body language.* Eye contact, facial expressions, & body movement is important.

***Do you cultivate happiness by your words? Do have the habit of happiness? Do you make life exciting around the home? Is it enjoyable to live with you because of what comes out of your mouth? Do you seek to have happiness? It is a choice you know and is mainly produced by our words.***

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson Five

**“Choosing To Love Your Wife!”****Introduction:**

Possibly couples fail as much in not fulfilling their roles as any area of the marriage relationship. How can any couple have an intimate relationship filled with much love, respect, and honor without fulfilling Divine roles?

- God has a perfect **blueprint** which if “lived out” will make a vast difference.
- Since the Heavenly Father **planned** a couple's relationship and then **created** them “male and female,” surely the Planner and the Creator knows best how the couple ought to relate!
- The couple must plan to take their proper place (Eph. 5). In the Church, everybody is not the head, or the eyes, or the ears, but all are needed in their own **place of function** as seen in I Corinthians 12. This also applies to the marriage relationship.
- In any team, organization, or association, each person **knowing** and **fulfilling their prescribed role** is **essential for harmony and efficiency**.  
(Read and study I Corinthians 2:12-25, especially verses 12, 18-20.)
- We must accept God's **authority** in assigning roles. (Psa. 119:128)

**The Husband's Role As a Lover**  
(Eph. 5:25-33)

Two words summarize the teaching of God's Word regarding the role of the husband. They are the words, “**lover**” and “**leader**.” The husband's role as head of the home or leader is a stated fact (Eph. 5:23; I Cor. 11:3). However, it should be noted that the husband's role as lover is commanded by God and is the motivating key to the husband's leadership of his wife and family. (Eph. 5:25, Col. 3:19)

- Failure to practice Christ like love destroys a husband's ability to lead.
- God designed a woman to respond to loving consideration from her husband.
- Thus, we should give attention first to the husband as a lover, then later, to the husband as a leader.

**A. The nature of the husband's love!**

1. The husband is **commanded** to be a lover, to love “**even as**” **Christ loves**.

A husband's love for his wife should be patterned after Christ's love for the believer. (Eph. 5:25) . . . which comes from God, and is a self-sacrificial in nature.

## CHOICES IN MARRIAGE

- a. This is a Divine love. (Eph. 5:25; Jh. 3:16; Rom. 5:8)
  - b. This is **agape** love, the love that gives because of need, not because of worthiness.
  - c. Obeying the command to love (agape love) will produce the feelings of love. Feelings do not produce love, **but godly love will produce the emotions that are a part of true love.**
  - d. **Eros** love and **Phileo** love are both to be controlled by **“agape”** love.
  - e. Love is to be given, as an act of the will. **God’s love, an unconditional love, is to be lived out in the home.** *“Correct biblical thinking will produce correct action, from which will follow correct feeling.”*
  - f. This divine love can only be given as the husband is controlled by the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18) God’s love is *“shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit”* (Rom. 5:5). The husband cannot give the love he must give without the Holy Spirit’s control and power.
2. The husband is to love his wife. . . **as his own body.** (Eph. 5:28-31)
  - a. His love for her is to be the same as the care he has for his own body.
  - b. The husband must realize that his wife is part of him.
  - c. Thus he should never abuse her, hurt her, or neglect her, but he should take positive action toward his wife’s good. (Eph. 5:29)
  - d. The word, **“nourish,”** means to strengthen and to build up. This encompasses helping the wife to grow spiritually as well as to minister to her physically, emotionally, and mentally.
  - e. He is to **“cherish,”** her which speaks of an attitude of caring, placing great value upon his wife, and looking after her needs.

### B. The expression of this love. How can he show it?

In the manner of expressing this love, Christ is the pattern in His love for the church. (Eph. 5:25-27)

1. Christ took the **initiative** in giving His love.
  - a. It was not given because we deserved it (Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 3:9-18, 23.)
  - b. It was not given because we asked for it. (Jh 3:17; Rom. 5:6; I Jh 4:19)
  - c. For the husband to love the same way (**even as**) means the husband is **first** to expressing love, share intimacy, sharing love, holding, embracing, in every way telling her...*“he loves her!”*
  - d. **Say it!** We are commanded to **speak** of our love, just as God tells us of His love in hundreds of ways. (John 15:9; Rom. 5:8; I John 4:19)
2. Christ loved the church **sacrificially.**

## CHOICES IN MARRIAGE

- a. Christ's love was self-sacrificing for the believers' good.  
In fact, His love was so great that HE DIED for us
  - b. The husband who practices sacrificial love gives up what is his for the good of his wife.
  - c. What about the husband who sits for hours in front of the TV, does his own things and won't inconvenience himself to minister to his wife?
3. Christ loved the church **realistically**. (Rom. 5:8; 5:6; Lk 19:10)
- a. His love is very meaningful, for He loved us when we were sinful, unbelieving, unlovable, unresponding, corrupt and undone.  
(Consider Hosea's love for his wayward wife.)
  - b. One of the major reasons for divorce is a false and unrealistic viewpoint of marriage that prompts impossible expectations for marriage partners.
  - c. Christ-like love is practiced despite failures and faults, and we all have them!
4. Christ loved the church **purposefully**. (Eph. 5:26-27)
- a. Christ's love for the believer has a purpose of spiritually perfecting the believer's life.
  - b. Likewise, in the practice of Biblical love, the husband ought to have the goal of his wife's betterment, and above all her spiritual well-being.
    - He should lead her spiritually by his example.
    - He should encourage her to grow in the Lord.
    - The loving husband will read the Word of God with his wife, discuss it together, meditate on it, teach it, and seek to build both himself and his wife through this practice.
5. Christ loved the church **willfully**. (Eph. 5:25; Jh 3:16; 15:9)
- a. John 3:16 does not say that God so loved the world that He felt sentimental about it, rather...*"He gave his only begotten son. . ."*
  - b. Love is an act of the will, not just some emotion. There must be a commitment of the will to love one's wife that goes beyond mere emotion in order that the marriage might last.
  - c. Human love must be transcended by divine love that wills to love the unlovable qualities in others.
6. Christ loved the church **unconditionally** (Eph. 5:28, 31; Jh 13:1).
- a. The expression *"to love their wives as their own bodies,"* and *"they shall be one flesh,"* speaks of an unconditional, unbreakable love that does not cease, regardless of the circumstances.
  - b. The word, *"joined to his wife,"* (Eph. 5:31) speaks of an unbreakable, indivisible union that knows nothing of the modern-day attitude of *"I'm just not in love with my wife anymore, so we're getting a divorce."*

***The husband can only love as he ought by knowing Calvary love.*** The husband must have experienced the great spiritual mystery of being one with Christ by accepting Him as Savior. Only then can he begin to practice true love to his wife.

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### **The Outworking of This Love!**

**So husband, meet needs!** (I Pet. 3:7; I Tim. 5:8; I John 3:17; Eph. 5:28; Rom. 8:3)

- physical needs -- ***provision and protection***
- emotional needs -- ***approval, affection.*** Tokens of love that reveal you are thinking about her when you are not with her.
- social needs -- ***companionship,*** friendship; *“Your best friend.”*
- recreational needs -- ***exercise, time alone, rest,*** and time away from work and routine
- sexual needs - ***satisfying her,*** not *yourself* should be your priority in this area; pleasing her and not yourself first! (I Cor. 7:1-5)
- spiritual needs - ***prayer together, worship together,*** leading the family and couple devotional time. ***Making time for it, doing it!***
- **So sacrifice for her. Give of your time and money.** (Eph. 5:25; Phil. 2:5-6; 2:20-21)
- share **your life with her,** not with someone else! Sharing your plans, dreams, feelings, fears, burdens, and needs. (I Pet. 3:7)
- **Praise** her in sincerity! Tell her what is good about her, not just for what she does. **Thank** her for the way she meets her responsibilities! (I Pet. 3:7-12; Prov. 31:28; Eph. 5:20)
- **Think** and **share** positive **thoughts!** (I Jh. 3:18; Col. 3:19; Phil. 4:8) *When we depreciate something mentally, we will treat it (or them) accordingly! Negative thoughts will bring negative behavior.*

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson Six

**“Choosing To Give Your Wife Godly Leadership!”**

It must be stressed that the standard of love we have seen comes only from truly knowing the Lord.

- A husband must love right before he can lead his wife and family in the right way.
- It is love that builds the atmosphere in marriage, that encourages a wife to respond to her husband's leadership.
- In fact, the nature of a woman seeks the security of a loving husband's leadership.

