



The Family

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The Family – New Edition
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Church in Salvador, September 2012
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This is an updated edition with lessons divided of the booklet The Family, 1995.

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Introduction

⁷The law of the Lord *is* perfect, converting the soul;...

⁸The statutes of the Lord *are* right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;...

¹⁰More to be desired *are they* than gold,

Yea, than much fine gold;...

And in keeping them there is great reward." Ps 19:7-11

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“⁶Therefore be careful to observe *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.’” Dt 4:6

Salvador, September 2012

Presbytery in Salvador

How teaching in the church should be

The disciples who are learning and teaching must be willing to manage simple studies. The Lord commands us to feed "lambs" and not "Giraffes." Those who have greater capacity should humbly bow down to eat of the plate of the little ones; Jesus exclaimed, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes...."(Mt 11:25,26). The Church does not need an academic and intellectual teaching (1 Cor 1:18-31; 2:1-16) to please the Lord.

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

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

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

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

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

God will not examine us about our knowledge with respect to contents of the Bible. He will ask us how we lived. The doctrine is practical commandments for the life of the disciples (Titus 2.1-15).

Working with this material

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

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

Seeking Revelation

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

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

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

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

Understanding More

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

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

Note: Biblical excerpts were taken from the New King James version of the bible, unless otherwise noted.

Part 1

The Purpose of God for the Family

The Purpose of God for the Family

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Rom 11:36; Gn 1:26-28; Rom 8:28-29

Help for Meditation

During your meditation pray and seek to answer the questions below by writing down the answers and any questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What is the purpose of the family?</i>	“ ²⁷ So God created man in His <i>own</i> image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it...” Gn 1:27-28
The family was created by God to cooperate with His Eternal Purpose.	

The Purpose of God for the Family

³⁶For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.” Rom 11:36

For what does the family exist?

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

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

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

²⁶Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;...²⁷So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;...” Gen 1:26-28

²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Rom 8:29

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

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

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

God. God is the creator of the family and the family exists for Him (Rom 11:36).

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

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

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

How does the family cooperate with the Purpose of God?

a) In the formation and development of personal life

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

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

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

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

b) In raising children for God

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Wedding

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Mk 10:7-9; 1 Cor 7:39
- Prv 2:17; Mal 2:14-16; Jer 5:8-9

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>Who unites a husband and wife?</i>	“ ⁷ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Mk 10:7-9
The union of marriage is made by God and is for a lifetime.	

The Wedding

"⁷ 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.'" Mk 10:7-9

Marriage was instituted by God

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

Marriage is not a society between two parties, where each one places their conditions. God, who created it, is the one who establishes the conditions, not the man or the woman, nor a common agreement of both, nor the laws of country. Those who marry must accept the conditions established by God, in his love and infinite wisdom, and cannot change them.

The foundation of marriage is the pact

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The matrimonial bond is sacred and indissoluble

“, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Mk 10:8-9

“³⁹A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” 1 Cor 7:39

“¹⁴...the Lord has been witness
Between you and the wife of your youth,...” Mal 2:14

The texts above show us that:

- a) The matrimonial bond is strong – a fusion. They have “become one flesh.”

- b) The bond is realized by God Himself. “What God has joined together.”
- c) It is an indissoluble bond while both spouses are alive. “A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives.” Only death of one of the two can dissolve it.
- d) God says that He Himself is witness of this alliance and hates the separation and infidelity (Prv 2:17, Mal 2:14-16, Jer 5:8-9). All infidelity and breaking up is an offense to God Himself.
- e) No man or human law can dissolve this bond. Whoever does will be directly rebelling against God.

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

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

Part 2

The Standard of God for the Couples

The Roles of Spouses

Seeking Revelation

Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- 1 Cor 11:3; 1 Tm 3:4, 12; Gen 3:17-19; 18:19; Eph 5:28-29; 1 Sm 3:12-13; Heb 12:7-9; 1 Tm 2:8
- Gen 2:18; 1 Tm 2:15; Prv 31:10-31; Ti 2:3-5; 2 Tm 1:5; 3:14-15

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What are the roles of the husband and of the wife?</i>	<p>“³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman <i>is</i> man, and the head of Christ <i>is</i> God.” 1 Cor 11:3</p>
The man is the head of the woman and the wife is his help meet.	<p>“¹⁸ And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Gen 2:18 (KJV)</p>

The Roles of Spouses

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

“³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.” 1 Cor 11:3

“¹⁸ And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Gen 2:18 (KJV)

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

God designed man to be the head of the woman and the woman to be his help meet.

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

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

The role of the head

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

- a) **To govern the home** (1 Tm 3:4,12). To govern with grace and love. To give direction; to lead. To be the representative of Jesus for the family. To express the character of Christ in his conduct. To not use his authority to impose his own whims (Mk 10:43).
 - b) **To work to provide the family sustenance** (Gen 3:19).
 - c) **To support, care, and protect the family** (Eph 5:29). To resolve all the difficulties that arise, with the help of the Lord. To guide the family to a loving and happy coexistence.
-

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

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

The role of the help meet

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

- a) **To occupy more in raising of children** (1 Tm 2:15; 5:14). To be a mother is their primary mission.
- b) **To tend to the family and take care for food** (Prv 31:13-15).
- c) **To take care of clothing of the family** (Prv 31:21-22).
- d) **To take care of the home** (Ti 2:5).
- e) **If necessary, assist in financial support** (Prv 31:16-18; 24). Only if this is necessary and if possible, avoiding leaving the home.
- f) **To teach the Scripture and also to take care of disciplining the children** (2 Tm 1:5; 3:14-15).

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

- g) **To care for the integral formation of the daughters.** To teach them about: character, femininity, social behavior, domestic tasks, manual abilities, conduct with boys, sex education, etc.
- h) **To be present and attentive to her sons.** The raising of sons is not the exclusive responsibility of the father.
- i) **To instruct young women how to perform their role of wife and mother** (Ti 2:3-5).

