

# TRUTH CENTERED TRANSFORMATION

MODULE



# MARRIAGE & FAMILY TEACHER GUIDE

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# Before You Get Started

## Special Facilitator Note for the Marriage & Family Module

These lessons are each about 2 hours—not the usual 1.5 hours. Ask the participants to invite their spouse to attend the training. Make some modifications for the couple discussions. Encourage everyone to participate in this training even if they are not married or if they do not have children. These topics are valuable for everyone to learn to develop healthy relationships in all communities.

All the Visual Aids are at the back of the Teacher Guide. If you do not print a Student Guide for participants, make one copy for each person of the Recognise our Differences in Lesson 2. Each church may want to pay for a copy of the Student Guide to remember the main ideas of this module.

## Preparing for Teaching a Lesson

1. Read through the **Teacher's Guide** carefully, several times if possible. Highlight or make notes on the sides of the pages to remind yourself of important points.
2. Look at the **main ideas** for each lesson so you know what students should learn through the lesson.
3. Read all **scripture** passages ahead.
4. Check to see what **materials** are needed in each lesson and make sure you make copies of Student Guides (handouts) and create the visual aids that are used in the lesson.
5. Make sure you are familiar with each **activity** in the lesson (role-plays, games, visual aids). You can practice it with your family or friends.
6. Take time to **pray** for God to prepare the students, for the students to hear what God wants them to hear, and for Him to help you teach the materials. Remember that it is only through God's strength that we will see people changed.

## How to Use This Teacher's Guide

1. **Main Ideas and Materials:** Each lesson begins with this section.
  - a. **Main Ideas** – There are many good ideas in each lesson, but participants should clearly understand these main ideas by the end of each lesson. It is good to ask yourself if you think participants could remember these main ideas after you lead a lesson. Take time to review the main ideas often to help them remember.
  - b. **Materials** – The specific materials needed are listed for each lesson, including Visual Aids and Student Handouts. This Teacher Guide will indicate when to use them.
    - **STUDENT GUIDES** – will be labelled like this.
    - **VISUAL AIDS** – will be labelled like this.
2. **Facilitator Instructions:** There are special instructions in the lesson to help you lead the training well. These are not meant to be shared with the students. Read these ahead so you are prepared to lead discussions and activities. Some questions will also have italicised answers to help you as a facilitator know what ideas to emphasize with the students. These are not the only good answers, just some good answers.

# Lesson 1: Roles in Marriage

## Main Ideas

1. Men have two roles in marriage. They are to be the leader of the family and they are to love their wives in the same way that Christ loved the Church and in the same way that they love and care for themselves.
2. Women have two roles in marriage. They are to love, respect, and submit to their husbands the way the Bible teaches and to be a godly helper.

## Materials

1. Student Guide:
  - a. Roles of Husbands and Wives

## Introduction

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

The success of our marriages calls for men and women to live in harmony and to relate the way Christ intended. One of the key aspects of building your marriage is to understand the different roles of spouses.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Read each story and discuss the questions in the large group.

### Leah's Story

Leah squatted in the doorway cleaning vegetables for dinner. Every now and then she would nudge the hammock where her baby was asleep to keep it swaying back and forth. Her mother-in-law lay on a bamboo mat nearby snoring softly in the afternoon heat. Leah had only been married two years, and already her life was very different than she expected. She felt old and tired. She missed her friends and wished she could visit her mother and father. Instead she had to care for the baby and keep house for her husband's family.

Leah knew her mother-in-law would expect everything to be ready for dinner when she woke up. Leah stretched and rubbed a sore place at the back of her neck. When she and Timeus were first married, he sometimes came home from work early and they would go for a walk or take a drive on the motorbike. Now he always stayed out late with his friends. He came home smelling like alcohol and cigarettes and barely said a few words before going to bed.

Leah had met Timeus at the church youth group. Before they were married, he seemed to like going to church. She imagined that he would be a good husband and a good father. Timeus was not cruel. He did not hit Leah and she knew he didn't go out with other women, but his heart was always far away. Even on Sunday afternoons when he was home, he seemed distant. He never played with the baby or talked with Leah. He only slept or watched TV. If the baby cried or if his mother complained about Leah, Timeus argued with Leah and shouted at her. Leah began to wish she had never gotten married. She never imagined that life could be so difficult.

### Timeus' Story

Later that same evening Timeus sat drinking coffee with his friends. Baara was telling a joke about women that made them all laugh. Timeus thought of Leah and shivered. He knew she would be waiting for him when he got home and that she would be angry. She was never happy. She always complained about Timeus' mother and about all the work she had to do around the house. Timeus knew his mother could be difficult, but he wished Leah could be more patient. His mother had worked hard all her life and she deserved to rest now that she was older. Leah should understand that.

Timeus had started staying out with friends and finding excuses to be away from home because he did not want to listen to all the arguments between Leah and his mother. He was tired of Leah's complaints about her work and the baby. She always seemed so angry with him. Didn't she understand that he worked all day and he just needed to be quiet and rest in the evening?

He even avoided going to church with Leah. He hated pretending like everything was fine between them. Whenever they went to Sunday morning services Leah dressed up the baby and ironed Timeus' best shirt. It was as if she wanted everyone to believe they were prosperous and happy. The truth was that they struggled to make enough money and were never happy at home. Timeus had started to wonder if anyone was really as happy as they pretended to be. He felt so discouraged that he did not even want to go to church anymore. He was not sure there was any meaning to it. He never imagined that life could be so confusing.

- What happened in these two stories?
- How does this compare to families in our community?

#### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

- What advice would you give to Leah? Think about what Timeus needs; what could she do to look after Timeus better?
- What advice would you give to Timeus? Think about what Leah needs; what could he do to look after Leah better?

In this lesson, we are going to examine the role of the husband and wife in marriage. God has given us guiding principles to help us to have successful marriages.

### **Role of the Husband**

#### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

- How would you describe the role of a husband in marriage?

Read Ephesians 5:23, 25, 28-29.

- What do these verses say about the role of a husband?
  - *The husband is the head of the wife.*
  - *The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church.*
  - *The husband is to love his wife as he loves and cares for his own body.*
- The husband is to be the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. How does Christ act as the head of the church? How should a husband act as head of the wife? What are some practical examples?
  - *The husband is the leader.*
  - *Jesus laid down His life and His rights as God to be our Saviour so the husband must make sacrifices to take care of, protect, and provide for his wife and not just to do what is best for himself.*
  - *He does not force his wife to submit but loves her unconditionally. (Christ never forces the church to submit.)*
  - *When a husband makes decisions, he should discuss them with his wife and consider what is best for his wife, not just what is best for himself.*
- Since the husband should love his wife the way Christ loves His Church, how would you describe God's love?

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Use **STUDENT GUIDE**: Role of Husbands and Wives.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and Philippians 2:1-8 and answer the following questions:

- How do each of these verses describe God's love?
  - 1 Corinthians: 13:4-8 – *patient, kind, does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, does not dishonour, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, does not keep account of wrongs. It does not delight in evil but in truth. It protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres. Love never fails.*
  - Philippians 2:1-8 – *humble, considering others' interests first, serving and sacrificing.*
- How can a husband show love for his wife in these ways? In your groups come up with 10 practical things that a husband could do to demonstrate this kind of love for his wife.
  - *Forgive his wife when they have a disagreement*
  - *Listen to his wife's ideas when they are making a decision*
  - *Help look after the baby – give the baby a bath*
  - *Collect water for his wife*
  - *Be faithful to his wife*
  - *Look after the children so his wife has time to visit others*
  - *Consider his wife's own needs before his needs*
  - *Be a good spiritual example – make sure the family attends church every week*
  - *Pray for his wife*
  - *Seek her ideas and talk about important decisions together*
- If a husband treated his wife the way the Bible teaches, what effect do you think it would have on a marriage?

**REPORT BACK** - Review questions above.

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

God has given husbands two primary roles in marriage—to be the head of the wife and to love their wives as they love themselves, just as Christ does for the Church. Jesus modelled an attitude of a servant, washing His disciples' feet and giving up His life as a sacrifice for our salvation. Jesus was caring and kind, gave up His rights as God, and was not dominating.

It is important that we understand how Jesus modelled these roles and that we do not follow one of these two roles and forget the other. If we look at the life of Abraham, we see sometimes he emphasized one over the other and each time it resulted in problems.

1. **Acting as the head, but without love (Genesis 12:10-16):** Abraham took his wife to Egypt to escape the famine. He told his wife to tell everyone that she was his sister so that he would not be harmed. However, this meant that Sarah was taken by Pharaoh to become one of his wives. In this case, we can see that Abraham was acting as head of the household and trying to solve the problem of the famine for his family. However, he was not loving his wife by asking her to lie and become another man's wife. God had to intervene and save Sarah from that situation.
2. **Loving, but not acting as the head of the household (Genesis 16:1-4):** Sarah asked Abraham to sleep with Hagar so that she could have a child through her and then, when problems arose, she asked Abraham to get rid of Hagar. Abraham went along with Sarah's desires without even praying about whether it was the right decision. He loved Sarah but, as the head of his wife, he should have reminded Sarah of God's commands for sex to be for married couples and not agreed to go along with her plans.

In both cases Abraham was not a good husband. If a man is to be a good husband, he must both be the head of his wife AND love his wife the way Jesus loves the Church. One without the other will harm a marriage.

## Role of the Wife

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- In your area, what is the typical role of the wife?

Read Genesis 2:18, 20.

- How does God describe the woman? (*helper*)
- How would you define a 'helper'? What things does a helper typically do?

Read Deuteronomy 33:29 and Psalm 121:1-2.

- Who is our helper in these verses?
- How would you describe the helper in these verses?

In Hebrew (the original language) the same word for 'helper' is used in each of these verses. When God described women as a helper, He used the same word that He used to describe Himself. Satan has lied to us and given us a wrong understanding of 'helper.' It is not the same idea of being a servant or slave. The real definition of 'helper' that God used for the woman means 'a strong person that comes to support and provide help for a person in need.' This same word is used 16 times referring to aspects of God's character: He is our strength, our rescuer, our protector, and our help! God created Eve to provide valuable strength and assistance for Adam.

- How does understanding the biblical idea of 'helper' change our understanding of the role of the wife?

Read Ephesians 5:22,24, 33; and I Peter 3:5.

- What do these verses say about the role of the wife?
  - *The wife should submit to her husband as to the Lord.*
  - *The wife should treat him with respect.*

God has given wives two primary roles in a marriage. The first is to love, respect, and submit to her husband as the leader of the family. The second is to be a godly helper that is both strong and capable.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Use the **STUDENT GUIDE**: Role of Husbands and Wives to answer the following questions:

- What are some ways to be a 'helper' and show godly submission and respect to husbands? In groups try to think of 10 examples.
  - *Prepare meals, clean house, etc.*
  - *Make sure that the family has clean clothes*
  - *Support him in his work*
  - *Create a happy home*
  - *Encourage our husbands*
  - *Share our ideas and thoughts with our husbands*
  - *Pray for our husbands*
  - *Obey our husbands*
  - *Speak well of our husbands*
- How would it affect a marriage if a wife did these sorts of things?

**REPORT BACK** - Have each group share their answers.

## A Godly Marriage

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Proverbs 31:10-31.

- Who were these verses written about? (*an honoured wife*)
- Who were the verses written to? (*vs. 2 – men*)
- List what activities this wife is doing
  - *She works with her hands making things – clothes and household items*
  - *She prepares good food for her family*
  - *Buys land*
  - *Plants a vineyard*
  - *She buys and trades successfully in the marketplace*
  - *She works hard*
  - *Cares for the poor and needy*
  - *Takes care of the household*
- Which activities are common for women to do in your area? Which are not typically allowed for women to do in your area?
- How does the husband treat his wife (verses 28-31)? (*He praises her, honours her, and gives her the fruit of her hands.*)
- In verse 30 why does the husband praise his wife and call her excellent? (Because she fears the Lord)
- How do you honour your wife?

This passage was written by the King's mother to help him to understand what a godly wife looks like and how valuable and powerful such a woman is (look at verse 10) It is not about giving a list of things that a wife must do or a justification for treating a wife as a slave. It does not promote laziness for a husband but instead calls the husband to treat his wife well.

## Love and Respect

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Ephesians 5:33.

- What does this verse show us about the roles of husbands and wives in a godly marriage?