**The Attitude of a Godly Leader!****A. Be a serving leader.** (Eph. 5:21-29; 6:1-4; Col. 3:23; Matt. 20:28)

1. The principle in leadership -- it is given by God. (Eph. 5:23; I Cor. 11:3)
2. The response and attitude of a good leader.
  - a. **Not** dictatorial, demanding, bossy, harassing, or hounding his wife.
  - b. Leadership must be viewed as a **service** to the ones led, not power plays and dominance over the ones he is serving. (Matt. 20:20-28 \*vs. 28; John 13:1-15; Phil. 2:6-8; Mk. 10:45).
  - c. Leadership must be viewed as a **service** to Lord first, to the family, and not as self-service. (Matt. 20:28; Acts 15:26) (**remove selfishness**)

**B. Be a humble leader.** (Psa. 51:17; 24:18;

1. God hates pride, and the proud heart. (Prov. 6:17; Jam. 4:6; I Pet. 5:5)
2. God blesses, and guides the meek of heart. (Psa. 25:9; James 4:6-10)
3. God stands against the proud person.

**The Ministry of a Godly Leader!****A. The position of leadership.**

1. “*Even as,*” Christ is head of the church. (Eph. 5:23; I Cor. 11:3), His blood bought children. God gave you this position.
2. The husband must put himself under Christ, as Christ put Himself under the Father. (I Cor. 11:3; Phil. 2:5-11)

**B. The ministry of leadership!**

1. Toward the Father, -- Christ fulfilled these four aspects during His life here on earth. *(These four things are the sum total of what a husband's leadership ought to include.)*
  - a. He came to **DO** the Father's will -- Jh 4:34; 5: 6: 8:
  - b. He came to **speak** the Father's words -- Jh 7:17;
  - c. He **gloried** the Father -- Jh 17: 9:1-4
  - d. He **manifested** the Father -- Jh 14:7-10 ????
2. Husband, in your leadership, you are there in that position, **to do God's will** ---not yours. **To speak His Word** to the family and lead accordingly, **to glorify the Lord** in your home and leadership, and **to make Christ real**. . . manifest to the family members. **Help them fall in love with the Lord.!**

**The Fulfillment of a Godly Leader!**

**A. It involves being a spiritual leader!** (Eph. 5:25-27)

1. He must take the time to be a person of **the** BOOK, the Bible.
2. He must be the person who leads spiritually -- by reading with the family, praying individually with the children.
3. This involves being aware of the spiritual needs of the family. Awareness comes only from spending time with each member of the family.

**B. It involves being a provider!**

1. The command of I Timothy 5:8 would require the husband to be a good money manager, and one who is not selfish.
2. He should be an example in giving, to stewardship, in generosity, in lovingly meeting the wife's and children's needs.
3. He should never use money as a power, or weapon -- just as the wife should never use sex as her weapon or to manipulate.
4. Provide you family -- time, yourself, your attention, love and compassion.

**C. It involves being a good manager.** (I Tim. 3:4-5, 12)

1. A key principle of good management is delegation of responsibility.
2. The good manager does not do all the work, he give different jobs to different people, dependent upon their ability.
3. The idea of "*rule over the wife*" (Gen. 3:16) is not dictatorship, but but wise management.



- a. Discover you wife's (and children's) abilities.
- b. Encourage her to use her gifts for the benefit of all.
- c. It is a poor husband/leader who is intimidated by a wife's talents, rather he ought to be thankful for them.

**D. It involves intelligent leadership.** (I Pet. 3:7a)

1. He should have an intelligent understanding of the management of a home and family.
2. He is to dwell "*with understand,*" and if he lacks wisdom, "*he ought to ask of God. . .*" (I Pet. 3:7; James 1:5)
3. It is sad when a husband thinks everything at home ought to move along with no thought, direction, consideration, or guidance on his part.

**E. In involves considerate leadership.** (I Pet. 3:7b)

1. In his considerate leadership . . . *he is to give honor to his wife. . . in public and in private.* (I Pet. 3:7b)
2. There is no place for *downgrading one's wife* or to belittle, degrade, to scorn, criticize, etc.

**Don't degrade you spouse! A good leader. . .**

- a. does not **scoff** at his spouse,
- b. is not **critical** of his spouse,
- c. is not **bossy, dictatorial or demanding,**
- d. **treats her as an equal,** as a **rational, moral, creative being,**
- e. gives her the greatest characteristic of love which is **respect. The very kernel of true love is respect.** If we have lost respect, we do not have much, but when we give respect and honor, then true love can grow.
- f. Understands that good leadership is built on biblical **love, honor, and respect.**

**F. It involves the principle of continuous association.**

(For you cannot lead those with whom you do not share your life. You cannot lead your family if you do not take time to meet their needs.)  
(Cf Christ/disciples; I Pet. 4:7).

**G. It involves showing those you lead what God wants.**

(What they are responsible to **DO**, and **how** to do it!)

(I Cor. 14:35; "*Knowing God's will by knowing the Word of God and leading your family accordingly.*" (Col. 4:12; Eph. 5:17; 6:6; Psa 37:23)

**H. It involves example, being what God wants you to be,** and not just appearing so! (Phil. 4:9; I Thess. 2:7-10; I Pet. 5:3)

**I. It involves making informed, correct decisions, and delegating responsibility.** (Cf Christ and his disciples; John 4:1,2; Mk 1:35-38; 6:7, 35-43)

1. The father/ husband needs to be goal- oriented.
2. The father/husband needs to be need- oriented.

3. The father/husband needs to be joy-oriented.

Never make a decision when you are angry or when you are discouraged and down! You will have the results of failure if you do, and your family will be hurt as well. You should never make a decision when you are angry or depressed for you will regret it and have to undo it - if that is even possible.

**How long did it take you to admit wrong, to confess sin?** To admit when you failed? How long did it take for you to say, **“forgive me, I’m sorry and I am wrong.”** If I you are a good leader, and make a poor decision, your spouse should be the first to know about it. Admit it, and deal with it! The children need to see that dad is a real man who knows how to ask for forgiveness and to give it as well.

**Be a conscientious learner.**

1. The husband must learn to **initiate** love.
2. The husband must learn to demonstrate unconditional love.
3. The husband must learn to practice a walk in love. (Eph. 5:1-2)  
As a normal result, the wife will reciprocate, amplify, and shower this love to everyone in the home.
4. The husband must learn to be a lover by demanding of himself the kind of dedication to his task and the kind of openheartedness to his family that will aid consistent, godly leadership. (I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:7-9)
5. The husband needs to learn to be a spiritual leader. He ought to be the **prayer warrior** of the home. (Cf Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-11)

**Be an encourager to your wife,** (I Pet. 3:7)

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Be <u>sensitive</u> to her. | 3. Dwell together as <u>heirs</u> together |
| 2. Give <u>honor</u> to her.   | 4. Live so prayers are not <u>hindered</u> |

**Significant Thoughts About Intimate Relationships!**

- The book of Genesis shows us that the woman was created to fill man’s loneliness as his lifelong companion and his beloved one. (Gen. 2:18-24)
- Man was instructed to leave all else, cleave inseparably to his wife, and to know her intimately over a lifetime -- a process designed to establish a powerful love bond between a husband and wife. (Matt. 19:3-9; Eph. 5:30-33)
- The woman is pictured in Proverbs and in the Song of Solomon as *“a cistern, a well, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed for her husband, whose waters will satisfy to the fullest.”* To be ravished in the Hebrew (Prov. 5:15-23) language means to reel and stagger as if intoxicated, to be enraptured, and exhilarated. To be satisfied in one another’s love is to have your thirst slaked, to take your fill, to be satisfied and abundantly saturated with that which pleases.

***(This necessitates building openness, forgiveness in every issue of life, a broken and contrite spirit that each in love might meet the need of the other.)***

- There must be daily romantic caresses, admiring glances, affectionate pats, a smile, a wink across the room . . . small attentions that tell the mate that he or she is a special person.
- There must be warmth, gentleness, softness, and caring. For both men and women crave the physical reassurance of loving closeness!
- Dare to work at putting away personal interests and meet the need of the one loved. And do not be afraid to say, *"I need you!"*
- We must build the warmth of love, mutual acceptance, and precious fulfillment toward one another.

**This can only take place IF we apply the Biblical principles we have studied in this series.**

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson Seven

**“Making Good Choices As A Wife!”**

Dr. David Hubbard, president of Fuller Theological Seminary has said, *“Marriage does not demand perfection, but it must be given priority. It is an institution for sinners. No one else need apply. But it finds its fullest glory when a sinner sees it as God’s way of leading to His ultimate curriculum of love and righteousness.”*

Yes marriage is God’s curriculum that never ends as we go through life. And there are separate courses for the husband and the wife that never end.

