



**Nazarene Discipleship International
(NDI)**



Adult Ministries

Marriage Ministries Lessons 2025

By Ángel Rodríguez Gómez
Mesoamerica Region

Marriage Ministries Lessons

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Church of the Nazarene

Mesoamerica Region



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Study Guide for Married Couples

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Presentation

Nazarene Discipleship International (NDI) of the Church of the Nazarene is responsible for developing Adult Ministries, Youth Ministries, and Children's Ministries.

This material is part of NDI's Adult Ministries materials and is intended to help members of the Church of the Nazarene to understand biblical teachings on living a holy life within marriage and to put what they learn into practice in their daily lives in order to grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

The areas of these marriage ministry lessons and their objectives are as follows:

A. Spiritual:

- Motivate couples to consecrate themselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- To personally evangelize other couples.
- To strengthen their worship of God and their devotional lives.

B. Ministerial:

- Recognize that married couples have a responsibility for the preservation and growth of God's work.
- Work toward building up the family and the church.
- Facilitate couples serving within the church.

C. Family:

- Build your home on the principles and values of the Kingdom of God that are plainly shown in the Bible.
- Apply biblical principles and values to develop a good marriage relationship.
- Apply biblical principles and values to parenting.

The document contains 12 lessons that can be shared once a month in small group/marriage meetings. Each lesson contains:

Learning Objectives.

They refer to the achievements expected of the students at the end of the lesson.

Introduction.

An initial presentation that contextualizes the topic to be addressed, in order to give the reader some background.

Development of the topic.

These lessons have been written in simple, dynamic language, connected to the ideas of the contemporary world, in order to facilitate their use for teaching.

Conclusion of the teaching.

A brief conclusion of what has been taught is provided at the end of each lesson, which can be used at the end of the class as closure and in the next session to review the topics that have been covered.

Activities:

Individual or group learning activities relating to the topic studied are suggested. These can be reproduced for the participants, although it's recommended that each participant has his own copy of this document.

Introduction

In accordance with our new NDI Ministry Handbook, we find:

The purpose of NDI is to assist local churches in:

- a. Reaching non-believers for Jesus*
- b. Establishing new believers in their faith in Christ*
- c. Walking with believers to a fully surrendered, heart-cleansed, fruit-bearing, and Spirit-filled life.*

To achieve this purpose we must promote the following 5 Core Principles.

NDI promotes the following five Core Principles that are essential to the discipleship process:

- a. Fervent Prayer*
- b. Compassionate Outreach*
- c. Comprehensive Biblical Learning*
- d. Intentional Mentoring and Equipping*
- e. Authentic Relationships*

During this year, as we study the lessons of our Marriage Ministries Handbook, we're going to learn how we can put these values into practice in such a way that we'll be a better influence on the formation of disciples with whom we can walk together along the Journey of Grace.

Lesson 1.

Strengthening the *Healthy family relationships* - Part 1

Biblical Text: *Philippians 2:3-4 NLT*

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Purposes:

- **Practice** and foster respect within your family.
- **Assess** whether you have developed trust within the family.
- **Practice** forgiveness and reconciliation within the family.

1.1 Introduction

Christian marriage is vitally important because it reflects the relationship between Christ and His church, and is considered sacred and blessed by God. It's a divine institution that promotes unity, companionship, and love between a man and a woman.

In addition, Christian marriage offers an environment conducive to raising children in an environment of Christian faith and values, and is an opportunity to grow in holiness. Therefore, it's critical to value and cultivate Christian marriage in order to experience a fulfilling and meaningful relationship.

The purpose of Christian marriage is to live in unity and harmony, helping each other grow in faith, honoring God with our actions and words, and sharing His love with those around us. As Christian spouses, we have a responsibility to care for and strengthen our relationship to fulfill this divine purpose and achieve lasting fulfillment and happiness.

In this lesson we'll learn some foundations for developing healthy relationships within marriage and in the family.

1.2 Development

1.2.1 Key elements for building meaningful relationships

Building meaningful relationships within a marriage is critical to strengthening the couple's bond. To achieve this, a few key elements are required:

- a) Mutual respect,
- b) trust,
- c) forgiveness, and reconciliation.

We will talk about them below.

A. The importance of mutual respect

*"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."*Romans 12:9-10 NIV

Mutual respect involves valuing and appreciating our partner as a person, recognizing their dignity, rights, and opinions. This involves treating them with courtesy, kindness, and consideration at all times.

Showing mutual respect involves avoiding insults, destructive criticism, or disqualifications. Instead, we must foster a climate of respect in which communication is open and respectful. When we treat each other with respect, we promote trust and strengthen love and unity within our marriage.

Respect leads us to accept the person even when their opinions don't agree with ours. That's because we value every member of the family. In this regard, Sara Tarrés (n.d.) gives us some advice on how we, as parents, can instill respect in our children. These are some of her tips:

1. Set the best example. When children live in a respectful and calm environment, they are more likely to be respectful as well. Remember that from childhood children learn by imitation. If disrespect between parents is frequent, it creates a climate conducive to the emergence of intolerance and aggression in our children.
2. Listen without interrupting their opinions. We must give equal importance to our kids and their problems. Let's learn to listen to them and be empathetic with them.
3. Be sincere in our messages. We must be careful not to lie to them or deceive them. Failure to do this will reduce their respect for us and cause them to not trust us again.
4. Be kind in dealing with them. Let's focus on teaching them courteous expressions such as "please," "thank you," and "I'm sorry." We must be humble and ask forgiveness when we make mistakes, recognizing our mistakes and thanking them for their efforts to help us.
5. Avoid yelling at them. Shouting doesn't increase our authority or credibility nor does it command respect. Shouting and rudeness foster fear and cause our children to distance themselves from us.

B. Trust: a fundamental basis

To cultivate trust, it's important that our actions and words are honest and transparent. Keeping our promises and commitments strengthens mutual trust. In addition, it's essential to respect each other's privacy and maintain the confidentiality of intimate conversations. Trust is built through faithfulness and loyalty, showing that we're trustworthy in all aspects of married life.

When we trust our partner and feel confident in ourselves, the marriage bond is strengthened and an environment of security and emotional stability is created. Some reasons why it's important to build trust in our marriage and in our family are:

- Trust strengthens bonds. By teaching your children that they can trust you, no matter what situation they are going through, and when you demonstrate it with facts, the bond between you and your children will be strengthened. Fathers and mothers must individually earn their children's trust. Usually, children perceive that their mother is closer and more available, so the father must strive to gain that trust as well.
- Trust allows everyone to be able to express themselves without fear. Expressing feelings, emotions, thoughts, and personal ideas without fear of rejection allows each family member to trust each other more. This will create the confidence they need so that they'll seek your support on the most difficult issues.
- Trust helps self-esteem. A good environment of trust in the family nourishes and strengthens the self-esteem of each member, so that they feel supported and accepted by the rest of the family.
- Trust improves emotional intelligence. If there is trust within a family, then the emotional intelligence of each member of the family will improve. To do this, it's necessary for our children to know how to identify the feelings of others and accept them, to know how to express their own feelings, among other aspects.

It's good to identify whether or not there is trust within our marriages. There are ways we can evaluate whether there is a lack of trust or not. Here are some symptoms that suggest there is a lack of trust (Family Therapy, n.d.):

- There is a lack of communication. Do you lack communication skills, whether oral or verbal? Do you practice affirmative communication?
- There is fear when it comes to expressing personal ideas. Have you noticed how other members hold back from expressing what they think, whether on important or trivial topics?
- Emotions are not allowed to be expressed. It's visible that sometimes when someone shows their emotions, rejection and discomfort are generated.
- Everything seems to be fine. When you ask a family member about how their day went and they always answer that "everything is perfect", it's very likely that they don't have the confidence to share with the other family members when something bad has happened or is happening.

Elizabeth McBride (n.d.) shares the following tips to build self-confidence in our children:

- Set them up for success. Help your children, even as toddlers, accept challenges that are appropriate for their age and maturity. Help them accept challenges that are just outside of their current abilities or comfort zone, so that they continue to development.
- Play to your strengths. Encourage your children to explore their interests. That way, their self-esteem will grow as they discover their own strengths and talents.
- Encourage them to persevere. When your children hit an obstacle and want to give up, in a gentle tone of voice, encourage them to try again. You will be surprised that this can be done from an early age, even as young as two years old. I've personally seen this with my oldest grandson and his parents.
- Praise their effort. I love to hear my daughter and son-in-law say to our grandson "Good job," "Nice try," and hear them encourage him to do something again. Elizabeth McBride (n.d.) asks us to focus on the effort they've shown by saying something like, "You studied so hard! I'm really proud of you."
- Teach them to bounce back. When your children feel frustrated, listen to them and try to understand their feelings. In these situations, it will be helpful to support them with words such as "This is really hard, isn't it?" Then, help them explore other possibilities to achieve what they intended.
- Don't criticize. When your child makes a mistake, don't condemn them with criticism. Instead, ask them how they feel about their mistake and listen to their answers. Help them think about what they could do the next time it happens.
- Model self-confidence. Show your children how you handle new challenges. Ask them for ideas on how you might approach the challenge.

C. The importance of forgiveness and reconciliation

To help you meditate on the forgiveness we must grant each other in marriage and in the family, we encourage you to reflect on the following Bible passages with your spouse:

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Colossians 3:13

"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 RSV

"...and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

Forgiveness plays a fundamental role in marriage, as it allows emotional wounds to be healed and the bond of trust between the spouses to be strengthened. Without forgiveness, resentments and bitterness can accumulate, creating barriers to communication and generating constant conflicts. It's necessary to recognize that, in any relationship, mistakes will be made and actions can hurt, but it's important to be willing to forgive and leave the past behind in order to build a future based on forgiveness.

1. **Acknowledging the need to forgive** is the first step in healing emotional wounds in marriage. It's important to understand that forgiveness doesn't imply forgetting what happened, but rather freeing oneself from the emotional weight generated by resentment and opening the door to genuine reconciliation. Recognizing that we're all imperfect beings and that we'll make mistakes can help us understand the importance of forgiveness and provide an opportunity to rebuild trust in the marriage relationship.
2. **Learn to forgive and let go of resentment.** This takes time and effort, but it's essential for the health of the marriage. It's important to reflect on our own emotions and seek to understand the motives behind our partner's actions. Practicing empathy and putting yourself in the other person's shoes can help us find compassion and understanding, thus facilitating the forgiveness process. In addition, we must communicate our feelings and allow our partner to express their regret and desire for change.
3. **Building a future based on forgiveness.** This involves leaving the wounds of the past behind and committing to work together to strengthen the marriage relationship. This involves setting clear boundaries, respecting and forgiving each other's mistakes, and pledging not to weaponize the past in future arguments. By building a future based on forgiveness, an environment of trust and security is created that allows both spouses to grow as individuals and strengthen their commitment to each other.

Acknowledging our mistakes and asking our partner for forgiveness helps us heal wounds and strengthen the marital bond. It's also essential to be able to forgive our partner when they make mistakes. Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting, but rather ceasing to nurture feelings of resentment and resentment.

Reconciliation involves restoring harmony and unity in the relationship, overcoming conflicts and seeking solutions together. Forgiveness and reconciliation allow us to grow as individuals and as a couple, strengthening our spiritual and emotional bonds in marriage.

As Juan Rojas (2016) puts it:

From the Cross we can glimpse the efficacy of the love that's given, of the forgiveness that hurts, of the ultimate consequences of true love. May our life as a couple reflect true Christian reconciliation where we recognize mistakes, ask forgiveness for them, learn from that experience and make the decision not to make them again ... a transformation through grace in which each forgiveness is a step towards a better life as a couple

1.3 Conclusions

We've valued the importance of healthy relationships in marriage and family. Without a doubt, if we achieve this, we'll be more efficient in raising our children in a healthy way. But not only that, we can also impact other couples with our testimony so that they know about Christ.

To do this, we must work in our family on aspects such as mutual respect, trust, as well as forgiveness and reconciliation. Let's pray that with God's help, we'll achieve it in each of our families.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. How can you foster mutual respect in your family?

Reflection and practical application exercises

2. Which of Elizabeth McBride's tips to build self-confidence in our children do you think you need to apply in your family?

3. How do you practice forgiveness and reconciliation in your marriage and with your family?

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Lesson 2. **Strengthening the *Healthy family relationships*. Part 2.**

Biblical Text: Ephesians 4:29

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

Purposes:

- **Practice** empathy in marriage and family.
- **Seek** a solution to those issues that cause conflict in the marriage.
- **Explain** how patience and tolerance contribute to good communication.

2.1 Introduction

We've been studying how to strengthen healthy and authentic relationships in marriages and families. This core value of Nazarene Discipleship International (NDI) is critical to building healthy marriages in which children can be disciplined.

It's also of great relevance because by building marriages with healthy relationships, we're prepared to share with others about our faith in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, in this second part we're going to address other elements that contribute to building healthy relationships. In this lesson we're going to concentrate on good communication, empathy, as well as looking for solutions together.

2.2 Development

2.2.1 Importance of Communication in Marriage

Communication in marriage is critical to maintaining a strong and healthy relationship. Through open and honest communication, couples can resolve conflicts, express their feelings, and build a closer bond.

Your communication can determine the direction of your marriage, so you need to be very careful about your words and how you communicate with your spouse. Love each other and make sure that your words always confirm that love.

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

A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Matthew 12:35-37

It's important to take the time to actively talk and listen to your partner, as this will strengthen the emotional connection and improve mutual understanding. In addition, expressing your feelings assertively will allow you to communicate your needs and desires effectively, avoiding misunderstandings and promoting harmony in the marriage.

A) Strengthening the bond through dialogue

Let your word always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each one. Colossians 4:6

Constant and open dialogue is a powerful tool to strengthen the bond in marriage. By taking time to talk about a variety of topics, couples can get to know each other better, understand their thoughts and emotions, and build a deeper relationship. Dialogue also provides an opportunity to resolve problems and conflicts peacefully and constructively, preventing resentments and tensions from accumulating. By committing to strong communication, couples can cultivate a strong and lasting marriage.

B) Actively listening to your partner

Actively listening to your partner is essential for effective communication in marriage. This involves paying full attention to what your partner is saying, without interruptions or distractions. By actively listening, you can better understand your spouse's thoughts, feelings, and needs, which strengthens emotional connection and promotes greater intimacy.

Active listening also avoids misunderstandings and conflicts, as it demonstrates respect and genuine interest in what the other has to say. By practicing this type of listening, you can enrich your marriage and build a strong foundation for open and effective communication.

C) Expressing your feelings assertively

Expressing your feelings assertively is key to healthy communication in marriage. This involves communicating your thoughts and emotions clearly, honestly, and respectfully, without being aggressive or passive. By expressing your feelings assertively, your partner will be able to understand your needs and desires, making it easier to resolve conflicts and strengthen the bond.

It's important to avoid assumptions and generalizations, communicating in a specific and concrete way. By practicing assertive communication in marriage, you can build a relationship based on trust, understanding, and mutual respect.

2.2.2 The Importance of Empathy in Marriage

Empathy is the ability to understand another person's feelings, thoughts, or attitudes. In the Bible there are several examples of empathy that are put into practice.

- Jesus was always sensitive to the situation of others.
- The apostle Peter counseled Christians by saying, "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." (1 Peter 3:8).
- The apostle Paul also counseled empathy when he exhorted Christians: "Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who mourn" (Romans 12:15).

Empathy is critical in marriage to strengthen the emotional connection between spouses. By practicing empathy, understanding and respect for the emotional needs of the partner are shown, which creates an environment of mutual support and understanding. Empathy allows both of you to feel heard and understood, which in turn promotes open and honest communication in difficult situations.

