

## The basic building block of society ...

is the individual. From birth on, our environment has a major effect on each of us. The family is in the *best* position to control that environment. Good, stable families build good, stable individuals, who make up good, stable societies. When the family unit becomes dysfunctional, however, individuals become dysfunctional; and they in turn create more dysfunctional families. If too many individuals are dysfunctional, society itself deteriorates.

People can help one another stay balanced; therefore God created in humans a need for social interaction. He implanted in us the need “to belong,” to be loved, wanted, and appreciated on a stable basis. God intended for families to meet these needs and thus keep us fulfilled and happy.

Most individuals have two families—the family of orientation (the family one grows up in) and the family of procreation (the family one creates). Strong social ties, especially in the family, serve as each individual’s ...

# ANCHOR POINTS

## THE FAMILY OF ORIENTATION

### 1. Who heads the family of orientation?

*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right”* (Ephesians 6:1). Parents are responsible for their families. But because raising children is no simple matter, God expects children to cooperate. *“Honor your father and your mother”* (Exodus 20:12).

### 2. What does God promise children who honor their parents?

*“Your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you”* (Exodus 20:12). Children who willingly learn from the experience of their parents and other successful, God-fearing adults, are less likely to be foolhardy and will be successful in life.



## FRIENDSHIPS

### 3. How can parents prepare their children for a healthy social life?

*“A man who has friends must himself be friendly”* (Proverbs 18:24). It’s the parents’ responsibility to teach their children social skills. Bad social habits are easily acquired and can take many years and much effort to unlearn. Thus, until children have obtained these skills, parents need to be with them when they interact with other children.

### 4. What are the qualities of a real friend?

- a) *“A friend loves at all times”* (Proverbs 17:17). A true friend can always be trusted and remains loyal even when the going gets tough.
- b) *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful”* (Proverbs 27:6). True friends will always want the best for us and will humbly but firmly let us know when we are at risk. They are good listeners and will be open minded, looking at both sides of questions. True friends will respect us in spite of disagreement.

## COURTSHIP

### 5. What is courtship?

It’s a procedure by which a man and a woman, already close friends, determine if the permanent commitment of marriage to each other would create a happy family. During the last few decades—as courtship deteriorated into “dating” between virtual strangers, with little supervision—the divorce rate soared. Consequently, trial marriages became popular. But couples discovered that terminating a trial relationship is as traumatic as a divorce. What’s more, trial relationships that result in marriage have a divorce rate almost twice that of those who marry before cohabiting.<sup>1</sup> When courtship is carefully and prayerfully entered into and properly conducted, there is less risk. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths”* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

<sup>1</sup> Melashenko, E. Lonnie, and Timothy E. Crosby (1988), *Sex: the Myth and the Magic*, National Bureau of Economic Research, p. 32.

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## 6. When is a person mature enough for courtship?

- a) *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.” “She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy”* (Ephesians 5:25; Proverbs 31:20). Those who enter courtship need to be socially mature enough to love outside themselves. Having a give-and-take relationship in one’s family of orientation is a good sign. Couples who enter courtship need **first** to have established a close, **comfortable, platonic** friendship.
- b) *“The husband is the head of the wife.” “She opens her mouth with wisdom”* (Ephesians 5:23; Proverbs 31:26). Each needs to have enough intellectual and emotional maturity as well as practical experience to lead a family.
- c) *“Which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it?”* (Luke 14:28). The couple should also be financially mature enough to support a family.
- d) *“You, fathers,... bring [your children] up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” “Her children rise up and call her blessed.... A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised”* (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 31:28, 30). Aspiring parents need to be emotionally and spiritually mature enough to lead their children to Christ.

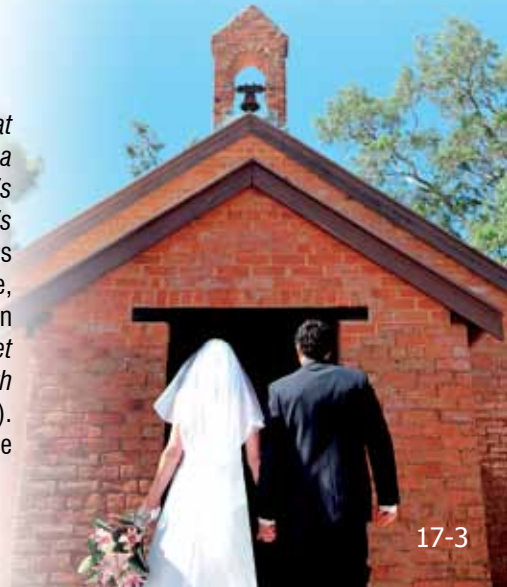
## 7. What is the most important area of compatibility a person should look for in a potential mate?

*“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers”* (Amos 3:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14). **Before** becoming romantically involved, couples need to be sure they have similar values. Once “in love,” people find that their hormones “bribe” reason, resulting in decisions they generally end up regretting. Dual-faith marriages are difficult and generally don’t last.

