

The Christian Family

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The Christ-centred family

Lesson 1

A. Who is the centre of our home?

1. We as families must ask ourselves who the centre of our home is.
2. **Is it one of the following?**
 - a) The father or mother?
 - b) The children?
 - c) The grandparents?
 - d) Wealth and possessions?
 - e) The Lord Jesus Christ?
3. Often there is a certain amount of confusion in Christian homes, where Jesus has to share His position with other people and things.
4. **Read Joshua 24:15.**
 - a) Joshua challenged his people with a very direct and clear statement, "Choose you this day whom you will serve".
 - b) Remember, whatever comes between one's heart and Christ is an idol, because the Lord Jesus should never take second place.

B. Important guidelines for the Christian home

Read Psalm 119:105

1. God has not left us in the dark as to how to run a home. He created marriage and the home; therefore He will guide us through His Word.
2. Many young married couples and newly saved parents are afraid that they do not know enough of God's Word to lead their home in a Godly way.
3. We should never fear this problem because as long as our hearts are right with God, He will guide by His Spirit, His Word, His ministers and the brethren in the Church.
4. Because the world has strayed too far from God, men have devised many of their own ways to run their homes. These ways have even become part of their culture.
5. Be careful not to fall into the ways of men, but check that it does not clash with the Word of God. Even the deep things in our culture take second place to the mighty Word of God.
6. We must concentrate on the following aspects in order for us to have a Christ-centred home:

- a) The Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- b) Knowing and obeying God's Word.
- c) Family prayer.
- d) Loving one another in word and deed.
- e) Forgiving one another.

C. The Lordship of Jesus Christ

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-5

1. This is the first great commandment and should be central to the lives of parents and their children.
2. Moses commanded the parents to pass down to their children and grandchildren a healthy fear and awe of God.
3. They were to have an attentive ear to His voice and live a life of obedience.
4. Of course, this must be done because of a great love for God, not because of an unnatural fear or bondage.
5. Parents who consistently show this kind of love for God will have a great impact on their children's lives which will never leave them.
6. We must be in a position to freely discuss God at any time and in any conversation in our home.
7. The whole family should be able to rejoice in the knowledge that Christ is Lord of their lives and their home.

D. Knowing and obeying God's Word

Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9

1. It is most important that the truth of God's Word first captures the heart of the parents, verse 6.
2. Then this truth will be transferred to the children in a real and meaningful way, verse 7. As parents, we should never be saying, "Do as I say but not as I do".
3. But these great truths do not get transferred to the children automatically. It takes time and effort, verse 7.
4. Notice that Moses does not tell the parents to preach at the children, but they must talk to them. Not just on Sunday, not just at bedtime, but talking that takes place naturally during all times of the day and every day.
5. Fill your home with the Word of God and things that point to God, so that the whole family is constantly reminded of who the Lord of the home is, verse 9.

E. Family prayer

Read Matthew 21:22

1. It is important for the whole family to have a specific time every day to come together for prayer.
2. It should not be a time of labour, but of great joy – all are coming to speak to and hear from God.
3. Everyone in the family should be encouraged to pray, no matter how young or old.
4. The family should be specific in their prayers and not just pray at random. Keep a book and in it note all your requests to God. As God answers the requests then tick them off. This will help to build up the family's faith.
5. Train the children not just to speak to God, but also to remain silent and listen to God. Soon they too will learn to hear God.

F. Loving one another in word and deed

Read Psalm 19:14

1. Our words should always be acceptable to God, who will give us the ability and strength to use the right words.
2. Daily home life should not spoil the unity and peace in the family. We should continue to speak words of love and upliftment at all times, even when correcting one another.
3. Our words are very important. What we say and hear changes our thoughts and feelings. Harsh words stir up anger, resentment and sadness. Kind words build us up and bring joy and peace.
4. Do to others, as you would have them do to you. We need to be humble towards one another and serve each other, not as forced labour, but out of love.
5. It is wonderful to see the father of the home serving his family with humility; this is a great lesson in humility and respect to the other family members.

G. Forgiving one another

Read Colossians 3:12-13

1. In daily family living forgiving is very important. Things happen which hurt others and which result in bitterness and anger.
2. God shows us what we must do when we have a complaint against another person. A complaint means to have reason to blame someone for hurting or making us unhappy.

3. We should forgive because the Lord has forgiven us and then we must forget the offence.
4. We should put away anger, wrath, hate, lies and evil talk. When another person offends us we should not answer back with hatred and anger in our hearts.
5. We should not correct a person if we cannot first forgive him. We speak to him to help him do the right thing, having first forgiven him in our heart.
6. Pray for gentleness and patience and then speak to the offending person.
7. The Bible tells us not to let the sun go down on our anger. Be sure to resolve differences and hurts as soon as possible in order to restore peace and love in the family.

H. The home that belongs to God

Illustration: The story is told of a man who had a large double storey home with many rooms. Each morning there would be a loud banging on the front door and as he opened the door the devil would enter his home and turn everything upside-down. One day, however, Jesus came to visit the man, who was greatly blessed, and he offered Jesus one of the rooms upstairs. Next morning the devil again entered the home and turned everything upside-down, except for the room Jesus occupied. The man cried to Jesus about the matter, but Jesus pointed out that the devil had not entered His room. The owner immediately offered Jesus the whole upper floor of the house. Sure enough the devil returned the next morning and again caused great confusion, but only on the lower floor.

Again the man was very disheartened, so Jesus asked him why he did not give Him the whole house. The man gladly agreed and sure enough the next morning the devil was back banging on the door. At first the man was afraid, but then he remembered that he no longer owned the home and so he crept up behind Jesus to see what would happen. When Jesus opened the front door, the devil looked with amazement and fear at Jesus and said, "Sorry Sir, wrong house".

Have you given every room, every aspect of your home to Jesus?

