

SEMBRADOS
EN BUENA TIERRA

**BUILDING A
HAPPY
HOME**

By: Heriberto and Elsa Hermosillo

To all our **semillosos** that had the patience to wait until God finished His project. We thank each and every one of you the bottom of our heart in hope that this material will edify your lives and the lives of many others.

Heriberto and Elsa Hermosillo

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Introduction

We give you our warmest welcome to our section: Building a happy home!

We are sure that the Lord will work in wonderful ways in the lives of all the families that apply the principles that God has given us in His Word; to build a strong marriage, to guide our children, and to honor our parents. We pray that through His Spirit, He might enrich your lives with each section from this series and bring freedom and hope to your family.

With love, Heriberto and Elsa Hermosillo.

1. Our origin: Discovering our identity

Genesis 1:11

11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.

Genesis 1:20

20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky."

Genesis 1:26-27

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Ephesians 4:22-24

22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:9-13

9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

One of the most serious problems in our society these days is that we have lost our identity, and as a result, we have also lost the roles that allow us to accomplish our true purpose in life.

As human beings we do not know where we come from or where we are going; we find ourselves following the patterns of this world that lead us to make wrong decisions.

But God has not left us alone. He planned His creation down to every detail and has left us a manual that has all the answers to our questions. In this manual, we can find the path that brings us back to our origin, so that we may gain back our identity.

The same way that a fish cannot live out of the water, or the tree out of the soil, man needs to come back to his origin to achieve the purpose for which he was created.

Let's consider the following passages:

Genesis 1:11

God creates plants from the land.
The origin of the plants is the land.

Genesis 1:20

God ordains the water to produce living creatures and birds that fly over the earth. The origin of the animals is the water.

Genesis 2:26 and 27

At the peak of His creation, God created man to His image and likeness. However, this image was corrupted by sin, when man sought to gain independence from God. He related himself with created things instead of relating with the One who created him. The result of losing our image is a world filled with anger, disagreement, arrogance, etc.

To be able to restore God's image back into our lives, God asks us to put off our old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

How can we put off our old self?

In Ephesians 4:22-31 and Colossians 3:9-13, the Word of God instructs us to stop lying to each other. It says that it is permissible to get upset every once in a while, but we cannot allow anger to lead us to do wrong things. It warns us from giving the devil an opportunity to take our weaknesses and make us fall into them. The one who has been stealing must steal no more, but instead he should work, so that he may have something to share with those in need. If our vocabulary was filled with bad words, now we must speak to build up the lives of those who listen. The Lord asks us not to grieve the Holy Spirit and to get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and every form of malice, among other things.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Not only do we need to put off our old self, but we also need to put on the new self, which is created by God. We need to allow God to renew our mind and reconstruct His image in our lives through His Word, His Holy Spirit, and the body of Christ.

And what is God's image like? The Word tells us that it is an image full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. It is an image of truth, mercy, and forgiveness, and once it has developed in us, it will bring glory and praise to His name. We need to return to our origin, which is God, to regain our role as His sons.

Verse to memorize:

“And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:24

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the origin of man?

2. What benefits are brought to our lives when we return to our origin?

3. Mention some examples of what God's image is like, according to Ephesians 4:22 and Colossians 3: 9-13.

2. Our purpose: Discovering our purpose

Genesis 1:27-28

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Colossians 3:12-13

12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Hebrews 10:19-22

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty

Once we know what our origin is, we can discover our purpose, which is what we were created for in Genesis 1:27 and 28:

Reflect His image:

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

God wants to restore His image in us, the same image that sin destroyed. Only by receiving forgiveness for our sins, through Jesus’s sacrifice in our place, and restoring our minds with His word, can we become new creatures that reflect His image.

Be fruitful

“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number...” Genesis 1:28

God wants our lives to be fruitful, that they may grow and multiply—not only physically here on Earth, but also in spirit, so that His presence is evident in our lives and will prevail until He returns.

What is the fruit that God expects in our lives as a result of returning to Him?

The fruit of His Spirit, which is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23).