We are given two simple commands, one for the husband and one for the wife. Husbands, LOVE your wives. Wives, RESPECT your husbands. Why do you think it is different? Why are wives told to respect and husbands told to love? Because God knows us; He knows exactly what we need. He knows that men need respect and women need love. Men still like to be loved and women to be respected, but men prefer respect and women love.

You can see this in common life. In the military, a place dominated by males, respect and honour are important. Men aspire to move up the ranks to get more respect. Disrespectful behaviour is not tolerated. Disliking your commander is not a problem. Commanders do not desire to be liked; they desire to be respected. Women, on the other hand, build nurturing environments—they want to be loved; they are not as worried about being respected.

What often happens is that women do not show respect to their husbands, then husbands do not show love to their wives. Because they feel unloved, women don't show respect, and men who feel disrespected don't show love. It becomes a cycle. It can start with either the husband or the wife, but once started it just goes around and around—a cycle of disrespect and lack of love.

Listen to this story and see if it sounds like a typical situation.

It had been a hard week working in the fields. The sun seemed especially hot and the heat was unbearable out in the fields where there was little relief. Matthew was excited that he would be home soon to see his wife. He had been away for 10 days; it was such a long time to be away from



the family. As he drove up the road, he hoped that she would be just as excited to see him as he was to see her.

Mary was at home; she was tired after looking after the children without much help, and frustrated that they did not seem to be behaving. She was looking forward to her husband coming home. She had called him earlier that day to remind him to bring home some rice. She had not been able to get out because it was too hard to take the young children anywhere. She hoped he would be back soon—the children were already getting hungry and she did not have anything to feed them.

"I'm home," called Matthew.

"Finally!" said Mary. "Where's the rice?"

"Oh," replied Matthew, "I forgot it—I had so much to remember today."

"How could you do that?" Mary felt her voice rising. "What are the children going to eat?"

"Don't you have any rice at all?"

"NO! That's why I asked you to bring some. Sometimes I think you care more about your friends than the family. You never forget to go out to coffee with them."

"Fine, I'll get some!" Matthew shouted as he stormed out the door. The happiness that they had both had at the idea of seeing each other had vanished already, replaced by anger and hurt.

- What happened in this story?
- What was Mary's response to Matthew?
  - *Mary was frustrated he forgot the rice*
- What was Matthew's response to Mary?
  - *He got angry*
- What happened in the end?
  - *Matthew walked out*

**Facilitator Instructions:** Remind the class – this argument is NOT about rice. It is about Mary feeling like her husband has forgotten her because he forgot the one thing she asked for. It is about Matthew feeling unloved because his wife did not appreciate all he had done but instead nagged at him.

Ladies, sometimes this (walking out) is a good thing. Sometimes (y)our husbands are so mad with (y)our comments that they need time to calm down, so they do not respond in an ungodly way, like hitting or using hurtful language.

However, what do you think women think when men walk out? HE DOESN'T LOVE ME. He does not even love me enough to solve the problem!

Men, you need to remember to communicate clearly as you walk out. "I am extremely angry right now. I love you and want to treat you in God-honouring ways, but I need some time to calm down."

How could this story have been different?

- What could Mary have said differently?
  - *"I so appreciate all that you have done to provide for the family, all your work and efforts. However, we do need some rice—could you do one more thing and get some?"*
- What could Matthew have said differently?
  - *"I was so busy thinking about how happy I would be to see you; how much I love and appreciate you that the rice flew out of my brain. Let me go and get some now; it will just take a minute."*

In every case someone must stop the cycle and either show love or respect. Even when we do not want to, we need to remember—we are commanded! The Bible does not say, ‘When your husband is being lovely, respect him. When your wife is being kind, love her.’ Christ did not wait until we were good to love us. We must remember, even if we do not want to, out of our love for God, we need to love and respect one another.

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Remember the story of Timeus and Leah.

- How do you think the problem of love and respect is reflected in this story?
- What advice would you give Timeus?
- What advice would you give Leah?

### **WITH A PARTNER**

1. Make a list of things that your husband or wife does to help you. (For single people, what do your father and mother do to help you?)
2. Looking over the list, pray and thank God for your husband or wife (or parents).

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

What can you do right after this training to improve your relationship with your spouse or family?

1. In the next day:
  - **Husbands:** Tell your wife you are thankful for her and for what she does to care for your family. Ask her if there is anything you can do to make her life less difficult. Remember that she wants to know you love her.
  - **Wives:** Tell your husband you are thankful for him and that you appreciate his hard work to care for your family. Ask him if there is anything you can do to make his life less difficult. Remember that he wants to know you respect him.
  - **Singles:** Tell your parents that you are thankful for them and all they do for your family. Ask them if there is anything you can do to make their lives less difficult.
2. Then, each day after, try to do at least one thing to show your husband or wife (or parents) that you love her or respect him.
3. Take time now to write down a few ideas of your own of what you can do each day this week. Pray and ask God to help you do these things.

These steps may sound too difficult. If you are not ready to talk to your husband or wife (or parents), then start by praying for him or her every day. Pray every time you feel sad or angry. Thank God for your husband or wife and ask God to help you in your marriage.

# Lesson 2: A Happy Marriage

## Main Ideas

1. We can have happy marriages by becoming aware of the differences we have with our spouse or close family member.
2. We need to learn healthy and biblical ways to address our differences and resolve conflicts.

## Materials

1. Student Guide:
  - a. Recognise Our Differences (1 copy per person with some extras for spouses)
  - b. Resolving Disagreements

## A Happy Marriage

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Some conflict is always going to happen even in a healthy marriage.

- What are things that couples often disagree about?

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read the following verses—what can we understand from these verses that help us to understand how to deal with conflict better?

- 1 Corinthians 15:41 & 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 – *God has made each of us unique; we have different pasts and have been given different talents. We need to understand the differences and be willing to accept how God has made each of us different.*

### REPORT BACK

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**God has made each of us different.** As we saw in 1 Corinthians, we have different talents, skills, and strengths. This does NOT make one person better than the other. We are each as God made us. God did not make us all the same. He made us unique. In the next exercise, we will see some of the ways that God has made us unique. Remember for each of these points, it is not that one person is better than another, it's a reflection of the way that God made us.

### INDIVIDUAL AND SPOUSE ACTIVITY

**Facilitator Instructions:** Each person will need a copy of **STUDENT GUIDE** – *Recognising our Differences*. It is important to provide very clear instructions for this activity! You can also have men on one side of the room and women on the other. If people cannot read, or if they do not understand the statements, then you can read each topic and have them mark on the line. Do the first one together.

Each person needs a copy of the **STUDENT GUIDE** – *Recognising our Differences*. We will go through the handout two times:

1. The first time – read each topic and mark on the line with an “X” what **you** like.
  - Let's do the first one together. People – would you prefer to spend time with people or to be alone? If you love to be around people, then put the “X” near the right end of the line. If you like both then you might put the “X” near the middle of the line. If you prefer to be alone put the “X” at the left end of the line. (*Demonstrate on the board*)
  - Go through the whole page and mark what you prefer in each situation.

2. The second time – read each topic and mark on the line with an “O” what you think **your spouse or close family member** would like. Do not discuss this with your spouse.
3. When you and your spouse are done with 1 and 2 then show each other your paper. Discuss each topic and the questions on the back of the **STUDENT GUIDE**.
  - Did you have a correct understanding of the other person’s preferences? Were you surprised by anything?
  - Did you and your spouse (or close family member) always have the same answers for each of these topics?
  - In which areas are you the most similar and you find it easier to agree?
  - In which areas are you the most different?
  - Which topics create disagreements in your marriage or relationship?
  - Talk about how you could handle these areas of your differences.
  - How can you use each person’s strengths to build your marriage or relationship?

**4. Write a plan together:** Make a plan to deal with the areas where you are very different. Choose 2 areas of difference and write down your plan for how you will resolve them. Examples are included in the **STUDENT GUIDE**.

#### REPORT BACK

**Facilitator Instructions:** Ask one or two couples to share their plan for one difference.

Our differences can lead to conflict if we do not discuss them and make a plan that works for both people.

## Resolving Disagreements

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There will always be some disagreements, but we need to learn to resolve them in a healthy way. We cannot let conflict build up. We need to try to quickly resolve any conflict before it has time to grow.

#### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Look up the following verses. What can we learn from each verse about resolving conflict?

- Ephesians 4:32 – *We need to be kind and compassionate and willing to forgive, remembering that we are also not perfect.*
- 1 Peter 3:9 & Matthew 5:23-24 – *We need to be ready to apologise. Even if the other person started the problems, we need to be ready to make things right.*
- Philippians 2:3-4 – *We need to think of each other as more important than ourselves.*
- Ephesians 4:26 – *We should not let the sun go down on our anger. This is a good reminder to be careful to resolve differences quickly and not allow days to pass. This is very important in our marriages, but also in all our relationships.*
- Matthew 7:3-5 – *Make sure you recognise your faults first—do not be quick to point out the faults of others.*
- Matthew 18:15 – *Discuss the issues in private, not in front of others, especially children.*
- Proverbs 15:1 – *Discuss disagreements calmly. Choose a time when you both are calm. If you are angry, postpone the discussion.*
- Colossians 4:6 – *State your points kindly without attacking each other.*

#### PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Which of these principles is easiest for you to do during a disagreement?
- Which of these principles is hardest for you to do during a disagreement?
- What one or two principles would you like to start to apply to your life?

### **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

Create a role-play. Choose a common disagreement in marriages and show how to resolve a disagreement using all these principles.

**Facilitator Instructions:** *Ask each of the small groups to do their role-play for the rest of the group.*

### **LARGE GROUP REVIEW**

In this lesson, we have learned to recognise the differences in our relationships, to make a plan to deal with our differences, and to resolve our disagreements in a biblical way.

- Which important principle of resolving conflict do you often forget during a disagreement?
- What are some ideas of ways to remember this truth next time you have a disagreement?

Remember, these principles are not just for people who are married to use only with their spouses. We can use these principles in all our relationships whenever we have a conflict.

**Facilitator Instructions:** *End by praying that God would help each of them to disagree in a healthy, godly way and to ensure that their differences do not become arguments and fights.*

# Lesson 3: Dealing with Hurts

## Main Ideas

1. We need to recognise and deal with how we hurt each other because unresolved hurt can destroy marriages.
2. Genuine apologies to those we hurt will help to restore our relationships.
3. We forgive others out of gratitude to God who has forgiven us.
4. Forgiveness is a process we must go through continuously to clean up the hurts in our relationships.

## Materials

1. Visual Aid (found in a Visual Aids section at the end of the Teacher Guide)
  - a. Picture of a family (one copy per group – torn apart)
2. Student Guide:
  - a. Identifying Hurts (one copy per person)
  - b. Steps for Apologising (one copy per person)
  - c. Steps to Forgiveness
3. Tape (enough for each group to use to put the family picture together)

## Review & Introduction

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

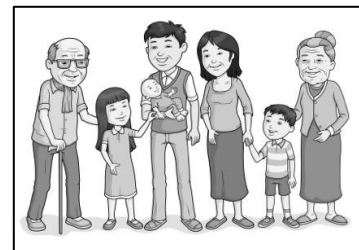
**Facilitator Instructions:** Ask the group if they remember anything from the previous lessons. Review the verses to remind the group of the main points.

- What were some of the principles that you learned for how we can discuss and resolve our differences?

Even in the best marriages there are times when the husband or wife or both hurt one another. Sometimes the hurt was intentional; sometimes it was unintentional.

### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

**Facilitator Instructions:** Give each group a copy torn apart of the **VISUAL AID** – Family picture (at least in 4-6 pieces) and some tape. Ask them to tape the picture back together. (The picture is found in the back of the Teacher's Guide)



Without the tape, it would have been impossible to put this picture back together. Forgiveness is the 'tape' in relationships, especially marriage. It holds the pieces together even when there has been hurt and broken relationships.

Hurt destroys marriages. It makes people less close and they no longer support one another.

In this lesson, we will look at how to restore a marriage damaged by hurt.

## First – Identify the Hurt

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Go through the **STUDENT GUIDE** - Identifying Hurts together.

Read Matthew 5:23-24.

- According to this verse how important do you think it is to reconcile hurt or conflict?

- What does this verse mean by 'have something against you'?
- What are we to do if there is hurt in our marriages?

The Bible makes it clear that we are to reconcile relationships. God thinks that it is so important that He tells us to leave the worship service to go and do so. The quicker that we reconcile relationships the less hurt can grow. After a few months, what started as a small hurt may easily grow into a big problem.