A) Understanding Your Partner's Emotional Needs

Understanding your partner's emotional needs is essential to maintaining a healthy and strong marriage relationship. By being attentive to your spouse's emotions and concerns, you can provide the support and comfort they need. This involves actively listening, validating their feelings, and showing genuine interest in their emotional needs. By understanding and responding empathetically to your partner's emotional needs, you'll be cultivating an environment of trust and closeness in your marriage.

B) Practicing empathy in difficult situations

Empathy plays a vital role when facing difficult situations in marriage. Instead of seeking to blame or judge your partner, practicing empathy will allow you to put yourself in their shoes and understand their perspective. This encourages more effective and constructive communication, as it avoids conflicts and approaches problems from a position of mutual understanding. Empathy allows you to respond calmly and compassionately, which can lessen difficult situations and strengthen the emotional connection in the marriage.

C) Avoiding Judgment and Showing Understanding

Avoiding judgment is crucial to fostering empathy in marriage. Instead of criticizing or condemning your partner's reactions, opinions, or behaviors, you should strive to understand them. By doing so, you're demonstrating respect and consideration for their person, creating an environment of acceptance and support. Showing understanding involves listening without judgment, trying to understand the context and reasons behind your partner's actions, and providing emotional support when needed. This will strengthen trust and connection in marriage.

2.2.3 The importance of looking for solutions together

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Romans 14:19

In many marriages, we try to avoid addressing those issues that cause us difficulties because both parties don't agree on them. However, as the Blog Got Question (n.d.) points out, "Avoiding conflict delays an adequate response and exacerbates the problem, because if conflicts are allowed to worsen and remain unresolved, they'll always increase and have negative effects on relationships."

Therefore, seeking solutions together is essential to strengthen the marriage. When both spouses commit to solving problems together, an environment of collaboration and mutual support is created. This implies recognizing that challenges and problems are the responsibility of both and that both have the capacity to find solutions. By addressing problems together, communication is strengthened and a sense of teamwork and solidarity is promoted in marriage.

A) Identifying Problems and Challenges in Marriage

Identifying problems and challenges in marriage is the first step to finding solutions. This requires open and honest communication between spouses, where each can express their concerns and needs. It's important to be aware that problems can be diverse, such as lack of communication, conflicts of interest, differences in values or trust issues. Identifying these problems will allow us to focus our efforts on finding the right solutions.

B) Working as a team to find solutions

Working as a team is essential to finding solutions in marriage. This implies sharing responsibilities and actively participating in the search for solutions. Both spouses must be willing to compromise and contribute ideas to solve problems. It's important to remember that it's not about winning an argument, but about finding solutions that benefit both of you. By working as a team, mutual respect is fostered and the emotional connection in marriage is strengthened.

C) Mutually committing to implementing changes

For solutions to be effective, both spouses must mutually commit to implementing the necessary changes. This involves being willing to let go of old patterns and habits that may be contributing to problems in the marriage. Commitment involves working together to set concrete and realistic goals, and being willing to make the necessary sacrifices. By committing to each other, you demonstrate a desire to improve and strengthen the relationship, and you create an environment of trust and growth in the marriage.

2.2.4 The importance of patience and tolerance

The scriptures tell us, "Let all bitterness, wrath, wrath, shouting, slander, and all malice be put away from you" (Ephesians 4:31). Patience and tolerance are critical in marriage to maintain harmony and overcome challenges. It's necessary to understand that each person has differences and limits, and to learn to accept and respect them.

By practicing patience in times of conflict, you avoid falling into heated arguments and seek a solution in a calm manner. Cultivating tolerance involves showing understanding and empathy towards the other's perspective, which promotes an environment of harmony and mutual understanding.

A) Embracing differences and respecting boundaries

Accepting the differences between spouses and respecting each other's boundaries is essential to having a healthy marriage. Each person has their own personality, interests and ways of being.

By recognizing and valuing these differences, an environment of mutual respect and acceptance is created. It's important to set clear boundaries and respect them, which ensures the emotional and physical well-being of both of you. Learning to accept and respect differences strengthens the connection between spouses and promotes a marriage based on equality and respect.

B) Practicing Patience in Times of Conflict

And may the God of patience and comfort grant you to have the same mind toward one another according to Christ Jesus. Romans 15:5

In times of conflict in marriage, patience plays a crucial role. Instead of giving in to frustration and expressing anger, it's necessary to practice patience to remain calm and seek a solution in a constructive way.

Patience prevents arguments from turning into destructive arguments and allows both spouses to express their views in a calm manner. By practicing patience, an atmosphere of understanding is fostered and the foundations are established for effective and respectful communication between spouses.

C) Cultivating tolerance to foster harmony

Tolerance is key to fostering harmony in marriage. Cultivating tolerance involves understanding and accepting your partner's differences, even when they may be challenging.

By showing tolerance, a safe space is created where both spouses feel valued and respected. Tolerance also involves being flexible and understanding when dealing with conflicts, always seeking a solution that benefits both parties. By cultivating tolerance, emotional bonds are strengthened and a solid relationship is built based on respect and harmony.

2.3 Conclusions

We've studied how to improve communication in marriage and family. This requires us to improve our abilities to know how to actively listen to the other person, to know how to express ourselves in a constructive dialogue and on the best terms, as well as to be able to manage our emotions to communicate properly.

It also requires that we be able to practice empathy in our relationships within marriage and family. This requires us to try to understand the feelings and emotions of those who express themselves, not to make condemnatory judgments about what we differ from. If not, understand what they think and feel. That's a way of showing that we actually care.

We've also meditated on the importance of seeking solutions to those issues that cause conflict in the marriage. In marriage and in the family, there will be issues on which we have different points of view, but with God's help we can find the right and proper solution in the midst of any conflict.

Explain how patience and tolerance contribute to good communication.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. How can you improve current communication within your marriage?

Reflection and practical application exercises

2. How can you develop better empathy within marriage and family?

3. Identify an issue on which you usually have great disagreements in the marriage. What would be the steps to follow in order to resolve the conflict you have in that area?

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Lesson 3.

Comprehensive Bible Learning **In the family**

Biblical Text: *Deuteronomy 6:6-7*

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Purposes:

- **Value** the importance of Bible study in the family.
- **Establish** an age-appropriate family Bible study plan.

3.1 Introduction

Biblical learning in the family is of utmost importance, as it promotes the transmission of the faith from generation to generation. The Bible is the Word of God and contains valuable teachings to guide our lives.

By involving the whole family in Bible study, knowledge and understanding of biblical principles is strengthened, which in turn fosters fellowship with God and spiritual growth. This learning isn't only based on acquiring knowledge, but also on applying biblical values and teachings in daily life, allowing the family to live according to God's will.

So in this lesson we're going to study who's primarily responsible for Bible education? What are the main benefits of family Bible study? How can we encourage family Bible study?

3.2 Development

3.2.1 Importance of Bible Learning in the Family

A. Biblical Foundations for Family Education

Family education has its foundations in the Bible, which urges us to teach our children the ways of the Lord. In Deuteronomy 6:6-7, we're commanded to put God's words on our hearts and teach them constantly to our children, at any time of the day and in any situation.

The Bible contains principles that guide us in raising children and shows us how to transmit ethical and moral values to them from an early age. These foundations establish a solid foundation for family education to be effective and transcend the lives of all family members.

B. The Role of Parents in Bible Teaching

Parents have a critical role in teaching the Bible in the family. They are the primary role models and spiritual leaders for their children, and their commitment to biblical learning directly influences their faith formation. Parents should take responsibility for instructing their children in the ways of the Lord, taking time to read and study the Bible together, pray as a family, and actively participate in the life of the church. By being diligent in Bible teaching, parents cultivate an environment conducive to their children's spiritual growth and strengthen family bonds around the Christian faith.

C. Benefits of Bible Learning in the Family

Bible learning in the family provides numerous benefits.

- It allows family members to develop a deep understanding of biblical teachings and values, which helps them face challenges and make decisions based on sound principles.
- It promotes family unity by focusing on God's Word, strengthening the bonds between parents and children.
- It creates opportunities to reflect on faith, pray together, and experience joint spiritual growth.
- This holistic approach enriches daily life and helps us to live according to biblical mandates, experiencing a full life blessed by God.

3.2.2 Strategies for Bible Learning in the Family

A. Family Bible Reading and Study

Family reading and Bible study are critical to comprehensive Bible learning. This involves taking time regularly to read the scriptures together, discuss their meaning, and apply their teachings in everyday life. It's important to select a suitable time and place where all family members can participate and concentrate.

Reading and studying the Bible as a family strengthens spiritual bonds, promotes understanding, and stimulates reflection and dialogue. In addition, an environment is created conducive for children and young people to ask questions and learn from the wisdom and experience of their parents.

B. Devotionals and Family Prayer

Devotionals and family prayer are essential times to strengthen spiritual life in the home. Having devotionals together involves taking time each day to worship God, meditate on His Word, and receive spiritual inspiration. These moments can include songs, Bible readings, reflections, and personal testimonies.

It's also important to encourage family prayer, both individually and together. Through prayer, a direct connection with God is established, needs are expressed, thanks are given, and His guidance and protection are sought. Devotionals and family prayer promote communion with God and strengthen the family bond through faith and trust in Him.

C. Participation in Church Activities

Participation in church activities is also an important strategy for Bible learning in the family. Attending regular services, Bible study groups, and programs for children and youth provides opportunities to be taught, learn from other believers, and serve the faith community.

The church also organizes special events and themed activities that strengthen biblical knowledge and foster fellowship among Christian families. Participating in these activities provide an environment of support and spiritual growth where the family can learn from trained leaders and pastors, build meaningful relationships, and live out their faith in practical and relevant ways.

D. Use of teaching resources and materials

The use of teaching resources and materials is an effective strategy for enriching biblical learning in the family. In our Mesoamerica Region, there is a wide variety of resources available, such as books, study guides, videos, and mobile applications, which offer different teaching approaches and formats. These resources provide additional information, visual illustrations, and interactive activities that help understand and apply biblical teachings. You can access them at the following link:

<https://www.mesonaz.org/ministerios/discipulado-nazareno-internacional/recursos-dni/>

By using these teaching materials, the active participation of all family members is promoted, practical learning is encouraged, and the process of acquiring biblical knowledge is made more fun and engaging. In addition, these resources can be adapted to different ages and levels of understanding, allowing each member of the family to benefit and grow spiritually.

3.2.3 Overcoming Challenges in Family Bible Learning

Bible learning in the family can face a variety of challenges, but it's important to find ways to overcome them to ensure that the teaching of God's Word is effective. We will study some of these challenges below.

A. Lack of time and priorities

Lack of time and priorities can be an obstacle to biblical learning in the family, but it's essential to overcome this challenge. To do this, **it's important to establish a family routine that includes a specific time for studying the Bible.** This may involve adjusting schedules and organizing efficiently to make time for learning.

It's also crucial to be clear about priorities and to recognize that spiritual growth and knowledge of God's Word must have a prominent place in family life. By making this a priority, you can overcome the lack of time and allocate quality moments to Bible learning as a family.

B. Difficulties in understanding the Bible

Understanding the Bible can be challenging for some families, but there are strategies to overcome these challenges. One way to address this challenge is to **use resources and teaching materials that make it easier to understand**, such as child-friendly versions of the Bible, study guides, or illustrations.

In addition, it's important to encourage family dialogue and discuss biblical passages to clarify doubts and strengthen understanding. You can also look for online tools, such as explainer videos or podcasts, that provide additional explanations on more complex concepts. Bible commentaries are also available on the Internet and are invaluable in explaining the passages and the context in which they occur.

With perseverance and the use of adequate resources, difficulties in understanding the Bible can be overcome in the Christian family.

C. Motivation and perseverance in learning

Motivation and perseverance are critical to successful Bible learning in the family. It's critical to maintain a positive attitude and constantly remind yourself of the importance of studying the Bible in the spiritual growth of each family member.

To encourage motivation, you can set realistic goals and reward achievements. It's also valuable ***to create an exciting and fun learning environment, using games, interactive activities and symbolic prizes.***

Perseverance is achieved through consistency in Bible study, even when obstacles or difficulties arise. By maintaining motivation and perseverance, biblical learning will become an integral and enriching part of Christian family life.

3.2.4 Teaching Biblical Values in the Family

"Listen, my child, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching." Proverbs 1:8

A. The importance of values in Christian formation

Values play a crucial role in the Christian formation of people. ***The importance of values lies in the fact that they are the moral guide that help us to make correct decisions and act in a fair and kind way.***

Biblical values help us distinguish between good and evil, love our neighbors, and live according to the principles of faith. By instilling these values in the family, we're promoting a solid formation in the Christian faith, which will endure throughout our children's lives.

B. Transmitting values through example

The best way to convey biblical values is through example. ***Our children learn more from what they see than from what they are told.*** Therefore, it's essential that we, as parents, live according to the values we want to impart.

If we want to teach them about love, we must love our fellow human beings in a genuine way. If we want to teach them about honesty, we must be honest in our words and actions. Our example is powerful and will leave a lasting mark on the formation of our children's values.

C. Disciplining with Love and Wisdom According to the Bible

Discipline is an essential component in the formation of biblical values in the family. However, discipline must be accompanied by love and wisdom, following the principles found in the Bible.

Discipline should not be punitive, but educational. It's important to correct and guide our children in a loving and respectful way, providing them with teachings and opportunities to grow. By disciplining with love and wisdom, we're modeling the character of Christ and helping our children develop an awareness and understanding of biblical values.

3.2.5 Integrating Bible Learning into Everyday Life

A. Relationship between faith and daily activities

The relationship between faith and daily activities is fundamental to living a consistent Christian life. This implies that faith isn't limited to times of prayer or church attendance, but is reflected in every action and decision made during the day.

From housework to interactions with others, Bible learning shows us how we can live in a way that honors God at all times. By integrating this learning into everyday life, the Christian character of the family is strengthened and a powerful witness is established for others.

B. Practical Application of Biblical Principles

The practical application of biblical principles is essential for biblical learning to be effective in the daily life of the Christian family. It's not enough to know the Word of God, but one must seek to put into practice the values and teachings contained in it. This involves making decisions based on biblical principles, acting with love and compassion toward others, forgiving and asking for forgiveness, and seeking justice and peace in all aspects of life. By applying these principles, the Christian family will be a living witness to God's love and grace in the world.

C. Celebrating Holidays and Special Moments from a Biblical Perspective

Celebrating holidays and special moments from a biblical perspective is one way to enrich biblical learning in the daily life of the Christian family. These occasions are opportunities to remember and reflect on the teachings of the Bible, and how they relate to the holiday or event in question.

When celebrating Christmas, for example, you can focus on the true meaning of Jesus' coming and his salvation for humanity. In this way, the faith of the family is strengthened and an atmosphere of worship and gratitude to God is created in each celebration.

3.2.6 Encouraging Children's Active Participation in Bible Learning

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

It's critical to encourage children's active participation in biblical learning so that they can develop a personal and meaningful connection to God's Word. This is achieved through the following actions:

A. Adapting teaching to different ages

For biblical learning to be effective, it's essential to adapt the teaching to the different ages of the children. ***Concepts and lessons should be presented in an accessible and understandable way for each stage of development.***

Younger children can benefit from illustrated Bible stories and hands-on activities, while teens can engage in more in-depth discussions and more advanced Bible studies. By customizing teaching to the needs of each age group, a higher level of participation and understanding in family Bible learning will be promoted.