God wants us to dress as His chosen ones, holy and loved, with compassion, kindness, humility, accepting one another, and forgiving each other as He has forgiven us. (Colossians 3: 12-13)

Multiply

Once our life reflects the fruit of His Spirit, the miracle of multiplying takes place (**Genesis 1:28**). This multiplication is spiritual. When the fruit of His Spirit is present in us, then our lives become a light in the darkness, and they now serve the purpose of bringing others to the knowledge of His name. This multiplication should occur not only in our family, but also in the lives of the people around us. Genesis 1:28 say that God “blessed them”; this means that God gave them all the resources they needed to fulfill a purpose. This purpose was to “be fruitful and increase in number”. We need to remember that God will never asks us to do something for which we are not prepared.

What are the resources that He has left us so that we can complete His purpose of being fruitful and multiplying?

God has given us two major resources to achieve this glorious plan:

1. Our personal relationship with God:

Through Jesus, we can now come every day to His presence. We need to develop this relationship with daily prayer and reading of His Word, so that God can talk to us personally and so that we can discover and appropriate of all the precious promises that God has left for us in His Word. It is only because Christ shed His blood for our sins that we can draw near to God with freedom every day and at any time (**Hebrews 10:19-22**).

Also, the day when God rested from his work is an opportunity that we have to be in fellowship with Him (**Gen. 2:2-3, Ex. 20:8**) and with the body of Christ (**Heb. 10:25**), so that His image continues to form in us.

2. Family relationship

When God created man, He saw that it was not good for the man to be alone, so He created him a suitable helper (**Gen. 2:18**). That is how marriage started; it is the divine organization created by God that has the purpose of helping us know Him and reflect His image. God purposefully created marriage as the same kind of relationship that Christ and the church have, calling the church Christ's bride.

What characteristics does this suitable helper have?

- **Gen. 2:19 -20:** Of the same species
- **Gen. 2: 21-22:** He made her from one of the man's ribs (Close to the heart, to be loved and protected. Not from the head, so that she had control over the man; not from the feet, so that man could step over her, but as his complement to fulfill God's purpose).
- **Gen. 2:22:** God brings her to the man. We need to wait on God, because what He has for us will not add sorrow to our lives.
- **Gen. 2:23:** There are only two genders: man and woman.

In a marriage, the roles of the man and woman are unique and are not replaceable. Marriage helps us develop to the image of our Creator and to fulfill the purpose of being fruitful and increasing in number. Through our family relationship, we establish an eternal bond with the members of our family, which gives us the opportunity to pray for one another, build up each other's lives, to support one another in overcoming our weaknesses, and to share our hopes and dreams that lead us to honor and glorify God in our lives.

Verse to memorize:

“The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”” Genesis 2:18

Questions for discussion:

1. What are the two resources God has given us to fulfill the purpose for which we have been created?

2. Mention some characteristics of the suitable helper that God provided unto man according to Genesis 2:18-26.

3. According to Colossians 3:12-13 and Galatians 5:22-23, mention some of God's characteristics that our lives should show once God reigns in our life.

conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Genesis 2:2-3

2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Exodus 20:8

8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Hebrews 10:25

25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another -and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

3. Our covenant: Leave, unite, and become

Genesis 15:7-10, 18

7 He also said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.”

8 But Abram said, “O Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it.”

9 So the Lord said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.”

10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half.

18 On that day the Lord made covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates

Genesis 12:1-3

1 The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.

2 “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

The concept of divorce is becoming more and more common in today’s society. The root of the problem is that we marry without understanding that it is not a contract that we sign in front of men, but a covenant that we agree to enter voluntarily with our spouse and with God.

The Hebrew word “**beryth**” (covenant) means “**alliance**”.

In a marriage, we enter an alliance with our spouse to fulfill a purpose. In the Old Testament the word “covenant” many times goes together with the Hebrew word “karath”, which means “to cut”. We need to understand that in order to make a covenant, first we have to put an end to, or cut off, different things in our lives. A good example is found in Genesis 15:7-10 and 18. In this passage we can see the cutting of the animals as a symbol of a covenant or an alliance.

In Genesis 12:1-3, we can see that the alliance that God made with Abraham consisted of the following **karaths**:

1. Leave your country
2. Leave your people
3. Leave your father’s household

If Abraham obeyed, God would make him into a great nation, He would bless him, He would make his name great, and Abraham would be a blessing to all peoples on earth. Now, let’s try to understand how a marriage covenant is founded, as well as the “karaths” that God calls us to make upon entering this covenant. In Genesis 2:24, God says that because our purpose (as well as that of our children) is to be transformed into His image, the following steps need to take place:

1. Man will leave his father and mother

We need to put an end to our financial and emotional dependency on our parents and change them for honor and appreciation. Marriage is a relationship that consists of two persons and God.