This verse reminds us that, if we make someone angry with us, we need to go and ask for forgiveness. In the next verse, we see that if someone makes us angry, we still have the responsibility to be the one who goes.

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

We are going to take a few minutes to quietly ask God to show us if there are any ways that we have hurt our spouses. If you are not married, think about a close friend or family member instead. Think about the following areas and write down your thoughts:

- Is there anything that you have failed to do that you should be doing?
- Is there anything that you have done (or are doing) that you should not do?
- Have you failed to do something you know your spouse wants you to do?
- Have you said anything that has been hurtful?
- Have you failed to show love and encouragement?

### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Read Matthew 18:15.

Not only do we need to recognise ways that we have caused our partners pain and hurt our marriages, but we also need to be prepared to tell our partners when we have been hurt. Sometimes our partners do not mean to hurt us, but we still get hurt. They may not realise what they have done. If you do not tell them then that hurt can make a tear in your marriage. Your partner will never know what is wrong and therefore cannot repair the tear.

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Now take a moment and think about ways that you have been hurt. It may or may not be something that your partner realises is hurting you.

- Are there ways that you have been hurt by your spouse?
- Pray and commit to start discussing these things with your spouse this week.

None of us are perfect. We have all hurt others, and we have all been hurt. In the rest of this lesson we will learn more about how to reconcile our relationship from these hurts. This week you need to remember the things that you thought of now and discuss them with your partner—apologising and forgiving when appropriate.

Read Luke 15:11-22.

- What obstacles did the youngest son face?
- What did the youngest son have to do to restore his relationship with his father?
- What can we learn from this story about apologising?
- What was the response of the father? (*He forgave.*)
- What can we learn from this story about forgiving?

The next two steps to restoring relationships are apologizing and forgiving.

## Second – Apologise When You Hurt Others

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

What are some obstacles that we face to apologising and asking others to forgive us?

- *Pride*
- *Embarrassment*
- *Finding time*
- *Fear*

**Facilitator Instructions:** Write these steps on a whiteboard as you read each step on **STUDENT GUIDE** – Steps for Apologising.

There are 6 Steps for Apologising to restore relationships when you have hurt others:

### Steps for Apologising

1. **Confess to God** – When we hurt our partners, we also disobey God. We need to go to God and ask for His forgiveness for what we have done wrong. Accepting God’s forgiveness will give us a humble heart to confess and apologise to the other person.

2. **Confess to the other person without giving excuses** – Often when we confess, we want to explain why we did what we did. However, this can make it hard for the other person to forgive us.

#### Example 1:

*Blaming:* I know I criticized you in front of your friends yesterday, but I would not have done it if you had not made us one hour late.

*Proper:* I hurt you by criticizing you in front of your friends yesterday; it was unkind of me.

#### Example 2:

*Blaming:* I know I was grumpy and rude towards you last night, but you should have remembered that your mother had been criticizing me a lot lately and I am tired from all the work.

*Proper:* It was selfish and insensitive of me to be rude and grumpy towards you last night. I am sorry I hurt you.

Compare each of the examples above. Which way would you be more likely to forgive?

3. **Apologise** – Make sure that you are specific about what you are sorry for and express your sorrow sincerely. Say something like, ‘I am extremely sorry for what I did’ or ‘I feel really bad about the way that I treated you.’
4. **Ask for forgiveness** – We need to realise that we need forgiveness. It may be that your partner is not ready to forgive us immediately, so we may need to be patient. Pray that God would help your partner to forgive you. You should not force them to say they forgive you against their will.
5. **Change your behaviour** – It is not enough to confess and apologise if we do not plan on changing and if we intend to keep making the same mistake. Part of restoring the relationship is making sure that you are willing and intent on changing your behaviour. To the best of your ability you should try not to do it again.
6. **Accept the consequences** – The person may need time to forgive you. You need to be patient and ask God to help them to forgive you. Some hurts might destroy trust in a relationship. You need to realise that your spouse may not trust you as easily as they did before. This is a consequence of your action. Apologising does not automatically make everything new. Sometimes you have to live with the consequences of what you have done. It takes time for the hurt that you have caused to go away.



## PARTNER ACTIVITY

Think of a common situation in which someone would need to ask forgiveness from their spouse or another close family member. Take turns to role-play how you would apologise and ask forgiveness.

**Facilitator Instructions:** You can invite those who would like to do their role-play in front of the group to do so.

## Application

### PERSONAL REFLECTION

Ask God to show you if there is anything in your marriage that you need to apologise for.

1. Create a plan of when you will talk with your spouse. When you talk with your spouse, apologise for the hurts you have caused. Try going through these steps. If you are not married then you can use these same steps to resolve hurt in any relationship that you may have—for example with parents, siblings, relatives, or friends.
2. Pick a good time for both people to talk. Find a time that will not be interrupted and both people are not too tired.
3. Pray and ask God to give you a humble heart and to give you the right words to say. Pray that God will prepare your spouse to hear you and be willing to forgive you.
4. Commit to the Lord to do this. Is there anyone that can pray for you and hold you accountable to do this?

## Forgive People Who Hurt You

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read the following verses and summarise what the Bible says about forgiveness.

- Luke 23:34 – *Jesus forgave, and recognised others did not know what they were doing.*
- Matthew 18:21-22 – *Jesus told Peter to forgive 77 times (every time).*
- Colossians 3:13 – *Forgive each other the way the Lord has forgiven us.*

God has forgiven us of much. He commands us to forgive one another. Sometimes it is difficult to forgive others when they hurt us.

- From your experience, what are some of the consequences of unforgiveness in a marriage?
  - *Bitterness – building up of hurts*
  - *Broken trust in each other*
  - *Dissatisfaction with marriage and possible unfaithfulness*
  - *Family tensions – even children feel unsafe and afraid*

Forgiveness is essential to ensure that a marriage grows strong. In the Bible, we are commanded many times to forgive. But first we need to understand clearly what forgiveness is and is not.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Draw two columns on the board and write “Forgiveness is NOT” and “Forgiveness IS” in each column. Write each point as you explain it.

Forgiveness is NOT	Forgiveness IS
1. A feeling	1. A choice we make
2. Accepting injustice or tolerating hurtful or abusive behaviour	2. We face the wrong that was done, but choose not to hold a hurt against our spouse
3. Demanding a person change before we forgive them	3. Trusting God to deal with the other person and forgiving even before they change
4. Forgetting	4. Releasing our spouse into God’s hands when we feel anger or hurt; not seeking revenge
5. Pretending that it does not matter	5. Accepting Jesus’ death as payment for all sins

Forgiveness is NOT:

- **A feeling.** Forgiveness is a choice that we make. We do not need to wait until we feel forgiveness but instead, we decide that we will forgive someone. We do not ask ourselves, 'Do I feel like forgiving?' but rather we simply decide to forgive and let go of our self-pity and desire for revenge.
- **Demanding a person change before we forgive them.** We cannot force someone to change. We forgive because Christ has forgiven us and commands us to forgive others, not because of what we demand from the person.
- **Accepting injustice.** When we forgive someone, we do not have to believe that what they did was right. We can recognise that what they did was wrong, but we will forgive them anyway. Just because we forgive someone does not mean that we allow them to keep hurting us. Forgiveness does NOT mean we tolerate hurtful or abusive behaviour.
- **Forgetting.** Sometimes as we forgive, we cannot immediately forget the pain that was caused to us. We need to keep forgiving the person as often as we start to feel angry.
- **Pretending that it does not matter.** When we forgive someone, we are not saying that what they did was okay or that it did not impact us. We are saying that, despite the way they have wounded us, we will still forgive them. We trust God to deal with the other person.

Forgiveness IS:

- **A choice we make.** It is a response to God's forgiveness of us and is in obedience to Him.
- **Facing the wrong that was done.** We need to recognise that someone did something wrong towards us and that their behaviour has hurt us, but we choose not to hold on to the hurt.
- **Trusting God to deal with others.** We let God bring conviction, and we forgive even before someone changes.
- **Releasing him/her into God's hands.** As we forgive, we give up our right for revenge or to demand change. Instead we allow God to discipline or change the person as He wants.
- **Accepting Jesus' death as payment for all sins.** After we have forgiven the person, we cannot keep reminding the person of what they have done and using it to get them to do things for us.

Forgiveness can be difficult, especially if the person has really hurt us. The Bible reminds us that we forgive out of gratitude for what God has done for us, not because the person necessarily 'deserves' forgiveness. When we forgive, we do not say that what they did was okay, but we say that we are willing to let God be the judge and decide how He wants to respond to their actions.

#### PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What new idea did you learn about forgiveness?
- How can you apply what you have learned in your marriage this next week?

## The Steps of Forgiveness

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**Facilitator Instructions:** Use **STUDENT GUIDE** – *Steps of Forgiveness* to talk through the steps of forgiveness. After going over the steps, point out how Adam in the story did or did not do this step. Then help clarify anything that they are unsure about.

If the hurt you experienced was small, then it might be easy to move through these steps. If the hurt was more significant, then this process may take more time.

1. Acknowledge that what was done to you was unjust.
2. Admit any anger and desire to hurt the person.
3. Ask God to help you forgive the other person.
4. Choose to take no revenge.

5. Let go of the desire to hurt the person.
6. Give the responsibility for judgment to God.
7. Ask God to remove any bitterness and resentment.
8. Ask God to heal your pain and all the consequences of the injustice in your life.

#### **WITH A PARTNER (Not your spouse)**

- Which steps to forgiveness are the most difficult for you?
- What could help you in making this step easier?
- What is one thing you need to forgive your spouse for?

If you cannot think of anything with your spouse, then think of anyone else that may have treated you unjustly. If you still cannot think of anything, then just pray quietly for those who are going through the process.

#### **REVIEW**

**Facilitator Instructions:** Read each step aloud as participants close their eyes. Pause for one minute after each step is read so participants have time to think over each one. When you have finished reading all 8 steps, pray for the group, that God would take away the pain that has come from the injustices that they have just forgiven.

Close your eyes and listen and think about forgiving your spouse as each step is read.

## **Start Again Together**

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#### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Read each verse and identify the main idea in each verse:

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 – *Love is unconditional and does not keep a record of wrongs done.*
- James 5:16 – *Confess our sins, pray for each other, and give grace to each other.*
- Philippians 3:13 – *Forget what is past and focus on the future.*

Once we have worked through the process of identifying hurts, apologising, and forgiving, then we need to be willing to start again. It is difficult to go through this process, so we need to comfort and pray for one another. Then, instead of remembering what happened in the past, we need to focus on the future.

- How often do you need to clean up around your house?

Just like housecleaning, we need to clean up the hurts in our marriages and other relationships regularly. If we do not regularly clean up the hurts, then they build up and can make quite a mess of our relationships! Help your marriage to stay strong by making sure that you go through this process regularly.

## **Conclusion**

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**Facilitator Instructions:** Review what forgiveness IS and is NOT and the steps of forgiveness. Review the 4 Steps of Restoring Damaged Relationships. Ask for any additional questions.

In the last 2 lessons, we talked about four ways to restore damaged relationships. Do you remember what they are?

- 1 – Identify the Hurt
- 2 – Apologise When You Hurt Others
- 3 – Forgive People Who Hurt You
- 4 – Start Again Together

After we do these things, we need to look forward and not focus on the past. We also need to make sure that we go through the process every time we hurt one another. We need to rely on God to help us in this process.

**SMALL GROUP OR SPOUSES PRAYER (This can be done with spouses)**

In groups or with your spouse, pray for each other. Ask God to help you to forgive others the way He has forgiven you. Ask God to heal your relationships through practicing forgiveness.

# Lesson 4: Strengthening Your Marriage

## Main Ideas

1. To show love to our spouses, we need to know what makes them feel loved.
2. When a couple prays together, they put God in the centre of their marriage.
3. We need to prioritise our spouses before others, because in marriage two people become one.

## Materials

1. Student Guide: Five Love Languages

## Introduction

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Marriage is a wonderful gift from God, and when husbands and wives are strongly united in marriage, they can do incredible things to serve and glorify God. However, for this to happen, our marriages need to be strong and healthy. Making a marriage strong and keeping it strong for a whole lifetime takes hard work. In this lesson, we will look at different ways that you can strengthen your marriage.

### 3 Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage

1. Show your love
2. Pray together
3. Put your spouse before others

**Facilitator Instructions:** Write the 3 Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage on the board or create a poster.