**The Aims of This Study**

1. To know what God teaches about some of the wife’s choices.
2. That she might feel the need to truly respect her husband.
3. That she might practice a life that gives admiration.
4. That she might have wonderful spiritual fulfillment as she obeys the Word of God.

**Wife, Choose to Give Reverence**

The wife’s course is laid out many places in the Word of God. The Apostle Peter speaks of it clearly in I Peter 3:1-6. The Amplified Bible takes the original Greek word and gives it all of its English meanings. (3:2) Here Peter writes about the wives having **reverence** and **chaste** behavior.

**God Says “Reverence” Your Husband**

- A. To reverence includes** to *“respect, to defer to, to revere the husband... to honor, to esteem, to appreciate and to prize the husband. **Wife, be his cheer leader.***
- B. In human terms it means** to adore him, to lift up, to look for ways to honor and esteem him in many opportunities of daily life.

**To Reverence Is To Give Total Acceptance (Rom. 15:7)**

- A. God never asks you** (Or commands) to do something that He won’t enable you to carry it out if you truly get your strength from Him.  
(Eph. 5:33; Phil. 4:13)
- B. Love is an expression of our wills,** not just a feeling. One of your husband’s greatest needs is your acceptance, which is truly an expression of your love.
- C. You must will to love** and then demonstrate that love by giving your husband loving acceptance.

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**Note: Just How Important Acceptance Is!**

John Powell tells of talking to a friend while he was writing his book, *“Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I AM?”* The friend said, *“Do you want me to give an answer to your question?”* The author replied, *“Well, that’s the purpose of the book, to answer the question.”* So his friend said, *“I am afraid to tell you who I am, because, if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and it’s all that I have.”*

**So Consider:**

1. True acceptance is perhaps one of the most difficult things to give in life, but it is one of the most vital.
  2. It is God’s job to make your husband good. It is your job as a wife to make him happy. One of the ways to make him happy is to accept him, to reverence him.
  3. In acceptance there is freedom, and in freedom there is love.
- 

**Wife, Choose to Admire!****A. Admire your husband, give sincere praise.**

1. Compliment him, build him up, encourage him.
2. Don’t corrode his strength, and tear down him or the things he does.  
(Prov. 12:4)

**B. Won’t this make your husband proud if you keep complimenting him and admiring him?**

1. Just obey the Word (Eph. 5:33) and let God take care of keeping him humble. (Prov. 3:27) *“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.”* (Amplified Bible)
2. We all long for admiration.

Women tend to compliment other women and receive admiration from their small children. . . but men seldom praise one another. A man hungers for admiration, it is vital to him. And if you are not source of the admiration he needs, perhaps someone else may be. *Think about that!*

**Wife, Choose to Listen**

It is said that listening intently with one’s mouth completely and firmly shut is a basic communication skill needed in all marriages. Most of us are so concerned about getting our own ideas across that we only concentrate on the **talking** aspect of conversation. We talk **to** people, not **with** them. In doing this, **we fail to listen** to the other person.

**Don’t talk. . . Listen To Your Husband.****A. You must learn to know him by listening to him.**

**B. You can only minister to him by knowing him.**

**C. You must choose to know your husband. . . by listening.**

### **Listen With Your Heart**

*“A Fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.”*  
(Paraphrase of Prov. 18:2) *“The mouth of the righteous is a well of life.”*  
(Prov. 10:11)

Acceptance, openness, and understanding can only be experienced when we listen with the heart.

Be compassionate and sensitive to your husband -- to your man.

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#### ***Homework. . . If Your Husband Has a Habit of Cutting You down Continually. . . Remember These Eight Things:***

1. Ask God for ideas to get through to him that you DO sincerely love and admire him.
2. Pray that God will change his heart and give him a more positive self-image so that he can respond lovingly to you.
3. Be honest with your feelings and *“speak the truth in love.”*
4. Ask God for strength to keep on loving and admiring him until you break into and reverse that down-ward cycle of ego-destruction that he may be living.
5. Pray daily for ability to be an encourager.
6. Note how other women show admiration to their husbands and seek to do the same.
7. Compliment your husband every day. . . find ways to do that.
8. Be a grateful wife . . . accept his gifts of love and pleasure.

.....

**The road to intimacy is often blocked by ridicule. It is obstructed by the wall of silence we build around our feelings.**

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson Eight

**“Choosing To Fulfill God's Plan For the Wife!”**

- What is the biblical role for a wife?
- What does God desire for the wife?
- If the husband is to be a lover and give godly leadership, then what is the wife's role?
- Why is her role is vitally important to peace and harmony in the marriage?

**The Biblical Role of a Wife**

**A. Be a submitted follower** (Eph. 5:22,24; Col. 3:18; Tit. 2:5; I Pet. 3:1-6; Gen. 3:16)

1. **Negative**, what this does not mean!

- Submission is not just for wives, but for all believers. (Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:3-4; I Pet. 5:5; Rom. 13:1; Heb. 13:17)
- Submission does not make the women the slave (or doormat) of her husband. (Prov. 31:10-31)
- Submission does not mean that the women should be idle, inactive, reclusive, or silent. (Prov. 31)
- Submission does not mean that she should never give advice or opinions. Her views are equally as valid as anyone's within the limits of God's Word. (Prov. 31:26; Acts 18:26; Judges 13:12-23)
- Submission in no way means she is inferior to or holds an **inferior** position to the husband. (Luke 2:51; I Cor. 11:3; John 5:30; I Cor. 12)
- The man's and woman's positions are different but **it is not a matter who is superior or inferior**. The husband is to make his wife the queen of his home, rather than to “harass, hound, or hurt his wife. (*She is not a piece of property.*)

2. **Positively**, what it does mean.

- Submission is the wife's *responsibility*. She is to place herself under the leadership of her husband. The wife is **commanded** by God to be submissive, but the husband is never told or commanded to make her submit. (Eph. 5:22; I Pet. 3:1)
- Submission is a command, not optional for the believer. (I Pet. 3:1; Luke 2:51; Eph. 5:21-22,24; Col. 3:18; I Pet. 5:5)
- Submission is a spiritual matter! The wife cannot be submissive to God without being submissive to her husband. (Eph. 5:22; I Cor. 11:3)

- d. Submission involves the attitudes as well as actions! (*In all things Christ was submissive as an example to us.*) (John 4:34; Psa. 40:7-8; Prov. 31:13; John 14:15)
- e. Submission extends to all areas of life, except for the higher authority of God and His Word. (Eph. 5:24; 5:22; Col. 3:18; Cf Acts 5:28, 20; I Pet. 5:1-6)

**B. Be a godly helper, the help-meet!** Definition of a help-meet!  
(Gen. 2:18-22)

- 1. Literally, she was made to be a **help**, or “aid, helper” that is meet **sufficient** for the opposite part, the other side, her husband. She was made to be a support to the man’s weak areas! And we have them, men!
- 2. God made the woman to be man’s helper, to help him to fulfill or do what God has commanded him (them) to do! (I Cor. 11:9)
- 3. God made her to be a **suitable** helper. (Prov. 18:22; 31:10-11)
  - a. Too often the wife countermands, belittles, makes light of, or resists her husband’s leadership or directions.
  - b. This is rebellion to God’s command.
- 4. God made the women to **correspond** to the man. (I Cor. 11:11)
  - a. Here too often the husband acts independently, does not **rely** on his wife as a helper, and treats her with rejection and resentment.
  - b. She is equal in everything but human strength, and position.  
**Treat her as equal!**

**C. Be a creative complement, by**

- 1. making her house a home (Prov. 31:11,20).
- 2. being faithful and trustworthy with her responsibilities. (Prov. 31:11, 12; I Cor. 4:10)
- 3. discussing problems, disagreements, and true feelings with her husband openly, lovingly, and honestly. (Eph. 4:15,25; Prov. 31:26; 27:5-6)

***It is the man who opens the door for communication!*** *A wife has tremendous frustration when he does not communicate. She cannot make the full decision, yet she must keep the home together. She cannot communicate with a man who is a loner, a pouter, a wrathful and angry man, or an alcoholic. She cannot do it! Sir, you are the key! What are you doing to build communication with your wife?*

- 4. be a creative, industrious partner on the team. Keep family goals ahead of personal ones (Psa. 128:3; Prov. 31).
- 5. show interest in her husband’s problems and interests. (Phil. 2:3-4; 2:20-21)
- 6. maintain a good godly life (I Pet. 3:1-2, 7; I Tim. 2:9-15).