# MARRIAGE

## 8. What is marriage?

*“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper.’... Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one”* (Genesis 2:18, 24). Marriage is a strictly exclusive, permanent, intimate relationship between husband and wife—a companionship.<sup>2</sup> *“Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth”* (Proverbs 5:18). Marriage as God intended it to be is the highest human source of happiness.





### 9. For marriage to grow stronger and better, who needs to be a part of it?

*“Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.” “The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man” (John 2:2; 1 Corinthians 11:3).* It’s nice to invite Christ to our weddings but far more important to invite Him to be the head of our homes. Divine love makes human love able to reach its full potential.

### 10. What role does respect play in marriage?

*“Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.... Likewise, you husbands, dwell with [your wives] with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:6-7).* Disrespect cannot be indulged in the family without destructive consequences to every member. The above verses tell us that when we are disrespectful, the Lord will not answer our prayers. Differences of opinions and feelings should be honestly discussed. Constructively criticize your mate’s behavior or words, but **never** assault his or her identity by, for example, negatively labeling your mate or attaching the words “always” or “never” to your criticisms. Keep to the subject; don’t bring up the past. Try to be objective. Remember, respect is basic to love.

### 11. What role does sex play in marriage?

*“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled” (Hebrews 13:4).* God planned for sex to be a mutually enjoyed activity that binds the relationship and sets it apart from other types of relationships. *“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11 KJV).* Lust, on the other hand, is a selfish obsession that defies reason and restraint. Sex indulged intemperately, as encouraged by the media, becomes addictive. Addictions lead to violation of trust and destroy love.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; Deuteronomy 22:22.

## THE FAMILY OF PROCREATION

### 12. What role do children play in the lives of parents?

*"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord"* (Psalm 127:3). God loves children and entrusts them to parents as both a privilege and a responsibility.

### 13. What are parents especially responsible for?

*"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). Successful parenting provides both love and discipline in proper mixture. Consistency, firmness, and kindness give children security. Proper guidance produces strength of character that makes children able and willing to shoulder responsibilities and understand their own missions in life. Such children become sources of happiness and support to their parents and are likely to become wonderful parents themselves as well.

### 14. What quality of interaction between parents and children does God bless?

*"And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath"* (Ephesians 6:4). Even when disciplined, children know if they are loved, respected, and treated fairly. Fair treatment wins the affection and the respect that parents need in order to lead out. Assault on a child's self-respect can cause irreversible damage.

### 15. What does God promise the God-fearing family?

*"Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table.... Yes, may you see your children's children"* (Psalm 128:1-3, 6). Earning the love and respect of the family is the greatest reward anyone can have.



What about ...

## YOUR ANCHOR POINTS?

- **What if I am married to someone who does not believe in God?**

*“And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy”* (1 Corinthians 7:13-14). Who knows? With God’s help and Christian prudence, the spouse and children may learn to know and love God!

- **I’m lonely, yet I don’t want to impose myself on anybody else. What should I do?**

*“God sets the solitary in families”* (Psalm 68:6). Do something for somebody who is worse off than you are, and you will find yourself needed and loved. Each day thank God for His blessings and the many evidences of His love and care for you. See if you don’t become aware of His constant affection and companionship.



We’re probably all familiar with pressure cookers and why they have safety valves. And we know what it’s like to “blow our own tops.” But when a nation is found “Blowing Its Top,” as in Lesson 18, there has to be a reason!

# REVIEW QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions—and send them to us so we can help you with any misunderstandings. Note that multiple-choice questions may have more than one correct answer. *Circle the letters of all correct answers.*

**1. Ideally, a child's primary anchor point is ...**

- a) his country.
- b) his playmates.
- c) his family.

**2. A true friend ...**

- a) tells us the truth in love.
- b) avoids telling us the truth to preserve friendship.
- c) will stand by us until the going gets tough.

**3. Courtship is “a procedure by which a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_, already \_\_\_\_\_, determine if the permanent \_\_\_\_\_ of marriage to each other would create a happy \_\_\_\_\_.”**

**4. Successful courtship and marriage require ...**

- a) social, intellectual, financial, and spiritual maturity.
- b) only love, because “love conquers all.”

**5. In selecting a partner for life, one should look for compatibility in ...**

- a) values.
- b) hormones.
- c) hobbies.
- d) religious beliefs.



**6. Marriage is intended to be ...**

- a) a strictly exclusive, permanent, intimate companionship between husband and wife.
- b) a source of happiness and esteem to at least one partner.
- c) honorable.

**7. “Train up a \_\_\_\_\_ in the way he should go, and when he is \_\_\_\_\_ he will not \_\_\_\_\_ from it” (Proverbs 22:6).**

**8. Whose leadership in the family is essential?**

- a) Your mother’s.
- b) That of Jesus Christ.
- c) A marriage counselor’s.
- d) Your best friend’s.



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