Memory verse

Joshua 24:15, "*.... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*"

Teacher's notes

1. Read Deuteronomy chapter 6 and notice and meditate on the many important instructions given by Moses to the parents who were about to go into the Promised Land.
2. Each verse in this chapter has clear instructions on how to live and raise up one's children.
3. In chapter 6:1-2 we are told that if we follow certain guidelines of God, we and our children can expect long lives here on earth.
 - a) Live free from idolatry. Deuteronomy 4:25-26.
 - b) Keep God's commandments. Deuteronomy 4:40.
 - c) Honour and obey your parents. Deuteronomy 5:16; Ephesians 6:1-2.
 - d) Walk in God's ways. Deuteronomy 5:33.
 - e) Fear God. Deuteronomy 6:2; Proverbs 10:27.
 - f) Humility and obedience. Deuteronomy 17:20.
 - g) Kindness to animals. Deuteronomy 22:6-7.
 - h) Hatred of covetousness. Proverbs 28:16.

The great miracle of marriage

Lesson 2

A. The glory of marriage

Read Revelation 19:7-9

1. The glory of marriage is depicted in the great scene in heaven when the Church will be married to Jesus.
2. Jesus does not receive the Church as a servant, but as His spotless bride dressed in white.
3. The angel told John to write that those who attend the marriage feast of the Lamb will be greatly blessed.
4. Even now the Lord is preparing His bride for that great marriage that we read of in Ephesians 5:25-27.
5. From these scriptures we can see how important marriage is to God and how wonderful and glorious it is in His eyes.

B. God has ordained marriage

Read Genesis 2:18-24

1. Marriage was instituted by God, the Creator of mankind, in the beautiful Garden of Eden.
2. God was the One who officiated at the ceremony of the first marriage between Adam and Eve.
3. The joining of two people together in marriage is not because of a good idea of men, but is the divine purpose of God.
4. God did not ordain marriage to be a struggle but to be a source of great joy and companionship.

C. Why was marriage ordained?

1. **From our scripture reading in Genesis 2, we can see that there were two reasons why God gave Adam a wife:**
 - a) Because it was not good for man to be alone.
 - b) Because man needed a helper fit for him.
2. **Adam was alone and lonely.**
 - a) We read in verses 19-20 how God formed every beast of the field and every

bird of the air and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them.

- b) Adam gave each creature a name, but after God had brought all the various animals to him, he had still not found a partner.
- c) He had needs, which could not be met by the animals. He needed someone with whom he could talk, someone with whom he could share things and someone with whom he could work.

3. Adam needed a helper.

- a) There was no animal that could be a helper for Adam.
- b) The animals served and obeyed Adam, but they were not helpers who could fulfil him and his needs.
- c) A helper fit for Adam could talk with him and could share things with him.

4. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone.

- a) In verse 23 we see how Adam rejoiced when God brought Eve to him. At last here was someone who was part of him and was like him, and he called her “woman”.
- b) God gave her to Adam to live with him and be his wife.
- c) God did not make another man to be Adam's first, closest friend. Instead he made a woman.
- d) Now Adam had the right kind of helper who would stay with him all his life.

D. The importance of a Christian marriage

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-15

- 1. From this part of scripture we can see how vitally important it is that a Christian must marry a Christian.
- 2. A believer in Christ must not marry an unbeliever because when two people marry they become one in God's eyes.
- 3. God talks about yoking one with another. If this is done unequally then great problems arise.
- 4. There can be no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Satan.
- 5. If a person has given his life to Christ, he is a child of God but, if he is unsaved, then he is a child of the devil. How can a child of God be joined as one flesh to a child of the devil?

6. While the one is living for Christ, the other will run with the world and there will be no harmony in their lives. The one will pull against the other.
7. Some say that they cannot find a Christian partner for marriage, so they will have to marry an unsaved person.
8. This is not true. You are God's child and He has specifically prepared a beautiful partner for you who will match you wonderfully in character.
9. Spend time with God in prayer; stay pure before God and He who created you will surely bring your partner to you.

E. God's plan for marriage

Read Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:31

1. **In Genesis we read of God's plan at creation. In Matthew we read the words of Jesus about marriage. In Ephesians Paul repeated these important words:**
 - a) Husband and wife must leave their parents.
 - b) They must cleave to one another.
 - c) They become one.
2. **Husband and wife must leave their parents.**
 - a) Now that he is married it is important for the man to leave his parents because he has started a new family.
 - b) A man may continue to live near his parents, who can still help and advise him.
 - c) He can still help them, but now his first responsibility and faithfulness is to his wife.
3. **They must cleave to one another.**
 - a) Cleave means to stick to, or stay with, or be bound together. The husband must ensure that he and his wife stick together.
 - b) Although the newly married couple are told to honour their parents, they must be careful not to allow disharmony to come into their marriage through wrong interference from their parents.
 - c) God will give them wisdom to honour their parents even as they leave them.
 - d) To the husband his wife must be first. No one must be allowed to separate the man from his wife.

4. They must become one.

- a) When two people marry, they become a new thing. God joins them together to become one.
- b) Becoming one flesh has many good meanings. One meaning is about their bodies. When a man and a woman are married, they can have sexual intercourse.
- c) God created them male and female to be joined together in body.
- d) They should share their thoughts and feelings.
- e) They should share some of life's daily activities.
- f) One of the great blessings of marriage is having someone you can trust completely. With this person you can share thoughts and feelings without being afraid.
- g) Note that God gave Adam only one wife – she was enough. God could have given Adam more wives if this had been His will, but more wives would have spoiled the special oneness between them.

F. Divorce

Read Matthew 19:6

- 1. It is totally against God's will for a man and wife to be divorced.
- 2. How can something that has been made one by God be separated by the wiles of the devil or the foolishness of men?
- 3. We must never forget that it was God who instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden for mankind.
- 4. Whenever something goes wrong with your marriage, you must always consult God, who designed marriage.

G. God is pleased with marriage

Read Genesis 1:31

- 1. In the very beginning, when God created the earth and the universe, He spoke of it saying that it was "very good".
- 2. This is true about marriage because it is part of God's miraculous creation.
- 3. He appointed all the various species to live together in their own order and when He had finished the creation He was content with its perfection.