7. cooperate with her husband in training the children for the Lord.  
(Eph. 6:1-4; Prov. 31:26-28; 6:20-23; I Tim. 5:13-14)
8. be his cheer-leader, **appreciate** your husband. (Eph. 5:33b; Rom 13:7)
9. show heart trust in your husband, show **admiration** for him.  
(Eph. 5:33b; I Cor. 13:4-8)

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**Consider the following as YOUR homework as you think through these things. It will help you become the wife God desire you to be for His glory.**

1. God's commands are not grievous, so obey them. (I Jh 5:3)
2. God's commands were not given to make us unhappy, or to be hard on us.
3. The command to be a submissive wife was given by God to help us live more freely, fully, and joyfully.
4. Women must stop buying what the world is trying to sell, it will lead to heartbreak and sorrow if it is pursued.
5. Scriptures such as "*speak the truth in love*" and "*admonish one another daily.*" are totally compatible with being a wife who is submissive to her husband.
6. Submissive is an attitude of the heart... and an attitude of yieldedness and of love.
7. God will hold the husband responsible for decisions, and the wife responsible to be submissive to his leadership.
8. Submission was practiced by Sarah (I Pet. 3:1-6), even when Abraham lied about her, in thinking thus he would save his own life. She trusted God to intervene and to protect her.
9. Few women truly live by or understand the extent of God's blessing and hand on the wife who fully trusts HIS will in process of her submission.

***God's blessings cannot belong to the wife in the midst of her disobedience!***

(Read and study Eph. 5:22, 24; I Cor. 11:3; Col. 3:15-21; I Pet. 3:1-6 Tit 2:4-5)

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson Nine

**“Choosing Constructive Conflict!”**

*It costs something to have meaningful communication. But it is definitely worth the price! The price must be paid -- in time given, a little less sleep at night, a willingness to discuss the priorities of life, and a willingness to be **vulnerable**. And a determination to solve the problems and issues that life bring.*

**We may experience the following:**

1. A tension-filled topic in the first year of marriage.
2. A hasty effort to bury it for fear of creating problems,
3. but we know something is wrong for the conflict continues because we know we have not solved things.
4. Silence in the marriage may denote fear, a lack of caring what the other partner thinks, or an unwillingness to pay for price of deep sharing.

**Some Principles To Follow In Constructive Conflict****A. Keep Cool**

1. The Bible says that *“a quick tempered person acts foolishly.”* (Prov. 14:17) *“and a hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger pacifies contention.”* (Prov. 15:18)

(At this point you may want to download, or study the chapter on anger found in the study... “Emotional Problems in Life and Home” found at ..... in the web site. )

2. Some things will help you to stay cool... like:
  - a. Practice thinking before speaking,
  - b. handling conflicts lovingly, without anger,
  - c. ponder and pray over your answer, (Prov. 15:18)
  - d. back away before having a quarrel. (Prov. 17:14)
  - e. Restraint your comments, (Prov. 10:19)
  - f. leave the subject, pray much, and then come back to solve the issue.

**B. Make understanding your aim:**

1. Your aim ought to be *not to win*, for there is no such thing as *“one who wins.”*
2. Your aim should not be to vent your anger or feelings to the other person. (Prov. 18:2)
3. We must listen with the heart (Prov. 18:13).  
A conflict cannot be entered into with idea of someone winning, there is no winning or losing in a constructive conflict, lest both lose.

**C. Keep short accounts:** (Eph. 4:26-27)

The deadline to solve problems in a marriage is prior to bedtime. We may not be always able to do this, but this should be our aim.

**D. Act wisely, not foolishly:** (Prov. 29:9,11; 3:3-5; 25:28)

1. Be kind, truthful, and trusting that God will lead you.
2. Do not be wise in your own eyes. (This is maybe the most difficult part, for in our pride we have determined that we are right, and this too often becomes a normal, consistent response.)
3. Ask God to make you a wise person, remember that a wise person accepts correction. (Prov. 9:8)
4. Be aware of the tone of your voice. Lowering it rather than raising it by remembering that *“a soft answer turns away wrath.”* (Prov. 15:1)

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**The Scene of Life May Include All the Following:**

**Too busy:** We may even effectively block the effort by our spouse to solve a problem by stating -- we are too busy.

**Changing the subject:** Our spouse endeavors again to bring up the problem that needs solving, but the other person effectively changes the subject in order to bypass the issue.

**Defensiveness:** Now the problem may be brought up again, but a strong defensive statement is made to put the other person in his or her place. . . so the subject again is set aside.

**Super guilt:** Here the spouse grows silent, depressed, and admits or feels total failure. The mate reassures them that they should not feel guilty, so again the real problem is ignored. As the guilt becomes the new issue. The person feeling guilt cannot seek a solution to his inner need or the problem at hand that fostered this.

**Peace at any price:** This tactic used by many is to simply say...*“Well, just do whatever you want, I don’t care what you do... you’ll do whatever you want anyway, so why should I care.”* Communication is crushed, the real issue is not addressed, the original need or problem is not solved.

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**Some “Nevers” Which We Must Choose:**

**A. Never use sarcasm in conversing with one another.**

1. The dictionary defines **sarcasm** as, *“A sharp and often satirical or ironic utterance designed to cut or give pain.”* *“bitter, caustic language that hurts deeply.”*
2. The Greek word means *“to tear flesh, bit the lips in rage, to sneer.”*

3. Some families fall into a trap of such talk, using sarcasm in joking or kidding.

**B. Never criticize or correct one another in public.**

1. Do we make our mate seem small in the eyes of other people?  
(Phil. 2:1-4; Rom. 12:10)
2. Do we belittle, correct, or interrupt the story they are telling?

**C. Never drop a delayed “time bomb.”**

1. Tell the truth, don’t imply something then later change it at an inopportune time.
2. Be honest, don’t later criticize what you once said was fine. . . be truthful in the first place. (Eph. 4:15; 25; 4:32; Col. 3:8-9)

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**Some Biblical Directives For Confronting Conflict**

(Study these together, work together to resolve problems, work at practicing these truths.)

1. Prov. 3:5-6 *Trust the Lord for the outcome.*
2. Prov. 15:1 *Don’t verbally attack your spouse.*
3. Prov. 16:32 *Keep your emotions under control.*
4. Prov. 17:9 *Don’t bring up the past offense, stick with the present issue at hand.*
5. Prov. 19:11 *Don’t accuse or blame.*
6. Eccl. 7:8,9 *Listen patiently to everything your spouse has to say.*
7. Rom. 12:16 *Keep a humble, learner’s spirit.*
8. Rom. 2:17 *Don’t retaliate.*
9. Eph. 4:25 *Be truthful, don’t exaggerate.*
10. Eph. 4:29 *Think of your spouse’s needs when you reply.*

**God Has Given Us His Word II Tim. 3:15-17) . . . for**

1. **Doctrine** -- so that we might know the great truths revealed in His Word.
2. **Reproof** -- so that we might hear God’s rebukes and reprimands concerning our sins and manner of life.
3. **Correction** -- so that we might change and rectify our behavior when He has reproved us.
4. **Instruction in righteousness** -- so that we might live the kind of life that pleases him in all of our relationships in the home.

**Choosing God's Principles for Marriage**

## Lesson Ten

**“Coping With Conflict. . . Biblically!”**

Our goal is to look further at the subject of conflict, and to consider more choices in this often, daily problem.

Though many couples may never come to blows (praise God), emotional tension can mount and be reflected in many different ways.

It is imperative to the health of a marriage -- that the partners learn to properly handle and resolve conflicts in such a way that they grow in the spiritual lives, both toward God and toward one another.

**Focus On The Word**

*“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye might inherit a blessing.” (I Pet. 3:8-9)*

**Why Do We Have Conflicts?**

1. One of the major problems is unrealistic expectations.
2. Idealistic myths are embraced by many that Christians ought not have problems, so *“we won't have disagreements or disputes like our parents had,”* is what we say to each other as we actually practice denial.
3. If there is conflict (or when) one spouse assumes the other is unspiritual or that their marriage is in some way faulty.
4. Conflicts will come. We have a sin nature, so naturally we will sin against our mate and it does not matter how much we love them, or seek to practice such a love. A good marriage is two people being *“very good forgivers and very good forgetters.”*

**Other Causes of Conflicts****A. Differing view points/ tastes:**

*Marriage is the union of two individuals with different spiritual, economic, emotional, physical, social, and intellectual backgrounds. No two families are alike and the merger of two independent personalities with distinct ways of life (based on their years of training in their families of origin) requires many major adjustments.*

1. Their preconceived tastes and viewpoints have been called extra baggage that we carry into our new homes.
2. Some of this may be useful, some must be thrown away, but be sure there will be conflicts.
3. What makes conflicts serious is basically two things -- what causes them, and what we do with them. If they come from bitterness, resentments, grudges, etc., held then they are very serious. What we do with them, how we handle them, and correct them is what makes the difference.

