

# **FAITH FIRE CHRISTIAN CENTER**

## **MARRIAGE COUNSELLING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Man is the highest of God's creation. God instituted marriage for man hence it is one of the earliest and oldest institution ordained by God Almighty. Gen. 2:23-25. The book of Genesis tells us that after God has made man Gen. 2:7 he found that it was not good for man to live alone, so he made helpmeet or companion suitable for him. Gen. 2:18. Gen. 1:27 testifies that God created human beings male and female. And that is why man and woman leave their parents and unite together as husband and wife. Gen. 2:24. From the foregoing we can conclude that marriage is certainly a divine institution and thus Almighty God places high premium on marriage and family life.

During the time of the great flood, it was Noah's righteousness in the presence of God that saved him, his wife, his three sons and their wives from destruction. To secure this point firmly, our Lord Jesus Christ started his earthly ministry with a miracle at the marriage ceremony in Canaan of Galilee. At every Christian marriage, God himself almighty acts as witness to the covenant. Christian husbands and wives should realize this and take heed. The witness i.e. God Almighty says in Mat. 2:13-14 that he hates divorce (in marriage, there is no reverse gear).

Marriage is not a covenant to be entered into by fancy. Full maturity i.e. physical, financial, emotional and spiritual must be attained before contemplating marriage. The reverential importance of marriage is emphasized in the context of the relationship between Jehovah and the nation of Isreal (i.e. today's church), as that between husband and his wife.

What is more? John the revelator prophesized about the marriage of the Lamb of God at which Jesus Christ will be joined to the new Jerusalem (i.e. the Church triumphant) in marriage forever and what a blessing to be present at that assembly!. May everyone of us be present there in Jesus precious name. Amen.

## **LESSON ONE**

### **WHAT IS MARRIAGE?**

Marriage is still the oldest institution in the world and has its roots in divinity. God instituted marriage for man from the inception of creation, all the other beings were created male and female. Its only man that God created male until God felt man should not be alone Gen. 2:18.

Marriage is the union or the coming together of two opposite sexes with a view of building a God centered home. Marriage is an honourable institution (with bed undefiled) which requires prayerful handling Heb. 13:4. Scripturally, this union is throughout a lifetime and as such a child of God should start praying for his/her at anytime his/her mind peeps into the future, even when he or she is not planning for it yet. However, it advisable that at anytime he or she is convinced that the time is up for marriage he or she is advised to go to God in prayers for assistance in setting up definite goals for the envisioned home and which way to achieve them, totality of which is a miniature heaven on earth!

### **WHAT IS MARRIAGE DESIRABLE?**

The main reasons why God brought man and woman together to live as husband and wife are:

- 1a. **BIBLICAL:** Marriage is recommended by God for a man and woman. God intentionally created the two sexes Gen. 1:27 to achieve this purpose. In Gen. 2:18 God emphasized the need for both sexes coming as husband and wife in order to assist each other
- 1b. **SPIRITUAL REINFORCEMENT:** To reinforcement

To support  
To uphold

} Prov. 27:17

2. **TO AVOID SIN:** In the book of Matt. 5:28 our Lord says lustfully looking at a woman makes a man to have committed adultery in his heart. In the book of I Cor. 7:1-2 “it is said that it is good for a man not to marry but since there is so much sexual immorality among you each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband”.
  
3. **COMPANIONSHIP:** God Almighty says in Gen. 2:18 that it is not for a man to be alone, I will make him a help meet (suitable companion) for him. Eccl. 4:9-12 tells us that two are better than one because they have a better return for their work..  
Realize the importance of the phrase or phrases “helpmeet or companion” in which ever way these words are translated what is glaring here is the fact of a male and female staying together permanently as husband and wife, supporting and helping each other in all that appertains to their marriage, and somebody you can associate with in all areas of human endeavor. God, by creating a woman for the man ( a wife as a companion), put a wife as somebody who will share with the man all his joys and sufferings, know his innermost recesses, all his secrets and all his overt actions. Similarly, the man has to know everything about he wife too. Nothing hidden, not even a shadow of the least human thinking.
  
4. **PROCREATION: (To Multiply);** After creating human beings in Gen. 1:28, God blessed them in these words “Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it”. God’s blessings of multiplication of Noah and his three sons is seen in Gen. 9:1 from the foregoing it is worthy of note that the power of procreate or to produce after their kinds

was transformed to the man and the woman. This power however can be rightfully exercised ONLY in marriage.

5. **SOCIETY**: Makes for honour and respect in the society. Prov. 31:23.

## LESSON TWO

### **CHOICE OR PARTNER**

The choice of a life partner is certainly one of the most crucial steps in the marriage act. It is a lifetime decision in which God's intervention is highly indispensable. Exo. 34:15-16; II Cor. 6:14. A child of God should not rely on his/her own wisdom to pick his/her life partner. Only God knows tomorrow and sees the end before the beginning Is. 46:9-10; Prov. 19:14 says: House and wealth are an inheritance from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord. James 1:17. A true Christian (Brother or Sister) has to commit the choice of his/her life partner unto the Lord with confidence.

Surely as you commit the choice unto God, the miracle will happen – yours is to find, His is to guide. Prov. 3:6, Prov. 18:22. No true Christian would enter into any relationship until he/she is convinced of God's will. Is. 37:5 enjoins Christians to put their trust in God in order to get the best.

God's will for a couple may be revealed in any of these ways:

- (a) **THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD**: God's word contains all things for life and godliness including marriage. Revelation can be received from God while studying the bible or while it is being delivered from the altar or both.
- (b) **THROUGH DREAMS, INTUITION OR VISION**: It has to be ascertained that the particular dream is not fake and that intuition is from the Holy Spirit.
- (c) **THROUGH SILENT VOICE**: As God spoke to Samuel, He is still speaking to his children today. I Sam. 3:4-10

- (d) **THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCES:** Sometimes during attendance at a Christian fellowship, the couple may have a joint assignment to carry out, and along the line without knowing it a relationship develops towards each other. Our father is wonderful. Amen.