2. Be united with his wife

We need to work on our marriage, looking for times to share and communicate with each other, so that we may agree and become one in our thoughts. With this, a sense of direction will be given to our relationship, and that way, we can accomplish the purpose that God has for our lives together.

3. They will become one flesh

When the previous steps have taken place, we can be one in all areas (financial, family, children, education, hopes and dreams, etc.). By letting God be the utmost authority in our marriage, we will have the assurance that the winds and storms of life will not destroy our home.

In **Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12**, we can find five more principles for our marriage:

1. Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. This is something that we sometimes forget as the years go by when we make alliances with people instead than our spouse. This causes us to suffer a major loss. My spouse is my ally, and I need to make him/her part of my dreams and my goals. Together we will be able to reach better and higher goals than we could ever to reach separately.

2. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. (Proverbs 10:12b) When my spouse falls down, I fall down as well. One of the most important roles of the spouse is to pick up and build his/her partner up during hard times, never destroying him/her. We must help our spouse stand up, give him/her a hand, and cheer him/her up so that we can get out of it together. If your spouse has a weakness in some area, you need to use your strength to help him/her overcome that weakness; do not use your strength to crush, criticize, or bring down your spouse. Love does not boast; love covers all wrongs.

3. If two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? (1Cor. 7:3-5). The understanding that we belong to each other, and that God has given each one the authority over the other's body, will help us to powerfully intercede in times of sickness, and to enjoy the blessing of conjugal intimacy.

4. Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. We have made an alliance and any of my spouse's enemies is my enemy. There is no person above my spouse, and anybody who attempts something against him/her is also against me. I must protect my spouse over any other person, even from my relatives or my closest friends (**Is. 54:15**). When we work together to resist the attacks of those who challenge our peace and family unity, our marital bonds will grow stronger.

5. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. We have the Lord as an ally and as that third strand that will strengthen our marriage. We also have our house built on the rock so that when the rain comes down and the winds blow and beat against our house, our house will not fall (**Mt 7:24**). If we put His principles into practice, we will be wise and our house will be established on a safe place.

Verse to memorize:

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24

Questions for discussion:

1. According to Genesis 2:24, what are the three basic steps we need to take in order to enter into a covenant, or into a marital alliance?

2. According to Ecclesiastes 4:12, how many parts make up a marriage and what are they?

3. What are the five principles that Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 teaches us for marriage?

Genesis 2:24

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:

10 If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

3 The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.

4 The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

5 Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

4. Our priorities. Identify God's order

Luke 14:26-33

26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple.

27 and anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower.

Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?

29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him,

30 saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish."

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

Ephesians 5:23-31

23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the savior.

24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy,

One of the most useful teachings for our daily life consists in putting our priorities in order based on God's design. If we want to be a reflection of His image, we need to ask for wisdom from above.

The Bible is clear about four essential priorities:

First priority: My relationship with God (Luke 14:26-33)

Our personal relationship with God takes place through these three areas:

a. Prayer

I need to set apart time to pray and to listen to God's voice, and to ask for His forgiveness when I have failed Him. The purpose of my prayers should be aimed towards His image developing in my life, and towards His will and kingdom being established in me and through me.

b. Getting to know God through His word

Jesus said: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." I need to take time to know God and know Jesus through His word, and to have the disposition to do what it says.

c. Congregating with the body of Christ

I must not forget that God has placed me in the body of Christ, and that He will fulfill His purpose for my life through the fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Christ.

By this, we are not talking about the social events involving my Christian brothers, but of all **that "works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"**. I need to be integrated, "**planted**" into the body of Christ; I need to know the objective of my church and walk together in it. A true son or daughter of God, a true Christian, needs to know that he or she does not merely go to church, but that he or she is the church, or body of Christ.

My daily time that I spend in dependence on Him is the most important time in my agenda for the day. In **Luke 14:26-33**, the Lord tells us that if we want to come to Him, we need to "hate", or love less, any other relationship other than our relationship with Him. He also tells us that we need to carry our cross and follow Him. But what does this mean? This means that we need to be ready to die to ourselves, in any area He asks us to, so that His project in us will be accomplished. Now, "**our dreams**" are not as important as the dreams that our Lord has for us, and His dreams are the ones we should hope for. "**I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**" **Galatians 2:20**

When we receive forgiveness for our sins, we also receive God's sovereignty over our lives; He is our Lord and Savior.