4. Marriage and family have a miraculous beginning.

Memory verse

Genesis 2:24, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh".*

Teacher's notes

Read 1 Corinthians 7

Notice the following instructions regarding marriage and divorce:

1. Verse 10 – The wife must not depart from the husband.
2. Verse 11 – If she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.
3. Verse 11 – The husband must not divorce his wife.
4. Verses 13-16 – If one of the partners is a Christian, they may not divorce the non-Christian if he or she is pleased to dwell with him or her.
5. Verse 15 – If the unbeliever departs and refuses to live with the Christian, let him depart.
Do not force the marriage to continue. The Christian is freed from marriage bonds in such cases.
6. Verses 17-24 – Let every man or woman remain as he or she was when each became a Christian. That is, do not use Christianity as an excuse to break up your home.
7. Verse 27 – If you are bound to a wife, do not seek to be loosed. Stay in the same state in which you were saved, regardless of the past. Do not get a divorce.
8. If you are loosed from your wife, do not seek another, but if you do remarry you have not sinned. Verse 28.
9. Verse 39 – The wife and husband are bound by law to be married as long as they are both alive.
10. Christians must remarry only Christians when companions die. Verse 39.
11. Divorce is only allowed if the non-Christian partner desires this or in the case of fornication/adultery. Matthew 5:32.

God's plan for the man in the home

Lesson 3

A. A role of great responsibility

Read 1 Corinthians 11:3

1. To be called the head or the one in authority in any circumstance carries great responsibility and challenge.
2. There is a clear chain of command and headship, which is: God – Christ – man – wife. If this God ordained chain is disturbed and put in a wrong order then great confusion arises.
3. Satan is well aware of this order of command, and if it is not adhered to it opens a door for him to enter and destroy the home.
4. The man in the home has four important roles to fulfil.
 - a) Head.
 - b) Priest.
 - c) Husband.
 - d) Father.

B. The head of the home

Read Ephesians 5:23

1. Many people have different ideas of what a head should be like. For example, some think he should be like a dictator ruling everyone with a rod of iron or merely please himself.
2. The Bible is clear; the man must be like Christ.
 - a) **Christ is the Saviour of the Church. He died for us.**
 - i) There is no greater sacrifice a man can give than to lay down his life for his family.
 - ii) This means that he gives his all to God and his family first, not holding back anything of himself from them.
 - iii) Work and friends must come second to God and family, for we are accountable to God for the responsibility of headship.
 - b) **Christ cares for the Church.**
 - i) Just as Jesus cares for the Church and provides for all its needs, so the head of the house must care for his family.

- ii) He should provide a safe and good place for them to live in and must supply their needs, such as clothing and food.
- c) **Christ is the perfect example for the Church.**
 - i) We are constantly told in the Bible to follow Christ – to be like Him. So, too, the head of the house must be a good example for his wife and children to follow.
 - ii) He must be a man of integrity, always telling the truth. A man of kindness and mercy and he must be hardworking – not slothful in his ways.
 - iii) What he says and does will be the example his family will follow. This is not an easy task, but Christ will never fail the man who calls upon Him for guidance and help.
- d) **Christ serves the Church.**

Read Mark 10:42-45

- i) Jesus said that Gentile leaders rule with power over others; they make others serve them.
- ii) However, He commanded His disciples not to do that. Instead He said that He had come to serve and not to be served.
- iii) It was He, the King of Glory, who washed His disciples' feet, taking the humblest position in the room. Let us, as men, humble ourselves before our families and serve them, for God loves a humble man.
- e) **Christ makes wise decisions for the Church.**
 - i) As Head of the Church, it is Jesus who has given clear guidelines for the Church to operate in and so is responsible for those decisions.
 - ii) Men, as head of the home, are responsible to make wise, clear decisions for their family and home.
 - iii) Christ is Head of the man. Some men think they are the final authority and that no one is over them. But this is not true, because a man is in the middle between Christ and his wife and children.
 - iv) This is a great blessing because the man is not left alone to make these important decisions, he has a Head who will guide and help him.

C. The priest of the home

Read Hebrews 7:25

1. Jesus, as always, is our perfect example. Here we see Him as our great Intercessor – what an inspiration to us fathers!
2. Fathers have the great privilege of interceding for their family before God, for a father has the authority and responsibility from God to fulfil this duty.
3. A deep fear of finding sin in himself or his children is one of the marks of a Godly parent.
4. The father must be in harmony with God, hating sin with a perfect hatred and seeking above everything to keep it out of his home.
5. As fathers we should be very careful not to allow ourselves to be blinded by our love, so that we find our children are growing up renouncing God in their hearts.
6. Ask God to impress in their young hearts the desire for holiness and salvation.
7. The father should always be especially watchful in the times of temptation that his family may face, and lift them up before God or cover them under the mighty blood of Jesus.
8. A Godly father has power with God to intercede, and he has the right to intercede for the grace that can save and sanctify.
9. The father who is the priest in the home must of course have received Christ as his Saviour. He must know his God.
10. By knowing and loving his God, he can then lead his family into salvation and a true walk with God.

D. The husband

Read Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29, 33; Colossians 3:19

1. He must love his wife.

See how God has repeated the same command four times: Husbands love your wives. When God repeats commands, it means He wishes us to take special note.

2. Love your wife even as Christ loved the Church.

- a) The husband must have love like Christ, who gave up His life for the Church.
- b) This love is a giving love, just as Christ gives to the Church.
- c) A husband with Jesus' love will be glad to make sacrifices for the well-being of his wife.

3. He must love his wife even as he loves his own body.

- a) He feeds it and provides it with clothes.

b) He protects it from being harmed and does not like it to suffer.

4. **A woman is not the same as a man in her emotional needs.**

God, her Creator, has made her differently. She constantly needs to know that she is loved.

5. **A woman who is loved will automatically blossom as a wife and will be a great blessing to her husband and family.**

6. **He must honour his wife.**

Read 1 Peter 3:7

a) A man should honour and respect his wife because she is weaker than he is.

b) He should honour her because they are both people living together before God.

c) She too has been created in the image of God and is equal with her husband who has become one flesh with her before God.

d) Notice the last words of this verse, "... that your prayers may not be hindered". If a man sins by not honouring his wife, his prayers will go unanswered.