B. Use Activities and games to learn the Bible in a fun way

Learning the Bible doesn't have to be boring. It's important to incorporate fun activities and games into the teaching process to make learning entertaining and engaging for children. Quizzes, theatrical performances, crafts, and Bible competitions can be organized to promote knowledge of Scripture in a playful way. Not only will these activities keep children engaged, but they'll also help them retain biblical concepts more effectively in the long run.

C. Involving Children in Spiritual Decision-Making

It's essential to involve children in spiritual decision-making so that ***they are active participants in their own faith.*** This involves providing them with opportunities to express their opinions, ask questions, and make informed decisions about their relationship with God. Whether in choosing their daily devotionals or participating in service activities in the church, children should be encouraged to make spiritual decisions based on their understanding of the Bible and their personal guidance from the Holy Spirit. In doing so, an authentic faith rooted in the hearts of children will be promoted in the context of the Christian family.

3.3 Conclusions

Implementing effective strategies for biblical learning in the family is critical to growing spiritually together. Family Bible reading and study, devotionals and family prayer, as well as attending and actively participating in church activities provide opportunities to learn and serve, fostering individual and family spiritual growth.

The teaching of biblical values in the family is fundamental for the Christian formation of children. These values, based on God's Word, will provide a solid moral and spiritual foundation in their lives. Biblical values, such as love, honesty, kindness, and humility, are indispensable for living a life in accordance with Christian principles. By teaching these values in the family, we're helping to form well-rounded individuals who reflect the character of Christ in all their actions.

Integrating biblical learning into everyday life is critical to strengthening faith and spiritual growth in the Christian family. It's important for each member of the family to see how the Word of God is applied in their day-to-day lives, in every activity, and in every decision that's made. This implies recognizing that faith isn't only lived in the religious sphere, but also in the secular world. It's a lifestyle in which one seeks to live according to biblical principles and teachings in every situation that arises.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. What do you consider to be the main benefits of family Bible study?

2. What are the main obstacles to implementing a family Bible study plan? How could you overcome those barriers?

3. How might your family apply what they learned in your family Bible study in everyday life? Give three examples of this.

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Lesson 4.

Fervent Prayer in **The Christian Family**

Biblical Text: Hebrews 11:6b

He rewards those who earnestly seek him..

Purposes:

- **Appreciate** the benefits of developing fervent prayer in the family.
- **Adopt** a plan for developing fervent prayer as a family.
- **Use** prayer to resolve family conflicts.

4.1 Introduction

One of the ways to form disciples who develop the spiritual discipline of fervent prayer is to have each family practice fervent prayer consistently, specifically, and intentionally.

Through prayer we build a relationship with God. It's also through it that we show that we need Him, that we're not self-sufficient to live life without Him. We need Him to give us direction, wisdom, and even strength in difficult times.

Therefore, in this lesson we're going to study: What are the benefits of fervent prayer? How to develop the discipline of prayer in the family? How to pray in the midst of conflicts? How to seek strength through prayer?

4.2 Development

4.2.1 Benefits of Prayer in the Family

Prayer in the family brings with it many benefits. First, it strengthens the family bond, creating a sense of unity and love among all its members. In addition, prayer fosters the individual spiritual growth of each family member, helping them to deepen their relationship with God.

Likewise, prayer contributes to peace and harmony in the home since it invokes the divine presence and eliminates tensions and conflicts. Finally, prayer provides divine protection over the family, ensuring its safety and well-being in all aspects of life.

A. Prayer strengthens the family bond.

This occurs by creating a space of spiritual connection between all its members. By praying together, the family shares moments of intimacy and trust with God, which strengthens family bonds.

In addition, prayer promotes open and sincere communication among family members, allowing them to express their concerns, blessings, and gratitude. This strengthening of the family bond creates an environment of love and support, where everyone feels valued and loved.

B. Individual spiritual growth of each member.

Through prayer, each person can connect with their faith, reflect on their relationship with God, and deepen their spiritual knowledge. Prayer promotes introspection and personal encounter with the divine, which leads to significant spiritual growth. By cultivating a prayer life in the family, each member is given the opportunity to develop their spirituality in a personal and unique way.

As Bret Eckelberry (2022) points out, praying together as a family develops a greater likelihood that your children will approach situations from a spiritual perspective.

The Incomparable Eternal Blog (n.d.) suggests some things to pray for in the spiritual area, especially in terms of each family being restored:

- May a renewal of holiness come in the lives of every family.
- May marriages and families be an example of holiness, because models are needed for the new generations that have lost the sense of holiness.
- May each Family renounce all spiritual decay in which they have accommodated themselves, so that they may return to God's original plan.
- May marriages be stable and permanent, that they be like a wall for their children where they grow up safely.
- May children be more sensitive to God's voice, and be able to respond like Samuel, "Speak, LORD, for your servant hears."

C. Peace and harmony in the home.

Prayer in the family is a powerful means of gaining peace and harmony in the home. By invoking God's presence in moments of prayer, an atmosphere of serenity and tranquility is created. Prayer calms hearts, dispels conflicts, and promotes mutual understanding.

In addition, family prayer allows the needs and concerns of each member to be expressed, thus opening a space to find peaceful solutions and promote reconciliation. Consequently, prayer fosters an environment of peace and harmony within the home.

D. Divine protection over the family.

Prayer in the family establishes a direct connection with God, resulting in divine protection over the family. As we pray together, we invoke God's guidance and care, both in moments of joy and in challenges. Prayer strengthens faith and trust in God, ensuring that the family is protected from any danger or adversity. In addition, divine protection extends to all areas of family life, including health, finances, relationships, and any other aspect that requires security and protection.

4.2.2 How to Set Up a Family Prayer Time

Having a time of prayer as a family is essential to strengthening the spiritual bonds between its members. To set this time, it's important that everyone agrees and engages. You can choose a suitable time, such as after dinner or before bed, where everyone can participate. It's necessary to find a balance between choosing a time that's convenient for everyone and making sure that there are no distractions during this sacred time.

What would prayer be like in your family? Start by establishing a prayer habit in your home. You may already be doing this, but if you aren't, don't worry, you can get started today. In Ephesians, it says: *Pray in the Spirit at all times, with petitions and supplications.* Ephesians 6:18a

Make your home a place filled with all kinds of prayers. Here are some practical steps for this.

A. Choose a suitable time.

Choosing an appropriate time for family prayer is essential to ensure everyone's participation. It can be helpful to identify a time when everyone is available, such as after dinner or before bed.

By establishing a daily routine, a habit is created that allows family members to anticipate and prepare for this time of communion with God. In addition, by choosing an appropriate time, interruptions or distractions that could affect concentration and connection in family prayer are avoided.

B. Create an environment conducive to prayer.

Creating an environment conducive to family prayer is critical to fostering intimacy and reverence during this special time. A specific area can be decorated with religious symbols, such as a cross or sacred images, to remember God's presence.

In addition, it's important to make sure that the place is clean and tidy, which helps to maintain concentration and respect. Turning off electronic devices and avoiding external distractions also contributes to creating an environment of peace and spiritual connection.

C. Designate a prayer leader in the family.

When you pray with your family, choose one person to pray for and ask others to listen, kneel, and bow their heads in reverence as that person prays. Teach your family members to pray and take turns praying each day. (Church of Jesus Christ, n.d.)

Designating a prayer leader in the family can help organize and guide prayer time effectively. This person may be responsible for leading prayers, selecting intentions, and making sure that all members have an opportunity to participate.

By appointing a prayer leader, responsibility and commitment in the family's spiritual life are promoted. Prayer leader roles can also alternate among members, encouraging participation and strengthening a sense of unity in the Christian family.

4.2.3 Prayer as a tool to resolve family conflicts

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that they may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. James 5:16

Prayer is a powerful tool that can help Christian families resolve conflicts effectively. When we face difficulties and disagreements at home, we can turn to prayer to seek God's guidance. Communication with Him helps us to gain clarity and perspective in difficult situations, which helps us find peaceful and harmonious solutions. By praying together as a family, we can strengthen our bonds and cultivate an environment of forgiveness and reconciliation, which is essential to maintaining unity and peace in the home.

A. Seek God's guidance in difficult situations.

In times of adversity and difficult situations, prayer gives us the opportunity to seek God's guidance. By coming to Him with humility and sincerity, we can receive divine wisdom to deal with family conflicts. God knows our circumstances and has the power to show us the right way. Through fervent prayer, we can trust Him to give us the answers and solutions we need to resolve the difficulties we face as a family. Prayer helps us to remember that we're not alone, that we have the help and love of our heavenly Father.

B. Ask for forgiveness and forgive in prayer.

Prayer also provides us with a space to ask for forgiveness and forgive others in situations of family conflict. Humility and a willingness to acknowledge our mistakes are critical to achieving reconciliation and restoring harmony within the home.

As we pray together, we can express our repentance and ask God for forgiveness for our faults, as well as forgive our loved ones for the hurts they have caused us. Prayer gives us the strength and ability to release resentment and cultivate forgiveness, creating an environment of love and unity in our Christian family.

C. Finding peaceful solutions through prayer.

By presenting our concerns and differences to God, we can receive His guidance and wisdom to resolve problems fairly and equitably. Prayer helps us to remain calm, control our emotions and seek solutions that promote reconciliation and mutual understanding.

In addition, prayer strengthens our faith and trust in God, reminding us that He has the power to transform any difficult situation into an opportunity to grow and strengthen family bonds. By prayerfully seeking His direction, we can find the peace and harmony we need in our Christian family.

4.2.4 Prayer as a source of strength and hope in difficult times

Prayer is a powerful source of strength and hope for Christian families in difficult times. Through prayer, we can find comfort and direction in the midst of adversity. It helps us to draw closer to God and place our worries and burdens on Him. As we pray fervently, our faith is strengthened and we remember that God is present in every situation. It helps us to trust that He has control over our lives and will give us the strength to overcome difficulties. Prayer gives us the assurance that we're not alone and that God is working on our behalf.

Bret Eckelberry (2022) points out that:

By praying with your family, you're also strengthening your relationship with them. Perhaps you pray with them about something that worries them or join them in praising God for good events. Whatever the case, you're spending time with them, sharing experiences and supporting them.

A. Face illnesses or family crises in prayer.

Facing illness or family crises in prayer is vitally important to the Christian family. Through prayer, we can seek healing and divine comfort in the midst of sickness. By praying together as a family, we strengthen family bonds and find mutual support. Prayer helps us maintain hope and trust that God has power to heal and restore. We draw near to Him in search of direction and peace in times of uncertainty. Maintaining a constant prayerful attitude helps us face crises with strength and find comfort in God's presence.

B. Maintain faith and trust in God during trials.

Prayer strengthens us and helps us remember God's promises in the midst of difficulties. Through prayer, we can renew our faith and reaffirm our trust in God's power and faithfulness. By encouraging one another in prayer, we can find comfort and hope even in the most difficult times. Prayer connects us to divine strength and helps us not to falter in our faith, but to remain steadfast trusting that God has a plan and will carry us through trials.

C. Receive divine comfort through prayer.

Through prayer, we can receive divine comfort in times of distress and pain. Prayer helps us to draw close to God and express our worries, sorrows, and anxieties to Him. As we pour out our hearts before Him, we find comfort and peace that can only come from His love and grace.

Prayer helps us find relief in the midst of difficulties by trusting that God is present and caring for us. As we receive divine comfort, we're strengthened and able to endure the challenges we face. Prayer is a powerful instrument for receiving the peace and comfort that only God can provide.

4.2.5 Prayer as a form of thanksgiving and praise to God

Prayer is a powerful way to express our thanks and praise to God. Through it, we can recognize the blessings and provisions God has given us in our families. When we stop to pray and reflect on all the good things God has done for us, we cultivate a grateful heart. Prayer helps us to express gratitude and praise for His love and mercy, and it helps us stay connected to Him at all times.

A. Recognize God's blessings and provisions in prayer.

In prayer of thanksgiving and praise, it's important to acknowledge the blessings and provisions God has given to our families. We can focus on aspects such as health, daily provision, opportunities, love, and the divine protection that surrounds us. As we prayerfully acknowledge these blessings, we strengthen our faith and trust in God, and we realize how much He loves and cares for us. Prayer helps us to cherish and be grateful for every blessing we receive from His generous hand.

B. Express gratitude and praise for His love and mercy.

The prayer of thanksgiving and praise gives us the opportunity to express our gratitude to God for His immense love and mercy. We can praise him for his faithfulness in our lives, for his forgiveness and for his compassion.

When we direct our prayer toward gratitude and praise, we recognize that all the good we have comes from Him, and helps us to strengthen our relationship with God and experience His love more deeply. Prayer helps us to express to Him how much we love Him and value His presence in our lives.

C. Cultivate a grateful heart through prayer.

Prayer helps us to cultivate a deeply grateful heart. When we approach God in prayer, we learn to value the little things and recognize their goodness in our daily lives. The action of constantly thanking God helps us to maintain a positive and optimistic attitude, even in difficult times. Through prayer, we can focus on blessings rather than problems, which gives us strength and fills us with hope. Cultivating a grateful heart through prayer transforms our perspective and helps us live a life of gratitude and joy.

4.3 Conclusions

Through this study we've been reminded of the many benefits we have in developing the spiritual habit of fervent prayer in the family. Some of the benefits that we highlighted are the spiritual growth of each member of the family, the strengthening of the family bond, and achieving peace and harmony in the home.

We also saw a simple process which we can begin in every family to develop the habit of fervent prayer. This requires looking for the right time, creating the right environment, as well as having a leader. Parents should model how to do this at first, but they should give the children an opportunity to lead prayer as well. We must also have a list of specific family needs. Let's do it continuously so it becomes a habit.

We've also learned to seek God's guidance in difficult situations as well as asking for forgiveness and forgive in prayer. Thus, in prayer we can find answers to conflicts in the midst of a harmony which helps us to emerge stronger from any difficulty.

Prayer is also a way of thanking God for the blessings we have. Taking time to meditate with a heart of gratitude helps us feel the love of God and our family.

When you pray with your family, remember the needs of others. Help family members realize that there are people around them who have needs, not least of which is the need for salvation.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. What are the main barriers that prevent families from developing the habit of fervent prayer for health? How can they overcome those barriers?

2. What are specific prayers you can pray for your family's healthy development?

3. How does prayer contribute to the spiritual development of each member of the family?

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Lesson 5.

Marriages Reaching Compassionately others for Christ

Biblical Text: Matthew 5:15-16

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Purposes:

- **Recognize** the importance of being a family focused on reaching others for Christ.
- **Develop** a plan to share the gospel with other couples.

5.1 Introduction

It's a reality that the family in today's society is in crisis. Few are seeking God, and many are not doing it in the right way. That's why it's urgent that they have models of Christian families who are willing to share their witness with them and help them to walk the Journey of Grace together.

In this context, it's necessary for the families of our local church to grow in healthy ways. As they do, they'll be willing to share the good news of the gospel. For this reason, in this lesson we're going to study how every Christian family can become an evangelizing and discipling family of other families.

5.2 Development

5.2.1 The Importance of Christian Witness in Marriage

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:9-10

Christian witness in marriage is vitally important, for through our actions and words we can influence the lives of others and bear witness to Christ's love and grace. Our marriage relationship should reflect Christian principles, demonstrating a loving and faithful commitment to one another. By living in ways consistent with our faith, we can inspire others to seek God and experience the transforming power of Jesus in their lives.

A. Living an Exemplary Life in Marriage

One of the foundational pillars of reaching others for Christ as a Christian marriage is to live an exemplary life in our own marriage. This involves honoring God in our actions, having a mutual commitment to faithfulness and respect, and constantly seeking growth and sanctification. By living according to biblical principles, we're showing a visible witness of Christ's redemptive work in our lives and providing a positive and attractive example for other marriages.