Second priority: My time in my relationship with my spouse (Eph. 5:23-31, 1 Cor. 11:7)

God shows us in His word that we need to have time to communicate and time to be with our spouse so that we can have a healthy relationship. This time is to be in prayer together, to pray for one another, and to share His Word, so that the Lord can mold us into His image. The tool that God gives man to cleanse his wife is His Word. The man is the sculptor of the woman he wants to have, and the Word of God is his chisel; the woman is the reflection of the man.

Third priority: My Children (Psalms 127: 3-5)

The most precious inheritance that we can receive from God, which we are responsible for, and for which we will need to give an account for one day, are our children. The Word tells us that they are **“a reward from him”** and that they need to be targeted **“like arrows in the hands of a warrior”** toward God. Our responsibility as parents is to give them direction by being role models in what we say, and by being coherent in what we say and do.

The most valuable thing we can offer to them is to instruct them in the Word in our homes, through our example. This will cause us shame when our children grow up, and it will allow them to keep establishing God’s kingdom in their lives.

Fourth priority: My Job (2 Tes. 3:10-12, Eph. 4:28)

Our job should not be our goal in life, and we should never look for happiness in it. Our job is one of the tools that God gives us to be able to accomplish His purpose. It is also through our job that God provides for our family’s needs. Our jobs give us the chance to let other people see the image of our Father’s generosity, and God also uses it so that we can be lights that shine in a dark place.

Verse to memorize:

“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat – for he grants sleep to those he loves. Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.”

Questions for discussion:

1. According to Psalms 127:1, why is it important to place God as our first priority?

2. According to Ephesians 5:23, 25-33, what is the role of the husband in marriage?

3. According to Ephesians 5:24, 21, 31-33, what is the role of the wife in marriage?

cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-
30 for we are members of his body.

31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

Psalms 127:3-5

3 Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him.

4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth.

5 Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.”

5. Our principles. Bases for our relationship

Mathew 19:3-9

- 3 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"
- 4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female,
- 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?'
- 6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."
- 7 "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"
- 8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not his way from the beginning.
- 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Deuteronomy 24:1-2

- 1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.
- 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.

Mathew 5:27-28

- 27 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'
- 28 But I tell you that

We have learned that God wants to establish His image in us so that we can achieve His purpose of bearing forth fruit and multiplying in other people's lives. Also, we have learned that our spouse is the perfect complement for this to take place.

We have understood that marriage is a covenant, or alliance, which implies leaving behind anything that gets in the way, so that the two may become one and God's kingdom may be established in us.

We are now ready to learn three principles that are necessary to build a strong marital relationship.

Principle #1: Marriage's covenant is indivisible (Mt 19:3-9)

In **Mathew 19:3**, the Pharisees wanted to test Jesus one more time, putting Him between two groups' interpretations of the law. The traditional group (according to Shammai) accepted the possibility of divorce for reasons of unfaithfulness or of lack of chastity. The liberal group (according to Hillel) put emphasis on the words "she finds no favor in his eyes" and allowed divorce for any reason that the husband gave, for example, if he did not like the food or her personality, etc. (**Deut. 24:1**)

The Pharisees knew that this would place Jesus in a difficult situation. If He opted for the traditional group's interpretation, it would not be coherent with His friendship with sinners, according to their point of view. If he opted for the liberal group's interpretation, where would His moral authority be?

But in **Mathew 19:4-6** Jesus focuses on the teaching's fundamental principle and answers: "**Haven't you read?**", "**...so they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.**" Getting married is like gluing two sheets of paper; if we try to separate them, both will tear. A consequence of divorcing a spouse, for any reason other than adultery, is that when the divorcee gets involved in another relationship, he or she commits adultery. That is why Jesus permits divorce only as a result of adultery, and this is only because our hearts are hard (**Mt. 19:7-9**). When the Word of God talks about adultery, it is important for us to remember Jesus' words in **Mt. 5:27-28**, where it says that if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Both men and women need to protect their eyes, their minds, and the intentions of their hearts from any person who is not their husband or wife. We need to pray and find contentment in our spouse.