## Show Your Love

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Everyone wants to feel loved. If you learn to express your love to your spouse, it will strengthen your marriage.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Write the following signs on the board (or you can print as a Visual Aid)

사랑해

- Who knows what this says?

We cannot read this because it is written in Korean. We do not know Korean, so it means nothing to us. It says, 'I love you.' The way we show love can be the same. There are different ways to show love and different ways that people feel loved. If we use the wrong language, then people do not understand us. It is as confusing as these words on the board.

### Five Different Love Languages

In Gary Chapman's book called *The Five Love Languages*, he explains 5 common ways that people feel loved. People are different and have different ways that they receive love. If we show love in a way that is different from how our spouse most feels loved, then it is like we are speaking a different language to them and they may not feel loved. We might be speaking, but they do not understand. If we want to speak to our spouse, then we need to speak their language. It is the same with love—we need to learn the other person's love language so that we can express love to them in a way that they can best understand. The secret to keep your love alive in your marriage is to learn to show your love in a way that your spouse will feel loved.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Refer to the **STUDENT GUIDE** – Five Love Languages

There are 5 different love languages.

1. **Serving Each Other** – Some people feel loved when we do things for them. These may be simple things like tidying the house, washing the dishes, or pulling the weeds.
2. **Words of Affirmation** – Some people feel loved when we say positive things to them. They may be compliments like, 'You cook so well' or 'You have beautiful hair' or 'You are a great mother.' They may be words of gratitude or appreciation: 'Thank you for cooking dinner.' or 'Thank you for working so hard to provide for the family.'
3. **Gifts** – Some people feel loved when they receive a gift. Gifts do not need to be expensive or even cost money. It may be as simple as a flower that you picked on the way home or a poem that you wrote.
4. **Physical Touch** – Some people feel loved through physical touch. This includes everything from holding hands, hugs, or stroking the other person's hair.
5. **Spending Focused Time Together** – Some people feel loved when we spend special time with them. This does not mean that we are in the same room but doing different things. It means that we give each other focused attention. In our busy homes, it may mean that we take a walk together and share about our days.

You might find that your spouse responds more favourably to one love language than others. Each person has their own preference. Try to discover which way of showing love means the most to your spouse and do more of that kind.

#### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

What are 2–4 ways that you could demonstrate each of these different ways of expressing love?

#### **REPORT BACK**

**Facilitator Instructions:** Ask each group to share some practical ideas how to show love in each of the 5 love languages.

If we want happy marriages, we want to make sure that our spouses feel loved. Even if our spouses are making no effort, when we start to show love to them in ways they like, they will appreciate it. They will also naturally grow more loving and forgiving towards us. If they do not feel loved they will be difficult to live with and more easily irritated at us.

#### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

- Think about your spouse – what do they seem to like or appreciate?
- What are some new ways you could show love to your spouse right away?
- What are 5 things that you appreciate about your spouse? Try to be very specific. Each day try to express something you appreciate about your spouse.
- Think about yourselves. Which of the ways to show love do you prefer? What are the things that your spouse does that make you feel most loved?

If it is difficult to know what your spouse likes, you can try an experiment. For one month choose one of the love languages and practice showing love that way. What is the response? If there is no change then try a different language. Keep trying month by month until you see a response from your spouse.

## Pray Together

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

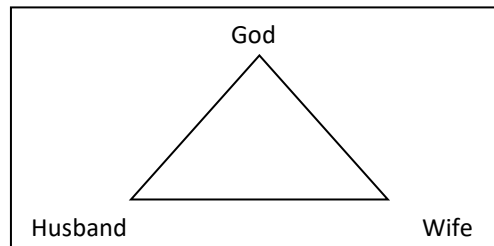
Read Ecclesiastes 4:12: 'A cord of three strands is not easily broken.'

Another important skill in building a strong marriage is praying together. When we pray together, we put God in the centre of our marriages. God never intended that our husbands or wives would meet all our needs. When we expect our husbands or wives to understand us completely and meet all our needs, then we fail and hurt one another. We were created to be in relationship with God—only He is able to meet all our needs.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Draw this image on a board or poster.

A marriage should look like this image:

- The husband is directly connected to God.
- The wife is directly connected to God.
- The husband and wife are connected to each other.



One important way for God to be at the centre of the marriage is to take time to talk with Him together as well as individually.

Praying together will help a husband and wife to strengthen their marriage. It will help ensure that a happy marriage lasts for a lifetime. As we pray, we can seek God's will for the challenges that we face and decisions that we need to make. Praying also helps us both to put our focus and dependence on God.

Here is some practical advice for praying together:

- Choose one time to pray together and keep to it. For example, when you first wake up or go to bed or when the children have just gone to school.
- Pray daily. It is better to try to pray just 5 minutes a day rather than half an hour once a month.
- Start with thanking God for each other, your marriage, family, etc.
- Use this time to pray for each other's needs, not the needs of the rest of the world.
- Listen to each other while you pray.
- Make sure you are praying to God. Do not use your prayer to try and change the other person.

## Put Your Spouse Before Others

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Read or tell this story.

Tamar was so frustrated with Caleb. She could not believe he had done it again. He had just arrived home to announce that he was going away for 4 days to help his mother.

She had explained that the 4-month old baby was sick and could not sleep. So she needed Caleb to help her at home with the other children and getting the fields ready to plant. But he said that he had talked to his friends about the situation and they all agreed that he should visit his mother.

So, he was going to leave in the morning. While Tamar sat awake feeding their baby, she had to admit that she admired that he cared so much for his mother. But she felt a little jealous—why didn't he see that she needed him to care for her in the same way? Who was going to help her?

- What happened in this story?
- Does this ever happen in this community?
- What was the problem?
- Who do you think was wrong? Why?

Before a man and woman are married, each person belongs to their parents' family. When a couple marries, they start a new family.

In Mark 10:6-9 Jesus refers to the verse in Genesis, that says a man should leave his father and mother, and that the two become one flesh; Jesus also says, 'Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.' This teaches us the importance of this new marriage unit. The man changes his priorities from his old family to his new family. He is responsible to first care for his wife and his children.

This does not mean that we stop honouring our parents or caring for our extended family.

Read 1 Timothy 5:8.

- What does it say in this verse?

Because in marriage two people become one, we need to put our spouses before others. But we should not neglect either the husband or the wife's extended family. The husband and wife relationship is the most important responsibility that God has given to us. Therefore, this means that we need to learn to prioritise our spouses first, but not neglect the husband's and wife's extended family.

- In the story, what were some ways that Caleb put others before his wife?
  - *He visited his mother instead of staying with his wife.*
  - *He allowed his friends to make the decision about whether he should go or not rather than making a decision based on his wife's requests.*
  - *He went out with his friends rather than staying home and helping with the baby.*
- What are other examples of ways that we make others more important than our spouses?
- How could Caleb have prioritized his wife and still shown his care for his mother?

There are several areas in which we need to put our spouse first in our lives. Today we will look at just two areas.

1. **Time** – This does not mean that we just spend more time with them but that, if they need our help, we put them before other people.
  2. **Decisions** – When a person is married, they need to make their decisions either with their spouse or thinking about what their spouse has already said. Decisions relating to a husband and wife should not be made by others. The wife should have more input into a decision than any other person and the husband should honour his wife in all his decisions. This is a practical way to 'submit to one another out of reverence for Christ,' as Ephesians 5:21 says. The best decision is made after good communication, careful reflection, and prayer by both the husband and wife.
- How would this understanding change the way a husband and wife could put their spouse before others?
    - *They would create a new family that they would prioritise and honour first.*
    - *Then they would take care of and listen to the advice of both families.*

### **ROLE-PLAY (If time available)**

Do a role-play that demonstrates what typically happens in families and what it would look like if we prioritised our spouses.

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Take time to think of one example in your life from each area in which you could do a better job putting your spouse before others. Then, for each example, ask God and later your spouse to forgive you. Ask God to help you change and remember that the first responsibility He gave you is to your spouse.



- Time – Are there times when you have made your friends or others more important than your spouse?
- Decisions – Are there decisions you made without considering the thoughts or feelings of your spouse?

## **Conclusion**

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### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Today we looked at 3 ways we can strengthen our marriage:

1. Showing your love
2. Praying together
3. Putting your spouse first

Try to practice doing these things right away so that your marriage will also grow strong.

# Lesson 5: Women Are Valuable

## Main Ideas

1. Both men and women have equal value because they are made in the image of God and redeemed in Christ.
2. We need to value and treat women the way Jesus did, even if it may be very different from our culture.

## Materials

1. Student Guide:
  - a. The Culture and Ways in the Time of Jesus
  - b. Our Community
2. Green and Yellow cards
3. Water and snacks to be served in Large Group Activity

## Introduction

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### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

**Facilitator Instructions:** Place a stack of yellow and green cards on a table. Ask everyone to take one.

Today we are going to do things a bit differently. Each person has a yellow or green card. All those with green cards will go to the back of the room. Please sit quietly and do not disturb the rest of us. We are doing an important lesson and we just want the opinions of a few key people. Please be quiet, do not interrupt, and do not disturb the rest of us.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Give everyone in the yellow group a piece of candy. Check if there is anything else that they would like. Ask them if they feel comfortable and ready to start the lesson. Treat them as if they are honoured guests. If anyone from the green group moves or speaks, look up and remind them of the instructions.

For each of these statements do you think people in the areas where you live would generally agree or disagree with it and why.

1. 'Girls are a burden to their family.'
  2. 'Women should not own land or receive an inheritance.'
  3. 'It is ok to beat a wife who is not being obedient.'
  4. 'Women should be seen and not heard.'
- Are there other statements that are common in your area about women? What are some examples?

### DEBRIEF OF ACTIVITY

**Facilitator Instructions:** Ask the green group to come back to join the yellow group. Debrief by asking questions to each group and then draw out conclusions from the group based on this experience.

For the last 10 minutes, the green group was excluded from the discussion.

- **Green group:**
  - What did it feel like to not be included in the discussions and to not be allowed to talk?
  - Did you want to participate and share your ideas?
  - How did you feel when you saw the yellow group receiving snacks and you did not receive any?
  - Do you think this ever happens in society? Who are excluded?

- **Yellow group:**
  - What did it feel like to not include part of the group in the small groups and discussions?
  - Did you notice that the other group did not get any water or snacks? What do you think about that?
  - Did you feel uncomfortable? Why or why not?
- **Everyone:**
  - What did not seem right about this?
  - What opportunities were lost by not including the green group in the activity?

This activity was about discrimination—the fact that often in society we do not value women and girls as much as men and boys. This time we did not discriminate by gender but by the colour of the card that you picked. However, in many areas this is not too dissimilar to the type of discrimination that girls and women face.

- Are the opinions of women sought on key community or church matters? Why or why not?
- Are there special privileges given to men but not to women? What do you think that feels like?

In this lesson, we are going to talk about how we think about women and girls. We will also look at some of the ways we treat them that do not reflect that we value them.

### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Read Genesis 1:27-28.

These verses show us that both males and females are created in God's image. While some people argue that only man was made in the image of God because some translations say 'man' and 'him'. In the Hebrew God uses the word 'Adam', which can refer to either a man or all of mankind. But in the Bible whenever God is referring to just man, not woman, it uses the word 'Ish'. In the next sentence He continues to clarify that it is male and female that He is referring to.

As you remember in lesson 1, Eve was created as a helper to Adam. Why do you think that no other helper could be found? The earth was filled with wonderful animals, but none were good enough. The answer is simple, because no animal was created in the image of God, so no animal could multiply the earth like Adam and Eve could. To continue to fulfil the work that God had given, both had to be made in the image of God.

In Module 1, we learned that God made both men and women in His image. Unfortunately, our cultural rules and expectations do not match the value that God gave women being made in His own image.

- What happens if a woman does not follow the cultural rules and expectations?
- How would her different family members react (husband, parents, in-laws)?

## **The Truth About Women**

### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

God created both men and women in His image with worth and value. Both represent aspects of God to the world. God told both of them to fill the earth and rule over it together as partners.

Read Genesis 3:6.

Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God and they suffered the consequences of their sin. Their perfect relationship was broken.

- What changed in Adam and Eve's relationship after they sinned by disobeying God?
  - *They blamed each other.*
  - *The wife would want to rule over man, but the man would rule over the wife.*
  - *God's plan for unity and oneness was destroyed.*
- How has sin and brokenness in our world influenced the way people see women in our culture?