### **SOME PREREQUISITES FOR CHOOSING**

In the crutext of marriage, these are some things that need to be taken into consideration choosing a lifetime partner such as:

- (a) **NEW BIRTH:** When choosing a husband or wife, you must ensure that such one is born again. The individual must have accepted Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Saviour II Cor. 6:14.
- (b) **COMPATIBILITY:** As intending couples, it is important to emphasize that anyone you are choosing must be one you are compatible with. Two cannot work except they be agreed (Amos 3:3), hence God's intervention is highly indispensable.

## **LESSON THREE**

### **FOUNDATION**

As with the construction engineers, the foundation of a building determines to a very large extent what happens to it and whether that building will last or not. When something fundamental goes wrong as with the foundation engineering construction work, very little can be done to rectify or sustain it. It is the same thing with marriage. In order to have a successful Christian marriage and a peaceful good home, you must lay your foundation upon the rock of ages (Jesus Christ)

How do you lay the foundation of your marriage upon the rock? It is by making our Lord Jesus Christ the central focus in your home; by allowing him to take His rightful place. Such a marriage will never fail, come rain, sunshine, flood or gale wind Mat. 7:24-27; Lk. 6:47-49. God's kind of love is the required

mortar to build the marriage and lay your foundation on the rock means ruling your home with the word of God. This is because Jesus is the word of God. (John 1:1, I John 4:7-19; Gen. 24:67; Eph. 5:25; Rom 12:3; Prov. 5:18-19).

### **PRE-COURTSHIP**

As God's will is revealed, the revelation has to be confirmed. After the confirmation, the leading has to be revealed to either the House Fellowship Leader, the Pastor or the Marriage Counsellors who will assist in praying for confirmation. Sometimes, the leading may not be known to the other partner and the Pastor has to invite him/her to go to the Lord in prayer on the revelation. While the prayer are going on for the leading, none of the parties is expected to approach the other. When the two parties have prayed and have been convinced of the leading, the couple will be invited and blessed by the Pastor who commit them into the hand of God for a successful courtship and future relationship.

### **NOTIFICATION OF THE PARENTS:**

After the intending couple have been blessed by the Pastor, it is necessary for the couple to inform their respective parents of their intention BEFORE starting their courtship. They may also ask for the blessing of their parents.

## **LESSON FOUR**

### **COURTSHIP**

This is the second stage in the journey towards marriage. This period is the art of seeking the love of someone with intent to marry. This period of courtship is of such importance that it should not be toyed with. This is the time when the foundation of the home in view is laid. How well this period is handled determines a very great extent how the envisioned home will be.

Today, courtship begins as soon as choice has been confirmed, and the couple prayed for by the Pastor for God's grace and power to uphold not to fall into temptation. Both of them interact with the single purpose of knowing the temperaments, likes and dislikes, individualities, dos and don'ts, friends and acquaintances of each other.

Intending couples should discuss their personal life history, past life, achievements, hopes and disappointments. They are to lay bare their past history and family background completely to each other (all skeleton in the wardrobe must be exposed to each other). This position is illustrated in Gen. 2:25 that the man and wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Courtship period also is supposed to be a period of getting to know each other better. It should be a time of sharing any peculiarities about each family. There is no point hiding facts about yourself that will be useful to the other person. Any information that you know if discussed after marriage may get the other party discouraged about continuing with you should be made known prior to the wedding. Courtship should therefore be seen as a time of building a strong foundation for the home in new. The importance of the courtship period therefore cannot be overemphasized. Every opportunities to attend church meetings, fellowships and healthy social gatherings should be exploited to enhance acquaintance for maximum benefits.

NOTE: At this point if it is discovered that the person you are courting is not the type of person you can spend the rest of your days with, wisdom demands you call it QUILTS.

How long this period is varies from ample to couple. Since marriage is not a thing to be rushed into (because once you go into it, you will have to stay in it for the rest of your days). It is important to be prove you know well enough whom you are getting married to. Courtship should therefore be reasonably long enough, for the two individuals go get to know each other well enoughso they will be able to live together all the days of their lives. To this end, this period which is not expected to last for more than one year may also be used to discuss prayerfully their future hopes and aspirations; the number and sex of children they are looking unto God for; what they want their children to become (Matt. 7:7; Ask, Seek, Knock). Similarly, all wedding plans including dresses, accommodation, engagement and reception have to he discussed and finalized.

At this stage, they should find the time to attend a suitable church counseling sessions to educate them on how to recognize danger signals and how to avoid pitfalls whenever they come across one because they are bound to occur.

## **LESSON FIVE**

### **ENGAGEMENT**

This is another stage in journey towards marriage. Formal or public introduction of each other to their parents, friends and relations to take place. Simply, engagement is a step in which marriage intentions are made known to parents and friends. Although engagement is still part of courtship, it is in reality, the time when the courtships is almost tending to marriage. This normally follows a successful period of courtship when the intending couples are satisfied with each other and are sure that they can now happily live together all the days of their lives.



During engagement ceremonies it is usually for the man's family to come in large numbers, bringing with them the bride price or dowry which is paid to the parents and relations of the woman by the intending groom. This payment of dowry is scriptural and also a Jewish practice as you read in Gen. 24:52-54 when Abraham's servants paid it to Rebecca. In a nutshell all matters concerned with the engagement ceremony should be undertaken with honour, dignity and to the glory of the Lord.

**ENGAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS:** Whatever thing is presented for dowry must be things that are precious, not thing that will dishonour God. Intending couples are advised therefore, to go through the requirements demanded by the bride's parent together, resolving any problems that may arise. They must avoid going into debts at all cost. Dowry and all other demands by the bride's parents in as much as they conform to the word of God should be supplied. It should be noted that all negative demands should be ironed out by the bride with her parents before the date of the engagement.

**NOTE:** An approved list of engagement requirements may be obtained from the marriage counseling or Pastor.

**MARRIAGE LICENCE:** The law demands intending couples notify, pay and get a marriage licence from the registry in order to wed. Even though you are not wedding you are enjoined by the law to do this. Thus at least 21 days to the wedding day, the intending couple must approach registry to obtain the licence for marriage without which no church will join the couple.

**MEDICAL TEST:** This is at the discretion of the intending couple. Knowing the medical condition of each other is good, but this should be settled between both of them.