In conclusion, God does not want us to go through the painful experience of divorce; He wants us to learn to live through and resolve our differences in love, not looking for our benefit, but for the other's. The Lord, His Word, and His Holy Spirit will always bring a better solution than divorce when we have problems in our marriage. That is why the first principle for our marital relationship is that marriage is indivisible.

Principle #2: Forgiveness, a result of being born again (Mt. 18:23-35)

Let's analyze these verses that talk about who we were and who we are now. This is only possible through God's love and forgiveness and that should encourage us to live a more productive life, a life that reflects Him (**Mt 18:23-35**). In these verses, we learn that a person's heart that has received God's forgiveness is a heart that is willing to forgive.

Forgiveness is vital in a marriage because we have different interests, personalities, education, emotions, and feelings. We will react differently to circumstances in our lives, and we need to learn to ask for forgiveness when we hurt our spouse and to forgive when we have been offended. Forgiveness is an advantage to the one that forgives, but in order to give it, we first need to receive it from God. We need to ask God to give us repentance, and then we need to confess our sin and to receive His forgiveness, so that we can forgive. In the section “Learning to Pray”, we learn that there are five reasons for which we must forgive; these are:

1. **God ordains it (Rom. 12:19)**
2. **We need to follow Christ’s example (Col. 3:13)**
3. **We are in debt (Rom. 13:8)**
4. **It will bring peace to our hearts (Col. 3:13-15)**
5. **It praises God (Rom. 15:7)**

Note: Forgiveness does not put in jeopardy our physical integrity or that of our children. We can forgive, but at the same time we sometimes must put distance between our family and our spouse if there are problems such as alcoholism, sexual abuse, or if any other dangerous situation exists. In such cases, professional help for our family is required.

Principle #3: Love (1 Cor. 13:4-6)

In the last passage, the Pharisees, as well as the disciples, were fixated (like many people today) on the idea of **“I married you so that you can make me happy”**, instead of thinking, **“What can I do to make you happy?”**. How can I use my marriage to benefit my spouse, my children, people around me, and God’s kingdom?

Let’s remember that love is a commandment, not a feeling. In **John 13:34-35**, Jesus emphasizes loving each other as He has loved us: in sacrifice. When we marry, **we** promise to love our spouse till death do us part; we never say, **“You** will love me till death do us part”.

The marital covenant establishes that we need to learn to love each other until the end, in the same way that the Lord loved His disciples, even with our weaknesses, mistakes, and even betrayals (John 13:1), because we have entered into a covenant, a commitment before God. God wants us to develop the characteristics of love that are found in **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**. The Word of God tells us that “love is patient, kind, it does not envy or boast, it is not proud, rude, or self-seeking. It is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrong, it does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, it always protects, it always trusts, it always hopes, it always perseveres.”

The enemy wants us to think that the war is against our spouse, but the war is not against flesh and blood, but against authorities in the heavenly realms that are trying to destroy our marriage. Let’s not be deceived by his schemes, but be alert and fight against our lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. God’s commandment is to love one another as He has loved us (**John 13:34-35**).

With these three principles, you will be able to build a happy home.

Verse to memorize:

“So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” Mathew 19:6

Questions for discussion:

1. What are the three principles on which our marriage should be built?
2. According to John 13:34, what is love?

anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Mathew 18:23-33

23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.

25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 “The servant, fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’”

27 The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him.

‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’”

30 “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

33 Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’”

6. Our children. How to guide them

Genesis 5:21-24

- 21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah.
- 22 And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.
- 23 Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years.
- 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

Genesis 21:3

- 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.

1 Samuel 2: 12, 17, 29

- 12 Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord.

- 17 This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the Lord's offering with contempt.

- 29 Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?

For God, it is of great importance that we learn to appreciate, guide, and take care of the inheritance that He has entrusted us with. We can see from God's covenant with Abraham that He gave great value to the family, since He promise to bless it. To bless means to give everything needed to fulfill a purpose. Among the family is the commission to make Jesus known to all nations; for His name and His plan for our redemption be passed on from generation to generation.

In Enoch's life, we can see that it is not until he begins walking with God that his life began to bring forth fruit and multiply (**Gen. 5:21-24**).