Read Galatians 3:26-29.

- Who are considered children of God through Christ Jesus? (*All who have faith.*)
- This verse says there is no more Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. What does this mean? (*We all have an equal opportunity to be children of God.*)

Through Christ both males and females can become children of God, heirs of eternal life, and both are fully restored into relationship with God.

Read Acts 2:17-18, 21 and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

- What does this verse say will happen when God's Spirit is poured out on all people?
- Does it surprise you that daughters and women are included in receiving the gifts of prophecy to be used in the church?
- When everyone uses the gifts God gives them, what is the result?
- What would happen if women and daughters did not use the gifts God gives them?

God gives gifts to both men and women to be used to build the Kingdom of God and bring honour and glory to God.

- How can you help your wife use all the gifts God has given her?
- How can you help your daughter develop and use the gifts God has given her?
- How can you encourage women in your church and your community to use the gifts God has given them?

## The Culture in the Time of Jesus and How He Treated Women

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Today we are going to look at the way women were viewed during Jesus' time and the way Jesus treated women. You can read along in your **STUDENT GUIDE** – The Culture and Ways in the Time of Jesus.

### The Culture in the Time of Jesus

The Jewish and Roman laws and traditions gave little value to women. Women were seen as inferior (lower and less important) to men.

- **Women were treated like possessions.** They were not independent. They either belonged to their father's house or to their husband's house. Jewish men were even forbidden to speak with any women on the street. Their presence was not recorded or recognised in important events.
- **Women were restricted in their worship of God.** Religious leaders had added new laws that meant that women were only allowed to go to the 'women's court' in the temple. (The women's court was never in the original design of the temple). They could not read the Word of God or participate in worship inside the temple.
- **Women were generally excluded from being educated.** Since education was given in the synagogue schools, girls were discouraged from participating.
- **Women had no legal rights.** They could not own land, receive an inheritance unless there were no men left in the family line, or divorce their husbands. Women were not allowed to testify in a court of law unless a man could confirm their story.

In general, in the culture of Jesus' time, women were seen as less trustworthy, less intelligent, and less spiritual than men.

### Jesus' Ways

Jesus' attitude toward women was radically different than the culture of that time. He treated men and women with equal respect and dignity. Women at that time had never known a man like Jesus.

- **Jesus treated women with incredible respect and dignity.** He talked to women publicly. Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman who was both a foreigner and 'sinful' (John 4:7). He spoke with grace, truth, and kindness to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11).
- **Jesus ministered to women and treated each one as a person.** Jesus reached out to women as persons who were equally worthy as men to be both healed and saved. He ignored the laws given to Moses that said you cannot touch a woman who is bleeding (Mark 5:25-34). He healed a woman crippled for eighteen years by a demonic spirit and called her 'daughter of Abraham' (Luke 13:10-17). He healed the daughter of a Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:22-28).
- **He taught women.** He took their questions and arguments seriously. Jesus entrusted important spiritual truths to both women and men. Jesus taught Mary, the sister of Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Women were the first to see the risen Lord and were told to take the great news to the disciples (John 20:1-18). Many women travelled with Jesus and supported His ministry (Luke 8:1-3) as He taught His disciples and the crowds.

#### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION** (See the **STUDENT GUIDE**)

1. How would you describe the way women were treated during the time that Jesus lived on earth?
2. Are there any similarities between how your culture treats women and how the culture in Jesus' time treated women?
3. What are some differences between how Jesus treated women and how the culture at that time treated women?
4. How do you think women felt when Jesus treated them this way?
5. Are our churches acting more like our culture or like Jesus? What are some examples?

**REPORT BACK - Facilitator Instructions:** Go over the questions above and ask each group to share their answers.

As Christians, we need to follow Jesus' example before our culture. Jesus is our example.

## **We Can Make A Difference**

#### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Jesus made a difference in His culture, and we can make a difference in our culture.

Read this true story (the names have been changed):

Sojib had never thought about men and women being created with equal value by God. He never really thought about his wife at all. They had very little income and could never buy quite enough food. So, every night at dinner the same thing happened. Sojib would sit down at the table alone and eat all the rice and curry he wanted. When he was done and got up, his wife would then eat whatever was left. One day Sojib attended a training on biblical values and marriage. He came home and decided to do something to show that he valued his wife. At dinner time, he asked his wife to sit down with him at the table. He took the rice she had cooked and split it into two equal sections, giving one section to himself and the other to her. He then did the same with the curry. His wife was surprised! Each night Sojib continued to do the same thing. He sat down with his wife and shared everything equally. As this went on, he found that his relationship with his wife improved. They became more united, and others in the community started to follow their good example of a healthy marriage.

- What daily practice did Sojib decide to change to show he valued his wife?
- What was his wife's reaction to this change?
- How did this change impact others (his wife, others in the community)?

Many cultures today do not view women and girls the way God has intended. Our cultural traditions are strong, and many people think that they are acceptable. However, the mistreatment of any person who is created in God's image is not right. It grieves God, and we should ask God to help us change our ways.

We need to look at our traditions and practices and learn what is not right from God's perspective. We will use the **STUDENT GUIDE** – Our Community to think about some areas in our community.


**Facilitator Instructions:** Before starting the small group discussion, explain the four contexts on the chart to help them think of local examples. Ask the questions and give the general examples below for each context.

- **Family** – What ways are women and girls treated differently than men and boys in the home? In what ways are they mistreated?
  - Example – When a trainer asked a group of 20 Christian doctors if they had ever beaten their wives, 18 raised their hands to indicate that they had. The trainer then asked, how many of you believe it would be okay to beat your wife if she did something that brought great shame on the family—all raised their hands.
- **School** – What ways are girls treated differently than boys in school? What opportunities do they not have that boys might have?
  - Example – Some schools do not allow girls to take certain classes or pursue certain careers like becoming a doctor or a pilot or builder.
- **Church** – What ways are women and girls treated differently than men and boys in church? What limitations do they have only because they are female?
  - Example – Two thirds of Christians are women—what happens if they are not allowed and encouraged to use their gifts?
- **Community** – What ways are women and girls treated differently than men and boys in our community? What ways are women and girls mistreated in our community?
  - Example – In one war-torn African country almost half of all women have been raped, even though the country is considered mostly Christian. In another Asian country, every 8 minutes a girl goes missing and is sold into slavery.

Both men and women are very important. God wants us to treat both with honour and value. We want to see both men and women thrive.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Use **STUDENT GUIDE** – Our Community. Talk together about each area and fill in this chart. Consider the problems you see in your community with how women and girls are treated and think of 1-2 ideas for each area of what you can do to treat women and girls with dignity, respect, and value.

Area	Mistreatment & Inequalities in Our Community	What we Can Do (1-2 ideas for each area)
 <b>Family</b>	<i>Give an example specific to your community (e.g., special gifts are given when boys are born; boys get to eat first and are encouraged to go to school).</i>	<i>Celebrate when both boys and girls are born. Encourage equal treatment of boys and girls – eating, education, inheritance, etc.</i>

 <p><b>Church</b></p>		
 <p><b>School</b></p>		
 <p><b>Community</b></p>		

- What are two things you could do differently in your home to honour your wife? Your daughters?
- What are two things you could do differently in your community to honour women and girls?

Share with each other what you are committing to do. Pray for each other and ask God to help you to do these things.

#### REPORT BACK

**Facilitator Instructions:** Check the groups to make sure they can think of local examples of issues and some ways to treat women and girls well. Give the groups plenty of time to work on this chart. Once most groups are finished, ask for volunteers to share one idea for each area – family, church, school, and community. Make sure they can think of a few different ways to honour the women and girls. Encourage them to ask God for His ideas and wisdom.

We are all made in the image of God—men and women. God loves us so much that He sent His son to die for us so that both men and women could be His children. There are no high people and low people in God's Kingdom. He has created each of us according to how He wants us, and He has a special purpose for both men and women.

We can make a difference by modelling to others the way to treat women and girls like Jesus. This will honour God and will help others see that women are valuable. We can start with small things to help people see that women are valuable. We want both women and men to live the way God intends.

#### PERSONAL REFLECTION or WITH A PARTNER

God is honoured when we act on what we learn. What can you commit to doing with what we have learned?

- What are two things you will do in your home to honour your wife and daughters?
- What are two things you will do in your community to honour women and girls?

Share with each other what you are committing to do. Pray for each other and ask God to help you to do these things.

# Lesson 6: The Role of a Parent

## Main Ideas

1. Children are a gift from God.
2. Parents are responsible to provide for their children's needs and to guide them as they grow spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically.

## Materials

1. Student Guide: Helping Children Grow (one copy for each person)

## Introduction

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

For those who are parents:

- How has your life changed since you became a parent? What changes were expected? What changes were unexpected?
- How would you describe your role as a parent?
- What advice has extended family given you on parenting (good advice and bad advice)?

It is difficult to be a parent. There is no detailed instruction book to help us know what to do. We want our children to be happy and well behaved, and to grow up to be able look after their families and be good members of society and strong Christians. But how do we do this? Unfortunately, there are no easy answers.

Typically, every adult finds themselves with the responsibility to care for and nurture children. Today we will start to look at the role of the parent to help our children grow spiritually and mentally. In the following three lessons we will learn skills for guiding our children and helping them to behave well.

## The Role of the Parent

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Psalm 127:3

- What do we learn about children from these verses?
  - *Children are a blessing from God*

As we look at verse 1-2, we are reminded that we cannot do anything without God's help. Raising children is no different. Children are a gift from God and raising godly children takes God's help.

**Facilitators Instructions:** *Most people will think of physical needs. Encourage them to think of other needs of a child. Remind them of Luke 2:52 and the four ways Jesus grew—physically, socially, spiritually and in wisdom.*

- What are some of the needs that a child has?
- Who is responsible for meeting those needs?

The role of the parent to provide for their children is a big responsibility that we often feel inadequate to do.

### SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** *Write the five verses on the board or on cards for each group.*

In your groups, look at the following verses. What do these verses say about the role of a parent?

- Proverbs 22:6 – *We are to guide our children.*
- Ephesians 6:4 – *We are to train our children.*
- Deuteronomy 6:6-7 – *We are to develop our children spiritually.*



- Proverbs 1:8 – *We are to develop our children mentally.*
- Proverbs 31:15, 21 – *We are to provide for our children’s physical needs.*

**REPORT BACK Facilitator Instructions:** Ask groups what each verse says about the role of a parent and emphasise the italicised main ideas above.

As parents, we are given the responsibility to train or guide our children. God has given us the responsibility to help them to develop into strong men and women of God. This responsibility is given to both the husband and the wife to bring up their children. Although extended family may help, parents have the primary responsibility.

The Bible tells us that this responsibility is very important. When Paul gives Timothy instructions on how to choose who should be leaders in the church, one of the qualities was that they had well behaved children (1 Timothy 3:4-5). As parents, we need to provide for our children’s physical and mental needs. The Bible also tells us that the parents, not the church, are primarily responsible for teaching their children the Bible. Just like Jesus grew in four areas of His life (Luke 2:52), we want to help our children grow in those same four areas—spiritually, mentally (wisdom), physically, and socially.

## Growing Spiritually

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of the ways you can help your children grow spiritually?
- How important do you think that it is to help children to develop spiritually?
- What are some of the difficulties that we face in helping our children to grow spiritually?
- How can we overcome these difficulties?

### REPORT BACK

**Facilitator Instructions:** Refer to the **STUDENT GUIDE** - Helping Children Grow. If the class has a high literacy level, then write the answers to the first question on the board.

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

- What does this teach about the importance of helping a child grow spiritually?

3 ways to help a child to grow spiritually:

1. **Family devotions or Bible reading** – Try to take time every day to read the Bible or to tell Bible stories to your children. Help them to understand the stories. Once you have finished the passage or story, ask them questions such as ‘What can we learn about God from this story? What can we learn about how we should behave?’
  - Have any of you tried this?
  - Does it work well? What advice would you give to those who have not tried it?
2. **Praying with our children** – We need to put aside time to pray with our children. Choose a time when you are usually free. Make sure that you spend that time with your child listening to their concerns and praying with them. When they are very small, they may tell you what to pray for and you can say a short prayer. As they grow, they can start to pray as well. Help them to see when God answers their prayers.
  - Have any of you tried this?
  - Does it work well? What advice would you give to those who have not tried it?
3. **Spending time together** – Talk about God all the time when you are together. Teach them about God. When you go outside and see a tree you can make a comment about how God loves us so much that He provided trees to give us shelter, wood, and food, and to make our land beautiful. Talk about how the

earth belongs to God and we have been given the responsibility to look after it. Always look for ways to help your children see God.