E. The father

Read Matthew 7:11

1. God is the true Father from eternity to eternity and has wonderfully made us in His image.

2. By giving us the position, the name and the authority of father, God has made us His image bearers.

3. He asks and expects us to copy Him and behave like Him.

4. The heavenly Father seeks to educate His children into His likeness and He has made us His fellow workers to carry out this function with our children.

5. From Him, parents will learn to combine love with authority, always tempering their actions with mercy.

6. An earthly father must reflect the heavenly Father and be the best sermon his child has ever heard.

7. The father should become a ladder by which the child can climb to the Father above.

F. The father's privilege

1. We should clearly understand that it is a father's great privilege and honour to be the

head, the priest, the husband and the father.

2. It is God who will give us the ability to achieve the worthy calling – look to Him in all situations.

Memory verse

1 Corinthians 11:3, *"Now I want you to realise that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God".*

Teacher's notes

Note the importance and meaning of intercession.

1. To come to or meet any person for any reason. Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:27,34.
2. To plead the cause for others as in a court of law. Isaiah 59:9-18; 1 Timothy 2:1.
3. To pray for others. Luke 22:44; Romans 8:26,27,34.
4. To defend a person.
5. To commend a person to others.

Read Job 1:5 and see how this great man Job always interceded for his family.

God's plan for the woman in the home

Lesson 4

A. God's gift to men

Read Genesis 2:18; Proverbs 18:22

1. God originally stated that it was not good for a man to be alone and this will always be the truth.
2. The Lord also says that he who finds a good wife finds a good thing.
3. It is a great privilege for a man to find a good wife, for she will be one of the greatest and most beautiful gifts that God will bestow on him.
4. For a woman, to be a wife and mother is a privilege and blessing from God and something to be highly esteemed.

B. Knowing the will of God

Read Luke 11:27-28

1. It is extremely important for a Christian family to know and understand the Word of God if they wish to be a happy and successful family.
2. A woman must know her position in Christ and her position in the family.
3. God's Word must be the guide, and not the vain and deceitful philosophies of men.
4. When the woman in the home applies God's truth in her life by faith, she will experience great joy and fulfilment as a wife and mother.

C. Woman was made in the image of God

Read Genesis 1:27

1. Just as the man is made in the image of God, so too is the woman. Both are completely equal before God in creation.
2. We must understand that while she is completely equal to the man, she is not exactly the same as the man.
3. God created Eve to be Adam's friend. She was to be a helper but not a servant.
4. If a man in any way mistreats a woman because he thinks she is less than he is, then he is in great error. He has committed the sin of treating someone, created in the image of God, as something lower than himself.

D. Divine submission

1. We must clearly understand God's principles of authority and submission in order for us to understand the role of the wife and her husband.
2. **Read Philippians 2:6 and John 1:1.**
Here the Bible tells us that Jesus is equal to God and, in fact, is God.
3. **Read 1 Corinthians 11:3 and John 5:19.**
The Bible tells us that the Head of Christ is God the Father and that Jesus can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing.
4. This submission was not limited to His days on earth but is part of the eternal relationship between Father and Son.
5. **Read Hebrews 1:1-3.**
Notice how the Father works through the Son. There will come a day when all things, including the Son, will be subject to the Father. 1 Corinthians 15:28.
6. Thus we see how Jesus is submitted to the Father and yet equal. There is no inferiority in this relationship.

E. God's plan for a wife's submission to her husband

Read Ephesians 5:22

1. This submission definitely does not mean the inferiority of the woman.
2. God has made a sovereign decision regarding headship. We serve where God calls us to serve.
3. To say that the wife is inferior to her husband is to say that Christ is inferior to the Father, which is not true.
4. However, just as Christ is subject to the Father, so the wife is subject to her husband.
5. A wife's submission to her husband will always be an outstanding distinction of a Godly wife.
6. The rebellion of a wife against her husband is exactly the same spirit as that of a disobedient Church (body of Christ) against the Head, which is Christ.
7. The wife should voluntarily accept her husband's authority as if unto the Lord, even as Christ accepts the authority of the Father.
8. There is the great truth that a wife who in faith and patience submits to her husband's authority, moves God to make him a responsible, caring head.

F. The wife in the home

1. Read Ephesians 5:33 – Respect.

- a) There are several commands given to wives and a very important one to start with is: to respect her husband.
- b) Respect for a person naturally leads to obedience and love.
- c) Her respect gives him the authority to lead the family and do his work. It also gives him honour and courage.
- d) This respect will bring glory and greatness to their marriage.
- e) There are two reasons why she should respect him:
 - i) Because he is her head.
 - ii) Because of the good things in him.
- f) God has given the man the responsibility of being her head, which is not easy, and therefore he needs all her support.
- g) Instead of looking for his faults, she should praise his good points and in so doing build him up.
- h) Here are some ways a woman can show respect for her husband:
 - i) Consider his plans important and fit in with them.
 - ii) Speak of the good things in him, especially in front of their children.
 - iii) Work to please him and make his home a happy one.
 - iv) Never speak against him in public.
 - v) Treat him as a valuable and important person.

2. Read 1 Peter 3:1-2 – Obedience.

- a) The wise wife will talk things through with her husband and so share the wisdom God has given her.
- b) The final decision should be made by the husband after they have prayed together to find God's mind on the matter.
- c) A wife should obey and be respectful and pure, even if the husband is not a Christian. Her good actions may help to win the husband over to Christ.
- d) If the unbelieving husband commands her to do sinful things, then she should explain wisely and gently why the Word of God and her conscience do not

allow her to obey.

- e) No Christian is expected to go against the revealed will of God, irrespective of who the authority is; whether authorities of the land, the husband or the culture.