Wrong attitudes of men

- a) To no assume his role as head. When this is so, the house is helpless and the wife becomes burdened by the weight of many family obligations beyond their role.

- b) To annul the woman. Some want to do everything alone. They do not converse with their wives nor seek their opinion. The woman becomes frustrated and bitter.

Wrong attitudes of women

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

The support of the house and the work of women

¹⁷Then to Adam He said, "...In toil you shall eat *of* it All the days of your life." Gen 3:17

¹⁵Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing..."1 Tm 2:15

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

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

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

There are extreme situations in which the husband is unable to supply the sustenance of the house. In this case, in which the woman needs to go out to work, this should be seen as a necessary evil and

never as a standard. In some families, wives have committed the mistake of exchanging the care and attention to their children for a much higher standard of living (housing, car, school ...). The absence of the mother is very harmful to development of children and the well-being of the family.

Each one should know and assume their role

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

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

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

The Standard of God for the Wife

Seeking Revelation

Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Eph 5:22-24, 33b; Col 3:18; 1 Pt 3:1-6
- Prv 14:1; 31:30; 21:19; 11:22

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What is the order of God for the wife?</i>	<i>“²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. “ Eph 5:22-23</i>
The wife must submit themselves to her husband, respect him, and have a gentle and quiet spirit.	

The Standard of God for the Wife

“¹⁸ And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. “ Gen 2:18 (KJV)

“¹ The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands” Prv 14:1

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

To submit to her husband as to the Lord

“²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.” Eph 5:22-24 (Read also Col 3:18; 1 Pt 3:1-6)

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

To submit to the husband as to the Lord, means recognizing the authority of God in him.

Aspects of submission:

- a) **Submission is the recognition of established authority.** It is not only an external obedience, but an interior attitude of submission and respect.
- b) **Submission does not annul the woman, but gives her conditions to fulfill her role.**
- c) **Submission does not put down women, but rather to protect.** God is good. He wants a woman to be covered and protected

under the authority of her husband. He does not want a woman overwhelmed and nervous, but tranquil and happy.

- d) **Submission of woman does not make her inferior.** Jesus, being equal to the Father, submitted Himself to Him in everything. The woman is not less, or the man more. They are equal, but in different functions, according to the plan of God.
- e) **The woman should be submissive in all things** (Eph 5:24). The husband is overall responsible for all the areas of family life. The woman should only disobey the husband if he gives her an order clearly contrary to the will of God known in scriptures. If he wants to force her to sin or to leave the Lord, in these cases she should obey God and not the husband; even suffering the consequences of it (Acts 4:18-20).

The submission of the woman does not make her inferior. Jesus, being equal to the Father, submitted himself to Him in everything.

- f) **The sisters with unbeliever husbands should be submissive to them.** They should behave themselves in such a way, that when they see their behavior, they themselves will convert (1 Pt 3:1-2).
- g) **Submission does not imply that women do not speak, do not give opinions, and have no influence in the decisions of the family.** She does not have to say yes for everything. She is the helper. Therefore, she should give her opinion, agree, disagree, etc. But it should always show an attitude of submission to her husband, and have a disposition to leave the final decision in his hands, without bitterness or interior rebellion.
- h) **When a wife considers that the husband (believer) is abusing authority, she should speak to him alone, with respect and gentleness.** If he does not listen, she should speak to him again, before spiritual and mature brothers (Mt 18:15-17). In the case of the nonbelieving husband that abuse authority, the wife should seek the counsel of the church as to what to do.

Respect or reverence to the husband

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

- a) Respect (or reverence - in some translations) is to go beyond simple obedience. It is to have a constant attitude of veneration and honor, in the presence and absence of the husband.
- b) Respect manifests itself in the form of speaking, in the tone of voice, in modes, gestures, and looking. Also in the manner of answering the husband, of listen to him, and obeying him.
- c) It also implicates in not belittling him or scolding him, neither alone, in before the children, or much less before other people. Never speak badly of him to others.
- d) The woman is responsible for teaching her children, by her example, to honor and respect the father.
- e) There is nothing that irritates a man as much as the disrespect of his wife. The arrogance and rudeness make a woman indignant and shameful.
- f) The respectful woman is the joy of the husband. She magnifies and makes a man honored before others (Prv 12:4; 31:10-11, 23).

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

Having a gentle and quiet spirit

“³Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— ⁴rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” 1 Pt 3:3-4

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

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

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

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

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

What blessing and peace the wise woman brings to her husband and children.

The Standard of God for the Husband

Seeking Revelation

Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

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

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible texts and references below.

<i>What is the command of God for the husband?</i>	<i>"²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her," Eph 5:25</i>
The husband must love his wife as Christ loved the church, treat her with dignity and not harshly.	<i>"¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them." Col 3:19</i>

The Standard of God for the Husband

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

To love his wife, like Christ loved the church

"²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her," Eph 5:25

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

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

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

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

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

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

Romance and Affection

The love sentiment also should be present at the wedding (Song 7:10-13). Everything that we said earlier establishes the solid foundations for this love to develop and grow. Romance is not just for the honeymoon, but for life.

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

The disciple must be a romantic husband.

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

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

Do not treat the wife with bitterness

"¹⁹Husbands love your wives and do not be bitter toward them." Col 3:19

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

Not treating with bitterness means always treating with kindness, gentleness, and kindness and never with harshness and rudeness. This

tenderness for his wife should be practiced in words addressed to her , in various situations that involve daily dealings.

a) Kindness and affection

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

b) Firmness and tenderness

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

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

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

c) Understanding

The husband should also know and understand his wife. For this it is necessary to attentively listen to what she says. Listening skills is one of the most valuable qualities that one can have. When the husband understands what the woman thinks and feels and what is his load, he can encourage her, lead her, and protect her with wisdom. a hug and a

loving word and tenderness shows the woman that she has someone that understands and loves on her side. The woman, who feels understood and attended by her husband, will hardly be rebellious and oppositional.