- Have any of you tried this?
- Does it work well? What advice would you give to those who have not tried it?

### PERSONAL REFLECTION

- From all the ideas given, what are one or two things that you can start doing to help your child to grow?

## Growing Mentally

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

We also need to help our children to grow mentally.

- What are some ways that we can help our children to grow mentally?
  - *When they are young, we need to teach them at home. When they are older, we need to take them to school so that they can learn more.*
  - *Young children have many questions. Try to answer as many questions as possible.*
- What are some of the problems that we face trying to help our children to grow mentally?
- How can we overcome these challenges?

One of our responsibilities is to help our children to grow mentally. If we look at Luke 2:52 we see that Jesus grew in wisdom. We also want our children to grow in wisdom. Two ways that we can do that include:

#### 1. Teach very young children at home.

Try to explain things to them when they are young and curious. Teach them their ABCs, numbers, names of colours and shapes (triangle, square, circle, etc.). With young children, allow them to choose between two options when the decision does not matter. For example, “Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue shirt today?” Take time to answer their questions!

#### 2. Send school-age children to school.

Sometimes we need to make sacrifices to send our children to school, but this is also an important part of being a parent. Through education we can give our children opportunities in the future. We do not know the plans that God has for our children, but we need to make sure they have the opportunity to explore their options. God may choose your child to bring great change to your area. Often, they need education and training to do so. Your sacrifices now may allow your child to even be able to go to university and help your family in the future.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- How well are you doing at these two things right now?
- What are some of the difficulties that you face doing these?
- What are other ideas for how you can help children grow in wisdom?

**REPORT BACK** – *If the class has a high literacy level then write the answers to the first question on the board.*

### PERSONAL REFLECTION

- From all the ideas given, what are one or two things that you can start doing to help your child to grow?

## Growing Socially

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

We also need to help our children to grow in their relationships with others.

- What are some examples of relationships that children have with other people?
  - *Siblings*
  - *Friends (neighbours, church, school)*
  - *Adults (relatives, neighbours, teachers, community leaders)*
  - *Parents*
- Why do you think it is important to help our children grow socially—to have healthy relationships with others?
- What are some common problems that children have with other people?

The family is the place where children learn to interact with others. Therefore, parents must spend time with their children and model best social skills. Use **STUDENT GUIDE** – Helping Children Grow.

There are 3 ways to help our children grow socially:

#### 1. Teach children how God wants them to relate with others.

Read each verse. What do we learn from these verses that are important to teach to our children?

- Philippians 2:3 – *Do not be selfish, value others more than yourself.*
- Colossians 3:13, 15 – *Forgive others when they hurt you, make peace with others, and always be thankful.*
- Matthew 5:44 – *Love your enemies and pray for people who persecute you.*
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 – *Love is patient and kind. Love does not boast and is not proud. It is not easily angered, and it does not keep a record of wrongs.*
- Matthew 7:12 – *Only do things to others that you would want them to do to you.*

The Bible helps us understand the importance of living in peace with others, loving everyone, being patient, kind, and forgiving, and treating others as we want to be treated. It is necessary to talk about this when your children are young and also as they grow and their relationships change.

#### 2. Be an example. Children learn social skills by watching others, particularly their parents. The way you relate to others is a daily example to your children.

Consider how you relate to others and how God would want you to relate to them according to what we learn in the Bible.

- In what ways are you a good example to your children?
- In what area would you like to be a better example with God's help?

#### 3. Help your children deal with the challenges in their relationships when they come up.

Many times, children will not tell you about the problems they are having with other people, but they may start acting differently. You may notice increased anger, physical violence, or being unusually quiet and withdrawn. These are signs that they may have some problems with other people. Children need support and encouragement to talk about these issues and to learn to treat others well even when they are hurt, angry, or being treated poorly by others. Let them share what has happened, how they feel, and how they have dealt with it. This kind of conversation is an example to the child of a loving, accepting, kind relationship. This is especially important at a young age so they will trust you to help them in these situations as they grow.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some other ways you can help your child learn to think well of others and treat them with love and kindness?

## REPORT BACK

**Facilitator Instructions:** Write ideas on a board.

Our relationships with others are very important. Being selfish is a normal behaviour for children, but it is not pleasing to God. We want to teach our children to think, speak, and act with kindness towards others. We also must teach them to deal with conflicts. These things need to be both taught and modelled for our children.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

- From all the ideas given, what are one or two things that you can start doing to help your child to grow socially?

## Growing Physically

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Use **STUDENT GUIDE** – Helping Children Grow.

- What are some of the ways that we can help our children to grow physically?
  - *Nutritious food*
  - *Sleep*
  - *Shelter, clothing*
  - *Exercise (activity and playing)*
  - *Healthy practices*
- What are some common health practices that you teach your children?
  - *Handwashing*
  - *Using a latrine*
  - *Rubbish pit*
  - *Bed nets*
- How important are they to protecting the health of children?

### WITH A PARTNER

- Which of these healthy practices are you doing or not doing? What more could you do to care for the health of the children that God has given you?

## Conclusion

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

The role of a parent is to guide our children, provide for their needs, and help them develop spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically.

Take a couple of minutes to think about your own children (if you have children) and how you are helping them grow in all four of these areas. Are there any areas that you think you need to focus more on? Ask God to help you be able to guide your children, provide for their needs, and help them grow in all areas of their lives.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What things are you already doing well to help your children grow?
- What areas do you want to focus on more?
- What new ideas do you have from this teaching about what you can do to help your children grow?

# Lesson 7: Communicating with Children

## Main Ideas:

1. Children are unable to process strong emotions well. As a result, they often act inappropriately. Instead of scolding we need to help them to deal with their emotions by listening.
2. Our words have the power to build up or hurt our children. Positive communication and encouraging words help children become who God intends them to be.

## Materials

1. Visual Aids (found in a Visual Aids section at the end of the Teacher Guide):
  - a. Listening Carefully to Children Role-play (2 copies for volunteers)
2. Student Guide:
  - a. Ways of Responding to Children
  - b. Principles of Listening
  - c. The Power of Our Words

## Dealing with Strong Emotions

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### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY – ROLE-PLAY

Child comes in and stamps his feet. 'I hate the baby, she's so ugly.' (*Hit the wall.*)

- Does this ever happen in your family or community?
- How would people typically respond?

There are a variety of ways that we typically respond when children behave badly. We often do one of the following:

- **Denial:** 'It can't be that bad.' 'You can't possibly mean that.'
- **Rational response:** 'There is nothing you can do about it—stop complaining.' 'Don't be silly! You know you have to go to school.' 'If you want a good job you have to go to school.'
- **Advice:** 'You will need to work hard to keep your friends or you will be very lonely.' 'You have to learn to fight back.'
- **Judgement:** 'What a terrible thing to say!' 'You must have done something to him.'
- **Questions:** 'What did you do?' 'Why do you say such horrible things?'
- **Defense of the other person:** 'She's a nice girl.' 'I'm sure he didn't mean it.'
- Does the child usually calm down or change their behaviour when we do these things?

When we react in these ways, we are not helping a child learn to understand their feelings and respond in a positive way. Instead a child will feel sadness, shame, embarrassment, blame, or even anger. But when we listen to our children, we can help them understand their feelings and deal with them positively.

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Have you ever been upset about something and then acted badly or in a way you regretted?

Often when we are sad or angry, we can do things we regret. This is a result of not knowing how to handle intense feelings. It is even harder for children.

Children often have big emotions but do not know how to manage them. Many times they are unable to tell us exactly how they feel—they do not understand it well themselves so they cannot communicate it to others. As

a result, in their frustration, they often misbehave or say things that are inappropriate. If we want to help children to behave well, we need to help them to express their feelings.

## Listening Well

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Ephesians 6:4

- What are some ways that fathers treat their children that make them frustrated, angry, or bitter?

### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY - ROLE-PLAY

**Facilitator Instructions:** Ask two people in the group to help you do the following role-play. Give the two volunteers

**VISUAL AID** – Listening Carefully to Children Role-play. Ask volunteers to prepare in advance so they feel confident.

**Father** is sitting reading the newspaper.

**Son** runs into the room shouting, 'I'll never play with him again! I hate him!'

**Father** puts down the newspaper, turns to his son and says, 'I can see you're very angry.'

**Son** says, 'He doesn't deserve to have any friends!'

**Father** says, 'Oh?'

**Son** says, 'I played really well and scored 2 goals. Then at the very end when the score was even, I missed a goal.'

**Father** says, 'Mmmm.'

**Son** says, 'And afterwards Micah said in front of everyone that it was my fault we didn't win. So, I yelled at him and marched off.'

**Father** says, 'That must have been very embarrassing for you.'

**Son** says more calmly, 'Yes, it was horrible, but I wish I hadn't gotten angry with Micah. He's my best friend.'

**Father** says, 'I understand.'

**Son** says, 'I think I'll go back and see if Micah's still there. I guess he really wanted us to win.'

**Father** smiles.

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What were the child's feelings at the beginning?
- How did they change?
- What are some of the different things that the father did to help the son cope with his feelings?
  - Put down the newspaper to focus on his son
  - Did not interrupt
  - Accepted his feelings (e.g., 'Oh', 'Mmmm')
  - Helped his son know what feelings he had (e.g., 'I can see that you are very angry'; 'That must have been very embarrassing for you.')
- What surprised you about the result?

## Principles of Listening to Children's Feelings

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### Listening Carefully

'Andrew, I can see that you are really upset. Tell me what happened.'

Listening carefully to a child helps them to deal with their feelings in a good way instead of behaving badly. It helps them to learn how to solve problems and gives them the skills that they need to be a mature adult. It helps them to feel better about themselves and learn how to behave well. It is one of the most important skills for bringing up children.

When we try to encourage a child to push a bad feeling away, the child usually gets more upset. Children can cope with many feelings and find their own solutions when we carefully listen to them and practice these principles:

## Principles of Listening and Responding to Children's Feelings

**Facilitator Instructions:** Read through the **STUDENT GUIDE** – Principles of Listening.

To listen carefully to our children, we need to do 3 things:

1. **Listen with your full attention** (*Example from the role-play: The father put down his newspaper*)
  - It is easier for the child if you do something to show that you are giving your full attention. Examples: putting your paper down and looking at the child, turning to face the child; coming out of the kitchen and sitting down.
  - It is difficult for children to deal with strong feelings on their own. If no one helps them, then the feelings get stronger and are often expressed in bad behaviour.
2. **Recognise their feelings:** (*Example from the role-play: 'Oh', 'Mmm', 'I understand'*)
  - Use a phrase or word – Oh, mmm, wow, yes, or I understand.
  - Use some non-verbal signs – head nodding, eye contact, facial expression.
  - Do not make them feel bad for having that feeling. With children, we need to accept their feelings and help them to deal with their feelings without behaving badly.
3. **Help them know what they are feeling:** (*Example from the role-play: 'That must have been embarrassing.'*)
  - Help them by using feeling words to express what their behaviour shows you.
  - Children are often unable to tell you how they are feeling. If you do this for them, they feel that you understand and accept them. They usually feel comforted and become calmer. Do not worry if you get it wrong. Your child will tell you if you have misunderstood.
  - What are some common examples of feelings that children have?

○ Sad	○ Angry
○ Frustrated	○ Betrayed
○ Hurt	○ Surprised
○ Embarrassed	○ Happy

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY (2-3 people)

Review the notes on **STUDENT GUIDE** – Principles of Listening to Children's Feelings

Develop two role-plays.

1. In the first role-play, show what normally happens in your community when a child is upset and how parents respond.
2. In the second role-play, show the listening skills and principles that you learned today. You can use some of the situations mentioned before or think of another common situation.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Give the groups 10 minutes to prepare their role-plays and then ask for those who are willing to demonstrate their role-plays in front of the group. After each role-play using the listening skills, ask the rest of the group which principles were used in the role-play. If there are any principles that were not demonstrated, see if anyone could do a quick role-play using those skills.

To help our children behave well, we need to help them to deal with their feelings. To do this we need to listen carefully to them. To listen carefully we need to do three things:

1. Listen with your full attention.

2. Recognise their feelings.
3. Help them know what they are feeling.

## The Power of Our Words

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

The Bible has a lot to say about our words, the way we use our tongue, and the words we say. The following verse is addressed to fathers because they are the head of the household but are appropriate to everyone who cares for children.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Use **STUDENT GUIDE** – *The Power of Our Words*.