3. Read Titus 2:4 – Love.

- a) The woman is encouraged to love her husband and children, not selfishly for her own gain, but with the love of God.
- b) God loves with a pure love, not because He is loved but because He gives of Himself in love.
- c) Notice that she is told first to love the husband and then the children. She should be very careful not to love the children in preference to her husband.
- d) Children feel safe when they see their parents truly love each other and of course her husband will respond with even more love for her.

G. A mother and homemaker

Read Proverbs 31:10-31

- 1. As we read through these wonderful words of God regarding the beautiful gift from God, we can see the following important points:
 - a) Verse 10 speaks of her personal character and value.
 - b) Verses 11-12 show how her husband has great confidence in her.
 - c) Verses 13-19 reveal her ceaseless labours and clever enterprise.
 - d) Verse 20 – She is a woman who is full of charity.
 - e) Verses 21-22 – She has provided well for her household.
 - f) Verse 23 – Her husband is respected in society because of her.
 - g) Verses 24-27 – She is industrious and has a beautiful character.
 - h) Verses 28-31 – She fears the Lord and is praised by all for her godliness and labour.
- 2. Women should not look at these scriptures and feel it is impossible for them to match up. God never encourages us to do something without giving us the power to do it.

H. A mother's persevering prayer

Read Matthew 15:22-28

1. God answers the prayers of mothers because they pray constantly from the depths of their heart. God is not so interested in the words of people but rather their heart.
2. Notice how this mother was so concerned about her daughter's misery that she sought the Lord out for help.
3. Initially her prayer appeared to fall on deaf ears just as we sometimes think Jesus is not hearing us.
4. Even then it seemed that Jesus would refuse her urgent request, but she persevered in faith.
5. Finally, she received two wonderful blessings. Firstly, Jesus blessed her with regard to her great faith and, secondly, He healed her daughter.
6. Mothers have a great responsibility to pray for the protection and health of their loved ones. Above all, a mother should persevere in faith for her loved ones who are not Christians – never give up trusting God for them.

I. The mother's great calling

The mother fulfils many roles of honour in the family:

1. She is a gift to her husband.
2. She can submit with honour to her husband.
3. She is the wife and friend to her man.
4. She is a mother and homemaker.
5. She is a great prayer warrior for her loved ones.

Memory verse

Proverbs 18:22, *"He who finds a good wife finds what is good and receives favour from the Lord".*

The children in the home

Lesson 5

A. A wonderful blessing from God

Read Psalm 127:3-5

1. Children, you need to know that you are precious gifts from God to your parents.
2. God does not give children to parents as a curse but as a blessing and, no matter what people say, you should always know that you are God's gift to your parents.
3. God compares you to arrows in the hand of a mighty warrior. This is how you are to your parents and to God.
4. A man with a full quiver of arrows is called blessed because they build up his own house and defend him from his enemies.

B. You represent the kingdom of God

Read Luke 18:16-17

1. Jesus always loved children and still today will never turn a child away. His angels always have their hand of protection upon them.
2. It is because of the pure and simple faith of young children that God tells adults to have the faith of a child.
3. Because your faith is strong you can trust God for great things and He will bless your faith as you walk in His will.
4. Learn to keep your faith strong as you grow older, do not let the ways of the world weaken your faith in God.

C. God will pour out His Spirit upon you

Read Acts 2:17-18

1. On the great day of Pentecost Peter quoted the prophet Joel regarding the glorious outpouring of God's Spirit.
2. Note that sons and daughters will also receive the Holy Spirit and will prophesy and have visions.
3. God knows that it is the young at heart who are on fire for Jesus and so He wishes to move through them by His mighty Spirit.
4. Just as you are arrows in your father's quiver, so God can use you to spearhead revival in your church in these end times.

D. A warning of rebellion

Read Mark 13:12

1. Jesus warns us that in these end times children will rise up in rebellion against their parents and authorities.
2. This is the plan of Satan to spoil the lives of young people and so bring the curse of God upon them. Deuteronomy 27:16.
3. Often young people are encouraged by unruly and godless organisations not only to disobey their parents but even to be violent towards their parents. Proverbs 19:26 warns us that this kind of child is worthless and only brings shame to his home.
4. Satan will do everything in his power to cause you to rebel against God and your parents. It is for you young men and women to stand on God's side and prove you are sons and daughters of the Almighty.

E. Your attitude towards adults

1. God has taken much care and time in His Word to give wonderful advice to young people.
2. Children and youth should not treat God's advice as a stick that beats them but rather rejoice because the way to live has been made clear to them.
3. Let the young people stand up in the congregation and read these scriptures out aloud.

1 Timothy 5:1 Do not rebuke older men, and treat younger men like brothers.

Proverbs 10:1 A wise son makes a father glad.

Hebrews 12:9 Respect parents for training and discipline.

Ephesians 6:1 Obey your parents in the Lord.

1 Peter 5:5 Be humble toward elders and God will give grace to you.

1 Timothy 5:4 Take care of your parents.

F. How can young people keep their way pure?

Read Psalm 119:9

1. God asks this question and immediately gives the answer – by conforming their lives to God's Word.
2. As they learn God's ways for themselves by attending Sunday School, Christian youth meetings, church, listening to godly parents and studying the Word of God, they will know the way.
3. They must apply these great truths by faith in their lives and constantly ask God to fill them with His Spirit for power to live the holy life.

G. Temptation

Read 2 Timothy 2:22

1. There is a great battle between God and Satan for the souls of children and young people.
2. We are warned to flee from youthful lusts. Do not play with them for they will ensnare us.
3. A young person can grow up to be a mighty man or woman of God or end up in the gutters of humanity as a slave of the devil.
4. The choice lies with each individual personally and we will all be answerable before God regarding the decision we make.
5. Read Proverbs 23:17. Notice that we must not envy sinners and think their ways are more interesting and better than God's ways, for the ways of sinners surely lead to death and hell.
6. Read 1 Peter 5:8. The devil is like a roaring lion devouring all who stray from God. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and Satan will have no chance to harm you.