B. Effective and loving communication with the partner

Effective and loving communication is key to reaching others for Christ as a Christian couple. It's important to learn to listen to and understand our partner, express our feelings respectfully and honestly, and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Healthy, loving communication in marriage shows the love of Christ and can positively impact others by showing them how they can have healthy and uplifting relationships based on love and mutual understanding.

C. Show compassion and empathy towards others

Showing compassion and empathy toward others is essential to reaching others for Christ as a Christian couple. We should strive to understand the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of the people around us and be willing to provide them with support and comfort in times of difficulty.

By showing compassion and empathy, we're reflecting the character of Christ and demonstrating God's unconditional love for each person. This can open doors to share the Gospel message and lead others into a relationship with Jesus.

5.2.2 How to reach others for Christ as a Christian couple

A. Pray for opportunities and wisdom to share the gospel

We know that reaching others for Christ as a Christian marriage requires opportunity and wisdom. Therefore, it's essential to dedicate daily time to prayer, asking God to open doors and provide us with opportunities to share the gospel with those who don't yet know Jesus.

We must also ask for wisdom and discernment to know how to communicate the message of salvation effectively and lovingly. By praying constantly for these two things, we'll be prepared to take advantage of every opportunity God gives us and share the love of Christ genuinely and persuasively.

B. Invite other couples to church events and activities

By inviting other couples to church events and activities, we're providing an opportunity for them to encounter God and a space where they can experience love and Christian community. By participating together in events such as worship services, Bible study groups, or community service activities, we're creating an environment that's conducive for other couples to learn about the gospel message and feel part of the Christian family.

By inviting them, we show them that we care about their relationship with God and their spiritual growth, and we give them the opportunity to be part of a community that will support them on their journey with Christ. In addition, by sharing our experiences and testimonies of faith, we can motivate and inspire other couples to follow Christ and live according to His teachings. Join us in being bearers of Christ's hope and love by inviting other couples to church events and activities.

C. Serving the Community as a Christian Couple

As a Christian couple, it's crucial to understand the importance of serving the community in Christ's name. This involves being willing to put in the time and effort to help, support, and bless those around us. We can look for opportunities in our local church to participate in community service projects, such as distributing food to families in need, visiting the elderly in care homes, and organizing events for the community.

Through our service, we can demonstrate Christ's love and compassion to those who don't yet know Him. By serving together as a married couple, we strengthen our relationship with God and also bear witness to the love and unity that comes from Him. Let's always remember that our purpose is to reach others for Christ through our compassionate actions and words.

5.2.3 Overcoming Obstacles and Challenges in Reaching Others for Christ

When reaching others for Christ, it's common to encounter obstacles and challenges that could hinder our purpose. However, we must persevere and overcome these difficulties with determination and faith. Let's review some obstacles and see how to overcome them so that we can share our faith in Christ Jesus with others.

A. Dealing with resistance or rejection from others

In seeking to reach others for Christ, it's common to encounter resistance or rejection. However, it's important to maintain a persevering and compassionate attitude. Sometimes, people may have prejudices or misconceptions about Christianity, so it's critical to listen to their concerns and respond with love and wisdom. Don't be discouraged if you face rejection, as it's not personal.

Remember that the Holy Spirit works in hearts and we should not take resistance as failure. Continue to pray for these people and be a living example of Christ's love, showing them patience, kindness, and compassion at all times.

B. Maintaining an Attitude of Love and Patience in the Midst of Hardship

On the path of reaching others for Christ as a Christian couple, it's crucial to maintain an attitude of love and patience in the midst of difficulties that may arise. As we strive to share our faith and live as a witness for Christ, some will encounter resistance or rejection. It's in these moments that we must remember the unconditional love and patience that God has shown us.

By standing firm in our faith and trusting in the transforming power of the gospel, we can pass on that same compassion and patience to others. Recognizing that each person has their own path and time, we must be patient and understanding, providing support and praying for those who have not yet experienced the love of Christ.

In addition, it's important to remember that the process of reaching others for Christ can take time and effort, but we must persevere with love and patience, trusting that the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of those with whom we share the Gospel message.

C. Seek Christian support and counseling to strengthen marriages

Seeking Christian support and counseling is critical to strengthening marriages. By seeking support, couples can receive guidance and wisdom from the Christian faith which will enable them to face the challenges and obstacles that arise along the way. Through counseling, they'll be able to learn practical tools to improve communication, resolve conflicts, and strengthen their commitment to each other.

In addition, the support of other Christian couples who have gone through similar situations can be invaluable. Finding a supportive community within the church will provide them with the opportunity to share experiences, receive encouragement, and grow together in their marriage and relationship with Christ. Seeking Christian support and counseling is a significant step toward a strong and successful marriage relationship centered on biblical principles and the love of Christ.

5.2.4 The Importance of Unity and Commitment in Christian Marriage

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:12

Unity and commitment are fundamental in a Christian marriage. The Bible teaches us that two become one when they marry, and this involves working together in all aspects of life, including evangelistic outreach. When a married couple is united and committed, they can face challenges and obstacles together, strengthening their testimony and their relationship with Christ. Unity also allows them to be an example in their ministry, inspiring other couples to follow their example.

D. Working Together as a Team in Evangelistic Outreach

Teamwork is essential in evangelistic outreach as a Christian couple. By working together, you can combine your skills and gifts to maximize your impact on the world.

You can strategize, look for opportunities, and support each other at every step of the evangelization process. In addition, by working as a team, you can provide mutual support and encouragement, which strengthens your marriage and testimony. Together, as a team, you can accomplish much more than if you act alone.

E. Maintaining a Strong Relationship with God as the Foundation of Marriage

A strong relationship with God is the foundation of a strong, committed Christian marriage. By maintaining a constant connection with God through prayer, Bible reading, and worship, you strengthen your faith and bond as a couple. By having God at the center of your marriage, you find wisdom, direction, and strength to face any challenge that comes your way. In addition, as you grow together spiritually, you also grow in your ability to compassionately reach others for Christ.

F. Support each other in spiritual growth and ministry

Mutual support in spiritual growth and ministry is crucial in a Christian marriage. Each spouse has a responsibility to encourage and motivate the other in your relationship with God. You can pray together, study the Bible, attend church services, and cultivate a life of shared worship. In addition, by supporting each other in your ministry, you can work together to reach others for Christ effectively. This involves encouraging and supporting each other in the tasks and challenges of ministry, reminding each other of the importance and purpose of your work in the Kingdom of God.

5.2.5 How to Stay Focused on the Purpose of Reaching Others for Christ

To keep the focus on the purpose of reaching others for Christ as a Christian couple, it's critical to constantly remember God's mission and calling. It's important to keep in mind that our responsibility as followers of Christ is to share the love and salvation we've received. Daily prayer and reflection will help us to remain aware of this purpose and to look for opportunities to be witnesses of Christ in our daily lives.

A. Constantly reminding yourself of God's mission and calling

Constantly remembering God's mission and calling is essential to keeping the focus on the purpose of reaching others for Christ. We must remember that God has called us to be His ambassadors to the world and to share the gospel with love and compassion. We can do this by remembering the scriptures and verses that motivate us to keep going, and by maintaining an intimate relationship with God through prayer and study of the Word. By doing this, we'll be strengthening our conviction and commitment to reach others for Christ.

B. Setting clear goals and objectives in evangelistic outreach

To keep the focus on the purpose of reaching others for Christ, it's important to set clear goals and objectives in evangelistic outreach. These goals may include the number of people we want to share the gospel with in a certain period of time, participating in church events and activities to connect with new people, or forming home Bible study groups. By setting concrete goals, we give ourselves direction and a sense of purpose in our evangelistic ministry as a married couple.

C. Evaluate and adjust strategies to maximize impact

To maximize the impact on evangelistic outreach as a Christian couple, it's necessary to constantly evaluate and adjust our strategies. This involves analyzing the results of our evangelistic actions, identifying what has worked and what hasn't, and making adjustments as needed to improve our effectiveness. We can conduct surveys or solicit feedback from people with whom we have shared the gospel to gain different perspectives. By tailoring our strategies to the needs and characteristics of the people we want to reach, we can make a greater impact on the expansion of God's kingdom.

5.3 Conclusions

In this lesson we've learned about the importance of assuming that as families we can also be agents of God's Mission. Sharing the gospel with other marriages should be a priority in every marriage. In doing so we'll be growing in Grace toward the stature of Christ.

This requires that our witness as a married couple be pleasing before God. We must be transformed by His grace. If we walk in obedience to Christ, we can be an inspiration to the lives of other married couples. We've also studied that unity in marriage is fundamental to being able to fulfill this mandate we have to share the Gospel with others.

Having goals and evaluating the results will help us modify some of the strategies we implement when evangelizing others. The important thing is to continue to focus as a couple on the fulfillment of the Mission.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. What are the main obstacles you have in sharing the Gospel with other couples? How could they overcome them?

2. Think of three couples to whom you would like to share Christ. What could be the actions to be carried out to begin to sow in them an interest in the Gospel?

3. What might be some compassionate outreach ministries that you can get involved in with your family?

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Lesson 6. **Equipping the family** *To Serve*

Biblical Text: Matthew 5:14

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Purposes:

- **Recognize** that the family is the basis for training and equipping its members.
- **Strengthen** the spiritual formation of each member of the family.
- **Encourage** each member of the family to participate in a ministry of the church.

6.1 Introduction

Within the Church each one has a purpose according to the specific calling that God makes to us. Disciples must recognize the need to be equipped to serve in the ministry to which God has called us.

Aside from the church, the family is another option to be properly trained to do the ministry of the church or truly live a life of love. Therefore, in this lesson we're going to study how each family can equip its members to fulfill God's purpose for each one.

6.2 Development

6.2.1 Importance of Involving the Family in Christian Ministries

It's critical to involve the family in Christian ministries, as this strengthens family faith, develops Christian values in children, and fosters family unity. By participating in activities and serving God together, an environment of spiritual growth and mutual commitment is created. The family becomes an emotional support and living example of the Christian faith for the entire congregation. In addition, by getting involved in ministries, the family has the opportunity to use their gifts and talents to serve God and the community.

A. Strengthening family faith.

If God does not build the house, it is useless for the builders to make an effort. If God does not watch over the city, it is useless for the watchmen to stay awake. Psalm 127:1

Strengthening family faith is essential to face life's challenges and difficulties. By involving the family in Christian ministries:

- Family prayer is promoted,
- The study of the Bible as a whole is encouraged, and
- They get involved in church activities.

These practices strengthen their relationship with God and among family members, creating an environment of solid faith and trust in divine providence. In addition, participation in ministries provides opportunities to apply faith in concrete actions, generating significant spiritual growth.

B. Development of Christian values in children.

The development of Christian values in children is a crucial responsibility of parents. By involving the family in Christian ministries, children are taught the importance of generosity, love of neighbor, humility, and compassion.

By engaging in community service and caring for those most in need, children learn to live out the fundamental principles of Christianity. This helps them build a solid foundation of ethical and moral principles that will guide them throughout their lives.

C. Promotion of family unity.

By involving the family in Christian ministries, family unity is promoted. Participating in service and worship activities together creates moments of intimacy and connection among family members.

Teamwork strengthens family bonds and fosters effective communication, conflict resolution, and mutual support. The family becomes a pillar of emotional and spiritual support to face life's challenges. In addition, by serving together, the family becomes a living witness to God's love and transforming power.

6.2.2 Spiritual Preparation of the Family

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.
Deuteronomy 6:6-9

The spiritual preparation of the family is essential to get involved in Christian ministries. It's important that each member of the family dedicates time:

- For Bible study,
- To pray as a family and
- To participate in church activities.

These practices will strengthen their faith and provide a solid foundation for serving in ministries. By engaging together in these activities, the family will grow spiritually and be able to face any challenges that come their way in Christian service.

A. Family Bible study.

Bible study is an effective way to prepare spiritually for Christian ministries. As you study the scriptures together, your family gains a greater knowledge of God's Word and develops a deeper understanding of their faith.

In addition, family Bible study fosters fellowship and mutual spiritual growth. This practice will allow you to align your lives with biblical principles and will give you a solid foundation to serve in the ministries of the church.

B. Family prayer.

Family prayer is essential to the spiritual preparation of the family for Christian ministries. By praying together, the family strengthens their connection with God and seeks His guidance and direction in all the activities they'll undertake.

Family prayer gives them the opportunity to share their concerns, dreams, and desires with God, trusting in His provision and wisdom. Through prayer, the family comes together in a common purpose and prepares to serve effectively in the Christian ministries of the church.

C. Participation in church activities.

Participation in church activities is a crucial part of the family's spiritual preparation for Christian ministries. By engaging in activities such as Bible studies, prayer groups, and worship services, the family is immersed in the life of the Christian community. This allows them to learn from other believers, share their gifts and talents, and find practical ways to serve others.

Participation in church activities strengthens the family's commitment to ministry and provides them with enriching experiences that will prepare them to be effective instruments in Christian ministries.

6.2.3 Identifying Family Gifts and Talents

Identifying family gifts and talents is essential to service in Christian ministries. Each family member has unique skills, abilities, and spiritual gifts that can be used for the glory of God. By recognizing and cultivating these gifts, the family can work together effectively and complementarily in the ministries of the church.

A. Discovery of individual skills.

The discovery of individual skills is an important step in identifying family gifts and talents. Each family member should take the time to explore their own skills and talents.

This can be achieved through hands-on activities, such as participating in different tasks and roles within the faith community. The discovery of individual skills will help determine in which areas each member can contribute most effectively to Christian ministries.

B. Evaluation of the interests of each member.

Assessing the interests of each family member is also important in identifying family gifts and talents. It's critical to know each person's areas of interest and passion, as this will give them motivation and satisfaction in serving in Christian ministries.

Having open conversations and listening carefully to each family member's aspirations can help determine where they can find their purpose and contribute meaningfully.

C. Promotion of spiritual gifts.

The promotion of spiritual gifts in the family is vital to growth and development in Christian ministries. Once individual gifts and talents have been identified, it's necessary to foster and strengthen these gifts through education and practice.

This can be accomplished by encouraging each member to participate in activities related to their gifts, providing them with opportunities to serve and grow in their faith. In addition, the family can seek additional resources and training to improve and fully utilize the gifts God has given them.

6.2.4 Training and Formation in Christian Ministries

Training and formation in Christian ministries is essential for the family to be able to serve efficiently and effectively. Through courses and workshops designed specifically for the family, the opportunity is provided to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to serve in different areas of the church. These trainings cover topics such as leadership, biblical teaching, counseling, worship, and community service, thus strengthening the preparation of family members.

A. Courses and workshops for the family.

Family courses and workshops are a great way to train and gain new skills in Christian ministries. These activities provide theoretical and practical knowledge on topics such as the Bible, prayer, discipleship, and church service.

In addition, they allow for the development of specific skills, such as teaching, leadership, and counseling which are critical to performing effectively in ministries. These courses and workshops are taught by expert leaders in each area and foster the spiritual and ministerial growth of the whole family.

B. Mentoring and discipleship.

Mentoring and discipleship are important tools for growth and formation in Christian ministries. Through mentoring, family members can receive guidance and support from people with experience in Christian service. These mentors provide practical advice, share their knowledge, and encourage the family to grow spiritually and develop their gifts and talents.

On the other hand, discipleship allows for a closer and more personalized follow-up, where the study of the Bible is deepened, the relationship with God is strengthened, and the importance of living a life according to Christian principles is emphasized.

C. Participation in service teams.

Participation in service teams is a valuable opportunity for the family to become actively involved in Christian ministries. By serving on service teams, the family can contribute their gifts and talents to meet the needs of the church and community.