## **LESSON SIX**

### **WEDDING DAY**

This is the long awaited day, which should be approached prayerfully. A couple of days to wedding day both the bride and groom must start praying fervently for the wedding to be glorious. While thanking and blessing the name of the Lord, they should commit the day and the lives of everybody who is expected at the ceremony to the mercy of the God Almighty.

On the appointed day, they should wake very early in order to arrive at the church, not later than 30 minutes to the appointed time. They should not over rely on people to avoid any disappointments. They should only rely on the Lord as their sufficiency and be hopeful.

**THE WEDDING DRESS:** The wedding dress MUST NOT be flamboyant but modest.

**NOTIFICATION OF CHORISTER:** The prepare the Choristers the performance at the church service, invitation card and a copy of the programme should be delivered to the Choirmaster at least a week before the appointed date.

**THE WEDDING PROGRAMME:** The wedding program should be as brief as possible to avoid boredom. The draft should be presented to the Pastor-in-Charge or Marriage Counsellor for approval two weeks before the date.

**THE WEDDING RECEPTION:** Intending couples need to understand that a wedding ceremony is a few days affair after which the crowd leaves them to face the reality of life. It is unchristian therefore to outdo yourself and thus be plunged into debt that will take years to repay. All these ceremonies can be done on a low scale that takes nothing away from the success of the home. Therefore, all arrangements regarding the reception must be conducted in moderation.

**NOTE THE FOLLOWING:**

- No traditional rites may be observed. Everything must be done to the glory of God Almighty.

- The bride may no longer go back to the parents' house after the reception. It is either to the groom's house or for honeymooning, therefore the bride's luggage must be handy.

**GIFTS:** All gifts should be thoroughly sanctified (covered with the blood of Jesus) and blessed. They should be opened as soon as they have prayed, thank God and settle down. Any gift which is not considered fit i.e. with demonic inscription, mermaid drawings or engravings should be destroyed and not given out to another person.

## **LESSON SEVEN**

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is the act of expressing, discussing, and settling plans between intending husband/wife about their wedding arrangements i.e. (including cost of engagement and other requirements) having regard to their financial capabilities.

The mode of communication during the courtship time usually takes place in DAYTIME and in an open environment to avoid sin. Late night or early morning discussion is not recommended. The discussion should be truthful and sympathetic, as the lives of a whole generation of people will be affected. The discussion should of necessity include the size and sexes of children to be raised etc.

Residential accommodation for the couple immediately after the wedding has to be discussed and finalized. In all these discussions the leadership role of the brother in whole life affair should be encouraged to manifest and the sister's complimentary role should also be enhanced.

## **LESSON EIGHT**

### **SUBMISSION IN LOVE**

Christian marriage must be deeply rooted in Christlike love that sort of love that covers all sins. Our Lord Jesus loves the church so deeply that he gave himself up for it. The husband continues to love his wife (as Isaac love Rebecca) even if she does not deserve it. In like manner, the wife continues to comfort/love her husband even when he does not seem to deserve it.

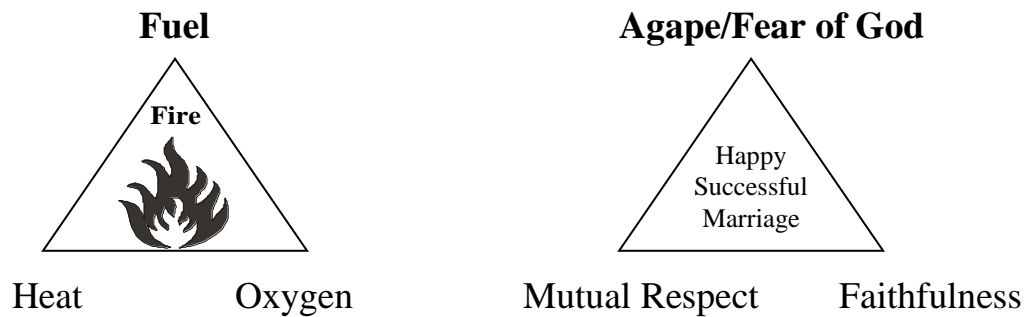
## **LOVE**

In common English usage, love means a sentiment of a strong attachment pertain towards a particular object or class of object. A person may be said to love anything in which he/she takes special delight e.g. the sea, flowers, birds, music, poetry etc. When the object of love is personal it is usually individual rather than generic. Therefore, let us examine some kinds of 3 categories as follows:

1. Agape Love      2. Infatuative Love      3. Too much of self love
1. **AGAPE LOVE (Supernatural Love)**: This type of love is neither selfish/possessive. It makes submission between Christian husband and wife easy to attain. Its divine nature makes it possible for either the husband or the wife to apologise to each other when the need arises Rom. 5:5; I Cor. 13:1-7; Col. 3:10-14; I John 4:7.
2. **INFATUATIVE LOVE (Gros/Sexual Love)**: An infatuative love is a love one foolishly or sadly desire. This is the love one develops because of mere shape of someone's nose, legs, complexion, way of speech, set of teeth and the like. This type of love wanes as soon as the object of desire fades. This type of love is dangerous and should be avoided by intending couples.
3. **TOO MUCH SELF LOVE (I, Me & Myself)**: This type of love is harbinger or forerunner of selfishness which means one being concerned with one's own interest, advantage etc. to the total exclusion of the other person's interest. This type of love must NEVER BE ALLOWED TO

EXIST between married couples. Whenever it is traced to any of the couple, the concerned couple must try everything within his/her power to root it out. This is because if it is not promptly nipped in the bud, it will definitely destroy the marriage beyond repairs.

### ANALOGY



### SUBMISSION ON THE SIDE OF THE WOMAN

Submission is the act of submitting to the acceptance of another's power or authority (surrendered, in the context of Christian marriage, submission is the key to a happy Christian home. Wives should honor and be submissive to their husbands as the Church honors and submits to Christ. The following qualities are tips to help our sisters in submission.