H. A witness in the family

Read Proverbs 20:11

1. A young person is either a wonderful testimony or a poor witness to his family and neighbourhood.
2. Young Christians have a wonderful opportunity to bring unsaved family members to a knowledge of salvation.
3. Even unsaved parents and grandparents must be treated with great respect and love in order to win them to Jesus.
4. Words only are not enough; it is our actions that convince people of the reality of Christ living in us.
5. **Read Ezekiel 20:18.** Although we are commanded to love our parents irrespective of their beliefs, we are warned not to follow the evil practices that they may have.
6. Do not be arrogant because you know the truth, but gently and uncompromisingly show your family members God's truth from His Word.

I. Young people in Christ are special

Read 1 Timothy 4:12

1. Because you are a young person this does not mean that you should be despised or looked down on by others.
2. Because Jesus lives in you, there is great potential in your life both today and in the future.
3. You must learn not only to walk with God in holiness, but also to hear Him and obey Him.
4. If He calls you to fulfil a certain function or calling, do not hesitate because you are young. He will fill you with power and wisdom to complete the task successfully.

J. Young people can lead in praising God

Read Psalm 148:12-13

1. Young people have a special ability to praise and worship God and lead others into praise of God.
2. Take every opportunity to encourage your church to worship God by your good example.
3. God rejoices to hear His people praise Him and the Bible says He inhabits the praises of His people.
4. By leading the church into praise and worship, the young people can bring the people into the presence of Almighty God.

K. Your choice

1. You must make your own choice whether to follow the devil's world that leads to hell, or to follow Jesus who leads to life eternal.
2. Your life on earth will affect all eternity for you. **Do not make the wrong choice.**

Memory verse

Psalm 119:9, *"How can a young man stay pure? By reading your Word and following its rules".*

Disciplining the Godly way

Lesson 6

A. Our perfect Father

Read Proverbs 3:11-12

1. God is the Father from eternity past to eternity future. He is the Father of fathers.
2. He is our perfect example and has given us a great deal of advice in His Word on how to discipline our children.
3. We must copy the way He disciplines us as adults, in the way we discipline our children.
4. It is because God loves us and delights in us that He disciplines and corrects us.
5. Love is the key in disciplining children; not anger, vengeance, nor wanting to impose our will.

B. The potter shaping the clay

1. As parents we have the great privilege and responsibility of shaping the characters of our children, for which God will hold us ultimately responsible.
2. Much depends on the potter when shaping a pot.
 - a) If he is consecrated and committed to his work he will achieve great success.
 - b) If he is unconcerned and just does the job out of necessity then he will have poor results.
3. When friends and strangers visit the potter they will easily discern the quality of his pots, whether good or bad.
4. We, too, as parents can easily be judged by others as to how well we have shaped the lives of our children.
5. Just as it costs the potter time and effort so it costs parents time, effort and love to shape the will and character of the children they have received from God.

C. Children are not born as saints

Read Proverbs 22:15

1. All children that are born into this world have fallen natures.
 - a) They inherit their fallen nature from their father and originally from Adam.

- b) Whether they are born into saved or unsaved families, there is no difference in their state as sinners.
 - c) Because they are born as sinners with fallen natures, their natural desire will be to rebel against God and all other forms of authority, e.g. their parents.
2. Any form of child dedication or baptism will not make your child holy; it requires guidance, correction, discipline and a personal commitment and decision from the children in order for them to mature into godliness.
 3. It is for this reason that God has given us so much guidance in His Word on how to raise our children.
 4. We need not go astray if we follow His way and we shall surely end up raising Godly men and women who are a joy to God, their parents and to society.

D. Unrighteous abuse and Godly discipline

Read Proverbs 15:13; 17:22

1. **It is very important that we discern clearly between unrighteous abuse of our children and Godly discipline.**
2. **Abuse.**
 - a) Abuse is unfair, extreme, degrading and crushes the spirit.
 - b) It is often harsh.
 - c) The punishment lasts for too long.
 - d) It degrades or lowers the personal esteem of the child.
 - e) A beating should never damage children physically, emotionally or spiritually, as this can scar them for their whole life.
 - f) Abuse does not stem from, or grow out of, love but out of hate and anger.
3. **Discipline.**
 - a) Discipline is fair and upholds the child's dignity.
 - b) It is always just and not unrighteous.
 - c) It always shapes the child's will positively and strengthens the child's self-worth.
 - d) It stems from love and a genuine concern for the child.
4. **The real goal of discipline is to build children up mentally and spiritually, not to crush them in any way.**

5. A child who has great self-worth is happy and well disciplined and will mature in a complete way.
6. A child who is abused will have no self-worth, no joy, often be extremely disobedient, even rebellious, and the spirit and soul will be broken.

E. Discerning between childishness and wilful disobedience

1. It is most important for parents to discern carefully whether the child has done something wrong because of their lack of maturity or because of wilful disobedience.
2. When a child has merely forgotten to fulfil a certain task, or has done something wrong without intending to do so, then we should be very patient.
3. Of course the child should be instructed clearly not to repeat the mistake but we should be gentle as we teach him/her to do better.
4. When a child purposefully goes against the parents will and commits acts of disobedience, which he/she clearly understands, then a more severe form of discipline is needed.
5. This form of discipline should aim to correct the child and not break the child.

F. Start early

Read Proverbs 13:24; 19:18

1. One of the key words in the first scripture is that we should discipline **diligently** (carefully).
2. Diligently means:
 - a) With proper care or attention.
 - b) To do something thoroughly.
3. This means that we should not discipline in a half-hearted manner or with little care, but really apply ourselves properly.
4. The second scripture speaks of "**while there is hope**".
 - a) This means that we should start disciplining the child as early in his or her life as possible.
 - b) To wait too long will make the task far more difficult.