**B. Differing values/ priorities:**

1. It is not unusual that married partners differ in their value structure or priorities in life.
2. Unity is dependent upon both embracing the Word of God. God's viewpoint for life, and a yielded life of service is the key. (Col. 3:1-4; Matt. 6:31-33)

**C. Daily pressures:**

1. Modern day life is so fast paced that many couples are living on the brink of constant irritation. (See shared chart).
2. Then, the least frustration can bring more conflict. Often one will react quickly without investigating the facts.

**D. Blocked desires:**

1. Conflicts also come because of the intentional or unintentional blocking of goals and desires of our spouse.
2. There must be much give-and-take in a marriage: plans must be discussed openly, or conflicts will be a source of much frustration and anger.
3. Both must give *deference to the other*. . . for marriage is a ministry of serving one another, a ministry to another whom we love.

**E. Sinful attitudes:** (possibly habits lived for years)

1. One such attitude is jealousy.
2. Another is selfishness . . . a self centered life,
3. yet another is indifference.
4. And just how patient are you? Are you a type A personality?

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**What If I Blow Up?**  
(Consider this together)

1. When selfish anger, or any other unbiblical response to conflict does occur, it is important to confront it for what it is. To deny the presence of sin is to invite disaster. To confess sin is to invite God's blessing. (I Jh 1:7, 9)
2. Confession must be first made to one's own self, acknowledging the anger about a matter must first take place in the heart and mind of the offender.
3. The repression of anger and pride under the false guise that they don't exist is like putting a time bomb in the closet of our inner being. . . it will go off.
4. On the other hand uncontrolled expression of anger is not the answer. Venting our anger only exaggerates the problem.
5. Proverbs 29:11 warns us that "*a fool uttereth all his mind*" which would teach us to hold our tongue, *blasting of* is surely not the answer.

6. After admitting our sin to ourselves and confessing sin to God. . . we must confess it to the family member involved (maybe to the whole family). This confession must be handled properly, lest we actually cause further hurt feelings and build more conflict.
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**Guidelines for Confronting Conflicts:**

- A. Speaking the truth in love.** (Eph. 4:15, 25; Col. 3:8-9)
  - B. Dealing with the real issue today, now.** (Eph. 4:26, 27)
  - C. Attacking the problem, and not the person.** (Eph. 4:29)
  - D. Right action, not reacting sinfully.** (Eph. 4:30-32; Col. 3:9-14)
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**Added Suggestions For Solving Conflicts:**

1. Prepare a proper setting for discussing the problem, work at this list together.
2. The expression of intimate feelings before others who are not involved or at tense times, only adds to the difficulty of the situation.
3. Taking time to pick a proper moment to discuss a problem often helps people to think more clearly and reduces needless stress.
4. Be humble! Put away pride! A willingness to sincerely admit that *"It's my fault, I have hurt you, and I want to correct my mistake,"* goes a long way toward settling conflict.
5. Keep in mind that a humble admission of wrong is quite different than merely manipulating your mate by insincerely saying, *"It's all my fault,"* just to get off the subject.
6. When confronting another person with a problem. . . try to have a potential solution in mind to present as a possible answer to the problem.
7. Focus on problem solving, not just problems in general. Be specific, work on one problem at a time.
8. An ounce of prevention is worth a lot. . . by
  - giving a lot of love
  - dismiss petty differences,
  - cover problems with a mantle of love, forbearing, forgiving.
  - put away a defensive stance, don't be easily offended.
  - Practice a lot more humor, for good, clean fun adds a lot to life and smooths out the way through many difficulties.
  - Pray over any and all things each day.
9. When expressing feelings, it is wise to use expressions like: *"I feel,"* rather than inflammatory words such as *"you are, you never, or you always."* It is wise not to use sweeping accusations that hurt the spouse and are not true. Attempt to solve, not ignore, resist, or give the silent treatment.

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson Eleven

**“Choices that Bring Failure In Child Rearing”**

**Parents are responsible for the training they give their child, but not for what the child does with that training.**

1. One of the most common feelings of failure stems from discouragement as a parent. Parenting is a very difficult task, and often fraught with many sorrows.
2. What does God desire? What does the Bible really teach about success in parenting?
3. While this lesson is sorely needed today, it is a very sensitive matter and only God knows all that goes on in any family.  
(Check our series on the web site... dealing with children,

**What Does Proverbs 22:6 Really Mean?****A. Some typical misunderstandings.**

Some think that it means *“If I train my child right, he will never disappoint me, or go into sin, etc. Others feel it means while the child may fall into grievous sin, some day, even if then old, he will come back to God.”*

**B. The Biblical meaning:** (seen in three words)1. Train up

The word train in the Hebrew language meant a *“palate or roof of the mouth.”* It was a picture of a midwife putting her finger in a dish of dates and then massaging a baby's mouth to stimulate the sucking reflex.

Thus it means to control by creating a thirst for godliness. It is obvious that this training spoken of, and commanded, is training that creates a thirst or desire for God, for spiritual things in the life of a child of any age under the parents' roof. . . even the college age youth. God desires that we build a desire a thirst or heart after God.

2. the way

Literally, the meaning is **his way**, which has to do with the child's own makeup -- his talents, interests, and the abilities that are God given. It also includes the gifts given by the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation. The words, *his way*, has the root meaning of the bending of a body. In other words children have their own bents as to temperament and gifts. A parent is wise to develop these qualities, praying for direction, giving guidance in the light of the child's strengths and weaknesses.



3. *old*

This third word is very interesting. It refers to one who has hair or fuzz on his chin. In other words, this verse does not refer to the 70 year old person who late in life comes back to God after wasting 50 or more years of his life.

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**What Do People Usually Teach About Proverbs 22:6?**

*It is this:* A Christian couple takes their child to Sunday School, and church on a regular basis. They teach the child to pray, and they memorize verse together. To further the child's spiritual education, they may even send him to a Christian school. In the summer time they make sure he goes to Bible camp. Then in his later teen years, they expect some rebellion to set in; however, they believe the child will eventually come back to God -- even it is means staggering back in old age -- because of the promise of Proverbs 22:6. ***But this is not what the verse means.***

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**C. Family Applications:**

1. Create a thirst for spiritual things.
2. Help the child or youth to understand God's goal, plan, and will for his life. (Eph. 5:17; Col. 4:12; Psa. 37:23)
3. Help them to realize their giftedness. . . God's good plan based on how He made them, and ***their***
  - a. inclinations
  - b. talents, abilities,
  - c. God-given gifts,
  - d. temperament
4. Help them understand their tendencies in temptations toward sin and failure. (Jer. 17:9)
5. Realize that your life, your example is paramount (Consider King Jereboam)
  - a. King Jereboam was known for rebellion, idolatry, and sensuality.
  - b. It is said some 21 times in the Old Testament that Jeroboam's descendants, "*walked in the way of Jeroboam.*"
  - c. Parental sin does affect our offspring!
  - d. In fact, in some cases the sins of parents allowed or occasionally fulfilled will be exhibited in their children in an even greater way.
  - e. God puts it this way: "*visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.*" ***What a serious warning!***

**Preventative Principles For Every Christian Family:**

**A. Walk in a personal relationship with God.**

1. Most important is the parent's walk with the Lord in His Word. (Col. 2:6-7; Gal. 5:15-17, 24; Eph. 4:17-32)

2. Children seldom overcome superficial spiritual commitment. But they do follow a parent's poor spiritual example. (Consider Lot.)
3. Often there is more hope. . . for the salvation and commitment of young people who come from unsaved homes than for children who grow up in lukewarm, half-hearted, disobedient, professing Christian families.

### **B. Live a godly example:**

1. In attitude, integrity, honesty, and dedication,
2. in love for the Word of God. (II Tim. 3:16-17; Psa. 19; Psa. 119)

### **C. Give godly teaching:**

1. Teach verse by verse through the books of the Bible in your family devotional time.
2. Teach doctrine, how to live for Christ, etc. (Prov. 4:1-13)
3. Read, study the usage of the words... "*my son,*" as found in the first seven chapters of the Book of Proverbs. It will give you many insights into the power and authority of the Word of God.