These teams can include ministries such as worship, teaching, children's ministries, youth ministries, social service, among others. By participating in service teams, the family not only benefits from applying what they have learned, but it also strengthens the family unit by serving together and sharing meaningful experiences in the ministry field.

6.2.5 Integrating the Family into Church Ministries

To strengthen the family bond through service in the church and encourage the participation of all members, it's essential to integrate the family in different ministries. This allows parents and children to work together in God's work, strengthening their faith and growing spiritually as a family.

In addition, by being part of the church's ministries, the family becomes a living example of devotion and commitment, positively impacting the community and attracting others to know Christ.

It's also very necessary to get involved as a family in ministries outside the church, which are focused on compassionately reaching non-believers. If your local church doesn't already have some of these ministries, you can talk to your pastor and bring the proposal to him/her. It's very necessary that among several families you can support each ministry that's generated. Another way to get organized is through your small groups. Some possible ministries you can start with would be:

- Hospital ministry where we can share the Word and food with families who are going to visit relatives in a hospital.
- Offer lunches once a week (possibly Saturdays) to children with limited resources. The purpose is to sow the Word in the hearts of these little ones.
- Periodically visit a Children's or Nursing Home.
- Offer academic support to children and adolescents so that they improve in their school work. It can be scheduled in the Church one or two days a week where the little ones are supported to do their homework, study their topics, etc.
- Offer counseling services to families in the community where we minister.
- Visit sick people.

6.3 Conclusions

It must be recognized that the family, together with the church, are the basis for forming and equipping its members. Therefore, it's incumbent upon us in the family to begin equipping each member to serve in some ministry of the church.

In this formation and training of our members, it's essential to strengthen the spiritual formation of each member of the family. It's very important that each one be transformed into the image of Christ. Then we could train ourselves to serve.

The identification of the gifts of each member of the family is necessary in order to place each one in the ministry to which each one has been called by God. Our responsibility is to encourage each member of the family to participate in some ministry of the church

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. How can you help your family discover what their gifts are? Why is this important?

2. How can you strengthen spiritual formation in your family? Make a small plan.

3. How can you encourage each member of your family, according to their age and gifts, to get involved in a ministry in the local Church?

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Lesson 7. **Making** *Wise Decisions*

Biblical Text: Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Purposes:

- **Make** wise decisions about marriage and family.
- **Seek** God's wisdom for their decisions.
- **Teach** your children to make good decisions.

7.1 Introduction

Research shows that we make a lot of decisions every day. Some very simple ones such as how we're going to dress. But there are others, sometimes few, but which are of great importance for the person and the entire family.

We tend to make decisions based more on feelings and emotions of the moment. For example, we usually make a purchase of something that we didn't plan to buy, but when we see it and hear the seller offer "everything we'll get" if we get the product, we end up buying it. Sometimes we may regret it on the third day.

It's a reality that on many occasions people and entire families find themselves in difficult situations that have been the result of bad decisions made. That ends up affecting all areas of life, including the spiritual part.

That's why it's very important to study in this lesson: What are the Bible's principles for making decisions? How can we gain wisdom to make good decisions? What is the process for making good decisions? How can we help our children learn to make good decisions?

7.2 Development

7.2.1 Biblical Principles for Making Good Decisions

Good decision-making begins with discerning God's will. Our Lord Jesus gave us an example of what our attitude should be in decision-making when He stated:

But not my will, but yours be done. Luke 22:42b

A. Make Decisions Based on Biblical Principles

Making decisions based on biblical principles is critical to living a wise life in alignment with God's will. God's Word provides us with a clear path forward and guides us in every area of our lives. By making decisions based on biblical principles, we're making sure we make the right choices that please God and benefit us and those around us.

1. Establishing a solid foundation in God's Word.

To make wise decisions based on biblical principles, it's critical to establish a solid foundation in God's Word. This involves studying and meditating on the scriptures and deeply understanding God's commandments and teachings. By knowing God's Word, we can have a clear understanding of His will and apply it to our daily decisions.

2. Applying Bible Principles to Everyday Situations

There is a path that seems right to man; But its end is a path of death. Proverbs 14:12

Applying biblical principles to our everyday decisions helps us to make wise decisions aligned with God's will. The Bible provides us with clear, timeless principles that we can apply to any situation we face. By considering the commandments and examples of faith present in God's Word, we can make choices that reflect God's justice, love, and wisdom.

Pastor Charles Stanley (2022) gives us the following help to develop our convictions that help the family in the decision-making process.

- Living for a cause greater than ourselves. We must decide to live for Christ and for the Kingdom of God.
- Be sure of what we believe. We must be firm in obeying what the Word asks us to do and avoid what the Bible forbids.
- Obey God and leave all the consequences in His hands. Let's be true to His Word, even when it causes us trouble. The Lord is always with us, no matter what happens.
- Remember God's sovereignty. Keep in mind that He has all the control and authority over what happens in the world. He'll give us a way out when we face difficulties for obeying Him.
- Be aware that we'll face conflicts for following our Christian values. As we live according to biblical principles, not everyone will agree with us. Some will disagree with our lifestyle and reject us.

3. Seeking Wise Counsel from Spiritual Leaders

The fool's way is right in his opinion; But he who obeys counsel is wise. Proverbs 12:15

Seeking the counsel of wise spiritual leaders is essential when making decisions based on biblical principles. These leaders, who have a deep understanding of God's Word, can provide us with divine guidance and perspective in our specific situations. By seeking their advice, we can gain additional wisdom and consider different viewpoints before making an important decision. The wisdom of spiritual leaders helps us discern God's will and strengthens us in our walk of faith.

B. Trust in God's guidance

Trusting God's guidance is critical to making wise decisions. We must recognize that He has perfect knowledge and divine wisdom to direct our lives. By trusting God, we can be sure that He'll lead us on the right path. This involves believing in His power to intervene in our decisions and trusting Him to lead us on the path that best aligns with His plans and purposes for us.

a. Recognizing God's Voice in Our Decisions

Recognizing God's voice in our decisions is essential to making wise decisions. This is accomplished through a constant relationship with Him through prayer and meditation on His Word. By having direct communication with God, we can discern His will and hear His instructions.

In addition, it's important to be attentive to the signs and ways God speaks to us, whether through His Word, circumstances, or the counsel of spiritual leaders. By acknowledging their voice, we'll be on the right path to making wise decisions.

b. Putting aside fear and uncertainty

To make wise decisions, we must let go of fear and uncertainty. Fear can paralyze us and lead us to make impulsive decisions or lack confidence in ourselves. However, by trusting God and His guidance, we can overcome fear and uncertainty. We must remember that God is with us and that He'll enable us to make wise choices. By letting go of fear and uncertainty, we'll be more open to listening to God's voice and following His direction in our decisions.

c. Trust that God has a perfect plan for you

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

It's vital to trust that God has a perfect plan for us. Even if we sometimes don't understand the circumstances or purpose behind certain decisions, we must trust that God has a bigger and better plan. He knows what's best for us and always has our best interests in mind. By trusting in His plan, we can be assured that the direction that guides us will be the right one. This helps us make decisions with confidence knowing that God is at work in our lives.

7.2.2 The Importance of Making Wise Choices

A. Impact of decisions on our lives

The impact of our decisions on our lives is undeniable. Every choice we make can have both positive and negative consequences. A wise decision can lead us down the right path, helping us achieve our goals and objectives.

On the other hand, an impulsive or irresponsible decision can bring with it unwanted consequences that take us away from our dreams. It's crucial to understand that our decisions shape our destiny and making them consciously helps us to open doors to success and personal fulfillment.

B. Benefits of Making Wise Choices

Making wise choices brings with it a number of significant benefits. When we make informed decisions, we can avoid problematic situations and unnecessary conflicts.

In addition, we feel more confident in our choices and gain confidence in ourselves. Wise choices also provide us with the opportunity to grow and learn, as every wise choice propels us forward. As we consistently make wise decisions, we also cultivate a reputation for trustworthiness and wisdom among those around us.

C. Consequences of Making Impulsive Decisions

Making impulsive decisions can have negative consequences on different aspects of our lives. A decision made without reflection or consideration can lead us to difficult or even dangerous situations. We may regret impulsive decisions and face regret and the difficulties that come with them.

Additionally, impulsive decisions can damage our relationships and negatively impact our overall health and well-being. It's important to remember that our impulsive choices have the potential to affect not only ourselves, but also those close to us.

7.2.3 Seeking Divine Wisdom

And if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all abundantly and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:5

To make wise decisions, it's critical to seek the divine wisdom that comes from God. We must recognize that we need God's wisdom is the first step. In doing so, we recognize our limitation and dependence on Him. This opens us up to receiving His guidance and direction in our decisions. By seeking divine wisdom, we're making sure to make choices that are aligned with His will and plan for our life.

A. Recognizing the Need for God's Wisdom

It's important to recognize that we need God's wisdom to make wise decisions. Our own wisdom is limited, and our decisions can be influenced by our personal emotions and desires. By recognizing our need for divine wisdom, we open ourselves to receiving the direction and discernment that only God can give us. This helps us make better decisions that are in line with His plans for us.

B. Praying for Direction and Discernment

Our Lord Jesus prayed many times for the Father's direction. One example was when He was going to call His disciples (Mark 3:13-19). Kings in the Old Testament also prayed to know if they should go into battle or know how to win it.

Prayer is a powerful tool for seeking divine wisdom. As we pray, we're asking God to guide us and give us discernment in our decisions. It's important to take the time to pray and seek God's direction before making important decisions. In doing so, we're surrendering our decisions to God and trusting in His wisdom. Prayer connects us to God and helps us receive His direction in all areas of our lives, including our decisions.

C. Studying God's Word for Wisdom

The study of God's Word is key to gaining divine wisdom. The Bible is an inexhaustible source of wisdom and teaches us God's principles and values. By studying God's Word, we can learn from biblical characters who made wise choices in their lives. This shows us how we can apply those principles to our own decisions. The study of God's Word enables us to discern between good and evil, and gives us the wisdom necessary to make sound decisions aligned with God's will.

7.2.4 Process for Making Wise Decisions

Pastor Rick Warren (2024) offers us the following proposal to make wise decisions:

A. Take the time to make the right choice.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's guidance in every aspect of our lives.

Galatians 5:25

Avoid making hasty decisions. Many times, we get carried away by emotions, or the stress of a situation doesn't allow us to think well about what we're going to decide. On other occasions, we haven't obtained enough information to make a good decision.

B. Take time to listen to God's Word.

I considered the course of my life and decided to return to your laws. Psalm 119:59

You should consult what the Word says about it. For example, if we're offered a business that seems very profitable, but it's about marketing something that doesn't go with God's will, we can decide beforehand not to invest in that business.

C. Pray for one another.

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Romans 15:30

You must put the matter to be decided to prayer. As a family, go to God in prayer for the answer to what you are to do. You can ask God to give you focus and clarity.

D. Seek the advice of wise friends.

Without wise leadership, the nation sinks; security lies in having many advisors. Proverbs 11:14

Consult with other Christians on the subject. You can look for people who know more about the topic about which you're going to make a decision. For example, if it's family finances, helping a child choose their future professional career, etc., find the wisest people you know and listen to their advice.

7.2.5 Teaching our children to make good decisions

In the Blog La Roca (n.d.). Here are some tips on how to support our children in learning to make good decisions. Here are some of those ideas:

A. Model your own decision-making process.

Based on your children's age, explain how you make decisions in your daily life. For example, if you're going to the store and it's raining, ask your child to help you think about how to do it without getting wet. You can share your steps to reach a decision and achieve it. Always ask them for their opinion.

The Rock Blog (n.d.) suggests that if we're praying for more complex decisions such as buying a car, we should take the opportunity to pray with them about that decision while asking God for wisdom. When your children see you make wise decisions, they'll be more likely to make the wise decision themselves.

B. Tell stories.

The Bible is full of people who succeeded and others who failed in wisdom. Read these stories together and talk about the consequences you experienced. For example, when Rehoboam, son of Solomon, asks for advice from the elderly and then from young people like him to see if he should raise taxes (2 Chronicles 10).

You can also take advantage of other opportunities that present themselves in everyday life and even when watching a TV show. Take advantage and talk about the decisions you're seeing unfolding in the story. Use them to teach and help your children discover more about wisdom.

C. Give them a chance to make the wise decision.

We must allow them to make their own decisions. Instead of giving them the answer to the decision, we can guide them through the process of making the wise decision. For example, if they have money saved and want to buy several things, but they don't have enough for everything, what should they do to make their decision about what to buy?

You can help them by asking questions that guide them through the kinds of ideas they need to consider when making a decision. Over time, those same types of questions will begin to be asked. The Blog La Roca (n.d.) tells us:

They may not yet make the choice you'd like them to make, but at least they're thinking about it. And who knows, they may surprise you and consider something you didn't.

D. Let them be wrong.

Try to resist the urge to rescue your children from the consequences of their choices. Sometimes we need to let our children make the wrong choices, but that will help them gain wisdom that will help them for the rest of their lives.

The Blog La Roca (n.d.) recommends that:

When they make mistakes, don't take the responsibility away from them. Let them learn from their mistake and get back to it. Show them that you can still trust them even when they choose wrongly. This will help give them confidence to come back to it and grow in wisdom.

E. Celebrate victories.

When your children make the wise decision, celebrate it with them. There are simple expressions you can express to show your celebration like a hug, with a note in their school bag, or even by going to celebrate with ice cream.

It's good to celebrate that they chose to finish their homework before playing video games all week, and showing them appreciation will affirm those choices and reinforce to your children that it was worth the effort to make the wise decision.

7.3 Conclusions

Making wise choices is critical to our lives. The decisions we make have a significant impact on our lives and can determine our future. By making wise choices, we can gain many benefits, such as greater peace and contentment, healthy relationships, and personal achievement.

On the other hand, making impulsive decisions can lead us to face negative consequences and regret it in the future. Therefore, it's important to seek the wisdom that comes from God. Recognizing the need for divine wisdom, we can pray for direction and discernment, study God's Word, and avoid negative influences that can affect our decisions.

In addition, it's important to learn a decision-making process based on biblical principles, establishing a solid foundation in God's Word, and seeking wise counsel from spiritual leaders.

We learned that it's necessary to start teaching our children to make decisions from a young age. To do this, they must see in us the way we make decisions, we should give them the opportunity to make mistakes in their decisions, and celebrate with them when they make good decisions.

Finally, we must trust God's guidance, acknowledge His voice in our decisions, and trust that He has a perfect plan for us. In short, by seeking the wisdom that comes from God and following these principles, we can make wise choices that will lead us to a full and fulfilling life.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. How do you currently make your most important decisions? What have been the results?

Reflection and practical application exercises

2. What can you do to improve your family decision-making process?

3. How can you help your children learn to make decisions? Give three examples.

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Lesson 8. *Winning together* **The obstacles**

Biblical Text: **James 1:2-4**

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Purposes:

- **Work** in unity in the face of obstacles.
- **Develop** your faith to overcome life's difficulties
- **Persevere** until you achieve the purposes that God has for you.

8.1 Introduction

The Journey of Grace is full of difficult moments that test our endurance and faith. We often face health problems, financial problems, difficulties in our relationships, work problems, the loss of a loved one and many more situations that put stress on our lives.

To successfully navigate each of the difficult situations faced in marriage and family, there must be unity and mutual support among them. Otherwise our faith will deteriorate and severely damage our spiritual life.

So in this lesson, we'll study How Can We Overcome Obstacles in Marriage and Family Together?