G. Two kinds of discipline

Read Proverbs 22:15

1. Physical discipline.

- a) This kind of discipline is physical and requires a rod to be applied.
- b) Do not be afraid to use different means of discipline, because God consistently advises us in His Word to do so.
- c) Just as a child learns that fire is hot and will burn him if he touches it, so he will learn that it is unpleasant to disobey.
- d) Certain things that a child learns in life are painful, like fire or falling from a tree, but these do not make the child rebellious or vicious.
- e) So too discipline applied in love will only correct his wrong ways and not break down his self-esteem.
- f) Do not let the sun go down on your anger, Ephesians 4:26. If the child does not come to you to seek forgiveness, you must go to him and be reconciled before he sleeps.

2. Verbal discipline.

Read Proverbs 3:11-12

- a) Here the Bible talks of reproof (rebuke), which means verbal discipline.
- b) Reproof (rebuke) does not mean that we should use our tongue as a whip, which cuts into the child.
- c) It means using words that correct and build up the child and show him the error of his ways.

Read Proverbs 29:15

- d) Notice how God says that the rod and reproof bring wisdom, which the Bible says is something we should eagerly seek.
- e) However, a child left undisciplined only brings disgrace.

H. We must be consistent

- 1. We should not discipline in a haphazard manner, as the child will not know where he stands.
- 2. We must discipline in order to correct and guide the child, not because we are angry or wish to prove our authority.
- 3. Discipline must be consistent and applied every time the child is disobedient.
- 4. Make sure that the child always knows the rules beforehand.

5. Discipline privately.
6. Speak to the child first, explaining the error and its consequences.
7. Do not be afraid to use the rod if it is required and apply the discipline thoroughly.
8. After the discipline be sure that the child knows you have completely forgiven him and that you love him dearly.

I. God's way

Read Ephesians 6:4

1. It is very important not to provoke our children but to always treat them with the same respect that we expect from them.
2. As the child grows older, there comes a time when it is no longer right to use the rod.
3. The discipline they have received in their lives should give them a healthy respect for themselves and others.
4. Use God's way of authority and discipline until your child reaches the time when you can transfer your authority in their lives over to God because they have now matured.

Memory verse

Proverbs 22:6, *"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it"*.

Teacher's notes

1. 1 Samuel 3:13. We must understand that God holds us responsible for the disciplining of our children, just as Eli had his house judged forever for the iniquity of his sons.
2. The parent who tries to please the child by giving in to him and expecting nothing from him ends by pleasing no one, least of all the child, who will blame the parent one day when trouble comes.
3. Children need to know there is someone stronger and wiser in the family and children actually need discipline, whether they realise it or not.
4. Discipline says to a child that he is loved and cared for and it is not just an unnecessary evil in the home.

Parenting the Godly way

Lesson 7

A. A home of refuge

Read Psalm 57:1

1. David wrote this psalm whilst hiding in a cave after he had fled from King Saul who wished to kill him.
2. This brave young man who had killed Goliath was now in fear of losing his own life.
3. But he knew that he could run to God for mercy and refuge whilst he was in the middle of great calamities.
4. Each family member should know that their home is a place of mercy and refuge at all times.
5. Life is full of pressures and problems and great calamities, which people often cannot handle on their own.
6. Sometimes a child can fail terribly and fall into awful sin, but it is then that the home provides a place of refuge and mercy.
7. If the person is repentant of their sin, then the home should always be open to them with love and kindness.
8. It is a wonderful thing for children to know that even when they have left their parents' home, it is still a place of refuge.

B. The family that talks together

Read Colossians 3:16

1. It is a wonderful blessing from God for a family to really communicate well with one another.
2. The Word of God encourages us to train and admonish each other in a variety of ways that will draw us closer together and give us greater understanding of each other.
3. It is important for the parents to create regular opportunities for the whole family to discuss different topics and aspects of each other's lives.
4. The good and bad things that happen in our daily lives should be discussed and guidance and encouragement given where needed.
5. We should thank one another regularly for the ways in which we bless each other, so that each member of the family is built up and feels appreciated.

6. It is also a time to warn each other of the temptations that each person may be facing in his or her life.
7. This should be done wisely and gently so that people are not offended and yet are helped to overcome a particular area of weakness in their lives.
8. A family that communicates well with each other is a family that is happy and secure.

C. The family that plays together

Read Psalm 133:1

1. Often families only eat and sleep in the same home and hardly have any other contact with one another.
2. There is a time for work and a time for play and it is very important that we are sure to have a regular time of playing with each other.
3. Ways of playing together are many, such as:
 - a) Games in and around the home.
 - b) Going on holiday together.
 - c) Finding entertainment that involves the whole family.
4. It is when the family relaxes together that they really start to know each other well and learn to enjoy one another's company.
5. It is also a time when parents can instil their Christian values into their children.
6. A father and mother who work all the time and never spend time relaxing with their children will end up with a very dull relationship within the family.
7. Notice that the psalmist says that it is **good** and **pleasant** when people dwell together in **unity**.
8. See also that dwelling together brings **unity**, which can only come from involvement with one another.

D. The family that works together

Read Hebrews 10:24

1. We are encouraged by this scripture to stimulate one another to good works, which can involve all kinds of activities.
2. Besides activities outside the home, there are many things that can be done for and with one another in the home.

3. Each person in the home should be involved with various tasks that are always necessary for a home to function efficiently.
4. Naturally the work given to each person should be according to his or her age and ability.
5. Notice that the scripture tells us to provoke, or stir up, or stimulate one another to good works.
6. This means that the various tasks around the home should not be seen as great burdens, but as ways to bless one another.
7. Each member in the family should realise that God has put them into their special home and family so each is responsible to help the others.

E. The family that trusts each other

Read James 5:16

1. James guides us to confess our faults to one another and to pray for each other.
2. It is very difficult to confess deep inner faults and character problems with one another if we cannot trust one another.
3. Each family member should be confident that his/her confessions would not be discussed with anyone outside the family.
4. Furthermore, each person should be sure that the other family members would treat his/her confessions with respect and love and not with laughter or criticism.
5. Notice that James goes on to tell us that when we confess to one another and pray for each other, we will be healed.
6. This healing is not only for physical problems but also for mental and spiritual problems.
7. To be able to confess, we must be able to trust.

