

Grow in Christ

Life Now Bible Exploration 2.0

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INTRODUCTION

The story is told of a rancher who spent his life eking out a meager existence on a few acres of unproductive land. Yet after his death, oil was discovered on his land. All along he had been a multi-millionaire. His problem was that he didn't know it.

In Jeremiah 29:11, God says to His people, "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

God has an exciting adventure in store for each of us, better than any fairy tale or science fiction story ever written. But He can only bring it about as we learn to seek Him and follow His will for our lives.

These Bible studies have been designed to help you do just that. Dig in to the verses and concepts presented. Apply the teachings until they become second nature. As you do, you will discover the power of God and the adventure He's planned just for you.

Don't live in poverty, scratching out a meager existence while underneath is a goldmine of hidden wealth. Take the effort to dig deep and discover the wonders of Christ and the thrilling life that God has planned for you.

"Thy word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against Thee."

"Open my eyes, that I may behold
Wonderful things from Thy law."

--Psalm 119: 11, 18

This is the second of three booklets in the Life Now Bible Exploration series. Each booklet references many Bible verses. The task of looking up the verses can be lightened by using an electronic Bible such as can be found at www.bible.com or www.biblegateway.com. Or groups can study together, each person looking up a different verse and reading it aloud for the group to answer together.

V. THE WORD

"I believe that the existence of the Bible is the greatest benefit to the human race. And any attempt to belittle it, I Believe, is a crime against humanity."

—Immanuel Kant

THE WORD

Is The Bible Inspired by God?

1. What did the writers of the Bible claim about the words they wrote?

a. 2 Peter 1:20,21 _____

b. 2 Timothy 3:16 _____

c. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 _____

The word translated “inspired” in 2 Timothy 3:16 is literally “God breathed.” God Himself spoke every word.

2. Prophecy shows that the Bible is inspired by God. One-fourth of the Bible consists of prophecies about future events. The Bible claims to be 100 percent accurate in these predictions (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). Below are three of the prophecies about Christ's first coming.

Event	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Place of birth	“But as for you Bethlehem Ephrathah...from you One will go forth from Me to rule in Israel.” Micah 5:2 —700 B.C.	“Now Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.” Matthew 2:1 —1 A.D.
Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	“So they weighed out 30 shekels of silver as my wages ...that magnificent price at which I (the Lord) was valued by them.” Zechariah 11:12,13 —500 B.C.	“Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests.... And they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver.” Matthew 26:14,15 —32 A.D.
Garments divided	“They divide My garments among them and for My clothing they cast lots.” Psalm 22:18 —1000 B.C.	“They divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots.” Matthew 27:35 —32 A.D.

What chance would the prophets have of predicting these events in their own wisdom? Peter Stoner, in his book Science Speaks, calculates the probability of the prophets predicting eight similar events without supernatural help. He calculated they would have the same chance as a blindfolded man would have of choosing one marked silver dollar out of a mass of silver dollars covering the state of Texas two feet deep.¹ These are only eight of the more than 300 prophecies fulfilled in Christ.

Why Is God's Word Important?

1. Why does Jesus want us to abide (remain) in His word?
John 8:31,32

2. What can change our lives? 1 Thessalonians 2:13

- positive thinking
- rules and regulations
- self discipline
- hearing and believing God's Word

3. In what ways can the Bible help you? 2 Timothy 3:16-17

4. Read 2 Peter 1:4.

- a. What two adjectives does Peter use to describe God's promises?

¹ Stoner's calculations can be found in chapter three of his book at http://www.geocities.com/stonerdon/science_speaks.html

THE WORD

- b. What two things will result if we know and claim these promises?

5. Read Luke 10:38-42.

- a. Out of all the activities that we could be involved in during our lives, how many does Jesus say are really important?

- b. When the Lord Jesus says there is really only one thing that is necessary for our lives, we should certainly pay close attention. What was the one necessary thing that Mary had chosen as her first priority?

- watching TV
- sleeping
- working
- studying chemistry
- listening to the Lord's Word
- spending time with friends

6. Often we tend to make excuses or put other things before God. In Luke 14:25-27, Jesus says that if we don't love Him more than any other person or thing, we can't even begin to be His disciple (follower). What excuses did the men in the parable in Luke 14:16-20 give for not following God?

- a. _____

“The Bible is no mere book, but a living creature with a power that conquers all that oppose it.” —Napoleon

b. _____

c. _____

7. What things might you tend to put before obeying God and spending time listening to His words?

When Should You Read?

1. Why did God call the people from Berea noble-minded?
Acts 17:11

2. When did David regularly get alone to cry out to God and read His words? Psalm 119:147

3. Why, in your thinking, could the mornings be an especially good time to be alone with God?

“A thorough understanding of the Bible is better than a college education.”
—Theodore Roosevelt

THE WORD

4. Read 1 Peter 2:2.

- a. What does God want you to desire and how intensely should you desire it?