Reference I Pet. 3: 1-6

- Chaste behavior v2
- Fear of God v2
- Meekness v4, Prov. 14:1
- Quiet Spirit, not contentious, quarrelsome, or nagging I Pet. 3:4; Prov. 21:19; Prov. 25:14; Prov. 27:15
- Not Insolent 2 Sam. 6:20 – 23
- Not Treacherous. Judges 14:15-17
- Trust in God in all things Heb. 11: 1,2,&6; Rom. 10:1
- Avoid gossip with other women.
- You must be virtuous Prov. 12:4; 31:16-31

## **TIPS ON HOW A HUSBAND CAN LOVE HIS WIFE**

1. Restore the I/thou relationship. Don't refer to her as it or that because she is a human being.
2. Place your wife above your work, knowing well a man's life is his work, whereas a woman life is her family. Christian leaders are among the chief offenders in the sin of neglect of wife/family. Therefore, the man must learn to give them quality time. The man must learn to choose an off day per week to be with the family alone.
3. Show your wife appreciation by words of thanks, kindness, and commendation. Sometimes buy her gifts and don't wait to be asked for one.
4. Write up family goals and resolve to accomplish them. It shows your wife that you care for the home.
5. Loving your wife is unconditional and should therefore not depend only on her submission as a wife (Rom. 12:19-21; Eph. 5:26-29; Col. 3:19; I Pet. 3:7)
6. Be faithful to your wife and there should be no flirtation (Gen. 31:40-50; Prov. 5:15-20).

## **LESSON NINE**

### **CHILD TRAINING**

The word of God tells us that (train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it) Prov. 22:6; Prov. 13:1. Children are gifts as in Psalm 127:3 as well as blessing from God and should therefore not be neglected. Parents are not just to bring children into the world, they are to rear them, nurse them, and train them in the fear of God.

Parents will be required to give account to God concerning the manner they have trained their children. Training is different from teaching, bearing in mind that teaching is theory which adds to the store of knowledge through instruction and information. On the other hand, training does not only involve teaching but also practice (that is, it is the application of theory or knowledge through exercise). To train a child therefore means to make him or her know the correct precepts and ensure the precepts are meticulously followed. Children should not be left alone by parents. Parents should monitor their children to ensure that their behaviour is not at variance with the teachings. Therefore for good results, child training which is the collective responsibility of both husband and wife should be done as specified by God.

#### **REASONS FOR CHILD TRAINING**

- (1) It is a commandment from God to all parents. Prov. 22:6
- (2) Child training is rewarding and profitable. Is. 1:19, compare and contrast Eli's children with Samuel.
- (3) Child training is important because to those children will make up tomorrow's generation.

#### **THE RIGHT TIME TO START CHILD TRAINING**

It has been ascertained that children can be trained right from the mother's womb. It is therefore very appropriate to pray and commence the training of your children from the time of conception. Training prepares children to become useful citizens. The primary purpose of child training is to

provide children with wisdom so that they can see things from God's eternal perspectives. The training will enable the child to gain spiritual values i.e righteousness, prudence, respect for law and justice, honesty and will make the child think of eternity. Child training gives hopes to the child, Prov. 19:18 by making the child pleasing and acceptable to God and to men.

### **HOW TO TRAIN YOUR CHILD AND FORM OF TRAINING**

In order to correctly and effectively train your children, Christian parent require:

1. **FAMILY ALTAR/LOVE:** Christian parents should spend time with their child/children on the word of God. Since God himself minister His love towards us through His word. The need for a family altar cannot be overemphasized. Family altar helps to mould the entire family in the way of the Lord. Joshua 24:15. The family that prays together stays together. Every member of the family including the children and households must be involved when observing family altar. They should be taken through the scriptures in 2 Tim. 3:15; Deut. 6:6-7 and explain the word of God to them and how we can assist them in day to day life. Talk to them and teach them the word of God, when you are at home, when you wake up in the morning, anytime of the day and prove the word of God to them. Let the word of God be stamped in their memories all the time. With the word of God they become useful to parents, the church and the nation. During family altar peculiar topics can be discussed and what the bible says, topic like teenage sex and other forms of special social vices and how the bible condemns them should be prayerfully discussed.

**NOTE:** It is very important for Christian parents to remember that every word altered to a child will ultimately make or destroy the child's future. Words of love, not of condemnation should always be spoken to the child. The life of a child is patterned after the words of his/her parents concerning him or her. Training a child actually means showing him/her



what to do by example, it means instructing the child by practicing the same. It's most improper for you as a parent to ask a child to do what you would not do yourself. With tenderness and love a child should be trained.

2. **DISCIPLINE:** Children without proper discipline are susceptible to destruction, which can in turn bring shame to their parents. Therefore, discipline serves as a check to a child who may not want to go astray. The bible commands in Prov. 13:24 and Prov. 23:13-14 that the rod should not be spared in the discipline of a child. Do not try to deny your children anything in the process of discipline. Denying them their rights will make them to be more stiff-necked. Therefore, reprove them by meeting out the necessary punishments (Give them the reasons) for the punishment but don't be cruel)
3. **CONTROL:** A child cannot be effectively trained without control, since control is for both parents and the child. A child is supposed to be guided by parents and not the reverse. A child cannot dictate to parents. Parents are supposed to be guide because God has commissioned them to train, give direction and help the children. If the excesses in a child are not controlled early in life, those excesses will later control and may eventually destroy him or her.
4. **EDUCATION/TRAINING:** The least legacy any responsible parents can give to a child is education or vocation. When you as a parent fail to give the necessary education or vocation such children grow up to be delinquent and property chasers. Care has to be taken to ensure that apart from education/vocation parents carry out their duty by fulfilling their own role in training their children. This is because children spend at least 80% of their time at home. They should not be left to be taught by their teachers alone or the internet.

5. **OBSERVANCE**: Parents have to keep their eyes on their children. What they do must be monitored. Craze for video films and other forms of music must be checked. Some of these films and musical songs influence children a lot. Parents must assess the type of friends their children keep so that they do not get influenced by peers. The female children must be looked after with more emphasis and parents should study very well the friends they keep and their altitude at home to monitor changes.

## LESSON TEN

### **CONFLICT AND CRISES IN MARRIAGE**

There is just no way of avoiding conflicts or misunderstanding in marriage. Therefore, every marriage (both Christian and non-Christian) experience conflicts that is rain, rising streams and even gail winds in their relationship. The main reason stems from the fact that two different individuals are coming together to become one. Most homes experience series of conflicts in their efforts to impress one another. Problem in a home range from personality, finance, sex, children and other external causes.