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

To treat the wife with dignity (honor)

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” 1 Pt 3:7

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

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

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

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

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

“²² *He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord.*” Prv 18:22

Man must represent Jesus in the home

The man is responsible for:

a) To manifest the life of Christ in the family

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

b) To establish the rule of Christ

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

All authority subject to Christ must act with firmness, but also with lovingness and humility. Without making undue concessions, but with a disposition to talk and listen. It is important that we learn to discern the will of God and take care so that it will be fulfilled in the home.

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

c) To minister the saving grace of Christ

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

overwhelmed by her tasks that sometimes seem trivial and insignificant.

d) To indoctrinate and edify his family

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

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

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

Communication in Marriage

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Jas 1:19; Prv 18:13, 15:23; Eph 4:15, 25-27, 29, 31; Col 3:13
- 1 Jn 1:7; Prv 25:28

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

- Why is communication important in marriage?
- Is the communication in your marriage good? Or is it lacking?
- Cite principles that cooperate with good communication.
- What practices hinder the dialogue?

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What is necessary for good communication?</i>	<i>“¹⁹So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” Jas 1:19</i>
It is necessary to listen with patience and speak in love.	<i>“¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ—“ Eph 4:15</i>

Communication in Marriage

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

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

Friendship and transparency

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

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

We cannot expect a profound friendship to emerge by itself. It is necessary that we take strong and conscious measures to promote it. We should dedicate time. Separate special moments for long and calm conversations. This deepens the relationship, creates openness and trust, brings each other closer to one another, makes one a participant of the life of the other, enables us to deal with many issues, and avoid future misunderstandings and friction.

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

Developing communication

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

**Dialogue = speaking + listening + understanding +
being understood**

Let us see some principles for effective communication within marriage:

a) Listen, listen in love

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

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

Principles to listen:

- Do not interrupt the conversation. Pay attention to the words of the other person entirely.
- Do not deviate your eyes from the other person. Give total attention. Do not answer the phone and turn off the television or the computer.

“¹³ He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.” Prv 18:13

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

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

“¹ I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplications.”
Ps 116:1

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

b) Be slow in speaking

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

“²³ A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” Prv 15:23

c) Speak the truth in love

Always speak the truth. Do not convolute; do not disguise. Do not exaggerate or diminish. Be sincere. But, speak with grace, wisdom, and love. The way you say things is as important as what you are saying, sometimes even more. Therefore, Paul tells us that, “speaking² the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ...” (Eph 4:15).

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

“¹⁴ Let all that you do be done with love.” 1 Cor 16:14

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

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

d) Use good words that edify

“29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” Eph 4:29

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

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

“26 “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,” Eph 4:26

f) Disagree, yes. Disrespect, never.

It is possible to not agree with what others are saying, but we cannot strike them or disrespect them.

“31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.” Eph 4:31

g) Confess your error, forgive your spouse

“13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” Col 3:13

“9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.” Prv 17:9

h) Pray for one another and with one another

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

Blocking communication

a) The lack of communion with God. Our communion with one another is linked to our communion with God. **Solution:** To walk in the light (1Jn 1:7).

b) Coded messages, half and indirect words. **Solution:** To speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15, 25).

c) The explosion. This occurs when they disagree with us or they touch our defects. This is the work of flesh and sin, fruits of pride. **Solution:** To repent, confess to anger, and control yourself.

d) The tears. Tears can be a self-defense or self-pity. This is more common to women. **Solution:** Seek self-control (Prv 25:28). The tearful must remember that they have the Holy Spirit and that, therefore, can control themselves. And, thus, not hinder the relationship. The husband, in turn, should not despise the tears of his wife. He should discern, since some tears are legitimate and lawful. He should be respectful and patient, without bending before illicit crying. Wait for the wife to calm herself and return to the conversation.

e) The silence. This is used by some as being an educated and Christian conduct. However, at times it is an escape or blackmail. It is a more common behavior among men. **Solution:** Even if you do not want to talk about it, the silent must deny himself and speak the truth in love.

f) The criticism. Excessive criticism destroys relationships. **Solution:** To compliment.

g) The television, the computer, the telephone, and other technologies that occupy time. These things rob the little time that we have for our relationship with God and one another. **Solution:** Redeem the time. (Eph 5:15-16).

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

⁴⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God," 2 Cor 3:5

Sexual Intimacy

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- 1 Cor 7:3-4; Heb13:4
- Prv 5:18-19; Eccl9:9; Song 4:12, 16, 7:10-12
- Gn 18:12, 24:67, 24:5

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What is the purpose of sexual intimacy?</i>	"3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does." 1 Cor 7:3-4
Sexual intimacy was created for procreation and pleasure of the couple. And each one must seek the satisfaction of the other.	

Sexual Intimacy

“¹² A garden enclosed Is my sister, my spouse, A spring shut up, A fountain sealed.” He, Song 4:12

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

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

Let us see what the Word tells us about sex.

God is the author of sex

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

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

The purpose of sexual relation

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

a) To seal the matrimonial union

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

b) Procreation of the race

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

- Not to want to have children for selfish motives and;
- To have many children irresponsibly (without taking into account the resources that you have and the health of the woman).

c) The pleasure and intimacy of the couple

⁹ Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.” Eccl 9:9

¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth.
¹⁹ As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love.” Prv 5:18-19

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

Men and women are not their own masters

³ Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.” 1 Cor 7:3-4

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

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

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

The sexual relation

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

a) Preparation

The relationship does not commence in bed. The whole relationship, during the day will determine sexual relation. The husband should dedicate special attention to his wife. She has to be loved, caressed, kissed, and encouraged with words and declarations of love. The man must create a climate where his beloved feels unique and exclusive. Demonstrations of affection, love, and desire; during the day; predisposes the couple to good sexual relations and good sexual relations provide the couple a full day of affection and care.

“² Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—For your love is better than wine.” Song 1:2

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

b) Intimate union

“⁶ His left hand is under my head, And his right hand embraces me.”
Song 2:6

Hugs, kisses, and caresses are not only in principle, they are followed during all of sexual intimacy. Using creativity the couple can enjoy an intense and pleasurable intimacy. Create a romantic ambience

where they can give themselves to one to another, without interruption and with total privacy.

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

“⁴ Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Heb 13:4

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

c) Relaxation

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

“¹⁰ I am my beloved’s, And his desire is toward me. ¹¹ Come, my beloved, Let us go forth to the field...¹² Let us get up early to the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has budded, Whether the grape blossoms are open, And the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love.” Song 7:10-12

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

Part 3

Raising Children

The Responsibility and Example of Parents

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Prv 22:6; 2 Tm 3:14-15
- Gn 18:18-19; 1 Sm 2:12-17, 22-24, 28-30; 3:13
- Rom 5:12; Ps 51:5; Gn 8:21; Prv 22:15
- Mt 7:28-29; 23:2-4; Phil 4:9

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

- What is the responsibility of parents?
- What was the condition that Abraham when received the promise of God in Gn 18? What happened to Eli and his sons? Why? (1 Sm 2, 3)
- Why do children disobey and make mistakes? (Rom 5:12; Ps 51:5)
- What is the basis of authority of parents to teach their children? How was Jesus (Mt 7:28-29)? And the scribes and Pharisees (Mt 23:2-4)?

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What is involved in raising children?</i>	"6Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." Prv 22:6
Raising children involves: Example, Friendship, Instruction, and Discipline.	

The Responsibility and Example of Parents

“⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it..” Prv 22:6

Parents are responsible for their children

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

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

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

The nature of the child and the task of the parents

All men are descendent from Adam (Rom 5:12). Therefore the children, from little babies are not inclined for good, “...for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth” (Gn 8:21 KJV).

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

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

How do we raise children?

We can define the task of raising children in four fundamental points:

Example, Friendship, Instruction, and Discipline.

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

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

The example of parents

⁹ “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” Phil 4:9

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

²⁸ “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Mt 7:28-29

² “...The scribes and the Pharisees ... ³ ... do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. ⁴ For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.” Mt 23:2-4

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

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

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

The example gives authority to the teaching.

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

Friendship and Instruction

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Prv 4:3-5
- Dt 6:4-9; Ps 78:3-4

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

- What can parents do to be friends of their children?
- In what way can you practice the word above?
- In what areas must we instruct our Children?

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What do children need?</i>	
Children need time, attention, and affection.	
<i>What does instruction produce?</i>	
Instruction leads children to know God and His will.	

“⁶ And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Dt 6:6-7

Friendship and Instruction

The friendship of parents

“³ When I was my father’s son, Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, ⁴ He also taught me, and said to me: “Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live..” Prv 4:3-4

a) To give time and attention

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

Some parents are only concerned in giving sustenance, shelter, food, study, clothes, health, and presents. And they believe that they are fulfilling their roles as parents. The children do not want only the things that the parents can give them. They need their own parents. Parents are not substituted by presents, day care, or nannies.

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

b) To give ears

Parents must dedicate time and patience to listen to their children, listening to their long stories, listening to their discoveries, listening to what they feel, listening to what they converse with their colleagues at school, listening to their many questions. Finally , parents should gain a total openness with the children, to the point that they recount their whole lives.

c) To make declarations of love

This is a very simple , but very important practice - to tell our children how much we love them – expressions like, “I love you,” “You are very important to me,” “I thank God for your life,” and “You are God’s gift to us” are simple and produces great fruit. We can call home

just to speak with them, send cards, and telegrams. Everyone likes to know that we are loved.

Children need time, attention, and affection

d) To give kisses, hugs, and caring gestures

Words often times fail to express everything. It takes gestures – a hug, a caress, passing a hand over the head, holding hands with caring, kissing, carrying in arms, carrying on the back, rolling on the floor, running together, playing catch, and hide and go seek. These things may be expressions stronger than words, even for older children.

e) To give praise and words of encouragement

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

Praises help to correctly form the character of children.

f) To give simple gifts

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

g) To play

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

g) To leave together

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

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

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

The Instruction of parents

⁶Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." Prv 22:6

⁶And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them **when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.** ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Dt 6:6-9

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

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

To address this influence of the world, we have to be very present and diligent in teaching. We have to teach them always, every day, and

everywhere. We cannot miss any opportunity. It is indispensable we practice what is commanded in Dt 6:4-9. A child is like an empty suitcase - the luggage - **that will load you for the rest of your life**, that depends on the parents.

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

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

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

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

a) Personal relationship with God

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

Speak of the love of God for us and of his deeds (Ps 78:3-4). We speak of His power and His greatness. Let us count the person of Christ, his love, his emptying, his obedience, his death, and his resurrection. We teach of the Purpose of God, the fall of man, and the forgiveness and life that we all need, through Christ. Let us tell our children the true stories of the works of the Lord instead of the typical children stories of the world

b) Character

To teach them to not to be proud, lie, be selfish, fearful, fastidious, or lazy; to be meek and submissive to authorities; to be humble, truthful, generous, courageous, responsible, hardworking, studious, and organized; to be careful in speech, honest, just, forgiving, and pure in dealing with sex; to say no to the pressure of friends and colleagues; to have good self-esteem (not to be boastful and complexes), to have self-control, to use time well, and professionalize themselves.

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

c) Relationships with people

Teaching to love others, to serve, and to have compassion for those who suffer. To be kind, gentle, to greet people, to respect others, especially older and disabled people, and to be polite (excuse me, please, and thank you). To treat everyone well and not make exceptions of people, to be friendly, to make friends, to honor others, and praise them. To rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep, to rejoice when others are honored and presented. To know the suffering of injustice, to acknowledge mistakes, and to ask forgiveness to the offended.

d) Hygiene and personal habits

To teach good nutrition, eating everything, politely. To be hygienic, brushing your teeth and taking a bath. To care for cleaning, not to dirty the floor, to care for and organize your things (toys, books, and clothing). To dress with decency and without vanity.

⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." Prv 22:6

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

The Discipline

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

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

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

- What makes a father love his son?
- Why is discipline necessary?
- What are the fruits of discipline?
- What are the consequences of not disciplining the children?

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What are the fruits of discipline?</i>	“ ¹³ Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. ¹⁴ You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell.” Prv 23:13-14
Discipline gives wisdom, removes foolishness, leads to obedience, and delivers from death.	

The Discipline

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

“²⁴He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.” Prv 13:24

“¹⁵Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.” Prv 22:15

“¹³Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. ¹⁴You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell.” Prv 23:13-14

“¹⁵The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.” Prv 29:15

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

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

The relationship of a child and Christ prospers in so far as the obedience to the parents. Jesus lives and works in the life of an obedient child. Obedience is not optional, nor is it limited to when the child considers just. Obedience should be everything. The authority of the parents was given by God to form and discipline their children and has all of His support.

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

Some modern psychologists say that discipline leaves trauma in children. This is a false and unfounded affirmation. They confuse

discipline with beating. The child needs to know their limits and learn to obey. What makes trauma is anger, aggressive words, and bitterness of parents who have lost control and do not know more what else to do with rebellious and spoiled children.

Those who love, discipline.

Consequences of lack of discipline

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

When to discipline?

a) Whenever the child disobeys an instruction or order given.

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

b) Whenever the child has wrong attitudes of rebellion.

The attitudes of rebellion must also be disciplined, such as “tomorrow,” “tantrum,” “stalling,” faces of protest, “pouting,” murmuring against the order of the parent, disrespect, challenging answers, alteration of voice with parents and reminders.

What are the steps to discipline?

The correct discipline should include five steps:

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

How to discipline?

The discipline should be immediate and without anger.

The discipline should be:

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

“¹¹ Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”
Eccl 8:11

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

- c) **In particular.** The objective is to correct and not to humiliate or ridicule the child publicly.
- d) **Without yelling of the child.** The child must accept and submit themselves to discipline. They should only cry, and not scream, or kick, or run away, or protest.
- e) **Without sorrow or threats of the parents.** The parents should not utter expressions of bitterness, resentment, or hostility against their child. The love of parents does not change with the circumstances. The forgiveness of the parents should be guaranteed.
- f) **With unanimity.** The parents have to show unanimity in discipline. The woman should have the care to not contradict her husband, and the husband should support his wife, especially in the presence of the child.
- g) **Proportional to the offense.** There are offences of different gravity. Disobedience to an old order, which was forgotten, should be disciplined with less seriousness than a “face to face” resistance. There should also be more seriousness for lies and the concealment of errors.

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

All aspects of the Council of God for raising children are a treasure that we must keep and practice with fidelity. However, we must

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

maintain life that it is not us that do the work in the interior of our children. Jesus said, “Without me, you can do nothing” (Jn 15:15). And Psalm 127:1 says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.”

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

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

The Care of Adolescent Children

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Ps 127: 3-5
- Eph 6:4; Col 3:21
- Eccl 11:9, 12:1

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What do adolescent children need?</i>	“ ³ Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. ⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth.” Ps 127:3-4
Adolescent children need direction, firmness, friendship, and the affection of parents.	

The Care of Adolescent Children

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

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

“⁹Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these.” Eccl 11:9

“¹Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, “I have no pleasure in them” Eccl 12:1

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

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

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

Firmness and Affection

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

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

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

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

Clear direction for life

“³Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. ⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth. ⁵Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.” Ps 127:3-5

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

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

Areas to be directed

It is necessary to seek the help of God to form these areas in the lives of children with grace and wisdom, in their interior, not simply for parental impositions.

- a) Relationship with God and with the Church.** Before everything, teach them to love and create a profound relationship with God, through prayer and the Word. Be committed and involved with the Church. Learn to respect the leaders and the other brothers. Participate all the events and cooperate with the advancement of the Kingdom of God.
- b) Family relationship.** Teach them to develop good habits and cultivate a good relationship with other family members, to be respectful with everyone, to assume personal responsibility in domestic tasks, and in caring for and maintaining the family property.
- c) Study and work.** Guide them to study and prepare themselves for the future, even if they do not like to study; to learn to control themselves and overcome discouragement that leads many to abandon their studies; to have in mind that this is preparing them for the future. Direct them to be a diligent worker, not lazy and accommodated, but punctual; dutiful; honest; and well-disposed.
- d) Character.** Form in them fundamental values of character – to be truthful, honest, courageous, pure, respectful, subject to authorities, meek, humble, organized, disposed to serve, and that they use their time well, to be abiding of the commitments to complete their tasks. Warn them against the influence of the world – fashion, music, films, magazines, friendships, and conversations.

A joyful and relaxed environment

With all this firmness and direction, parents should take care not to transform the house into barracks. Everything should be showered with much affection and relationship. It is important that there is an environment with play and relaxation. This does not diminish the authority of the parents. On the contrary, it brings the children closer to the parents. Who will bear to live in a sad and heavy environment? The

youth are joyful by nature. They like to laugh and play. It is something legitimate that parents should also seek, promoting much laughter and healthy jokes. The life with the Lord is a joyful life. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." (Neh 8:10; Rom 14:17; Gal 5:22)

Parents should not impose their tastes upon their children. Tastes are different than principles. When possible, it is good to comply with the tastes and preferences of the children (evidently, nothing that offends the Lord). This gladdens and exercises them, in a healthy way, to discern between good and evil. (Eph 6:4; Col 3:21)

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

Instruction with the Word

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

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

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

Alternative correction of adolescent children

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

the beginning of the growth of the seed of rebellion in the heart of children.