## **Factors that Contribute to Family Failure**

### **A. Abraham's testimony to us:** He could say:

1. *"There is a definite Biblical basis for the saying, 'like father, like son,' for just look at my life."*
2. *"I had a tendency to lie when confronted with a difficult situation. In Genesis 20: 1-12 you have the account of my traveling into the territory of a pagan king. In order to protect myself when King Abimelech sought Sarah, I lied about the true identity as my wife. True, she was my half sister, but to call her my sister was really a lie."*
3. *"If you think this was just one little mistake. . . I told the same lie to Pharaoh to protect myself." (Gen. 12:11-13)*
4. *"I passed along this sin, unchecked, to Isaac and Rebecca. (Gen. 26) For he lied just as I did."*
5. The third generation was no different, in fact, the lies took on a violent twist. Jacob was taught how to lie. . . and he practiced lying and had the fruit of it from his father-in-law as well. *"For whatsoever we sow, we will also reap."* Then later, Joseph's brothers were jealous of their father's love for Joseph. They lied to Isaac. (Gen. 37:31-32) *Lying continued through the family for many generations as a way to get your ends.*

### **B. Eli's example:** (I Sam, Chapters 2, 3, 4)

1. Eli spoiled his sons, he also failed to correct them as they lived in horrible sins.

2. The problems -- (I Sam. 2:12, 17, 23-24; 3:1-14)
  - a. Here was a home of no instruction, 2:12) and it became a
  - b. home of no influence, (vs 25) and a
  - c. home of no restraint. (3:13)
  - d. It became a home under divine judgment. (4:14-22)

*Nothing can assure spiritual failure in the family quicker than a spoiled, unrestrained, and undisciplined child. God judged Eli's home severely.*

**C. Lot's example:** (Gen. 12:5-13; Chap 19)

1. Here is a third common factor that contributes to failure in the modern family.
2. There is a glaring lack of separation from the world. (Gen 13:10-12; II Cor. 6:14-17; I Cor. 6:19-20; Tit. 2:11-14))
3. An obvious lack of embracing the will of God, not living for the glory and honor of God, and not applying the principles laid down in the Word of God will bring swift judgment. (Gen. 13:13; I Pet. 2:5-9, 20-22)

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**We Basically Reproduce "After Our Kind"!**

1. God has laid down a principle (See Gen. 1:9-12, 20-21, 24-25) that everything reproduces after its kind. This is true physically, and also true spiritually.
2. Parent attitudes and actions do set the pattern for family ethics and actions.
3. If there is a critical attitude on the part of the parent. . . children will pick up the same criticalness.
4. Bad moral character and sinful practices must be checked by complete, thorough repentance, breaking the practice of sin. (Prov. 28:13)
5. When a parent does wrong, (such as a parent's action in anger) he must be quick to confess it to God and ask the child's forgiveness as well, if the child is at all involved.

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

Lesson Twelve

**“Choosing a Biblical View of Sex!”**

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***God created man and woman to enjoy sexual relations within the bonds of marriage!***

- Every Christian needs a wholesome, pure and Biblical view of sexuality.
- This most intimate area must be under God's control.
- What does God say about this special gift of God that builds a special oneness between a husband and his wife?

**Special Needs Are Apparent All Through Life.**

- Young and middle aged adults may need special guidance on adjusting to/and meeting the sexual needs of their spouses.
- Older adults may need to consider answers that address biological changes that affect their sex lives and/or the renewing of intimacy once their children have left their home.
- Single parents especially need to realistically deal with their sexual desires in a Biblical way.
- For all purity is the most important aspect.

**Focus On The Word**

*“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” (Heb. 13:4)*

**Sex Is God's Invention**

**A. The Bible gives us general principles about sexuality.**

1. God instituted marriage and the sexual relationships in the Garden of Eden prior to man's fall. (Gen. 2:18, 21-25)
2. Sexuality is of divine origin, and as such is holy and good. (Gen. 1:31) It is not the product of perversion or man's idea.
3. Like all of God's gifts -- it can be **perverted**, and has been because of man's idea.

**B. God gives us His purposes for sex in marriage.**

1. For parenthood-- or procreation. (Gen 1:27-28)
  - a. The blessing of children in the home is God's greatest gift to the couple, only second to salvation itself. (Psa. 127:4-5; Psa. 128:1-3, 6)
  - b. Our children are our greatest contribution to the next generation for the cause of Christ.
  - c. Too often children are considered an inconvenience rather than a reward and blessing.

2. For prevention of fornication/ adultery.
  - a. God's gift of sex to a married couple also is to prevent fornication. (I Cor. 7:2-5)
  - b. God desires that we possess our vessel unto honor. (*This could be applied to how we relate in use of our body as well as toward the spouse.* I Thess. 4:3-4)
3. For promotion of mutual love.
  - a. The sexual relationship in marriage should provide mutual love and oneness. (Gen. 2:24-25)
  - b. To "know" one's wife (Gen. 4:1) speaks of the sexual act in marriage and involves total oneness -- spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
4. For pure, proper, and pleasant relationships.
  - a. God declares sex in marriage is to be "honourable in all," and the "bed" (which refers to sexual relationships) as "undefiled." (Heb. 13:4)
  - b. Remember that Satan tries to counterfeit every good thing God makes.
  - c. The family must be protected against adultery -- the destroyer of marriage and homes.

### **Adultery -- Man's perversion of God's gift:**

#### **A. The significance of man's sin.** (Rom. 7:1-3)

1. The root meaning of the word "adultery" is "to mar or to make impure something that is beautiful."
2. The marriage relationship is a beautiful type of the spiritual oneness that the believer has with the Heavenly Bridegroom -- Christ. (Eph. 5:31-32)
3. God considers the marriage relationship -- **sacred**, and brings serious **consequences upon all those who violate it.** (Heb. 13:4)

#### **B. The sinfulness of adultery (or fornication):**

As with all of God's gifts to man, Satan seeks to pervert and ruin what God has given. In order to build a hedge around our homes and personal lives we must see God viewpoint of the sinfulness of adultery.

1. It is a sin against ones self.
  - a. First Corinthians 6:18 teaches us that one who commits sexual immorality, "sins against his own body."
  - b. Sexual sin does unparalleled damage to the individual -- physically, emotionally, and spiritually. (Read Proverbs chapters 2-7.)
2. It is a sin against the home.
  - a. Those who violate God's standard for sexual purity sacrifice the future on the altar of immediate desire for lust.
  - b. Many fail to see that sex outside of marriage makes it impossible for the individual to ever totally reclaim what they have lost. (Prov. 2:19)

Sexual sins not only hurts the husband and wife relationship, but no parent can love or care for their children and selfishly wreck their home through adultery.

When King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan declared, *“By his deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.”* (( Sam 12:14)

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3. It is a sin against the church.
  - a. Many laugh at churches today -- because of the sinful failure of its members. (Col. 3: 5)
  - b. God declares, *“Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”* (II Tim. 2:19)
4. It is a sin against our nation. (Prov. 14:34)
5. It is a sin against God. (Exod 20:14; Psa. 51)

### How Can We Protect God’s Gift of Sex?

#### A. Establish some basic safeguards for your life.

1. Guard the company you keep in order to avoid compromising situations. *“Be not deceived: evil communications (company) corrupt good manners, (character).”* (I Cor. 15:33; See Proverbs 5:3-12)
2. Monitor what you allow your eyes to observe. *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.”* (Psa. 101:3)
  - a. What about pornography, female nudity, X and R- rated movies, etc.
  - b. It takes determination to seek after purity.
  - c. The human mind is like a computer -- it stores everything we fed into it through each sensory *“gate”* -- Read Proverbs 23:7a; Matt 12:34b.
3. Fear the danger of sin. (II Tim. 2:2) *“Flee also youthful lusts.”* It is significant that 27 times in the New Testament we are told to run or flee from such temptation.

***The dedicated Christian does not sees how close he can get to the edge of sin and not fall; rather, he stays in the “safety zone of obedience.”***

4. Practice wholesome thinking. In Philippians 4:8 we have a list of six strong soldiers who can protect the mind as think upon the things that are truth, honesty, just, pure, lovely, and good report.  
*The mind can’t think two thoughts at the same time, so right thoughts **must replace** wrong, lustful thoughts.*
5. Fully surrender to Christ. As a tree cannot stand without being rooted, so we must be anchored secure and strong in Christ. (Col. 1:9-18; 2:6-7)

#### B. Follow Joseph’s example

1. See temptation for what it is.

2. Don't let emotional pressure and desire control.
3. Watch out for deceitful appeals.

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**Think Upon Such Questions As:**

1. Why were Adam and Eve initially unashamed of their nakedness?  
(Gen 2:25)
2. What reasons did Joseph give for not succumbing to sexual temptations?  
(Gen. 39:8-9)
3. How does an extramarital affair (adultery) affect those involved?  
(Prov. 6:23-35; 7:24-27)
4. For what purposes did God give sex to humans?
5. What does the physical relationship of husband and wife described in the Song of Solomon teach us about sex?