#### **TYPES OF CONFLICTS**

- (a) **PERSONALITY**: Because marriage and different personalities, there are bound to be problems. They both came from different homes, background, education and upbringing. They therefore experience some clashes in their reaction to situations.
- (b) **FINANCE**: Money sometimes play a unifying role in a family. Except by the grace of God and understanding by the couple, money matter can be a foundation of clashes for a couple.
- (c) **HOME MANAGEMENT**: Oftentimes, lack of proper management of available resources may bring misunderstanding among couples. The background is often the cause of this. Even if the wife of husband

come from a background of affluence, they should know that this a new life and should be managed differently.

- (d) **INLAWS**: This is a problem most new couples often face. Sometimes some of them find it difficult to accommodate members of each others family and this creates unhealthy situation.

### **HOW TO OVERCOME CONFLICT AND CRISIS IN MARRIAGE**

- (a) **PERSONALITY**: Couples must try and understand each other's temperament and so pray for God's grace to be able to understand each other at all times. The husband should not abandon his role as the head of the home. I Tim. 5:8. Couples should try as much as possible to accommodate each other's views and ideas (Never exhibit the attitude of "Know-it-all")
- (b) **FINANCE**: Divine financial management will help families/couples a lot. The following suggestion would help families to live a harmonious family life in money and other matters.
- (1) Avoid wastage of resources in all forms.
  - (2) The wife should learn to do bulk purchasing as a way of saving cost.
  - (3) Do not enter into any financial agreement without telling your partner or spouse.
  - (4) Do not take a loan without your partner or spouse.
  - (5) Maintain a joint account or if you have separate bank accounts spend money together.
  - (6) Let your partner know your financial status, i.e. liabilities or assets.
  - (7) Never suspect your partner on money matters. E.g. never you your partner is cheating you financially. Marriage remains absolute trust.

- (8) When common accounts are maintained responsibilities to one's family should be balanced on either side.
- (9) When your income is better than your partner don't allow that to create pride and a dominating spirit.
- (c) **HOME MANAGEMENT:** Home management is essential. Firstly, it increases the life span of equipment at home. Both husband and wife should learn to take care of the things at home. The wife should learn to prepare good food. She should be supported by her husband in the kitchen. Prov. 14:1.
- (d) **IN-LAWS:** Visitors to the home should be well received. In-laws should be honorably received by both whilst not allowing undue interference in their matrimonial matters. In this regard, all quarrels must be settled amicably without making it known to any third party.

**SUMMARY:** Ref. Gen. 2:24-25; Eph. 5:31; 6:1

- (1) Give parents their rightful place in your family. They are advisers and admirers. They should not be allowed to dictate your marital life.
- (2) Love them, provide and care for them especially at old age or as widows or widowers. I Tim. 5:3-8.
- (3) Man should obey the biblical command to leave and cleave to their wife. Gen. 2:24.
- (4) There should be equal love and care for both party's relations.
- (5) Mother-in-laws should allow their children to enjoy their marriage.
- (6) Wives should accord their husband's parents and relations loveable and understanding treatment. The Holy Spirit will give them guidance. They should ask him for it all the time. He will surely guide them in Jesus' name. Amen.
- (7) **ADDITIONAL AVENUES OF INCOME:** Husband and wife should also explore other avenues by which they would generate additional

income legitimately e.g. farming and gardening, petty trading, professional practice etc. where possible to augment their income.

- (8) **PRACTICE LOVING EACH OTHER'S PARENTS:** This is a method whereby the couple actually treats the parents and relations of each other as their own people. Take care of the people of your spouse. It implies you do not take the decision for the benefit of your own people but the people of your spouse. You think of them, plan for their comfort and peace. Visit them as regularly as possible. When they visit your family do the talking with them such that their own son or daughter does not have to engage them for too long.
- (9) Never report your spouse to your parents. Also realize it is equally unhealthy and dangerous to report your spouse to his/her parents.
- (10) Do not talk ill about them even to your spouse. Remember he or she is still their son or daughter.
- (11) Do not condemn them even when their wards do so.
- (12) Do not confide in anybody about them.
- (13) Give them every deserved respect.
- (14) Keep them away from the affairs between you and your spouse. Do not make them your counselor.
- (15) Be on good communication with them, especially about their personal welfare.
- (16) If possible do not bring them into your home for too long, realize that familiarity breeds contempt. In-laws are best on visits NOT as residents. This is in the interest of both parties. Any long visit should be on the agreement of you and your spouse.
- (17) If truly you got married according to God's will for your life, you do not need any sympathy or counsel or unnecessary affection that will divert your love from your spouse. Keep a steady mind.

(18) Win the hearts of your In-laws and love them. Everyone wants to be loved and given good commendation. It is very true that your In-laws might possibly have offended you and you have not been able to eye to eye with them. See that the Bible says in Matt. 5:43-48 and find something good in your In-laws. No one is outrightly bad, they cannot be as terrible as you know Satan is.

## **LESSON ELEVEN**

### **SEX IN MARRIAGE**

**INTRODUCTION:** One of the main purposes of marriage is for the propagation of the human race Gen. 1:28; Gen. 9:1, to fulfill this purpose, God has made man with certain biological desires that are good, holy and legitimate but can only be satisfied in marriage.

The importance of sex in any marriage therefore cannot be overemphasized. Sexual intercourse plays a very important role in the success of any marriage. Sex between a husband and his wife is the ultimate physical expression of the love and union that God has brought about in making them husband and wife. In other words, sexual union between couples is not just a physical act it is symbolic of the oneness of the SPIRIT and the SOUL and of the mutual submission which God ordains.

Couples need to understand themselves very well when it comes to the issue of sex. We should not deceive ourselves or pretend on this issue because many homes have been shattered because of the ignorance of couples. The bible enjoins in I Cor. 7:3-5, that to avoid fornication/ in fidelity, a husband and his wife should not deny themselves sex. It is therefore not a sin and not something to be frowned at. It is designed for the natural enjoyment of the couple. They should make sex enjoyable as a way of encouraging subsequent intercourse.

**THE BIBLE ENCOURAGES THAT:**

- (1) The wife must meet the sexual needs of the husband and the husband the sexual needs of the wife. I Cor. 7:3-5
- (2) The couple must not defraud each other in sexual matters, this intimate relationship is a conjugal vow we must pay each other regularly and constantly.
- (3) The couple must come together again after they both have consented to live continent/self restraining for a period to pray and fast (I Cor. 7:5) i.e. for spiritual reasons.