8.2 Development

8.2.1 Unity, first and foremost

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

Our Lord Jesus considered it vital to strengthen unity in the disciples. He prayed to the Father that they might be one as Jesus and the Father are one. (John 17:6-19). Jesus also warned us that:

And a house divided against itself, falls. Luke 11:17

A family in which each member is looking for themselves without thinking about the others is divided, therefore, it cannot prevail. Thus, we must work to develop unity within marriage and the family. In this regard, Josman Proudinat (n.d.) shares five tips to strengthen family unity:

- **Speak the truth in love.** *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. Ephesians 4:15*
- **Forgive offenses.**
- **Remember things in common.**
- **Pray for unity.** *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. John 17:20-21*

If we remain united to Jesus, we can find the strength to overcome the greatest obstacles. Together, anything is possible.

We can also heed the following key tips to strengthen those bonds and cultivate a strong family unit, which is shared by the Family Playland Blog (2023).

- ***Spend quality time with the family.*** Let's dedicate moments without distractions to play, talk and share unforgettable moments. It's also recommended to establish family traditions such as game nights, watching a movie or having dinner together. All of this contributes to creating valuable memories.
- ***Practice open communication.*** Develop an environment where everyone can express their thoughts and feelings. When you actively listen to your children and respond with empathy, you make them feel valued and loved.
- ***Carry out shared activities.*** Participating in activities together, whether it's cooking, crafting, or sports, creates opportunities to bond.
- ***Teach values.*** Talk to your children about the importance of family unity, responsibility, and respect for others. These values will contribute to developing a sense of identity and belonging.

8.2.2 Developing our faith to overcome difficulties.

In the world you will have trouble; but take heart, I have overcome the world. John 16:33b

Faith is a powerful engine that drives people to overcome any obstacle that comes their way. It's to believe in God as a source of strength and to trust fully in his divinity.

When you have faith, you acquire a security and conviction that allow you to face challenges with courage and determination. Faith strengthens us and gives us the strength to not give up in the face of difficulties. In addition, prayer becomes a fundamental tool to overcome obstacles, since it connects us with the divine and provides us with the necessary guidance and support.

A. Believing in God as a Source of Strength

When you believe in God as a source of strength, you find unlimited power that helps overcome any obstacle. Faith in Him gives us the confidence and security needed to face life's challenges. We know that we're not alone, that we can lean on His love and power. Believing in God gives us the inner strength to persevere and not give up in the face of difficulties. He strengthens us and gives us the strength to move forward, trusting in His goodness and His plan for our lives.

B. Facing Challenges with Confidence in God

Facing challenges with confidence in God involves believing that God is present at all times and is with us every step of the way. The certainty of His love and power gives us the security necessary to face any obstacle that arises. Trusting in God means knowing that we're not alone, that we have someone greater than us who looks after our well-being. This trust impels us not to be afraid, to persevere and not to give up in the face of difficulties, knowing that God is with us and will give us the strength to overcome them.

C. Prayer as a tool to overcome obstacles

Prayer is a powerful tool that helps us to overcome obstacles. Through prayer we connect with the divine, draw closer to God, and receive His guidance and support. In times of difficulty, prayer brings us comfort, strength, and fills us with hope. It helps us maintain faith and confidence that we can overcome any obstacle.

Prayer gives us inner peace and helps us renew our strength to continue fighting. It's a time of intimacy with God in which we can express our concerns and ask for His help and direction.

8.2.3 Perseverance as the key to success

Even if you fall seven times, you will get up. Proverbs 24:16

Perseverance is critical to success in the life of a Christian man. Despite the obstacles that arise, it's important not to give up and to move forward with determination. Perseverance helps us to stand firm in our faith and trust that God will lead us on the path to victory.

A. Do not give up in the face of difficulties

Not giving up in the face of difficulties is essential to overcoming the obstacles that arise in life. A Christian must stand firm in their faith and trust that God has a greater purpose in the midst of difficulties. Through trust in divinity and perseverance, you can find the strength to keep going and overcome any adversity.

B. Staying Determined Despite Failures

Sometimes failures can demotivate a Christian, but it's important to remain determined and not let failures hold us back. God strengthens us in our weaknesses and gives us the ability to learn from our mistakes. By maintaining determination despite failures, we'll be able to move forward and achieve the success God has in store for us.

C. Learning from mistakes and moving forward

Mistakes are learning opportunities in the life of a Christian. Learning from them helps us to grow and improve, avoiding making the same mistakes in the future. We must not let mistakes hold us back, but we must press forward with determination, trusting that God will give us the wisdom and strength to persevere and achieve success.

8.2.4 Mutual support with other families of faith.

A. The support of other believers in difficult times

The support of other believers plays a crucial role in the difficult times that every Christian faces. The community provides emotional and spiritual support, offering comfort and encouragement based on faith in God. Other believers can share similar experiences and understand the struggles and challenges that come with the Christian life. Through the companionship and support of the community, the Christian finds strength and hope to overcome any obstacle, knowing that he or she isn't alone in their path.

B. Sharing experiences and strengthening faith in community

Sharing experiences and strengthening faith in community is essential for the Christian man. By exchanging testimonies and experiences with other believers, faith is strengthened and spiritual growth is stimulated.

The community offers a safe and trusting space where doubts, concerns and reflections can be discussed. Through fellowship with other believers, a broader perspective of faith is gained and the foundation in God is cemented. The exchange of ideas and shared experience strengthen the relationship with God and foster a sense of unity and solidarity that impels the Christian man to persevere and overcome obstacles with confidence.

C. The responsibility to help others in their faith journey

The Christian community has an important responsibility to help others in their journey of faith. This involves providing emotional, spiritual, and practical support to those who are facing difficulties in their Christian life. Through prayer, counsel, and loving action, Christian men can guide those who are going through difficult times.

The responsibility to help others in their journey of faith is based on the idea that Christian love is manifested in concrete actions. By offering help and showing genuine commitment, you strengthen the community and inspire others to move forward in their own faith.

8.3 Conclusions

All families face various difficulties in life. God allows them so that our faith grows and we have spiritual growth.

But as a family we must promote unity and be prepared to face together the various adversities that come our way.

Also, faith is a powerful engine of overcoming that impels the Christian to persevere and overcome despite obstacles. Believing in God as a source of strength and trusting in divinity in the face of challenges are critical. Prayer becomes a powerful tool to overcome any obstacle. In addition, basing our actions and decisions on biblical principles guides us to success.

Perseverance is key to not giving up in the face of difficulties and learning from mistakes to move forward. Hope motivates us to stay positive and envision a better future in difficult times. The influence of faith on our actions and the importance of community in the journey of the Christian are fundamental aspects.

Also, Christian witness has a significant impact on our environment, inspiring others through the example of life and living according to Christian values.

In short, the Christian marriages that win despite obstacles are sustained by faith, perseverance, hope, faith-based decisions, and community influence, leaving a positive impact on their environment.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. How can we strengthen unity to overcome all kinds of obstacles as a family?

2. What do you consider to be the most common difficulties faced by each family?

3. How can you help other families solve their problems? Give three examples.

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Lesson 9. *Emotional Support* in marriage

Biblical Text: Ephesians 4:2-3

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Purposes:

- **Explain** the importance of emotional support in marriage.
- **Develop** strategies to foster emotional support with your partner.

9.1 Introduction

In the current context, marriage faces numerous challenges that test the relationship between husband and wife. The importance of emotional support in marriage is a relevant and timely topic, as it can make the difference in the stability and strength of the marriage. From a biblical perspective, emotional support is critical to promoting love, understanding, and solidarity within marriage.

In this lesson, we'll explore the importance of emotional support in marriage from a biblical perspective, analyzing how this concept can strengthen the relationship between husbands and wives, fostering an environment of mutual respect and empathy.

In addition, we'll examine how biblical principles can provide a solid foundation for understanding and practicing emotional support in marriage. We'll also look at some practical aids to better develop emotional support.

9.2 Development

9.2.1 Emotional Support in Marriage

A. Emotional Support Concept

Emotional support in marriage can be defined as the provision of empathy, care, encouragement, and understanding to the spouse at all times, especially in those of need or distress. This support is based on love, compassion, and a commitment to supporting one's spouse through life's joys and challenges.

Emotional support requires a deep level of understanding and a willingness to provide unwavering love and encouragement. By offering emotional support, couples can build a secure and nurturing foundation for their relationship, fostering trust, intimacy, and resilience.

From a biblical perspective, emotional support is considered an essential component of love, as described in passages such as 1 Corinthians 13:7, which states that love "always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

B. Importance of emotional support

Understanding the importance of emotional support in marriage is crucial to nurturing a Christ-centered relationship. Emotional support fosters a safe and secure environment in which both spouses can openly express their feelings, fears, and needs. This not only strengthens the emotional bond between husband and wife, but also promotes a deeper level of intimacy and understanding.

Emotional support plays a vital role in fostering intimacy, trust, and mutual respect between partners. It provides a safe space for people to express their vulnerabilities and fears, knowing that they'll be cared for with compassion and understanding.

Through emotional support, couples can cope with challenges and conflicts more effectively, knowing that they have a partner who will support them through thick and thin. Ultimately, the concept of emotional support in marriage is rooted in the biblical principle of selfless love and sacrificial care for one another, which forms the foundation of a thriving and lasting marriage relationship.

C. Benefits of Emotional Support in the Relationship

Some benefits that are obtained through mutual emotional support in the couple are:

- It contributes to strengthening the bond between the spouses.
- It fosters a sense of safety and trust, creating a safe space for open communication and vulnerability.
- It allows couples to better cope with challenges and conflicts, ultimately leading to a more harmonious and fulfilling relationship.
- It contributes to better mental and physical health for both of them. Research has shown that people who maintain supportive relationships experience lower levels of stress and anxiety, as well as a lower risk of depression.
- Additionally, mutual support and encouragement within the relationship can lead to greater resilience and ability to cope with life's ups and downs.

Overall, the benefits of emotional support in a marriage relationship extend beyond the people involved, contributing to the overall well-being and strength of the marriage and children. They will also greatly influence the relationships we build with others.

9.2.2 Bible Principles for Providing and Receiving Emotional Support

The Bible gives us clear principles about how to give and receive emotional support in marriage. Next, we're going to mention just a few of them.

A. Love one's neighbor as oneself. (Matthew 22:39)

This means that we should take care of our partner's emotional needs in the same way that we take care of our own. It's important to show empathy, understanding, and be willing to help in times of difficulty. This principle urges us to be emotionally present for our partner, offering comfort, support, and encouragement at all times.

Loving one's neighbor as oneself also involves cultivating a deep sense of care and concern for one's spouse's emotional health. This may involve actively listening to their feelings, offering a comforting presence, or providing words of affirmation.

By adopting this principle, couples can foster a strong emotional bond, creating a safe and loving environment where both partners feel valued, understood, and supported in their emotional journey.

B. Be patient. (Proverbs 14:29).

This command calls us to be patient and compassionate, recognizing that we all go through times of emotional weakness and need the support of our spouse. The Bible urges us to be understanding and patient with our spouse, showing empathy and seeking to understand their emotional needs.

C. Bear each other's burdens. (Galatians 6:2).

The Bible exhorts us to bear the burdens of others, to comfort one another, and to build and strengthen our relationship through emotional support. This principle emphasizes the importance of remaining united as one to face life's challenges. Thus, by applying this biblical principle in our marriage, we can create an emotionally healthy and loving environment where both spouses feel safe and understood, thus strengthening the marriage bond.

D. Do not hold grudges. (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

We're also taught not to hold grudges or resentment, but to forgive and show grace, which is essential to maintaining an emotionally supportive environment in marriage.

In summary, the Bible offers us clear and solid principles for receiving emotional support in marriage, ranging from the importance of effective communication to the need to show compassion, patience, and grace toward our partner. These biblical principles not only strengthen the marriage relationship, but also promote an environment of love, care, and mutual support.

9.2.3 Practical Tools to Strengthen Emotional Support

To strengthen emotional support in marriage from a biblical perspective, it's crucial to have practical tools that can be implemented in everyday life. Next, we're going to present some of them.

A. Effective Communication Strategies

Effective communication is crucial in any marriage, and it's especially important when it comes to providing emotional support. In the context of a Christian marriage, effective communication involves not only sharing thoughts and feelings, but also listening to and understanding one's spouse.

One strategy for accomplishing this is to actively listen, which involves giving your partner your full attention, asking clarifying questions, and summarizing what they've said to make sure you've understood.

Another important strategy is to use "I" statements instead of "you" statements when expressing feelings or concerns. This can help avoid defensiveness and promote empathy and understanding between partners.

Additionally, setting aside time dedicated to open and honest communication, whether it's a weekly check-in or daily conversations, can help strengthen emotional support in the marriage.

Finally, maintaining a respectful and non-judgmental attitude during conversations, even when discussing difficult topics, can foster a sense of security and trust between spouses. By implementing these strategies for effective communication, couples can better provide emotional support to one another in accordance with biblical principles of love, kindness, and understanding.

B. Understanding Our Emotions

The Mind and Body Counseling Blog shares some strategies for greater emotional responsibility, which are presented below:

- Recognize and identify your emotions. Take the time to observe and label your feelings as they arise. Do you feel happy, sad, angry, or anxious? By naming your emotions, you'll better understand your inner experiences.
- Understand the root causes of your emotions. After identifying your emotions, try to understand their root causes. What triggered these feelings? Do they come from past experiences, current situations, or unmet needs? Understanding the origins of your emotions will help you address them more effectively. Let's reflect on what generated our anger, to identify what I can take responsibility for and what I cannot.
- Learn how to express your emotions in a healthy way. We must learn to express emotions in a healthy and constructive way. Instead of stifling or lashing out, find suitable outlets to communicate your feelings. This may involve talking to a trusted friend, journaling, or engaging in creative activities that allow you to process your emotions.

C. Identify your emotional needs

Sabrina Romanoff suggests a four-step process for thinking about your own emotional needs. These steps are outlined as (Stritof, 2023):

1st Step: When you feel like your emotional needs aren't being met, stop. Romanoff states, "Standing still for a moment helps you avoid doing something impulsive, dismissing your needs, or acting without thinking."

2nd, Take a step back: if you feel overwhelmed, it's difficult to identify your needs. Romanoff says, "Take a step back, either mentally or physically, from the situation." Use deep breathing to help regulate your emotions.

3rd, Observe: observe what is happening around you and within you. Who is involved? What are they doing or saying? "It's important not to jump to conclusions," Romanoff advises. "Instead, gather the relevant facts to understand what's happening and what you need."

4th, Proceed with mindfulness: Romanoff suggests asking yourself: "What do I need from this situation? What is my goal? What decision or behavior would improve or worsen this situation?"

D. The Role of Faith and Prayer in Emotional Support

Believing in God brings us comfort and strength during difficult times, and it can help couples stay together on their journey together. In the context of a biblical perspective, faith is often thought of as a foundation for personal and relational stability. It can provide hope, guidance, and a sense of purpose that can ultimately strengthen emotional support between spouses.

Prayer, as a spiritual practice, also plays an important role in providing emotional support in marriage. It allows couples to connect with each other on a deeper level as they seek God's guidance and support.

Through prayer, couples can express their worries, fears, and desires, and they can find comfort in the act of sharing these emotions with each other and with God (Philippians 4:6-7). This shared spiritual practice can create a sense of unity and emotional intimacy that can support and strengthen the marriage bond. Therefore, integrating faith and prayer into a marriage's emotional support system can provide a strong foundation for couples to overcome the challenges they face and can ultimately contribute to the overall health and sustainability of the relationship.

9.3 Conclusions

We've studied that the importance of emotional support in marriage from a biblical perspective lies in the critical role it plays in strengthening the relationship. Through love, understanding, and empathy, couples can cultivate an environment of mutual trust and security, which will allow them to face challenges with greater resilience.