Read Colossians 3:21 and Ephesians 6:4.

- What sorts of behaviour and actions cause children to be exasperated (v 21)?
- What sorts of behaviour and actions cause children to be bitter and discouraged?

One of the ways that we exasperate our children is by not listening to them well. Another way is by the words that we use. In this section, we will examine how we can use our words to hurt or build up our children.

Read Proverbs 12:18.

In this verse, we are reminded that words can pierce like a sword or bring healing.

- What types of words might pierce like a sword?
  - ‘You are stupid’
  - ‘You are worthless’
- What types of words might bring healing?
  - ‘You are very talented’
  - ‘I like the way you treat your sister with kindness’
- Do you remember anything that was said to you as a child—hurtful or healing? It may be from your parents, siblings, a teacher, etc.
- What impact did it have on your life?

**Facilitator Instructions:** Give the group enough time to think carefully about the power of our words. Help them see that some of the things that were said to them as a child they still remember. The words had an impact and still have an impact today. Pray briefly for those who remember negative things that were said to them.

Let’s pray for God to heal us from the memory of any negative words others said about us and to help us forgive them for those words. We also will ask God to remind us of positive things people said about us, and most importantly what God says about us.

## Hurtful Words

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Use **STUDENT GUIDE** – *The Power of Our Words*.

Hurtful words are things that we say that hurt someone. Often, we do not plan to hurt the person. In fact, usually these things are said to encourage a child to change but the result is that it hurts the child.

Most hurtful words fit into one of these categories:

- **Words spoken in anger and frustration**  
Often, we do not mean what we have said (e.g., ‘I wish you would have never been born!’).



- **Labels we give children**

When children do something we do not like, we often say something about the child instead of the behaviour (e.g., 'You are a failure' or 'You are stupid').

- **Comparisons**

It is very easy to compare a child with his brothers and sisters (e.g., 'I wish you were more like your brother' or 'He's not as clever as his sister').

- **Predictions**

We sometimes tell them what will happen in the future (e.g., 'You will never get a job' or 'You are going to be just like your lazy uncle').

- **Talking negatively to others**

Sometimes we talk negatively about our children to others when they can hear us (e.g., 'My son failed his exam again. He does not try hard enough.' or 'This is my daughter. She is so naughty!').

Usually hurtful words achieve the opposite of what we want in our children. For example, we want to see our children work harder, but hearing these words makes them believe that they cannot do anything well. So, they stop trying. Hurtful words can stop children from becoming all that God designed them to be.

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION or WITH A PARTNER**

Think about these two questions and then pray quietly that God will help you to learn better ways to speak to your children.

- What hurtful words have you said to your children?
- In what situations have you said them?

## **Positive Communication**

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### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

It is possible for us to communicate well with children.

Read Proverbs 15:1: 'A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.'

### **Principles for Positive Communication**

1. **Explain to the child what is true as soon as possible** if you said something that was not true, even if what you said was unintentional. This avoids long-term misunderstanding.
2. **Apologise and communicate positively after using very hurtful words in anger.** This gives your child a model of apologising that he can copy. It also gives him an opportunity to apologise if appropriate for doing what made you angry. Children will respect you more if you apologise when you are wrong, and they will be motivated to please you.

Read the following story:

Chun had believed it was best for his teenage son to be always busy with different church activities. As often as possible he sent him away to attend Bible camps and conferences, thinking this was best for him. But Chun's son did not enjoy any of it. He was a little shy, and it was uncomfortable for him to go to these events. When a youth conference in the big city was announced, Chun and his son got into a big argument about him going. Chun was so angry that he yelled at his son and insisted that he go to the conference.

His son made the long trip to the conference. He knew almost no one and was miserable. He kept thinking about the harsh things his father said to him. When he got back home, he was so angry he refused to even speak to his father.

While his son was gone, Chun attended the TCT Marriage and Family training. He learned about apologising and asking for forgiveness even from his son when he spoke hurtful words. Normally, he

would have never considered apologising to his son. In his culture, people believed that parents and elders were always right, and so there was no need to apologise to children. But Chun realised that he had wronged his son by yelling at him and not listening to him. He went and apologised to him. His son had not spoken to him in weeks, but from that point his anger started to decrease. He began to talk with his father again and slowly their relationship began to heal.

- Why did Chun want his son to go to the youth conference?
  - Why didn't his son want to attend activities like the youth conference?
  - What happened when Chun did not listen to his son and recognise his feelings?
  - What are some ways Chun could have listened better to his son? How would this have changed the outcome of the situation?
  - When Chun realised that he did not listen well, what did he do? How did that affect the situation?
  - What did his culture believe about apologising to their children?
3. **Describe the behaviour that disappoints or angers you instead of labelling the child.** Saying, 'That was a very stupid thing to do!' is more effective and less hurtful than saying, 'You are stupid!'
  4. **Never compare your children with each other.** Comparisons make children feel bad about themselves and cause resentment. It makes it difficult for your children to get along well.
  5. **Only say positive things about your child when it is possible for him to hear you.**
  6. **Never introduce your child with negative characteristics.**

#### **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY (2-3 people)**

In your groups, pick one of these principles and create a skit to show how you could use it in your family.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Give the groups 5 minutes to prepare their role-play and then ask for those who are willing to demonstrate their role-play in front of the group. After each role-play, ask the rest of the group which principles were used in the role-play.

#### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

**Facilitators Instructions:** Use the section Giving Encouraging Words on **STUDENT GUIDE**. Encourage them to be specific and make sure everyone has plenty of time to think about things that they appreciate about their children. If they are able, encourage them to write them down.

Instead of using hurtful words we need to find opportunities to encourage our children.

Take 5 minutes to think of 5 things that you could say to encourage each of your children. The more specific you can be the better. For those without children, either choose to think of ways to encourage some other children you have contact with or other members of your family.

For example, 'I appreciate the way that you usually help me in the kitchen when you come home from school. It is nice to spend time with you, and you make my job much easier' is better than "You are a good girl."

#### **WITH A PARTNER (With Spouses if Possible)**

Discuss what things you are already doing well in how you talk to your children. What words have you used that may have hurt your children? Share with one other person some of the ways you plan to encourage your children or children you have contact with.

## Conclusion

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### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Our words can be used to encourage our children or hurt them. Although we may not mean to hurt them with our words, our hurtful words can stop our children from becoming who God intends them to be. We can learn to use positive communication skills with our children. It takes practice to change our habits and the way we talk with our children, but the Bible tells us that it is important to use our tongues to encourage and build others up.

Try to find as many opportunities as possible to encourage your children in the next week. Try to avoid saying hurtful words and, if you do say something hurtful, then quickly apologise and explain what you meant.

# Lesson 8: Loving and Effective Discipline

## Main Ideas

1. Discipline means guiding and correcting children to learn to act in a godly way. It does not just mean punishment.
2. Effective discipline is done in love and is consistent.
3. Physical punishment is NOT the only way or always the most effective way to discipline children.

## Materials

1. Visual Aid (found in a Visual Aids section at the end of the Teacher Guide):
  - a. Alternative Forms of Discipline Dramas
2. Student Guide
  - a. Disciplining Children
  - b. Alternative Forms of Discipline

## Introduction

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Proverbs 29:17 and 13:24.

- What do these verses teach us about discipline?
- How important is it that we discipline our children?
- If we love our children should we discipline them?
- Is proper discipline good or bad for a child?
- What are the typical ways that people use to discipline their children?

Read these two stories:

Seth had six older brothers and sisters. One day his sisters were teasing him, and he had enough. He was so angry that he threw a big water jug at them. The jug hit two of his sisters and they began to cry. His aunt saw what he had done and called for his father. His father came quickly and began to yell at Seth. Everyone was scared, even the neighbours that watched. He hit Seth 4 or 5 times with a belt and told him that he better never do that again or he would not be able to walk the next day. Seth was so angry at his sisters. The next day one of his sisters started to tease him. Everyone laughed. Seth slapped his sister. This time his father just laughed with everyone.

Dinah loved to draw. She did not love to do her chores. Her mother reminded her every day to do her chores. Today, she told Dinah that if she did not do her chores by the end of the day, she would not be able to spend time drawing for a whole week. After school, she came home and started to draw. She forgot about her chores. After dinner, her mother asked her about her chores. Dinah realised she had forgotten to do them. Her mother asked her about what she had said that morning. She asked her if she remembered the consequence of not doing her chores. Dinah remembered. She told her to bring her drawing materials. Her mother then said if she did her chores for the rest of the week, she could get them back next week. However, each day she forgets to do her chores, she will lose another day of drawing next week.

- Which story is most like your community?
- What different ways did the two parents discipline their children?
  - *Seth's father hit his son one time and laughed at him another time and Dinah's mother took away her privilege to draw.*

- Which story demonstrated some good examples of discipline? Why?
  - *Dinah's mother disciplined her with love, made sure Dinah understood what she did wrong and what the consequence was, and she was consistent.*

In this lesson, we will look at how to guide our children through godly discipline. We will also examine some other methods of helping children to cooperate so that we do not have to physically punish them. If we apply these and the other techniques that we have learned, then we should not have to punish our children often.

## Good Tips for Disciplining a Child

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Refer to the **STUDENT GUIDE** – *Disciplining Children*.

Discipline means guiding and correcting children to learn to behave in a godly way. Discipline does not only mean punishment. There are a variety of ways to discipline children. Discipline is good if it is done in love and is done consistently.

We discipline our children because we love them and we want them to learn how to live godly lives, make good choices, and treat others well. Sometimes the way we discipline children is not effective because it causes rebellion, bitterness, hard hearts, shame, fear and insecurities. It is very important to understand what we can do to make our discipline effective to help our children grow to maturity in their relationship to others and God.

### Tips for Effective Discipline:

1. Ensure that children know we love them even when we discipline them.
  - You should never punish your child when you feel angry. This just teaches a child to hit or shout when angry. If you feel angry then try to calm down first and have your child sit in the corner until you are ready.
  - After disciplining a child, it is important to express your unconditional love for them. You can also speak encouraging words to the child, like, 'I believe you can make the right choice in the future,' or 'I believe you can learn to be kind to your brother.' Love is a better motivator than fear. This also helps a child feel secure knowing that they are still loved.
2. Be consistent in your discipline.
  - If we allow children to do something one time and then punish them the next time, then the children will be confused about what they can and cannot do. They will be afraid that they will accidentally do something wrong. If we are consistent then children will learn what is right and wrong.
  - Threatening to punish a child for bad behaviour but not enforcing the consequence is confusing and not effective.
3. Make sure the child understands what they did wrong.
  - Ask the child if they know what they did wrong. If they do not know, calmly explain.
  - NEVER discipline or spank a child without talking to them about what they did wrong.
4. Explain the expectations of the good behaviour you want.
  - Sometimes children do not know what is expected. Give children clear boundaries.
  - Make sure the child understands what you want them to do in the future.
5. The type of discipline or punishment should be different depending on the age of the child.
  - Young children (2-10) can often be corrected by a stern look, by spanking or by sitting them in the corner for the length of time that is equal to their age (e.g., 10 minutes for a 10-year-old child).

- Older children (11-18) respond to having privileges taken away and being required to take responsibility for their behaviour and choices.
6. The severity of discipline should equal the seriousness of the wrong that was done.
    - If the misbehaviour is serious, then the discipline should be serious. If the misbehaviour is minor, then the discipline should be lighter.
    - It is not appropriate to take away a privilege for one month if a child made a mistake only once. It would be more appropriate to take away the privilege for a day and if the behaviour continues, then increase the time.
  7. When possible, use a form of discipline that is directly related to the misbehaviour.
    - The goal of this way of disciplining is to help a child to take responsibility to fix their misbehaviour.
    - For example, if Sarah likes to help her mother prepare meals, but she yelled at her brother who also wanted to help, Sarah's mother would tell her that she can't help her cook until she is willing to let her brother also help. Or, if Peter hits the table and the water spills, his mother would ask him to help her clean it up.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Use **STUDENT GUIDE** – *Disciplining Children*.

- Which of these tips have you used already with your children?
- Which of these tips have you never thought about or heard of?
- Read Seth's story again from the introduction. Go through each step and talk about what Seth's dad could do differently to apply the tip to this situation.