**NOTE:** Very busy schedule at work is not an excuse to abstain from sex. It must not be used as a form of punishment on your partner. Normal marital relations are probably safe during pregnancy until THE LAST FEW WEEKS. Pregnancy is not an excuse to abstain from sex exception on doctor's advice, and it is not excuse for adultery. However, if at any time during pregnancy sexual intercourse becomes uncomfortable, it is wise to refrain.

### **TIME TO SEX**

This intimate relationship between a man and his wife usually should be an all-day affair, as it is supposed to come out of the care and love shown all through the day. To this end, there is no specific time for sex among couples. Depending on the mutual agreement between the two. Sex can be held at any time of the day, BUT it must be held in a decent manner with dignity and respect for each other. Couples need to understand each other very well when it comes to having sex. The husband should understand his wife thoroughly to avoid friction by adjusting sexually to satisfy each other.

**NOTE:** Do not deprive each other of sex so that Satan will not tempt either of you because of your lack of self control.

### **MERITS OF GOOD SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP**

1. **MUTUAL LOVE:** Good sexual relationship brings mutual love among couples. It will also serve as a bond or nucleus which encourages them to love each other.
2. **LEGITIMATE CHILDREN:** Sincerity on issue of sex among couples will bring about good, healthy, and legitimate children/offspring since there will be no need for infidelity between them.

### **SEXUALLY RELATED SINS**

The act of sex could be sinful (contrary to God's divine plan) if carried out:

1. Outside Marriage
2. With inordinate affection
3. Cheating (personal interest at the expense of the spouse)

### **SEX OUTSIDE MARRIAGE**

Sexual relationship between people who are NOT legally married is a very terrible sin before the Almighty God. Anyone who has sex whether with another person other than the legitimate spouse in marriage is violating God's command. Sexually related sins e.g. fornication is very common these days even among believers in Christ. This ought not to be so. Unfortunately, some believers actually practice fornication and they think it should be legalized or accepted as a norm.

**NOTE:** Apostle Paul's comment in I Cor. 5:1-2 "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you and such fornication as is not so much as named among the gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned, that he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you".

REMEMBER sex outside marriage is breaking God's command. Sex is best ONLY in marriage.



- (2) **INORDINATE AFFECTION:** "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves" - Rom. 1:24. As best as sex may be in marriage it is unfortunate that some believers still go into the sexual act with vile affections **BY PUTTING SEXUAL ORGANS INTO WRONG USE.** Unholy affection such as using the sexual organs for other orgies is a sin before God. That's why the bible says, "for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections for ever their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature Rom. 1:26. This passage though directed against practices outside a heterosexual relationship, is equally the wrong use of the sex organs.
- (3) **CHEATING** (i.e **Personal interest at the expense of the spouse**): Cheating means to dishonor and disregard the joy and satisfaction of the spouse. If you cheat your spouse in the act of love you may not get to heaven. This is because you would have breached God's standing principle on "Christian ethics" "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. Rom. 12:10

**NOTE:** By cheating, you have dealt treacherously with the spouse of thy youth and this may cause him or her to stumble. Mal. 2:14-16

To avoid cheating, sexual acts should be carried out on the mutual agreement of both parties. Please do not force or compel your partner. The act should not be abruptly stopped until both parties are satisfied. Many men are guilty of this as they quickly attain orgasm and drop the woman headlong over a cliff into a sexual hazard. Such experience may cause the victim to become frigid i.e. loss of interest and unspoken hatred for the act of sex. Often, once one of the spouses becomes frigid, the marriage is bound to experience some problems. It is also very unfortunate that some believers use sex as a weapon against their spouse. This is very terrible and ought not to be so. It is one of the fastest ways to break the home.

**WARNING:** Don't ever use sex as a punishment. If as a spouse you have done so, please repent and God will forgive you. The bible in I Cor. 7:3-5 tells us that "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife has no power of her body but the husband and likewise the husband has no power of the body but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other except it be with consent for a time".

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the best way to have sex is for the married couple to be in mutual agreement for their satisfaction. This will keep their heart and home together. It is not meant to hurt but to be enjoyed. Do not hurt your partner please. Realize that a sexually starved or dissatisfied spouse may not always behave normally in the home. Sexually inflicted wounds are not easily pronounced or spoken but they will kill the relationship faster than cancer does to man. To this end, keep your sexual acts in line with God's divine plan.

### **TIT BITS ON HOW TO ADJUST SEXUALLY TO SATISFY EACH OTHER IN MARRIAGE**

Bible References: Gen. 2:25; 4:1; Eccl. 4:11; Prov. 5:15-23; I Cor. 7:1-5; Song of Solomon 4: 1-7

- (a) Sex should be ONLY within marriage.
- (b) Avoid infidelity in marriage. Heb. 13:4; 2 Tim. 3: 1-6; Prov 30:18-23; I Cor. 6:15-20
- (c) Sexual intercourse should be enjoyed proportionately by both husband and wife.
- (d) Provide adequate environment that ensures privacy before sexual acts.
- (e) Wife should avoid getting or offering sex as an incentive.
- (f) Husbands should not pervert or abuse their wives sexually.
- (g) Know and apply the correct physical techniques before, during and after sexual acts for complete sexual fulfillment in both.

- (h) Maintain self-control, consider the times of birth, menstruation, sickness, sad news strains, health and emotional disorder.
- (i) Remember the possible outcome/implications of sexual intercourse and make adequate provisions for them.

## **LESSON FOURTEEN**

### **KEEPING YOUR MARRIAGE ALIVE (THE CHRISTIAN HOME)**

The Christian marriage or Christian home is the backbone of any nation. It can be likened to the strength of every community, and the church of God cannot flourish without it. God wants us to build a home where parents are bound together by Christian love; where children are welcome and spiritually instructed, and the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the supposed head of the home but the active head. It is a place where parents, children and dependents gather daily for family worship. Marriage is a living relationship and must not only be kept alive but must grow and mature. Marriage can be compared to the relationship between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Church. Eph. 5:24-32; Col. 2:19.