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

a) Verbal admonishment

⁴“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Eph 6:4

⁵“Open rebuke is better Than love carefully concealed. ⁶Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” Prv 27:5-6

This is a first instance. It is not yelling and not arguing. It is leading a child to comprehend their error. It can go from a serious advice to a strong reprimand. It must be something seriously coated with wisdom and grace of God. Appeal to the fear of God and point to the love for justice and to what is right and true.

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

b) Admonishment with the removal of something that they like

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

c) Physical correction

²⁴“He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.” Prv 13:24

“¹⁸Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.” Prv 19:18

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

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

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

d) Discipline in the church

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

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

To cultivate friendship and openness with the children

To develop with the children a sincere friendship should be a priority of parents – truly being friends with children. The communication and the instruction will have much more effect within a sincere friendship. This will provide an environment of trust for the children to open their lives with the parents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Part 4

The Standard of God for Singles

The Standard of God for the Children

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:20
- Ex 20:12; 21:17; Dt 21:18-21; 1 Tm 5:4,8; Prv 23:22
- Prv 1:8; 6:20; 13:1; 15:20; 19:26; 30:11, 17

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

- What is submission? What does it mean to honor the parents?
- What does it take to develop a good relationship of friendship with the parents?
- What are the attitudes that children must develop for work and study?
- What summarizes the will of God for the children?

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What does God expect from children in relation to their parents?</i>	“ ¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: ³ “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” Eph 6:1-3
That the children obey and honor their parents.	

The Standard of God for the Children

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

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

Many of the youth today are disobedient and disrespectful to parents. This way of thinking and acting is a tendency in the present world. It is written that in the end times, man would be “disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving” (2 Tm 3:1-4). But God wants to conduct the family life of a disciple, providing them everything that is necessary for him to live their role of child after His heart.

This subject is very important to God. We can see that He showed His will for the children right in the ten commandments (Ex 20:12). And there, it did not say anything for husbands, wives, or parents. Also for rebellious children it had established a most severe penalty – death (Dt 21:18-21; Ex 21:17). This expresses the seriousness with what God sees in this subject. Although, in these days, we no longer stone the rebellious children, but God feels equally offended and judges these children. He takes all rebellion and disrespect of children to parents as being directed against Himself.

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

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

Obedience

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

“²⁰Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” Col 3:20

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

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

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

It is right the children obey their parents. Obedience must be in everything. And this is pleasing to God.

The testimony of the life of Christ through the life of a disciple because of their parents has much more impact than their words.

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

Honor

Eph 6:2-3; Ex 20:12

“²Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: *³“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”* Eph 6:2-3

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

“⁸My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother;” Prv 1:8

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

“²⁰A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother.” Prv 15:20

Children should learn to appreciate and be grateful for their parents. This will make it easier to honor them. For this, they must learn to put greater weight in their virtues than in the weaknesses of their parents.

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

It is important to note that the commandment of God is that the children honor their parents, independent of their being admirable or not. They should not confuse honor with admiration. There are parents that are unable to appreciate all the injustice they practice. Some practice course sins. Others have offended their children in various ways. There are even those who are criminals. These parents may not be admired, but God requires that His children honor their parents. When a disciple of Jesus forgives and honors a father or mother, the name of Christ is honored and glorified.

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

“¹⁷The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.”
Prv 30:17

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

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

It is necessary to develop a loving relationship with their parents, expressing the love in gestures and words.

- It is good for a father or mother “to hear” expressions of love on the part of their child. Many times the children let pass opportunities to demonstrate their affection and care;
- Tell them how important they are;
- Speak well of them to others;
- Present them special dates outside;
- Provide them, spontaneously, little services that they are in need;
- Spend time with them;
- Talk about what they like;
- Prepare them a special food;
- A flower, a kiss, a gesture, a card, chocolate, are ways to transmit love, gratitude, and appreciation.

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

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

The Promise

“³that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” Eph 6:3

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

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

Specific directions

a) Domestic tasks

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

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

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

When the children are small, the mother does everything. But it is an injustice to permit that she continue to do so. The children can and should assume responsibility for common tasks in the home. This honors the parents and the Lord.

b) Studies

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

“4 The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.” Prv 13:4

c) Work

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

d) Relationship between brothers

A good relationship between the brothers also constitutes honoring the parents. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps 133:1). To cultivate between the brothers a healthy environment, where the family ties are strengthened, forming a solid friendship that will last a lifetime.

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

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

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

e) Gratitude

While the child is under the parental care, they will enjoy the benefits and natural privileges. **Some of these, their parents cannot**

leave to provide. Others, however, are conceded to the children by an attitude of love, caring, and grade of parents.

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

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

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

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

The Friendship between Singles

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- 1 Thes 4:3-6; Mt 5:28-29; Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5-6; Jn 17:14-16; 2 Cor 6:14-15; Prv 15:22

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What is the will of God for the relationship of the single?</i>	“ ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified..” 1 Thes 4:3-6
To develop good friendships with holiness and purity.	

Friendship between Singles

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

Friendship

Among singles, there can be 3 types of relationships – friendship, friendship with observation, and friendship with engagement.

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

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

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

The first type of relationship is pure and simple friendship.

It is in this environment of many friendships that may arise an interest for someone, that can be transformed into observation.

The relationship with the world

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

“¹⁴I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” Jn 17:14-16

“¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?” 1 Cor 6:14-15

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

Dating in the world

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness ... that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Gal 5:19-21

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

Through all this, we do not use the word dating among us, for it is considered inadequate. We call it commitment (compromisso). This is the pact assumed between two people that love each other, with the objective to marry and pursue, as a family, cooperating with God for the realization of His purpose.

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

³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.” 1 Thes 4:3-8

Passion

Passion is a feeling, an emotion. A feeling emerging is normal. However, a disciple has control over all their passions. Being dominated

and directing life by feelings and passions is absolutely wrong. Every passion should be submissive to the will of God. And every passion in discord with the will of God should be abandoned.