F. The home that has life

Read John 10:10

1. Jesus says that He has come to give us an abundant life, which overflows with joy.
2. If He is the centre of our home, then there should be abundant life for each member of the family.
3. Often our homes are very dull and many of the family members are not motivated to experience and enjoy life.

4. For example the old people, like grandparents, are left to their own devices with very little encouragement to continue experiencing the joys of living.
5. Small children are often left with very little to stimulate their growing minds and bodies.
6. The parents of the home should constantly be aware of each family member's needs and find ways to meet them.
7. Remember that Jesus has come to give us abundant life, but it is up to us as adults in the family to be sure our family experiences this abundance.

Memory verse

Colossians 3:16, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God".

A light on the hill

Lesson 8

A. A family that is a witness to all

Read Matthew 5:14-16

1. Jesus gives us great encouragement and instruction both as individuals and as families in these powerful verses.
2.
 - a) Firstly, He tells us that we are the **light** of the world.
 - b) Notice that He does not say that the big flashy things of the world are the light, but we as Christians are.
3.
 - a) Secondly, He says that we are like a **city** on a hill which cannot be hidden.
 - b) Our homes should be so well known as good Christian homes in the community that no-one is in doubt of our stand for Jesus.
4. Thirdly, He says that we do not **hide** our light of Christianity, but in fact it must bring light to all around us.
5. Finally, Jesus tells us that because of our walk and commitment to Him, those around us will see our **good works** and so **glorify God**.
6.
 - a) The world is sliding into hell daily.
 - b) The people around us are part of that world.
 - c) We have the great privilege of being the light on the hill to a dark and lost world.
7. To be a light on the hill, we need to ensure two important things:
 - a) Each child is brought to a knowledge of salvation.
 - b) Our lifestyle in every aspect is an example for others to desire and follow.

B. Bringing our children to Jesus

Read Matthew 19:14

1. It is Jesus' great desire that children be brought to Him, for only He can give them real life.
2. Right from when a child is very small he/she should be shown and taught the ways of God.
3. Just as a small seed is planted and needs food and water to grow into a mighty tree,

so too a child needs spiritual feeding.

4. A tree that lacks water and food is stunted and often grows crooked, so too a child without correct spiritual guidance will be stunted and often end up crooked.
5. God has blessed children with simple and yet great faith, so it is not difficult to lead them to Jesus.
6. We must never assume that, because the child grows up in a Christian home, he/she will automatically get saved.
7. Every encouragement and guidance should be given both by word and deed to bring the child to salvation.
8. We cannot force our children to receive Jesus as Saviour, for this is an individual decision, but we can show them how to ask Jesus to come into their heart.
9. Remember that it is our God-given task as parents to lead our children to Jesus. Do not just leave this important task to others to do.
10. Our lifestyle will radically affect the decision our children make; let us continually ask God for grace to be a good witness to them.

C. Our spiritual home

Read Hebrews 10:25

1. As a Christian family we should be deeply involved in our church and should attend regularly.
2. Our children must grow up knowing that church is an important aspect of family life.
3. Involvement in Sunday School, youth groups, Bible study groups, etc., should be part of family life.
4. Giving of time and possessions to the church and those about us should be a natural outflowing of our lives and not something forced upon us.
5. There are many different kinds of Christian gatherings that the family should be encouraged to be involved in:
 - a) Evangelistic crusades.
 - b) Visiting preachers and teachers.
 - c) Inter-church functions.
6. The family should learn to love and respect the brethren and leadership in their church.
7. It is also important for children to learn to respect church members of other denominations, as only God may judge the hearts of men and women.

D. The Christian home in society

Read Hebrews 6:10

1. God has especially gifted all of us in different ways so that we can be used by Him to bless one another in the body of Christ.
2. There are so many needs about us and God prepared these works, before the foundation of the earth, for us to fulfil.
3. As a family we should pray and ask God how He wants to use us and then go forward with His wisdom and ability to meet those needs.
4. God can use us in ways such as these:
 - a) Hospitality – opening our homes to people.
 - b) Giving advice.
 - c) Being a place of safety for those in trouble.
 - d) Providing food and clothing for those in need.
 - e) Looking after the sick.
 - f) Visiting those in hospital and jail.

E. Preaching the Good News

Read Mark 16:15

There are some wonderful ways in which God can use our home and family to fulfil the great commission of Jesus Christ. One of them is:

Home fellowships:

1. A home fellowship is when you allow God to use your home as a place where the body of Christ can gather during the week.
2. A special day and time should be chosen so that people know when to come every week.
3. The time of gathering should be divided up into several parts:
 - a) Time of praise and worship.
 - b) Bible study.
 - c) Time of prayer.
 - d) Fellowship time.
4. Soon the people gathering in your home will come to know and love each other well and begin to grow in Christ.
5. Once this happens, it is important to encourage the fellowship members to bring unsaved people with them to future meetings.

6. When the unsaved come and see the love of the Christians and their care for one another they will be encouraged to come again.
7. They will be hearing the Word of God and be encouraged into salvation as well as attending your church.
8. Soon you will find your home fellowship growing too big for your home.
9. When your fellowship reaches approximately twenty people, it is time to split the group.
10. Be sure that in the preceding months you have been training up one of the people as a home fellowship leader who can take over the other half of your group.
11. Now both groups can continue to have fellowship and bring new converts into the Kingdom of God.
12. This is how the early church in the book of Acts evangelised and this was a method inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Memory verse

Matthew 5:14, *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid".*

Teacher's notes

The role of the pastor in home fellowships:

1. It is most important for the pastor to be involved in the home fellowship system, for he is the authority point.
2. The pastor is the one who should encourage his congregation to become involved.
3. The home leaders should be selected and given a certain amount of training.
4. These home leaders can deal with the various problems that the members in their home fellowships face.
5. If the problem is too difficult for them to handle then they can bring it to the pastor.
6. The pastor should meet as often as possible with the home leaders to ensure that all is in order and to encourage them.
7. This material is an excellent way of providing the home leaders with good, consistent teaching material.
8. This also means that the pastor is always aware of what his home leaders are teaching his sheep.