### **AREA OF FOCUS**

#### **1. BUILDING EACH OTHER UP**

- (a) Building each other up is one of the God's reasons for instituting the first marriage. Gen. 2:18b; Gen. 2:20b.
- (b) Scripture makes it clear that woman needs the man and vice versa. I Cor. 11 & 12.
- (c) Building each other up must be in all aspects of life. Physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Taking interest in each other's jobs, activities, and interests. Helping each other to be what God wants him or her to be, whether in business, politics, career, education, and other

areas of interest. Allowing the full manifestation of talents and gifts of each other by sharing and supporting each other's aspirations.

## 2. **STAYING TOGETHER AND ENJOYING EACH OTHER**

For a couple to successfully stay together in their marriage, they must understand the following principles:

- (a) That the marriage is a genuine heart agreement of both parties.
- (b) Both must be willing from the beginning to establish a true Christian love and operate on that kind of love. I Cor. 13.
- (c) They must have it at the back of their minds that it is a lifetime commitment.
- (d) They must consider the relationship of prime importance next only to that of God. Being alone was one loophole that God noticed in the man's life before He made the woman. Gen. 2:18a; Gen. 2:24; Gen. 2:24; Eccl. 4:9-12

## 3. **STAYING TOGETHER MUST ALSO ENCOMPASS ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE**

- (a) **SPIRITUALLY:** Praying together as a couple and studying the scriptures together. Walking together as church workers should be encouraged as much as is possible. Winning whole families to church is usually more successful with couples that have a habit of staying together. The family altar cannot be overemphasized. Families that pray together stays together. It is important for couples to learn to pray about every problem or misunderstanding together rather than with parents, relatives, or friends.
- (b) **PHYSICALLY:** The inability to communicate effectively often possess lot of problems in Christian marriages. Couples must be open to each other by keeping no secrets. They must learn to talk about every problem and misunderstanding. Only by sharing it that they get to know one another better. Being together most of the time as much

as is possible is also quite important. Couples must learn to go out together, sit together as much as possible. Having time to be alone with each other, for example having holidays together or a retreat together. Deliberately making time for each other and keeping to it as much as possible. Couples must learn to commend and appreciate each other. There should also be a continual expression of love by words and action by both partners.

Some married Christians have cultivated the bad habit of enjoying the presence of the opposite sex, other than themselves. This is because they have not been able to build in themselves what they like in other opposite sex. To build each other communication is key. It is also important to note that it is not wrong for a husband to romance his wife. Some Christian men get into trouble with other women because they have not been able to establish a good physical relationship with their own wives. Christians with these challenges should visit:

- Your Pastor for special prayer.
- Marriage Counsellor
- An experienced Christian Doctor

(c) **STAYING TOGETHER MATERIALLY:** This is part of the marriage vow a man makes to his wife. A joint purse is the ideal and what is expected of every marriage. When your money and assets are not together then you are much as 50% apart. Couples must learn to keep their assets for each other i.e. the next of kin of a husband should be wife and vice versa.

(d) **APPEARANCE:**

- (i) Don't be careless just because you are married to a Christian especially the ladies.
- (ii) Have good health habits, body fitness, exercise etc.
- (iii) Know what your partner likes and try to do it.

- (iv) Try to satisfy each other.
- (v) Commend each other's appearances and lovely criticize when necessary.
- (vi) Christian standard is very important, moderation Phil. 4:5. The adorning of the inner man must be more than the adorning of the outer man. I Pet. 3:3-4
- (vii) Outward adorning must not be your chief aim in life.

Accept your partner for who he/she is. Respect each other's opinion and views even when they differ.

Avoid arguments and let the woman know that the man is the head of the family - I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23. Be open to correction and correct in love. Be open to admonition and advice - Gen. 21:12. Be slow to wrath, slow to speak but quick to hear - James 1:19. Be attentive to one another. Always bring to your memory I Cor. 13 kind of love, and try to practice it. The love that believes all things never keeps grudges. Be quick to settle differences. Don't store up offences in your mind only to relate them to other things later.

Believe the best about your partner. Always remember that any seed of unforgiveness nullifies all the power God has given to your union Mark 11:25-26. Women, no matter the spiritual gift they have been endowed with by God, must always remember that they are first of all, wives and then the mother of the home and not teachers of their husbands. Thus, women must never attempt to teach their husbands like little children, even when the husband is not a believer. It is the chaste manner and the way of life that will win them over.

### **TIPS ABOUT RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **(1) JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- (a) Both must love the Lord and encourage each other in the things of the Lord.

- (b) Both must obey the word of God and encourage each other to do the same.
- (c) It is the responsibility of both partners to create an atmosphere of love within the home.
- (d) It is their joint responsibility to bring up children in the way of the Lord and love them equally.

(2) **HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- (a) Be a good leader in all aspects. Eph. 5:23
- (b) Spiritually, lead family altar.
- (c) Materially, provide for the family.
- (d) Love his wife as Christ loved the church. Eph. 5:24-25; Col. 3:19
- (e) Love his wife as his own body. Eph. 5:23 & 33
- (f) Nourish his wife i.e. bring up, care for and protect. Eph. 5:23; Eph. 6:4; Rev. 12:6
- (g) Honor and cherish his wife i.e to foster, to warm in one's own bosom. Eph. 5:29; I Thess. 2:7
- (h) Be joined as one flesh. Eph. 5: 30-31
- (i) Leave parents for his wife. Eph. 5:31
- (j) Cleave to wife. Eph. 5:31; Matt. 19:5
- (k) It is the duty of the husband to have a careful understanding of his wife. I Pet. 3:7

(3) **WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- (a) To be submissive and obedient to husband. Eph. 5:22
- (b) Recognized headship of husband. Eph. 5:23
- (c) Be subject to husband. Eph. 5:24; I Pet. 3:3
- (d) To reverence husband. Eph. 5:33
- (e) Must be faithful in all things. I Tim. 3:11; Prov. 31:11
- (f) Keepers of the home. Titus 2:5

- (g) A true helpmeet. Spiritually, upholding the family and husband in prayer. Physically, cares for husband, children, and whole household. Materially, helps with home expenses.
- (h) It is the duty of the wife to love her husband well. A man also needs a great deal of love and affection.
- (i) The model wife. I Pet. 3: 1-6
- (j) Obeys and submits to her husband. I Pet. 3:1, 5, & 6
- (k) Obeys God's word. I Pet. 3:1
- (l) Has a chaste conduct and manner of life. I Pet. 3:2
- (m) Outward adorning is not her chief aim in life. I Pet. 3:3
- (n) Her inner man is more adorned than her outer man. I Pet. 3:4
- (o) She trusts in God. I Pet. 3:5
- (p) She does well. I Pet. 3:6
- (q) She lives faithfully with her husband so that there is no fear of being found guilty of infidelity. I Pet. 3:6
- (r) Such a woman will win an unbelieving husband.