We also explore the benefits of emotional support in married life, as well as the biblical principles that underpin this idea. We've seen how love, compassion, empathy, and patience are essential to provide emotional support to our partner, and how this can strengthen the marriage bond and promote harmony in the home.

To strengthen emotional support in marriage from a biblical perspective, it's critical to have practical tools that can be implemented in everyday life. One of the key tools for strengthening emotional support is effective communication strategies, including active listening, being empathetic, and expressing feelings and needs in a respectful way.

Couples can also benefit from setting aside time dedicated to open and honest conversations, free from distractions. In addition, they can identify their emotional needs. Overall, these practical tools are essential for building and maintaining strong emotional support in marriage, as they provide tangible ways for couples to connect and support each other according to biblical principles.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. What are the benefits of emotional support?

2. What are some biblical bases of emotional support?

3. In what practical way can emotional support be improved in the couple?

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Lesson 10.

Educating our children **With love**

Biblical Text: Colossians 3:12-13

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Purposes:

- Communicate lovingly with your children.
- Be patient in your love dealings.
- Explain how positive discipline can be exercised.

10.1 Introduction

Couples who have been blessed with children recognize the great challenge that parenting presents. Undoubtedly, being parents implies the great responsibility of being able to educate children in such a way that they grow in their spiritual, emotional and physical lives in a healthy way.

The foundation for the healthy education of children is love. As parents we must be able to educate them in love. That's going to help the children love God, their parents, their siblings, and learn to love their neighbor.

As Christian parents, we should be living examples of Christ's love and compassion. Our children learn more than we tell them when they see how we live our lives and how we treat others. We show them love and patience in every interaction, and we teach them to forgive as God has forgiven us. By showing them unconditional love based on faith, we help them understand God's love and how they should treat others. Our example is fundamental to their spiritual growth and development. Therefore, in this lesson we're going to study some ways in which we can educate our children in love.

10.2 Development

As Christian parents, we should strive to be examples of love and kindness toward our children. This involves showing them unconditional love, listening to them with empathy, and treating them with respect and tenderness. By acting in this way, we teach them core values of Christianity such as love of neighbor and the importance of treating others with compassion and kindness. In this section we're going to study loving ways to educate our children.

10.2.1 Developing the right communication

A. Aspects that contribute to good loving communication

Communication plays a fundamental role in strengthening family ties and transmitting the values and teachings of the faith. Through effective communication, we can understand our children's needs and concerns, provide support and guidance, and foster their spiritual and emotional growth. Open and honest communication helps us to be present in our children's lives, share our own feelings and experiences, and create an environment of trust and love.

a) **Actively listening to our children**

Actively listening to our children is a crucial skill in loving parenting. This means giving them our full attention, without distractions, and showing genuine interest in what they have to say.

By listening carefully, we show respect to them and provide them with the opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. In addition, by actively listening, we can identify their emotional and spiritual needs, offering comfort, counsel, and support in their journey of faith.

The Church of Jesus Christ (n.d.) points out in this regard that:

Children usually behave well when they feel that they are valued and respected. Parents can help their children have these feelings by listening to them and accepting what they are feeling. Sometimes, children have feelings that their parents don't like; However, those undesirable feelings often change when children are allowed to talk about them.

b) **Encourage open and honest dialogue**

In Christian parenting, it's important to encourage open and honest dialogue with our children. This involves creating a safe and judgment-free environment where they can express their ideas and opinions without fear. Let's encourage them to ask questions and share their concerns about faith, providing answers based on the Bible and Christian teaching. Through open dialogue, we can strengthen their understanding of Christian principles and help them develop their personal relationship with God.

c) **Showing affection**

Let's tell our children how much we love them and hug them as much as we can. At all times let's use signs of affection, caresses, smiles, pleasant words, etc. Vilma Medina points out that "The simple fact of receiving a hug makes us feel loved, protected, understood, supported, comforted...". Vilma Medina (n.d.) shares with us some benefits of hugging our children (which extend also to the spouse):

1. **Hugs generate a sense of protection and security in children.** It helps them feel safe and more confident in themselves.
2. **Hugs stimulate children's self-esteem.** They transmit affection and support, so the child will feel more confident about themselves and have greater self-esteem.
3. **They create happier children.** Hugs activate endorphins, which are responsible for increasing feelings of joy and fullness, and decreasing anxiety or sadness.
4. **They bring calmness.** Children experience more tranquility and stillness when their parents take them in their arms. Hugs bring them peace and serenity.
5. **Hugs strengthen emotional bonds.** They improve the bonds between parents and children and foster attachment in the family. Build bonds of affection, affection and trust.
6. **They reduce stress.** Physical contact reduces the production of a hormone, cortisol, which promotes stress, and increases the hormones responsible for producing feelings of well-being.
7. **They improve mood.** If the child feels sad or down, hugging them will feel comforted.

B. Poor communication practices to avoid

Some communication practices that keep children away, and therefore we should avoid, are (Church of Jesus Christ, n.d.):

- Lecture; moralize; preach; interrogate.
 - *"You should be ashamed. Now look at what you've done."*
 - *"What were you thinking when you did that?"*
- Not taking into account what they say; appease; using nonsensical reassuring words.
 - *"Calm down. You have no reason to be upset."*
 - *"Nothing happened. Many people have suffered more than that."*
- Judge; condemn; threaten.
 - *"The problem is that you..."*
 - *"You'll never amount to anything."*
- Blame; criticize; ridicule.
 - *"It's all your fault."*
 - *"I won't tolerate you whining like that."*
- Talking about one's own feelings when a child needs to share theirs.
 - *"I know exactly how you feel. When I was your age, I..."*

10.2.2 Patience and understanding in loving education

Patience and understanding are fundamental in loving parenting. When we find ourselves in challenging times with our children, it's crucial to remain calm and patient. We can remember that our children are still learning and growing, and they need our unconditional love and support.

A. Be patient in times of challenge

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

In loving parenting, being patient in times of challenge is essential. Children may test our patience with their challenging behavior or impulsive actions. However, it's important to remember that we're role models for them.

By staying calm and responding patiently, we're teaching them to manage their emotions and find peaceful solutions. Patience helps us give them the time they need to learn and grow, without losing confidence in their ability to improve. Through our patience, we can show them God's unconditional love and help them develop virtues such as perseverance and resilience.

Just because parents are patient with their children doesn't mean that they should indulge them in everything. A biblical proverb warns:

Disciplining a child produces wisdom, but an undisciplined child embarrasses his mother.
Proverbs 29:15

Sometimes, children will question their parents' right to correct them. But Christian families must apply their authority. In order to apply their rules, parents don't have to ask permission from their children.

B. Show understanding and empathy towards our children

In loving parenting, it's essential to show understanding and empathy towards our children. As parents, we should strive to understand their feelings and perspectives, even when we disagree with them. By putting ourselves in their shoes and actively listening, we show them that we value their emotions and are willing to understand their concerns.

Empathy helps us strengthen our connection with our children and build an environment of trust and love. By showing them understanding and empathy, we're reflecting God's love and compassion toward them, and we teach them to be compassionate toward others.

C. Seeking God's guidance in times of difficulty

In loving parenting, we must seek God's guidance in times of difficulty. Raising our children can be challenging, and there may be situations where we feel lost or overwhelmed. However, instead of clinging to our own limited understanding, we can rely on God's infinite wisdom.

Through prayer and connection with God, we can find comfort, direction, and answers to our questions. God is our loving heavenly Father, willing to guide us every step of the way. By seeking God's guidance, we show our children humility and dependence on God, thus cultivating their own relationship with Him.

10.2.3 Loving discipline

My son, pay attention when your father corrects you; do not neglect your mother's instruction. Proverbs 1:8

Loving discipline from a Christian perspective is critical to guiding our children on the right path. Through love and understanding, we can set clear and consistent boundaries that help them understand which behaviors are appropriate and which aren't.

Discipline isn't only about correcting negative behaviors, but also about teaching our children about repentance and forgiveness. Using discipline as an opportunity to teach Christian values helps us to convey to them the importance of living according to the principles of love, forgiveness, and humility that Jesus taught us.

A. Set clear and consistent boundaries

Setting clear and consistent boundaries is essential for loving discipline from a Christian perspective. Our children need to know what behaviors are acceptable and which aren't. By setting firm boundaries and communicating them in a loving way, we provide them with structure and security.

In addition, being consistent in the application of boundaries helps us teach them the importance of obedience and responsibility. Through loving and steadfast discipline, we show them how to live according to Christian values and help them grow and develop in healthy ways.

B. Teaching Our Children About Repentance and Forgiveness

Teaching our children about repentance and forgiveness is fundamental in loving discipline from a Christian perspective. We teach them the importance of acknowledging when they've made mistakes and asking God and the people they've hurt for forgiveness.

In addition, we show them how to forgive those who have failed us, following Jesus' example. Finding opportunities to teach them about repentance and forgiveness in times of discipline helps them understand the importance of living a life based on Christian principles of love and reconciliation.

C. Using discipline as an opportunity to teach Christian values

Using discipline as an opportunity to teach Christian values is essential in raising loving children committed to their faith. Every time we discipline our children, we can use the situation to teach them about Christian values such as love, patience, humility, and compassion. We show them how their actions have consequences and how they can learn and grow through loving discipline. By integrating Christian values into discipline, we're building a strong foundation for our children to develop a life of faith and obedience to God.

D. Recommendations for Practicing Positive Discipline

Some recommendations for exercising positive discipline are (Similac, n.d.):

- Avoid physical and emotional abuse. This will leave negative consequences and not lessons.
- Avoid insulting with qualifying adjectives. Many times in a moment of anger we may say things like "You're useless", "We're fed up with you." These expressions produce wounds that remain in the hearts of our children for a long time.
- Parents must work out the rules and consequences and must always agree. Both must be consistent with what they say and what they do, which generates credibility in the children.
- Always educate by example. They must learn by watching their parents do what they are asked to do.
- Avoid setting a consequence and not carrying it out. That will make them doubt whether what they do wrong will have repercussions.
- Correct the inappropriate action and don't wound the child who does it.
- Some inappropriate actions may be lovingly ignored, others require immediate consequence.

For positive discipline, establish with your partner a set of agreements for actions that require discipline.

10.2.4 Spend time with your children

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:15-16

Nowadays there are many families who, due to their occupations, only see their children in the morning to take them to school and then pick them up. That's a tragedy in the integral formation of our children.

As a family, we must learn to invest time into our children. To do so, we must ask God for wisdom to adjust our daily schedules. But most of all, we need to understand how valuable it is to spend time with our children.

When doing so, take into account the following:

- Let's tell them how much we love them and embrace them as much as we can. At all times use signs of affection, caresses, smiles, pleasant words, etc. Vilma Medina points out that "The simple fact of receiving a hug makes us feel loved, protected, understood, supported, comforted...".
- Take time to help them with their schoolwork.
- Take time to play with them, according to each child's age.
- Take time to go out somewhere together.
- Always show a sense of humor. Don't let life's difficulties rob you of the joy of enjoying your time with your children. They must see that you like being with them. Joy generates feelings of well-being that generate emotional bonds.
- Include in your schedule the time you're going to spend with your children.
- Share a **minimum** of one meal a day together.
- If you can't leave the house, do activities with them that burn energy.

10.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, being loving Christian parents is of utmost importance to pass on Christian values to our children, guide them towards a life of faith, and be an example of love and compassion.

To do this, it's essential to use discipline as an opportunity to teach them Christian values, setting clear and consistent boundaries, and teaching them about repentance and forgiveness.

Communication plays a crucial role in Christian loving parenting. We must actively listen to our children, encourage open and honest dialogue, and teach them to communicate with God through prayer.

In addition, patience and understanding are essential, we must be patient in times of challenge and show understanding and empathy towards our children. Show patience and understanding. It's important to keep in mind that your children are in the process of development and will face difficulties in it. Positive discipline is also important in the loving education of children.

At all times, we must seek God's guidance in times of difficulty. Being loving Christian parents is a demanding but rewarding task, and by applying these principles, we can raise children who follow the path of faith and God's love.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. What are the clear and consistent boundaries that we have established in loving discipline?

2. Are we using discipline as an opportunity to teach Christian values? Describe an example of how to do this.

3. Are we actively listening to our children and providing them with a safe space to express themselves?

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Lesson 11. *Teaching Children* to behave responsibly

Biblical Text: Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

Purposes:

- **Understand** the value of raising responsible children.
- **Develop** responsible children.

11.1 Introduction

We would all like our children to be responsible and pick up their toys when they finish playing, do their school homework, help with household chores. Also that they began to attend to their personal hygiene and go to sleep at the time they should. The question is: How can we achieve all this?

As parents, we must understand that children aren't small adults, but human beings in the process of formation and development. Therefore, everything they've assimilated, or are able to do so far, they've learned mainly through the examples they receive at home. (Storybook, 2024).

Therefore, in this lesson we're going to study what a responsible person is and how we can help our children to be responsible people?

11.2 Development

11.2.1 What does it mean to be a responsible person?

For Storybook (2024), "A responsible person is one who keeps his word, with his obligations, with what he promised, who assumes the consequences of his actions, when he does them in a thoughtful way and with a defined purpose".

For World Vision (2021):

Responsibility is a value that defines our ability to make reasoned decisions and assume the consequences of our actions. It's a quality that's taught, ideally from childhood, and is acquired and perfected with time and experience.

Responsibility is a value that can, and should, be taught from a young age as it brings multiple benefits. Some of them are (Compartir en Familia, n.d.):

- It allows you to avoid certain dangers by reflecting before acting.
- It helps one assess the consequences of each act and to accept responsibility for them.
- It allows decisions to be made without the help of others, appropriately and within the rules.
- It helps us improve ourselves, as well as to be self-sufficient and have more self-esteem.

11.2.2 Help to develop the responsibility of children

A. Being a Model for Them

Our Lord Jesus showed us that the best way to teach others is through example. As he neared laying down his life for us on the cross, Jesus asked the disciples to do what he had taught them through his example.

I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John 13:15

Let's first reflect on what we're currently doing. Think about the following:

- How do we express ourselves about fulfilling our obligations? Am I positive or optimistic?
- Do I express that I feel satisfaction in doing things well, even if it means working hard?
- Or, conversely, am I always complaining about how easy others seem to have it compared to my duties?
- Do I demand more from my little one than I myself am willing to do?
- Do I do my work on time and consciously?

Let's model how gladly taking on our responsibilities is part of everyday life. We invite you to start now with every opportunity to do so. For example:

- Show joy in doing work that have to do with household chores.
- Even if you arrive tired from your job, express that you feel blessed to have that job.
- Share your joy in participating in a church ministry and they'll see how you enjoy it.

B. Have reasonable expectations

Jesus knew that his disciples would not be able to take on all the responsibilities he expected of them overnight. On one occasion he said to them:

Many things I still have to tell you, which you could not bear at present. John 16:12

So before giving them a particular task, the Lord Jesus spent enough time training them. And only when he considered that they were ready did he leave them on their own. Similarly, as parents we shouldn't expect our children to do things for which they aren't prepared. Our children will be able to take on greater responsibilities as they grow up. Little by little, parents can teach them to:

- Take care of their personal hygiene,
- Tidy up their room,
- Be punctual
- Manage money well.
- Complete their schoolwork

It's important to note that it's not enough for parents to indicate their children's obligations. In addition, they have to help them comply with them.

C. Set boundaries and rules

It's important to set limits, and establish rules for the good development of habits. We should talk to our kids about what we expect them to do, as well as those things they aren't allowed to do.