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**Consider the Following Together. . for homework:**

1. In the text of I Corinthians chapter seven, children are not mentioned. Sex is for more than procreation, it is intended by God for marital pleasure and bliss.
2. The Corinthians lived in a sexually perverted society, I suppose much as exists today in our world, but probably worse.
3. Read I Corinthians 6:18-20 which reminded the Corinthians of God's prohibition of fornication. Then, you will note that I Corinthians 7:2 was God's positive answer to man's God-given desires.
4. While illegitimate sex outside marriage is condemned, God's Word recognizes sexuality as proper within marriage and as a necessary protection against sexual temptations.
5. The physical union is but the expression of the deep spiritual oneness that God intends for the Christian couple within the bonds of marriage.
6. Two physical bodies cannot "*make love*;" they can only express the love that should already exist -- a pure, godly love.
7. It is recorded of Isaac that he was "*sporting with Rebekah, his wife.*" (Gen. 26:8) They were not playing tennis! The word *sporting* means caressing.
8. A good marriage relationship involves physical contact and pleasant expressions of affection and love between a husband and wife. To withhold such from our mate is very serious- ***it is called defrauding.*** (I Cor. 7:2-7)

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

Lesson Thirteen

**“Choosing To Understand Each Other!”**

*“For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.” (I Cor. 11:3, 8-12; I Pet. 3:7)*  
**God desires that you would understand each other, dwell with each other in knowledge. . . knowing how to relate!**

**Understanding Each Other -- A Comparison of the Differences Between Husbands and Wives**

<u>Aspect considered:</u>	<u>Husband:</u>	<u>Wife:</u>
1. Because of the fall, (Gen. 3)	painful toil, the ground cursed (Gen. 3:17) busy providing	painful childbirth, desires toward the husband, burden of relationships.
2. As a result, an orientation toward. . .	doing	being
3. Therefore, greatest need of each. . .	significance	intimacy
4. Resulting in primary activity. . .	providing	nurturing
5. Creativity is directed toward. . .	work	home
6. Principle concern. . .	money, meaning	family, security
7. Deepest fear. . .	failure to provide	something happens to a child/ husband
8. Principle struggle. . .	pressures of life	worry over life
9. Principle need in marriage. . .	to be respected	to be cherished
10. Principle command. . .	love the wife	submit to husband
11. Disobedience is. . .	toward indifference	to resist
12. Principle strength. . .	wisdom	humility
13. Principle weakness. . .	pride	folly
14. Principle temptation. . .	anger	fear



15. Three mutual commands. . .	<u>Love</u> Eph. 5:25	<u>Love</u> Titus 2:4
	<u>Respect</u> I Pet. 3:7	<u>Respect</u> Eph. 5:33
	<u>Submit</u> Eph. 5:21	<u>Submit</u> Eph. 5:22

***The single most important skill then is to build harmony by understanding how God made you different. . . and thus minister accordingly.***

**God Made A Difference As He Created Man and Woman**

- 1., In one sense men and women have a lot in common. It is remarkable that we don't understand each other better. As Adam said of Eve, *"This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man."* (Gen. 2:23)
2. We are genetically and biologically connected. Everyone woman received half of DNA from a man. Every man receives half of his DNA from a woman.
3. Yet in another sense, men and women are as different as night is from day, as beauty is from the beast, as sandpaper from silk, or as a rose from a thorn.
4. In fact husbands and wives are virtual opposites in almost every significant area of comparison -- exactly as God planned it to be.
5. Rather than this being a disadvantage, God meant all of this to be a great advantage -- a diversity that works wonders in the sacred institution of marriage and the family -- that is when they live together according to the directives in the Word of God.
6. The one thing that most men lack is the one thing most women want -- **intimacy**. Why is this such a need, and why do men lack it? What is intimacy, anyway?

**Understanding Each Other In the Realm of Communication**

*Another most important skill in building a harmonious marriage is the delicate art of communication. This is something a couple must work at. . . build skills. . . desire to have it. . . and understand how God made them to be so different.*

<u>Aspect of difference</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
1. Main thrust of life. . .	information	feelings
2. Principle use of communication. . .	transmit info., data, facts	express ones feelings and moods.
3. Main purpose of communication. . .	a function to share facts	for clarity about ones feelings

4. Relate primarily to. . .	physical world	relational world
5. Starting point of communication. . .	rational, logic, analysis	emotional concerns and interests
6. Irritating tendency is to. . .	grunts, ignores spouse	repeating and shows anxiety

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### **Our Barriers to Communication**

*The single greatest obstacle to understanding each other is a lack of complete frankness. This is brought about by two fears. . .*

1. The fear of criticism.
2. The fear of receiving advice.

*We probably fear criticism from our closest companion because to each one of us it becomes a fear of rejection.*

### **Some Important Suggestions About Communication**

1. When a wife repeats herself over and over again, it does not mean she didn't hear her husband's response the first time. Rather, she is trying to discharge the emotional tension that has built up in her heart.
2. Wives, in the best marriages, say that even though they have struggles, they can communicate with their husbands.
3. Learn to avoid "you" statements and "why" questions. Instead make "I feel" statements. Then both of you will feel safe in discussing a difficult subject.
4. The wife will never connect her heart to her husband's heart if he only speaks to her through his head. Realize, men, she is an emotional being. Listen with and speak from the heart.
5. Deep listening means to take an all-consuming interest in building up your mate.
6. THINK:
  - Discussing facts enables you to connect at the head level.
  - Discussing feelings enables you to connect at the heart level.
  - Connecting at the level of the head will get the task done, but only by connecting our hearts to each other can we become the intimate soul mates we all dream about.

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### **What Is A Husband's Greatest Need?**

#### **A. Why do men compete so fearlessly?**

1. Why is it men at times will take on almost impossible challenges?
2. What drives a man?

3. Why do men take on seemingly humanly impossible tasks?

**B. What is a man's greatest desire or need?**

1. **Men are driven by their greatest human need -- the need of significance.** (The wife meets that need by her reverence, respect, honor.)
2. Man was made for the task. In the breast of every male is the heart of a doer.
3. God has made the man with an intense longing to perform meaningful work. (Gen. 1:28-31; 2:15, 20)
4. Men strive to make a mark, to live with purpose, to make a contribution, to make a difference.
5. The highest calling of a man seems to be to : (often selfishly)
  - conquer      • to achieve      • to excel
6. Men have an innate need to seek after significance.
  - a. Yet this need must be balanced against all the other priorities in a married man's life -- like marriage and his children.
  - b. He must seek to fulfill the right priorities -- fathering, church, relationship with the Savior, to love God with all his heart.
  - c. Nothing devastates Christian families more than a man's selfish, all controlling, desire to be significant just for himself, at any cost.

**What Is a Wife's Greatest Personal Need and Desire?**

1. Why do women talk on a phone for an hour, and to men they seemingly say nothing?
2. Why do women desire to talk a whole evening about nothing of great importance in the man's viewpoint?
3. Why are women so emotional, and often cry so quickly, so easily, or "tear-up" over seemingly nothing -- according to a lot of men?
4. **What is her greatest need? -- It is intimacy!**
  - a. Intimacy means "*I desire to know you at the deepest level, and I accept you.*"
  - b. Her need to be intimate is a "*relationship*" orientation.
  - c. Women speak on a phone, largely, to build a **relationship**, men to **know something** (For the man has an agenda, he feels he has an over-riding task to complete.)
  - d. Significance is all about **doing** for the man for he is task oriented, but for the woman it is about **being**. The woman's key orientation is nurturing. (While men are described in action, in movement -- climbing, overcoming, conquering.)
  - e. The highest calling for the wife -- is listening, caring nurturing, loving, mothering.
  - f. Since intimacy is the wife's greatest need -- who is to meet that need?

## CHOICES IN MARRIAGE

- The husband -- (Gen. 3:16) for her desire is to her husband.
- The Hebrew word, desire. . . literally means “*a desire bordering on disease,*” in other words her need for intimacy can make her “sick at heart” when her husband does not give enough of himself or seeks to manipulate her emotions for his own ends.
- Not only can the husband rob his wife of intimacy, but because of the sinful heart, (our sin nature) she can easily fall prey to possessiveness, pettiness, and oversensitivity in her relationships.
- The wife must manage her need for intimacy by walking in the Spirit, in the power of the Lord. (Eph. 6:10; Gal. 5:15-17)
- Husbands, to fail to satisfy her need for intimacy is to fail to love, to give consideration and respect. It is sin!
- We are not separate beings, but have been mysteriously fused into “*one flesh,*” in marriage. It is a sin against her, and it is a sin against our own bodies to fail to give intimacy.
- Because the wife’s greatest need is intimacy, then the husband’s greatest responsibility at this point is to meet that need.