## **LESSON FIFTEEN**

### **MARRIAGE TIPS**

#### **KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL MARRIED LIFE**

- (1) Be a wife to your husband, a mother to your children. You must not fail also to be a mother to your husband's relations and your own relation. They may come to stay with you. You are the lover your husband must have. If you fail him in that capacity, he will be moluly tempted by the enemy.
- (2) Give your husband/wife protection he or she needs in the areas of sex. I Cor. 7:3-5
- (3) Maintain a courtship relationship through the years after your marriage. It is equally a husband's duty for this applies more to the sisters. Thinks of how meticulously you attended to your hygienic need appearance, hair, clothing etc. you wanted to look your least for the man you wanted to capture. Now that you have captures him, you need to keep him by excersing same care.
- (4) You must not create his or her time with infidelity as this will cause an irreparable earnage.
- (5) Don't hang around men and women alone. It may lead to temptation.
- (6) Wives must maintain your personal private devotions. You must also have a family altar morning and night.
- (7) Wives, be on the alert that you are not drawn into gossip and slander. Some woman will be more spiritual if they learn how to keep quiet sometimes.
- (8) Never argue with your husband when people are around.
- (9) Be careful how you treat the boys and househelps living with you because they will be the people to protect your image outside.
- (10) Remember dirtiness would kill the joy of marriage in your family. Always do your best to avoid it.

- (11) avoid partiality, do not show a greater love or attention to your brothers and sisters. Try to be a mother of both parties and give both a sense of belonging, accommodating all. Bear in mind that if you fail to do these things, your husband will be bitter with your people because his people are feeling they were being cheated and see him as a weak husband being controlled by the wife.
- (12) don't forget that even though your husband is a man of God he is still a human being, he has his weak points, therefore never take the place of the Holy Spirit or keep nagging him. Remember Aaron and Miriam Num. 12: 1-2, David's wife II Sam. 6: 16-23.
- (13) Never be a police dog against women that come to your husband for counseling. Remember your husband is a man of God. Feel free to advise him when he becomes careless BUT do not make the other women feel that they are husband snatchers.
- (14) Learn how to cover your husband's faults more especially when he is caught in a sin. When he repents, forgive him. Your maturity is needed to cover him and encourage him to stand.
- (15) Don't run away from corrections. When you try to correct some women, they start weeping to attract sympathy or start to shout and make a quarrel. Sometimes it is good to wait until tempers cool before pointing out mistakes either way.
- (16) Don't imitate another woman in dressing and so on. First and foremost assess your husband's income and standard/statue in the ministry.
- (17) Do not go on a shopping spree and new bomw without your spouses knowledge. Plan on how to get more legitimate money to only necessary things, before you buy up everything you see in the market.
- (18) Don't insult each other privately or publicly.
- (19) Don't try to settle your differences in public.

- (20) Never become jealous when your husband sends money to his people. Never you send money to your people without letting him know of it first.
- (21) Never report your husband or wife to any of your church members or relatives.
- (22) Don't discuss each other weak points to prayer partners or to a friend.
- (23) Calm yourself down whenever you are being insulted by your spouse outside until you come home to discuss the issue peacefully. Please hold yourself and act like an angel for that will help to save the marriage/ministry.
- (24) Never insult the elders and deacons or anybody working with your husband, then your marriage will work out well with your spouse.
- (25) Always help your husband to submit to his higher officer in his place of work. Rebellion brings judgement and this will bring hardship and trouble to the family.
- (26) Never discuss your problems with your In-laws but with God.

## **LESSON TWELVE**

### **PREGNANCY**

#### **EARLY, POST AND DELIVERY CARE**

*(Gen. 3:16; Exo. 1:19; Ps. 128: 1-6; I Tim. 2:15)*

Planning for a baby is such a lovely experience for both parents. It is partly the real fulfillment of marriage. These nine months of waiting should be a joyful time, a time of happy planning for the future family. This is the time when nature is doing a most remarkable job and you must do your part to keep yourself strong and healthy. Pregnancy is not something to be afraid of, especially as a believer or a child of God, when you have Jesus you have everything and there should be no reason for any worries or anxieties.

## **SYMPTOMS OF PREGNANCY**

- (1) Menstrual loss.
- (2) Early morning sickness
- (3) Dizziness
- (4) Body pains especially your back
- (5) Slight change in colour (some darker and some lighter)
- (6) Additional weight

It is advisable for the woman to go for medical check-up if any of these symptoms begins to manifest. Once pregnancy is confirmed the woman is strongly advised to go for anti-natal care at any reputable and good hospital.

**NOTE:** The mission maternity center also offer free anti-natal services for willing members of the church.

## **DO'S AND DON'TS DURING PREGNANCY**

- (a) Proght through pregnancy is wise to wear shoes with flat heels.
- (b) Clothing should be comfortable and loose therefore tight-dressing must be avoided.
- (c) Frequent travels must be avoided at the early stage of the pregnancy and also during the last few months.
- (d) Avoid self-medication. It is advisable to consult qualified medical personnel for any medication.
- (e) For divine protection, always attend the faith clinic for pregnant women in the church and put your absolute trust in God for safe delivery. I Tim. 2:15; Jn. 16:21
- (f) Do not embark on fasting unnecessarily.

## **AFTER CHILD BIRTH**

- (1) After delivery, the baby should be fed with breast milk (Baby friendly). Before then you may begin with water.

- (2) Ensure that the baby is given BCG infection and all necessary immunization.
- (3) When the baby is a month old ensure you take the baby for oral polio infection.
- (4) At nine months take the baby for measles immunization.  
At the post natal clinic, your doctor will advise you further.