### PERSONAL REFLECTION OR WITH A PARTNER

- What things do your children do that make you really mad? What practical things can you do to calm down before you discipline your children?
- What can you do to show your children that you discipline them because you love them?
- What is one new thing you will do when you discipline your children in the future?

## Alternatives to Physical Punishment

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Occasionally it is appropriate to spank a young child (ages 2-10).** Spanking is different than hitting a child. When you spank a child, wait until you feel calm, take them into a separate place, explain why you are spanking them, and then spank them. Do not spank a child in front of others. This can be embarrassing and cause bitterness. After spanking, you should give them a hug and assure them of your love. Spanking is done to discipline and is **motivated by love** to change future behaviour. It should not cause physical harm or be motivated by anger. If used wisely, it can be an effective way to prevent negative behaviour and promote obedience and feelings of security. If you spank a child often, their heart may become hard and rebellious.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some other ways to discipline your children besides using physical punishment?

### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

**Facilitator Instructions:** Cut out each drama from **VISUAL AID** – *Alternative Forms of Discipline* ask different pairs to act out the role-play. After each drama answer the questions and explain the alternative form of discipline that could be used in that situation.

Disciplining your child does NOT mean just hitting them. Physical punishment is NOT the only way to discipline children. Here are some good alternatives to physical punishment that can be even more effective:

### Drama 1 – Give a helpful task

**Child** is banging plate on floor and demanding food.

**Mother calls:** 'Stop making that noise. You can help by bringing the water for our meal.'

#### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- How did the parent discipline the child?
  - For what ages of children is this form of discipline most appropriate to use?
1. Give the child a **helpful task** instead of the unacceptable behaviour.  
Especially for young children, you can change irritating or inappropriate behaviour by distracting the child with a positive alternative activity like helping a parent or sibling or doing something you know they like to do. It is still appropriate to let the child know that you do not like their behaviour.

### Drama 2 – Strong disapproval and clear expectations

**Child** is taking lids off pens and throwing them around.

**Mother says:** 'That is not the way to treat your sister's pens. If you borrow something, I expect you to take care of it. Put the lids on immediately and put them back in the box.'

#### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- How did the parent discipline the child?
  - For what ages of children is this form of discipline most appropriate to use?
2. Express **strong disapproval** (without attacking the child's character).  
For example, for young children a stern look or clear statement of disapproval of their behaviour can be effective because the child wants to be loved and accepted. Focus on the behaviour and do not use harsh or negative words about the child. Say something like, 'I do not like it when you (describe the behaviour).'
  3. **Take away privileges.**  
For example, you can take a toy from a child for a period of time or not allow them to watch TV for a period of time. Remember, the length of time should match the seriousness of the behaviour that needs to be changed and should be appropriate for their age.

### Drama 3 – Show how he can take responsibility for what he did

**Child** in shop when accidentally breaks something.

**Mother says** calmly: 'Pick the pieces up and we will go to the shopkeeper and you must apologise. Then I'll pay for it.'

#### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- How did the parent discipline the child?
  - For what ages of children is this form of discipline most appropriate to use?
4. Show the child how he can **take responsibility for what he did.**  
For example, if something is broken or a mess is made (even if it may not be on purpose) the child is asked to fix or clean up the mess. This teaches the child to solve problems that they are responsible for creating. (Example: Adam knocks down his younger brother in the field. His father tells him to help his brother get up, check to see if he is hurt, and tell his brother he is sorry.)

### Drama 4 – Give a choice, enforce the consequence, and let child suffer the consequence

**Mother** is getting ready to go to market.

**Child asks:** 'Ma, can I go too?'

**Mother says:** 'Last time you behaved badly and screamed for a new car as we passed the toy shop. You may come this time, but you have a choice. Behave properly with no crying or next time you stay at home. Do you understand?'

**Child screams** for a new car at the toy shop on the way to the market. **Mother** calmly takes him home. Next day **Mother** gets ready to go to market.

**Child** runs to her and says: 'Can I come with you?'

**Mother says:** 'No—yesterday you had a choice: to behave well or stay at home next time. You behaved badly yesterday so you have to stay at home today with Granny. You may come another day if you behave well.'

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- How did the parent discipline the child?
  - For what ages of children is this form of discipline most appropriate to use?
5. **Separate the child from others** – 'time out.'  
For example, you can put the child in a chair, room or area alone where he can consider what he did and why it was wrong. This allows the child to calm down and gain self-control. Then take a few minutes to talk with the child to make sure he understands what he did, why it was wrong, and other choices he could make in the future. Remember, this should be done only the same number of minutes as the child's age. For example, a 6-year-old child would have to sit in the corner for 6 minutes.
  6. **Give a choice** – acceptable behaviour or a consequence/restriction.  
The point is to give the child a choice between what is right and the consequence for a wrong choice. It is important that the consequence be specific, realistic, and not harmful, but something that the child would miss or not want to have happen. For example, if your child will not brush his teeth you can give him a choice of brushing his teeth now or not getting to eat sweets for the whole day. This works at all ages.
  7. Allow the child to **suffer the natural consequences** of their behaviour.  
For example, if a child does not take care of his belongings, the natural result is they will not last long. Or, if a child does not pick up a favourite toy, the natural result may be that it is lost. Natural consequences can teach children responsibility. This is most effective with older children.

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY or WITH A PARTNER

1. Read through **STUDENT GUIDE** – Alternative Forms of Discipline
2. Think of situations with your children at home when they are often disobedient or behave badly.
3. Choose one situation and think of good alternatives to physical punishment. Prepare one role-play using the new technique in that situation.
4. Do the role-play for the rest of the group.

## Review

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Take time to see which ideas in this module people remember and how they plan to use what they have learned. There may be some topics that you would need to review again. Take time at the end of the lesson to pray for God to help them to guide their children and help them to apply today's lesson.

In this module, we have discussed many different techniques and principles.

- Which techniques or principles about discipline do you remember?
- Which have been most helpful to you?

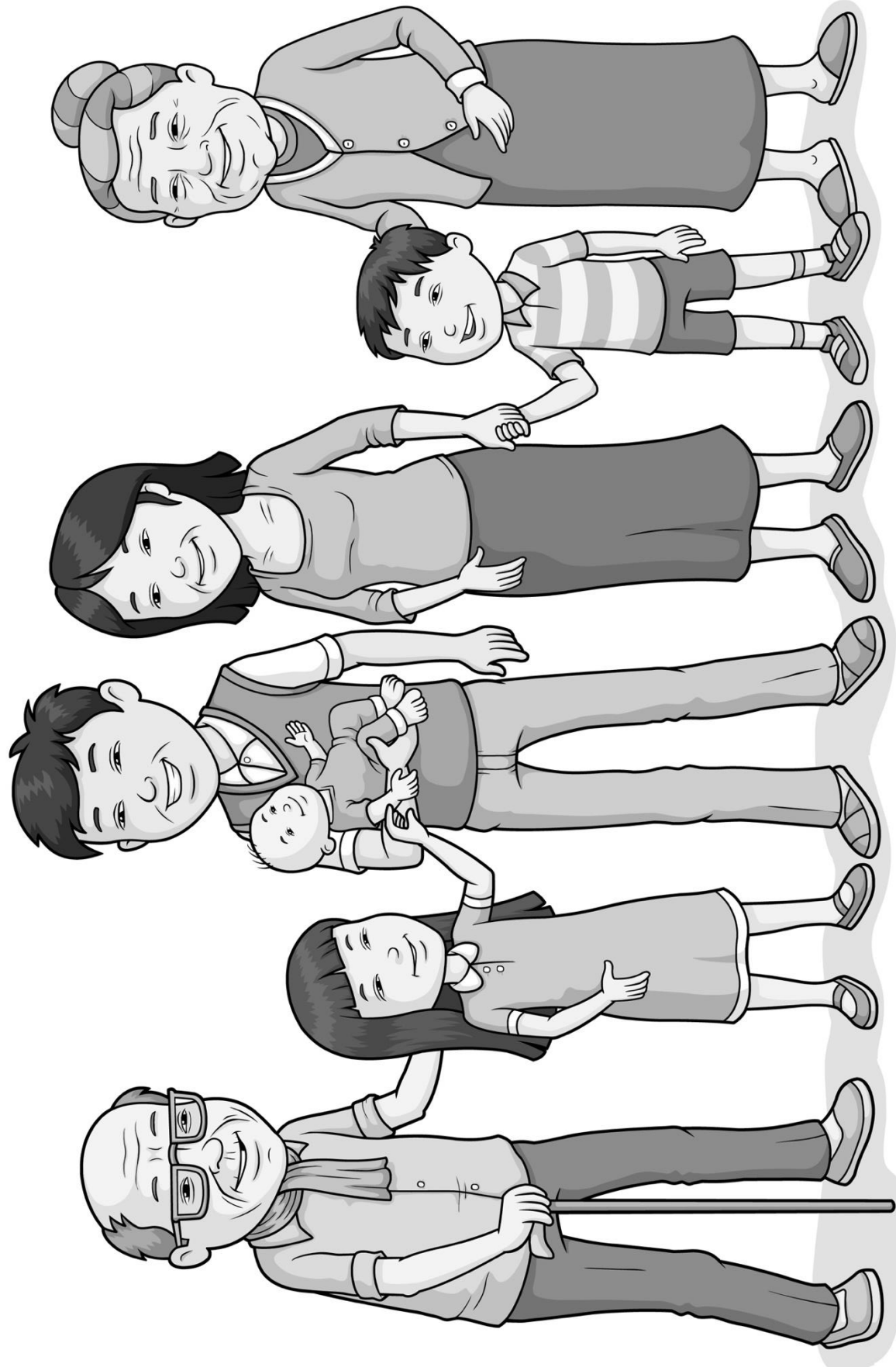


- What do you want to try to do more? And what do you want to not do anymore?
- What changes might you see in your child when you use these techniques?
- What would help you rely on God to use these techniques and to create positive changes in your children?

When we discipline our children, we are guiding them and correcting them to live godly lives. Godly discipline is motivated by love. For discipline to be effective, we must be consistent and wise in the way we discipline our children so they will not become bitter or resentful. Children who learn to act in godly ways are a blessing to God, to their community, and to their family.

# Visual Aids

## Picture of a family (one copy per group – torn apart)



# Listening Carefully to Children Role-play

Father is sitting reading the newspaper.

SON runs into the room shouting, *'I'll never play with him again! I hate him!'*

Father puts down the newspaper, turns to his son, and says, *'I can see you're very angry.'*

Son says, *'He doesn't deserve to have any friends!'*

Father says, *'Oh?'*

SON says, *'I played really well and scored two goals. Then at the very end when the score was even, I missed a goal.'*

Father says, *'Mmm.'*

SON says, *'And afterwards Micah said in front of everyone that it was my fault we didn't win. So, I yelled at him and marched off...''*

Father says, *'That must have been very embarrassing for you.'*

SON says more calmly, *'Yes, it was horrible, but I wish I hadn't got angry with Micah. He's my best friend.'*

Father says, *'I understand.'*

SON says, *'I think I'll go back and see if Micah's still there. I guess he really wanted us to win.'*

Father smiles.

# Alternative Forms of Discipline Dramas

## **Drama 1 – Give a helpful task**

Child is banging plate on floor and demanding food.

Mother calls: 'Stop making that noise. You can help by bringing the water for our meal.'

## **Drama 2 – Strong disapproval and clear expectations**

Child is taking lids off pens and throwing them around.

Mother says: 'That is not the way to treat your sister's pens. If you borrow something, I expect you to take care of it. Put the lids on immediately and put them back in the box.'

## **Drama 3 – Show how he can make amends**

Child in shop when accidentally breaks something.

Mother says calmly: 'Pick the pieces up and we will go to the shopkeeper and you must apologise. Then I'll pay for it.'

## **Drama 4 – Give a choice, enforce the consequence, and let child suffer the consequence**

Mother is getting ready to go to market.

Child asks: 'Ma, can I go too?'

Mother says: 'Last time you behaved badly and screamed for a new car as we passed the toy shop. You may come this time, but you have a choice. Behave properly with no crying or next time you stay at home. Do you understand?'

Child screams for a new car at the toyshop on the way to the market. Mother calmly takes him home.

**Next day** Mother gets ready to go to market

Child runs to her and says: 'Can I come with you?'

Mother says: 'No—yesterday you had a choice, to behave well or stay at home next time. You behaved badly yesterday so you have to stay at home today with Granny. You may come another day if you behave well.'