**But how?** Through > mutual love,  
> mutual respect, > mutual submission.  
**It takes place when a husband knows his wife at the  
deepest level, and totally accepts her.**

Choosing God's Principles for Marriage

## Lesson Fourteen

**“Choosing To Build Family Worship!”**

A very interesting study in the Word of God is the subject of an **altar!** Prior to man's fall into sin you do not find any mention of an altar. But after that, it was a very important aspect in the lives of the Patriarchs.

**What is a family altar?** What constitutes family worship? Why should we be concerned about having a family altar, as it was called in generations gone by? Or should that be a concern of ours today? What is our choice? What should we choose?

In the Garden of Eden, mankind had perfect fellowship with God. The whole garden was his altar; God walked with man in unbroken fellowship -- then man sinned, and God's judgment was pronounced, and many things changed. Then an altar was seemingly necessary for mankind to come to God. In the Old Testament times man was to come before a holy God with a sacrifice (which indicated faith and worship). This also included the making of an altar.

**Why Did Many Old Testament People Build An Altar?**

1. The first act of Noah after the earth was judged through the flood -- was the building of an altar. (Gen. 8:20-22)
2. When God called Abram, He made His promises, and established the Abrahamic covenant. Abram first built an altar, and then pitched his tent. (Gen. 12:7-13)
3. Abraham, under orders from God to sacrifice his son. . .
  - a. took him to Mt. Moriah to sacrifice him.
  - b. Abram build an altar, then God provided the ram in the place of Isaac. *Abraham died to Isaac, in order to be alive toward God.* (Gen. 22:7-9, 13-14)
4. God again confirms His covenant with Isaac, who builds an altar. (Gen. 26:24-25)
5. Jacob - (Gen. 28:10-16, 18-22) He was on the run, had a dream of God's messengers and a *ladder ascending and descending from heaven.* . . there he built an altar.
6. Joshua and Moses after a resounding victory against the Amalekites (at Rephidim) established an altar, and called the name of the place a name that meant, *“God is our Banner.”* (Exod. 17:15)
7. In Exodus 20:24-26, God gave directions to build an altar, *“In the place where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.”*
8. Moses, summoned to the top of the Mount to meet with the Lord, built an altar, and sacrificed there, interceding for the people. (Exod 24:4-8)

9. Elijah, on Mt. Carmel, :*“repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down and called upon the God of Heaven to answer.”* (I Kings 18:30-32)
  10. Isaiah, worshiping the Lord as we read in chapter six, *“after confession of his sin, an angel took a live coal off the altar. . .”* (Isa. 6:1-8)
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**Consider Some Aspects of the Significance of the Altar  
In the Old Testament**

1. The altar in the Holy of Holiness was the place where spiritual business was done with the God of Heaven in behalf of His people.
  2. The altar is often mentioned in the Book of Revelation. . . as the place where man meets God.
  3. The altar was a place of > intercession, > confession, > petitions  
> praise and worship.
  4. It was a place where -- > joy was received, > burdens were lifted,  
> eternal business was transacted with God, > covenants were made,  
> dedication took place, > deliverance, happiness, and holiness was felt.
  5. It was a place where God and man were united, man and man were reconciled.
  6. An old English Bishop was known to say prior to rising in the morning, *“Lord, this bed is the altar, and my body is the sacrifice, and I happily and heartily yield it up to thee.”*
  7. Add the word, *FAMILY* to *ALTAR* and you have a blessed place, a storehouse of blessing to the family who will use it well.
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**What Should The Family Altar Be?**

**A. It ought to be a way of life --** (Deut 6:4-7, 17, 18a)

1. ***Why don't we make it a way of life?*** Because we feel we are too busy, or
2. we are not in the mood, for our *“attitudes”* militate against such a time of spiritual retreat, or
3. tensions however slight are felt, for often the atmosphere in the home is one that does not lend itself to worship.
4. Hostilities, anger, irritations, resentments, friction militate against having a time of reading and prayer.

**B. The family altar -- a special place --**

1. It often helps if it is a certain place,
2. It is a blessing if it becomes a sacred place.

**C. The family altar -- a time and an event -- (Deut 6:6-11, 17)**

1. A place where the family together meets God.
2. A set time when we gather together for prayer, study of the Word of God, and worship of the Lord.
3. A daily event that becomes a part of the life, even when others are present. Often only a crisis would cause us to set aside this time, and place or make time to pray.  
(Deut. 31:11-13; Psa. 5:3; “*Daniel as afore time..*” Dan 6:10)

**D. The family altar -- an institution -- (Deut 11:18-22)**

1. More than a mere tradition,
2. more than a mere concept, but an *institution* that goes with the child for his whole life.
3. A place where spiritual values are taught, and love, joy, and peace with the Lord is real.

(Read the materials about family altar from the web site... the book, “*Tools or a Christian Family*” for this covers the functions of a family and a lot of helps for family devotions.)

**E. The family altar -- a family necessity -- (Psa. 78:1-8)**

1. As we plan for family education, health, well-being, mental, emotional and physical aspects. . . so the spiritual life is even more important.
2. To “*bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,*” demands a family worship time. (Eph. 6:4)

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**Why the Family Altar Ought To BE a WAY OF LIFE!**

1. Spiritual battles in the home so often revolve around the lack of family devotions or a spiritual time in the Word and prayer.
2. We often discuss having family devotions -- but rarely do; it must become a way of life or we will never do it.
3. Our hearts probably advocate this as strong as anything we know -- yet we fail so miserably -- success is determined by it becoming a way of life.
4. Everything in our generation militates against having a family devotion time -- it becomes a victim of our carelessness -- so we must determine to make it a part of our daily life.
5. Too often it is preceded or followed by unkind words, thoughtlessness, or continued feuding. We must see the serious need of a godly home and begin family worship.

6. If we see the great importance of a family worship time -- we will be more apt to rid our lives of impatience, bitterness, anger, bad feelings, mean spirited thinking, etc., -- so we can build our spiritual lives together.
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### **How Should We Establish a Family Altar?**

1. Be **convicted** of the necessity -- not an option with God.
2. Get the family together, **discuss why it is so vital**, pray about it, and plan for it, agree about doing it.
3. Plan the time and place.
4. Begin the family altar time, it won't maintain itself, it must have our full attention.
5. It may help to make a piece of furniture the place to meet, or a certain room, making it a special sacred time as a family gathering in the Word of God.

### **What Are Some Ideas That Would Aid Us?**

1. Make it brief, especially dependent upon the age of the children.
  2. Make it Biblical -- make the Word of God exciting,
  3. making it interesting as you involve the whole family if you can.
  4. Do not preach -- or make it a time of chiding, correcting, but a time of considering what God is saying to your hearts and lives.
  5. Remain open for suggestions to improve it.
  6. Keep it informal -- don't allow yourself to be *uptight, but relaxed and joyful*.
  7. Avoid routines, do the novel and the innovative.
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### **So Why Have Family Worship? (study this together)**

- First, it involves the whole family as they are all trained to worship the Lord.
- It increases your knowledge of the Word of God and thus better know the will of God for your lives. (Eph. 5:17; Col. 4:12)
- As Timothy was trained in the Word of God by his mother and grandmother, so he greatly benefited in every aspect of his life, and came to trust Christ as Savior. (II Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15)
- Parents who faithfully teach their children in family worship in the home often have the privilege of leading them to Christ.



## CHOICES IN MARRIAGE

- Daily family devotions teaches children how to pray, as well as the parents to better know how to seek God's throne. (Heb 4:14-16; Luke 11:1)
- The entire family can develop a prayer list of requests and have the shared blessing of seeing God answer their prayers. Thus children learn to trust God, know His promises and see God answer their prayers personally.
- Family worship provides opportunity to influence the children correctly, using the Word of God, so they learn how the Scriptures indeed speak to their hearts and give guidance for life. (II Tim. 3:16-17)
- Successful family devotions involves careful parental planning to address typical problem areas of life such as -- honesty, sexual purity, obedience to parents, relationships, etc. -- all taught from the Word of God.
- Last of all, family worship promotes family unity -- for there is nothing to build a wonderful bond for life like praying together, weeping together, praising together and learning together.