It's also important that they know what they'll get for being responsible, as well as what the consequences are for not attending to their responsibilities. It's better that they know in a positive way the advantages of being responsible. We must also be willing to say "No" when that's the right thing to do.

D. Setting consequences

Again the Lord Jesus shows us the example of how we should act when we've fulfilled our responsibilities, but also establishing the consequences of not doing so. We can see this in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) when it says:

- 23 His master answered, "You have done well, good and faithful servant! In the few things you have been faithful; I'll put you in charge of so much more. Come and share the happiness of your lord!"
- 30 And throw that unprofitable servant out into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

So as parents, we must establish the consequences of not fulfilling the responsibilities assigned to the children. We must remain firm in applying what is established in each case.

E. When assigning tasks, give specific instructions

Jesus, the Master par excellence, knew very well that the best way to learn to do something is by practice. So, when he realized that his disciples were ready, he sent them *"two by two before him into every city and place where he himself was going to go."* Luke 10:1.

But he didn't just send them out and let them manage as best they could; but he gave them very specific instructions (Luke 10:2-12).

And you, how do you react when your children are faced with a challenge? Does you let them face what scares them, or do you protect them by helping them avoid any failure that discourages them? Perhaps our most immediate reaction is to want to "save" them, and so we take on the task ourself.

But think about it for a few moments. If every time they encounter an obstacle, you run to save them, what message are you giving them? That you trust that they'll know how to solve the problem? Or that you still see them as helpless children who depend on you for everything?

F. Give them tasks according to their age

The teaching of responsibility must begin from a very young age. By assigning them simple tasks, we'll be helping with the development of their motor skills, motivating their collaboration, while increasing their confidence and ability to organize while providing the establishment of habits.

Some tasks that a child can perform according to their age are (Storybook, 2024):

- A one-year-old child who is walking can put away their toys.

- From two to three years old, they can already collaborate in putting the toys in their place, throwing the garbage in the corresponding basket, bringing diapers or wipes. Right now I see it in the case of my two-year-old grandson.
- Four to five years, they can help clean up their room, make the bed, clean up a spill, water a plant.
- Six to seven years old, they can help with changing the toilet paper roll, picking up the dry leaves, putting the socks together.
- Eight to nine years old, they can collaborate with taking the dog out, loading the washing machine or dishwasher, cleaning the table.
- Ten to twelve, they can collaborate with sweeping the patio, cleaning the kitchen, helping to store the purchases.

G. Recognize responsible behavior

When the seventy-two sent by Jesus to share the gospel returned happy with their success, Jesus congratulated them (Luke 10:17-24). He showed them that he trusted them and that he was happy with what they had done. The Word mentions that:

- Jesus was filled with joy by the Holy Spirit
- Turning to his disciples, he said to them privately: "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!"

So, as parents we must recognize them every time they show that they're fulfilling their responsibilities. Congratulating achievements, encouraging them with a hug, a kiss, or other demonstrations of affection, will motivate them to explore new areas where they can continue learning to be responsible (Vega, 2024).

Aish Latino (n.d.) points out that "Any time your child acts responsibly, describe what he is doing well and shower him with praise. This will help to positively reinforce such behavior":

- "I appreciate that you helped your mommy clean the table. That's called being responsible."
- "You finished your schoolwork on time. That's called being responsible."
- "You put your toys away. That shows responsibility"

Being happy and proud of them when they fulfill their responsibilities encourages them to continue doing so.

11.2.3 Different ways to be responsible

The concept of responsibility is broader than properly fulfilling tasks and obligations. The child must learn to make commitments according to their age and ability to cope with problems, circumstances or decisions. It's important that the characteristics of each one are taken into account, and that the responsibilities attributed to them can be assumed and fulfilled (Vega, 2024):

- *Taking care of yourself*, your personal hygiene, your rest time, including what you eat.

- Within the family, with their friends, colleagues, learn to relate with *respect*, understand that their behavior affects others. The importance of fulfilling promises and commitments. Respect for different opinions.
- *Caring for the environment*, which starts with small things, such as turning off the lights and preventing water from being wasted.
- *With nature*, through taking care of a plant or a pet.
- *The importance of attending school*, finishing homework, learning to manage their time.

Daniela Vega (2024) highlights that:

Patience and affection will be necessary to teach responsibility, as well as the other aspects of parenting. Realizing and knowing how to recognize when your little one still doesn't have the skills to do things well is to sow love and trust in their heart.

11.3 Conclusions

We've learned the importance of helping our children to be responsible. To do this, we must model to them that as parents, assuming our responsibilities is something we do willingly (Col. 3:23)

We've also seen that we must set limits and rules. Along with this, we must specify well what tasks each one has to do. In order for them to begin to assume their responsibilities, it's necessary that we establish the rewards and the consequences for not doing so.

Finally, it's necessary to start with them at an early age (even from the age of two), assigning tasks according to their age and abilities. Let's not forget to celebrate their progress with them, as well as to make them assume the consequences for their actions.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. Explain why it's important to help our children develop the quality of responsibility from an early age.

Reflection and practical application exercises

2. Describe the process of how to develop responsible children as they develop.

3. List the basic tasks that each of your children should take on according to their age and abilities.

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Lesson 12. **Learning to** *Manage anger*

Biblical Text: Psalm 37:8 NLT

Don't be angry anymore! Put your anger aside! Don't lose your temper, that only causes damage.

Purposes:

- Be aware of the effects that uncontrolled anger causes in family members.
- Understand how you get angry and the need to accept responsibility for problems resulting from anger.
- Practice ways to control and overcome anger.

12.1 Introduction

Lovingly parenting our children is a challenge because of how complex it is. But if we add to this that sometimes we're angry or in a bad mood, that's undoubtedly much more complicated.

Unfortunately, on a day-to-day basis we face many things that can make us angry. Sometimes small things such as the fact that we encounter a lot of traffic as we're driving, or we arrived late to work, or we burned some food cause us to get angry. On other occasions there may be more compelling reasons such as suffering abuse at work or school, not having the necessary money to cover the expenses of the month or day, etc.

We recognize that if we want to parent our children with love, it's very important that we learn to manage our anger. Therefore, in this lesson we're going to learn about the consequences of uncontrolled anger, How can we better manage anger, and How we can help our children manage their anger.

12.2 Development

12.2.1 Anger and its consequences

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. Ephesians 4:26

According to the Dictionary of Emotions (2022),

Anger is an emotion that arises when we face a situation that we consider to be "wrong" or when we feel upset by other people's words, actions or attitudes. It ranges from mild irritation to a more intense emotion, such as fury or anger. Getting angry is a natural response. Although we don't always control our reactions, we can focus our mind to act in a better way.

The Encyclopedia of Meanings (n.d.) mentions that anger, in general, predisposes our spirit against another person or against a given situation that has become unpleasant or unfair. In this sense, the causes of anger can be both external and internal.

- ***They are external*** when they are related to situations that occur around us, such as a lack of respect, an attitude of disobedience, a misunderstanding or a mistake.
- ***They are internal*** when we experience them within ourselves, such as personal problems, unresolved situations from the past or unpleasant memories of traumatic events, which when they come back to our memory awaken feelings of anger.

Anger is also an emotion made up of a set of negative feelings which can lead to acts of violence. Anger is the emotion that emerges when a person is subjected to situations that cause frustration or that are aversive. It's expressed through resentment and irritability and causes symptoms such as headaches, rapid breathing, and cardiac agitation.

Compelling Truth (n.d.) tells us that anger is a difficult emotion for many of us to handle. There are two Greek words used for "wrath" in the New Testament.

- One is defined as "passion, energy"
- The other is "agitated, boiling."

Not all anger is sin. Anger often results from a sinful attitude. Other times, our anger has a righteous source (e.g., generated by abuse). Anger can quickly turn into sin if not handled properly.

The consequences of anger

One of the things that affects parents and children the most is the mismanaged anger of parents. When we feel angry with our children, the feelings stay inside us. Words and phrases come out of our mouths that end up frightening our children, hurting them in their soul and destroying our prestige.

Many times as parents we're not aware of the seriousness of the consequences that poor anger management brings. Therefore, the first thing is to become aware of the cost of not knowing how to control our anger.

Knowing that cost, it's our hope that we'll be less likely to respond to our children with anger. Sadly, many parents get angry with their children to vent their anger at a friend, a boss at work, a police officer, or a church leader. Let's look at some of the consequences, all of them harmful, of not managing our anger properly. The costs include:

- Loss of our fellowship with God.
- Loss of respect (for oneself and family members).
- Loss of friendship and cooperation.
- Loss of self-confidence.
- Guilt and loneliness.
- It causes harm to itself and other people.

- Fear is generated in children, instead of love.
- It can cause children to rebel to the point of participating in delinquent behavior and have to leave their home.
- An increased risk of problems, such as depression, poor health, addictive behavior, and employment-related problems.

12.2.2 How to Manage Our Anger

A. Improper anger management

There are three ways in which anger is often mismanaged: through aggression, internalization, and passive-aggressive behavior (Church of Christ, n.d.).

- **Aggression.** Anger is expressed through physical violence (hitting, kicking, slapping, spanking, hair pulling); emotional and verbal abuse (yelling, insulting, blaspheming, threatening, blaming, ridiculing, manipulating, and degrading); sexual abuse (incest, harassment and humiliation); and the control and dominance of another person.
- **Internalization.** Anger is directed at oneself, which leads to self-contempt, depression, or self-destructive acts (drinking alcohol, using drugs, attacking oneself, mutilating one's body).
- **Passive-aggressive behavior.** Anger is expressed with indirect actions (lack of punctuality, irresponsibility, stubbornness, sarcasm, dishonesty, irritability, discontent, criticism, laziness).

B. Proper anger management

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

The Church of Jesus Christ (n.d.) in its work "How to Strengthen the Family" explains to us how to handle anger in the light of this text.

a) What does it mean to be quick to hear?

First, respond by listening instead of getting angry. Learn to listen carefully. Nothing dissipates anger more effectively than listening. Then, ask questions to understand the other person's perspective and feelings (Prov. 18:13, 15) without responding defensively or angrily.

b) What does it mean to be slow to speak?

Managing anger biblically follows four rules of communication. Ephesians 4:15, 25–32 describes them.

1. **Be honest and speak the truth with love** (Ephesians 4:15). Try to be kind and acknowledge the other person's emotions (1 Peter 3:8-17).
2. **Resolve disagreements quickly** (Ephesians 4:26) and keep your anger away. Focus only on the current problem (James 3:13-18).

3. **Attack the problem, not the person** (Ephesians 4:29, 31). Make sure the other person understands that you're responding only to their actions. You're not attacking them personally (Proverbs 15:1). The goal here is to restore the relationship.
4. **Act, don't react** (Ephesians 4:31-32). Control your spirit (Proverbs 25:28) by obeying God's Word no matter how you feel (Hebrews 12:15).

c) How can we respond slowly to anger?

1. **Quickly control your anger** (Ephesians 4:26-27) by taking a deep breath or counting to ten.
2. **Use the energy provided by anger to solve problems** and not create bigger ones.
3. **Keep a healthy distance from the other person while you're angry.** And interact with them only when you can speak constructively.

d) Have a contingency plan

When sinful anger begins to grow within you, it's good to have a contingency plan. Pray immediately for discernment (James 1:5), remembering that you can control your thoughts (1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 1:13).

Focus your thoughts, words, and actions on the Word (2 Tim 3:16-17) by reviewing your memorized scriptures (Ps. 119:9, 11, 16), especially verses that deal with anger. It's also helpful to focus on the positive qualities of the person who frustrates you.

e) Long-Term Change Planning with Anger

- The first step is to commit to change (Colossians 3:23-24) regardless of how you feel (Galatians 5:16-17).
- Identify all the situations, places, and people that make you angry (2 Timothy 2:22). Then eliminate them, flee, or resist.
- Learn to ignore small disagreements (Proverbs 19:11), and stay away from habitually angry people (Proverbs 22:24-25).
- If your habits don't change or you become a danger to others or yourself, seek counseling.

f) Forgive like Jesus

Anger is a natural emotion that needs a godly response. This is a long journey and not a quick fix (Phil. 1:6). There will be times in our lives when each of us will deal with feelings of anger. But it's how we choose to deal with that anger that determines its effect on us.

We're not victims of our circumstances but overcomers through Jesus Christ. People or events may have hurt us, but we can respond with forgiveness through our new life in Christ.

By controlling our tempers and forgiving others, we follow Jesus' example. After all, he forgave each of us.

12.2.3 How to Help Our Children Manage Their Anger

The Emotional Wellbeing Blog (2019) shares the following aids to support our children in managing their anger.

1. Help them act calmly in the face of confrontations and conflicts with other people.

Let your children know that sometimes it's healthier to get away from what's bothering them. It takes a lot of courage to recognize that something is bothering us and decide to leave in time. It's important to let your child know that fighting doesn't solve problems.

2. Explain that sometimes it's hard to get along with other people.

There are children who fight when they get angry, or who annoy others and make fun of them and even those who encourage them to fight at home. In these cases, it must be made clear that for you, fighting is unacceptable and that you will always prefer and support your child to withdraw from the conflict without fighting.

3. Teach them to recognize their emotions and feelings.

We can all feel sad, frustrated, or disappointed. Sometimes, "feelings don't like to peek out because they can make the child look vulnerable." So the strongest of all, anger, comes out to defend it. That's why children get angry when they are hurt, when they can't do what they would like, when they are lied to, or when they are excluded. A child can get angry for many reasons. Therefore, to help anger go away, one has to put their feelings into words.

4. Anger isn't going to go away on its own.

When children get angry, you have to recognize it and validate their emotion. You don't need to validate their reasons (which may be wrong) for getting angry, just validate that they're angry. To help them gain control of themselves, they need to breathe and count or move away for a few moments. Once they can listen, they need to think about the cause of the problem and ways to fix it. The child must be helped to express him or herself and ask questions until they manage to communicate their discomfort.

5. If someone starts a fight, you have to react and walk away.

If someone else wants to start a fight, your child will need to learn to calm down and not confront. It's better to keep a safe distance, breathe, stand and move away little by little.

6. Ask your child to avoid fighting back.

Your children should avoid insulting or returning insults at those who are looking for a fight. That would only make things worse.

7. Learn to listen.

Some children don't know how to ask for things the right way, and that isn't their fault either, because perhaps they haven't been taught. If your child learns to listen to what the other person is really looking for and wants, it will be easier for them to avoid conflict. Encourage them to ask "What do you need?" before assuming they're looking for fights.

8. Be their best role model.

Teach them to resolve conflicts by resolving yours in a good way. If they see you fighting in the street at the slightest provocation, your child is sure to do the same. Teach them to take things with humor, to stay away from unnecessarily violent situations, and to always respond with a smile in any circumstance.

12.3 Conclusions

We've learned that anger is something that can appear in any of us. Sometimes anger can be intensified by causing you to experience rage. Anger and rage can have some justifiable reasons such as when we're victims of an injustice or when we see it committed on others.

However, we must be aware of the effects that uncontrolled anger causes in family members. This will make us more aware of the need to have adequate anger control. We must also accept responsibility for problems resulting from how we express our anger.

Lastly, we've studied how we can learn ways to control and overcome anger. Also how to help our children manage their anger. If we do this properly, we'll be laying the groundwork for strengthening our healthy relationships in marriage and family.

My Commitment to God

Reflection and practical application exercises

1. What are the clear and consistent boundaries that we've established in loving discipline?

2. Are we using discipline as an opportunity to teach Christian values? Describe an example of how to do this.

Reflection and practical application exercises

3. Are we actively listening to our children and providing them with a safe space to express themselves?

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