“⁹“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?” Jer 17:9

“¹⁹Hear, my son, and be wise; And guide your heart in the way” Prv 23:19

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

Friendship with observation

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

The observation has two phases.

a) The first phase of observation

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

In this phase, the disciple must not give “hints” to whom they are observing. There should not be declarations that compromise or that arouse interest (e.g. I like you, I was just thinking about you, etc.). This is very important for two fundamental reasons – first, because the natural tendency of who is being observed is to create a “mask,” impairing the vision of who observes; second, because it can awaken in the heart of the person observed a feeling or an expectation that may not be met. In this moment, the disciple should not compromise his word (Mt 5:37). Let no one be irresponsible in this matter.

If, during this phase of observation, the disciple reaches the conclusion that it is not the person with which they want to marry, they should “get out of the observation” without leaving trace. If they acted with the proper discretion, they will not leave a mark or injury of their observation.

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

If during this observation, there arises a real interest by the other person, they can pass onto the final phase, which we will explain below.

b) The final phase of observation

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

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

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

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

c) What should be observed?

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

The following is a list with important characteristics to observe, that should be in the life of all young men and women. Some of these, although they only appear in one of the columns, apply to both.

Young women	Young men
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faithful and stable in faith - Helpmeet and companion - Meek and submissive - Good relationship with parents - Joyful and grateful to God - Not quarrelsome - Respectful - Hardworking and responsible - Orderly and hygienic - Discrete and feminine - Desire to make disciples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faithful and stable in faith - Loving and unselfish - Not wrathful - Good relationship with parents - Submissive to authorities - Courageous and decisive - Has priorities in order - Hardworking and responsible - Acts by faith and principles, not by impulses - Masculine, without “gestures” - Desire to make disciples

d) What are the things to do in observation?

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

The council is principle element in this moment. They should not have pressure or anxiety. They should converse with his discipler, companion, leaders, pastors and their parents, and listen attentively, considering each word. “Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established” (Prv 15:22).

This time is for seeking conviction, before God, certain that this is right person for them to marry. It is not yet the moment to give wings to the heart. Liking is a necessary condition , but not sufficient to marry.

What to do at the conclusion of observation?

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

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

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

The Commitment for Marriage

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- 1 Thes 4:3-6; Mt 5:37

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<p><i>What principles are involved in the relationship of the committed?</i></p>	<p>“³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified..” 1 Thes 4:3-6</p>
<p>The relationship of engagement involves two principles: the commitment to marriage and holiness.</p>	

The Commitment for Marriage

Friendship with Commitment

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

This relationship involves two principles:

- **Commitment.** They are committed to one another for marriage. It is not a simple relationship without responsibility or for personal satisfaction (Mt 5:37).

“³⁷But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” Mt 5:37

- **Holiness.** A relationship without physical intimacy until marriage (1 Thes 4:3-8).

**This relationship is established upon two bases:
commitment and holiness.**

“³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.” 1 Thes 4:3-8

Who can commit?

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

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

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

How is the relationship of the committed?

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

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

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

What type of physical relationship can there be?

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

Care should be taken in this phase. In demonstrations of caring, do not awaken sensuality. There should be honesty and sensibility of the heart. The two should help one another in order to maintain a holy and

pure relationship before the Lord. One should not have the fear of stopping the other. They never should think they are strong and can walk close to the limit. This is a mistake, a trap that should not fall.

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

They can express their special love and affection towards one another, by way of gifts, cards, and declarations, always maintaining a holy language.

There should be fear and care not to defraud one another. Holiness is to please God and to rejoice His heart.

a) What can you not do?

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

b) What can you do?

- Everything that we do with other brothers.

Part 5

The Presence of Christ in the home

The Presence of Christ in the Home

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Dt 6:6-9; Mk 10:13-16
- Gn 8:20-22; 12:7-8; Jb 1:5
- Jo 24:15; Acts 11:12-15; 16:14-15, 30-34

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What should parents do as priests?</i>	“ ⁶ And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Dt 6:6-7
Parents should speak of the children to the Lord and speak of the Lord to the children.	

The Presence of Christ in the Home

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

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

“¹Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.”
Ps 127:1

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

Parents are the priests of the home

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

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

The constant witnessing of the life of Christ

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

- Intense love and dependency on the Lord. Praying, reading, and reveling in His Word in His presence daily;

- Permanent attitude of praise and thanksgiving, with faith, in all and any circumstances, of joy or difficulty;
 - Straight life and a character of integrity;
 - Good use of time, money, television, internet, etc.;
 - Commitment and submission to the church of Christ;
 - Zeal, passion, and involvement in the work of God;
 - Expectation and desire of the Will of God and for all that is eternal.
-

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

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

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

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

Discipleship and family worship

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

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

This discipleship must happen at every instance, teaching at every opportunity, with example and the word.

Parents should also separate special moments to meet with their children. We recommend having special moments with each child, for prayer, ministry of the word, conversations, etc.

In the family there should also be the practice of “Family Worship.” Far from being something mechanical and frigid, worship in the family is a great opportunity of power to enjoy together in the presence of Jesus in the home. Although, at times, the children are not well disposed, parents should persevere.

The following are some practices of priestly ministry in the family:

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

Part 6

The Indissolubility of Marriage

The Indissolubility of Marriage – 1st Part

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Mk 10:2-12; Lk 16:18; Mal 2:14-16
- Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor 7:10-16, 39

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

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

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>What is the character of matrimonial bond?</i>	“ ¹⁸ Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.” Lk 16:18
The matrimonial bond is indissoluble. Whoever divorces and remarries commits adultery.	

The Indissolubility of Marriage – 1st Part

This was already announced in lesson 2. However, due to its value and also the strong present attack on the matrimonial bond, we consider it important to dig a little deeper, **although we have not exhausted it** in this booklet.

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

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

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

Marriage was instituted by God in creation

“⁶But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’ ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Mk 10:6-9

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

Marriage is not a partnership between two parties, where each one puts their conditions. God, who created it, is who establishes the conditions, not the man or woman. Nor the two if mutual accord. Nor the laws of the country.