In the Old Testament, there are only a few cases where we can see an example of understood and responsible parenting. One case of responsible parenting was Abraham's. He sought to obey God and instruct his son in the ways of the Lord (**Gen. 21:3, Gen. 24:3-4**). Unfortunately, we see in the Scriptures how many negative examples predominated:

1. Eli (1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 29)

Eli's sons had no regard for the Lord, they did not know Him, and they disrespected God's offerings. Perhaps their father invested little time and interest in his sons and this was the consequence.

2. Samuel (1 Sam. 8:1-3)

Samuel appointed his sons as judges for Israel, but his sons did not walk in the Lord's ways. Instead, they turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes. Samuel appointed his sons to have a title and a responsibility that they were not qualified for.

3. David (2 Sam. Chapters: 12-18)

In these verses, David's fault is evident. Instead of scolding and enforcing discipline after his son abused one of his daughters, he overlooked his son's offense most likely because David's conscience accused him of what he had done with Bathsheba. David did not make justice unto his daughter's offense, which led to the awakening of his son's anger and then to other family tragedies. Even though it is hard and painful for us, we must discipline our sons and daughters when it is needed.

This lack of spiritual parenting was responsible for damaging the model that God established for the family, and it continued degenerating until the days of the last prophet of the Old Testament: Malachi. In this book God makes His last warning to the arrogant and evil, urging them to repent and to consider God in their lives.

God also promises, to the ones who come back to Him, that **“He will turn the hearts of the fathers to heir children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers...” Malachi 4:6**

Let's examine some of the principles that God gives as a model for the relationship of parents to their children:

1. Psalms 127

- a. **Edification:** we need to understand that our relationships and our families need to be built on a living relationship with God through His Word. (**Deut. 6:6-7**)
- b. **Preservation:** we need to safeguard our family through prayer, seeking God with a whole heart and living according to His Word, so that we might not sin against Him. (**Sal. 119:9-11, Eph. 6:18**)
- c. **Provision:** the provision that our body, mind, and spirit need come from His hand, only if we first seek His kingdom in our lives. God is the provider of all things; by being diligent and faithful to live according to His Word, we will never lack what we need to accomplish His purpose for our lives.
- d. **Direction:** we need to send our children in the direction of the purpose for which they were made, which is: reflect God (Is. 43:6-7), be fruitful (Gal 5:22) and multiply in other people's lives (Mt. 13:23), carrying on with the commission of letting His name be known through:
 - **Our example (John 5:17):** Jesus shows us through His relationship with His Father to follow the example established by God through His Word.
 - **Our integrity (John 5:20):** Our actions have to be coherent with our words; parents have an impact on their children through their actions, not their words.

2. Ephesians 6:4

We need to remember that our children are learning from us, and that they need us to have authority over them which consists of:

- Patience
- Discipline: when our discipline is not followed by advice and an explanation, we provoke them to anger.

3. Proverbs 22:15, 29:15

We must be brave and correct them even though sometimes it is hard, but by correcting them we will help them reach the goal.

Verse to memorize:

“Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him.” Psalms 127:3

1 Samuel 8:1-3

1 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel.

2 The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba.

3 But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Psalms 119: 9-11

9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

John 5:19-20

19 Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.

7. Our parents. How to honor them

Ephesians 6:1-3

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 “Honor your father and mother” – which is the first commandment with a promise –

3 “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

God gives us children the privilege of honoring our parents. Throughout the different stages of our lives, we can honor them in diverse ways. When we are minors and we still live in their custody, God urges us to obey them, and when we are older, our commitment is in appreciation, love, and economic support.

Let’s study these principles from God’s Word:

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”

Ephesians 6:1-3

a. Obey in the Lord

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Like sons and daughters, it is part of a healthy development to learn to obey our parents, because by doing this, we are protected. The only exception for this obedience is when parents ask their children to do something that is wrong, like steal, lie, use some sort of drug or participate in a sexually immoral situation.

b. Honor unconditionally

“Honor your father and mother” – which is the first commandment with a promise”

To honor implies verbal and affectionate appreciation, as well as economic support for our parents, especially when they get older. This type of honoring does not depend on whether they complied with their roles in the most appropriate way or not, but because of our commitment with the Lord.

c. Reward

“That it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Honoring our parents affectionately and economically results in wellbeing in all areas, as well as a long life on earth.

Verse to memorize:

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Questions for discussion:

1. What are the benefits God gives us when we honor our parents?

2. What does it mean to honor our parents?

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