

June 1, 2003

Week Thirty: "Growing Through Committed Relationships"

Day One: Small Group Guide

Read: Titus 2 (p. 1411)

Read: Commentary (p. 1412)

Reflect: What are the most permanent relationships in your life? What makes them so stable?

Dig: What is the reason given in each relationship example that they should love each other? (see the close of each paragraph in your Freedom in Christ Bible)

According to Paul's use of the term here, what is "sound doctrine"? (see verses 1-2)

According to verse 11, what is it that helps us to live holy and glorious lives? How does this answer contrast with other ways to try to live the Christian life?

Apply: Since the grace of God "...teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age..." what is it that God is giving you the gift to say "No" to today?

Ask God for the power to resist a specific temptation that you know will come to you today and then go out and live by grace!

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Day Two: "Marriage, a Covenant Relationship"

Read: Matthew 19:3-12 (p. 1102)

Read: Commentary (p. 1104)

Reflect: Where have you seen a model of a good/great marriage? What life lessons did you learn?

Dig: Look up and read the passage that Jesus is referring to: Deut. 24:1-4 (p. 218). What does Jesus say about this passage?

Look up Malachi 2:13-16 (p. 1069). What does God say his feeling about divorce is?

What reason does God give in verse 15 about why divorce is so detestable to Him?

What direction does God give about avoiding divorce? (see verses 15b and 16b).

Apply: What does it mean for you to "guard yourself in your spirit" regarding marriage and divorce?

Ask God to give you a new respect for the covenant of marriage.

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Day Three: "Divorce and Remarriage"

Read: 1 Corinthians 7 (p. 1310)

Read: Commentary (p. 1312)

Reflect: How has divorce touched your life?

Dig: If all scripture is inspired and trustworthy, what might it mean for Paul to say, after the beginning of verse 10, "not I, but the Lord" and then later, in the beginning of verse 12 to say "I, not the Lord"?

In terms of sexual fulfillment in marriage, how might verses 3-5 be misused? How does the commentary help us with interpretation?

How might Hebrews 13:4 (p. 1436) and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (p. 1320) help us answer questions about what is healthy or permissible in the marriage bed?

What is the ground for divorce given in verses 15-16 and what is the

reason given?

Apply: If you are married, ask God for the power to fulfill the wisdom of this passage. If you are single, ask God for the power to honor Him with your sexuality.

Week Thirty: "Growing Through Committed Relationships"
Day Four: "Training up a Child"

Read: Proverbs 22:6 (p. 716)

Read: Commentary (p. 717)

Reflect: How did your parents train you in terms of control?
How did they train you in terms of support?

Dig: What is the command and what is the promise in this verse in Proverbs?

Since Proverbs are "wise sayings" and not "rules" or formulas, how should we respond to this Proverb if a child well raised still turns out evil all his days?

How do Ephesians 6:4 (p. 1361) and Deut. 6:4-9 (p. 199) fill out the picture of how to raise children?

Apply: Since we are called to parent our children with wisdom, and since we raise our children as a covenant community (that is, in a spiritual sense, all our children belong to all of us), what kind of renewed commitment is God calling you to? Commit that to him today in prayer and then go out and love our children!

Week Thirty: "Growing Through Committed Relationships"
Day Five: "Disciplining Children"

Read: Malachi 4:5-6 (p. 1071)

Read: Commentary (p. 1070)

Reflect: Have you ever seen very poor discipline of children either in the home or classroom? What has been the result?

Dig: Verse 6 of Malachi 4 is the last verse of the First Testament. After this there are over 400 years of silence in terms of scripture. What conclusions might you draw from that fact?

How does 2 Timothy 3:1-5 (p. 1406) shed light on this passage? What does this passage have to do with the last five words of the Malachi text?

Our commentary teaches six ways that we can "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children" and avert the curse of God. Do you agree with them all? Why or why not?

Apply: Read Matthew 18:1-6 and ask God to give you the same heart he has toward the children in your life. Now ask the Holy Spirit to nudge you into practical ways to express this heart.