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

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

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

Characteristics of matrimonial bond

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

⁸“and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Mk 10:8-9

“...the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth...”
Mal 2:14

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

And this is independent of the couple knowing God and having conscience that God is uniting, independent of faith or religion, independent of celebrating the wedding ceremony, if there is a judge; a pastor; a priest; or tribal chief. God is witness of this alliance and this union.

b) The matrimonial bond is indissoluble

⁸“and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Mk 10:8-9

³⁹“A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” 1 Cor 7:39

Again, we hear the words of Jesus with respect to this subject, “so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” And the apostolic word, “The wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives.”

Jesus said that the husband and wife are no longer two, but one. They are not two joined. Two joints can be separated. One does not. And then Jesus adds, “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” What authority does man have to separate what God united? And the apostle Paul declares, “A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives.” What is the only thing that can break this link of woman with her husband? Death, not problems, nor divorce, nor human law, neither infidelity; because it is not written that she “is bound by law as her husband is faithful.”

Therefore, the matrimonial bond is indissoluble during the life of the couple. It is impossible to be broken.

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

Elements that constitute the marriage

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

a) The mutual pact

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

This pact should be verbalized by way of vows, in the moment they are married. **There is no point in one saying that they are considered married with the other in their heart.** This would become a dubious and subjective pact of marriage. Their verbalization is necessary. A vow has date, locale, and is expressed verbally.

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

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

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

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

b) The physical union

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

Separation, Divorce, and Remarriage

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

a) Separation

¹⁰Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. ¹¹But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife." 1 Cor 7:10-11

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

b) Divorce

¹⁴Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. ¹⁵...Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. ¹⁶"For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce..." Mal 2:14-16

The text affirms that

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

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

c) Remarriage

¹¹So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. ¹²And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." Mk 10:11-12

³So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man." Rom 7:3

¹⁸ "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery." Lk 16:18

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

- a) If someone divorces, God does not permit remarriage. This is because, although they are judiciously separated, before Him they continue to be husband and wife.
- b) When someone divorces and remarries, God does not consider this marriage, but rather adultery.

- c) Neither the spouse that repudiates or the one that is abandoned cannot remarry. If they do, they will be committing adultery.
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If someone divorces and remarries, they commit adultery.

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

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

The Indissolubility of Marriage – 2nd Part

Seeking Revelation

Bible Readings

Read, pray, and meditate on the following texts:

- Mt 19:3-12; Mal 2:16; Mk 10:7-9; Lk 16:18
- 1 Cor 7:10-15

Help for Meditation

Note your conclusions and questions in your notebook.

- Are there exceptions that permit someone to remarry?
- And how is the situation of someone that is abandoned by the spouse?
- And the case of someone that came to Christ already remarried?

Memorization

Memorize the phrase, the bible text and reference below.

<i>Can an abused or abandoned spouse remarry?</i>	<p>“¹⁰Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. ¹¹But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.” 1 Cor 7:10-11</p>
No. Independent of the fact that motivates the separation or divorce, a second marriage is not permitted by the Lord.	

The Indissolubility of Marriage – 2nd Part

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are there exceptions?

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

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

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

a) Jesus responds to them clearly,

⁴“And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Mt 19:4-6

Here, Jesus gives a complete answer to the subject. He says that, from the beginning, the man is united to his wife, no longer two, and that God unites them, and that no man separate.

In other words, Jesus is saying, “No. There can be no divorce.” And, for Him, the answer had already finished.

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

- b) But the Pharisees insist, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” (vs 7). They wanted a doorway for divorce.
- c) Then Jesus answered them,

⁸He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.” Mt 19:8

The answer of Jesus declares, God permitted the divorce to you because they had a hard heart, but that this was not His will from the beginning. He is again saying that God consented, but did not want divorce.

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

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

- d) Then, Jesus added,

“⁹And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” Mt 19:9

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

Misguided interpretations

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

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

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

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

“⁹And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for PORNEIA, and marries another, commits MOICHEIA; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits MOICHEIA.” Mt 19:9

PORNEIA means any type of illicit sexual relation. MOICHEIA means adultery, that is, sexual sin that a married person commits.

Jesus knew the two words and used them in different senses. If he wanted to give the sense to make an exception in the case of adultery, He would have used the word MOICHEIA in place of PORNEIA. The text would be like this,

“⁹And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for MOICHEIA, and marries another, commits MOICHEIA; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits MOICHEIA.” Mt 19:9

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

Correct interpretations

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

⁹“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for FORNICATION, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” Mt 19:9

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

However, it seems to us that the most correct interpretation is to take the text with the most ample sense of the word PORNEIA, not only fornication.

Doing this, the text looks like this,

⁹“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for ILLICIT SEXUAL RELATIONS, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” Mt 19:9

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

e) Finally, in this text, Jesus continues the conversation with the disciples,

¹⁰“His disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” Mt 19:10

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

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

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

Other questions

a) The texts of 1 Cor 7:15

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

No, the apostolic words are,

“¹⁵But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.” 1 Cor 7:15

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

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

The expression “not under bondage” means to say that the situation of life of the unbeliever is impossible to live with, that the unbeliever departs, and the brother is free of having to support this unsustainable situation. But they are not free to remarry.

The Lord commands that if a spouse were to separate, they can remain unmarried or be reconciled with their spouse.

b) What about the person that remarried before knowing Christ?

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

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

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

Final Considerations

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

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

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

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

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

To our great sadness, part of the church embraces the concepts of this world, for humanistic reasons. And this church is also responsible, before the Lord, for the level of acceleration of the degradation of the family. Because if she had risen up and said, "This is not the will of the Lord," who knows if we would have fewer destroyed families and devastated youth because the parents separated. Each time that the church supports an illicit relationship, they are being complicit in the destruction of a family and of many others to come.

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

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

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