- b. What will be the result?

- c. Newborn babies are almost constantly hungry. They require nourishment many times every day. Applying this thought to the Word, how should you arrange your daily schedule? Be specific.

Suggestion: Purchase and carry with you a pocket New Testament. Read it often during the day. (Ephesians 5:16)

“People say that the Bible is a boring book ... but they don't say that about Shakespeare, because the people who teach Shakespeare are zealous for Shakespeare.” —Malcolm Muggeridge (20th century British apologist and journalist)

How Should You Study?

1. Pray

- a. Much study of the Bible on our own is not enough to give us understanding. What else is necessary? Luke 24:45

- b. Psalm 119:18 is a good prayer to pray before you read God's Word. How would you say this prayer using your own words?

2. Study (meditate)

- a. In Colossians 3:16, God gives us a command.

Where should the Word of Christ dwell?

What are some specific ways that you can put this command into action?

"If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love for the Scriptures." —Daniel Webster (19th century U.S. statesman and orator)

THE WORD

- b. Read Joshua 1:8. What must you do in order to have a successful life?

- graduate with good grades
- get the right job
- meditate on God's words

The word meditate means to think about or ponder. How often must we do this?

What is the purpose of pondering God's words?

3. Obey

- a. What should be your goal when you read the Bible?

James 1:22

- b. What is true of the person who knows something from the Word and does not obey it?

James 1:22

“I consider an intimate knowledge of the Bible an indispensable quality of a well-educated man.” —Dr. Robert Millikan (former Pres. of Calif. Inst. of Tech. & Nobel Prize winner)

James 4:17 _____

c. How can you tell if a person is truly wise? James 3:13-17

- if he knows a lot in the Bible
- if he has been a Christian for many years
- if he can win every argument
- if he is doing what the Bible says

d. Just as it is the duty of every soldier to obey his commander, so it is our duty to obey the Lord. According to Revelation 4:11, why does the Lord deserve our worship and obedience?

e. Why does God want us to obey all His commands?

Deuteronomy 6:24

12-Minute Daily Plan

1. TIME: A set period of time, an appointment with God. A smaller spiritual meal daily is far better than gorging once a week.
2. PLACE: Quiet, alone.
3. PLAN: Pray: 1 minute. Give thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Pray for others and yourself (Colossians 1:9-13). Read: 10 minutes. Start to Obey: 1 minute. Write out the verse that speaks to you the most. Take it with you and read it often that day.

THE WORD

Write down a time and place where you can privately meet with the Lord every day.

Time _____

Place _____

Thought Question

List several reasons why a daily time reading the Bible is essential for your life.

Final Thought

Do you want to have every day exciting with God? You can with one condition: Get into the Word of God daily and sincerely pray a prayer like this every time before reading: "Lord, whatever you show me, I will do, today."

Memorize and think about:

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." — Joshua 1:8

Supplement A: Memorizing

Someone has said that we remember about 15 percent of what we hear 24 hours after we hear it. We remember about 30 percent of what we read and about 60 percent of what we study. But we remember close to 100 percent of what we memorize and review.

In order to follow the Lord and grow in love for Him, we must not only hear, read and study the Word of God, we must learn to hide it in our heart (memorize and meditate) as David did. The most important

step in memorizing is making up your mind to do it! If you have any doubts as to how important this is, read Proverbs 7:1-3 and Joshua 1:8.

There are three basic principles that should be applied to every verse that is memorized. They are:

Association—Study the context and background of the verse.

Impression—Impress it in your mind in every way possible:

1. Read the verse in other translations.
2. Quote the verse aloud (walking helps).
3. Emphasize each word of the verse.
4. Write the verse.
5. Visualize what the verse is saying.

Repetition—Consistent, regular repetition is the key to successful memorizing.

Don't be discouraged when you think you have a verse memorized the first day and then you can't quote it the next. This is the learning process. In order to memorize something, you must learn it, forget it: learn it, forget it: learn it—and you've got it. Remember, Scripture memory is not an end in itself. The goal of Scripture memory is to "meditate on it day and night" so that we might obey God's Word.

Former broadcaster Earl Nightingale, in his lecture "The Common Denominator of Success" said:

"Perhaps you've been discouraged by a feeling that you were subject to certain dislikes peculiar to you, with which successful people are not afflicted. Perhaps you have wondered why it is that those who accomplish the most seem to like to do the things that you don't like to do. They don't! And I think this is the most important and encouraging statement I have offered to any person.

But if they don't like to do these things, then why do they do them? Because by doing the things they don't like to do, they can accomplish the things they want to accomplish...Successful people have a strong purpose—strong enough to make them form the habit of doing things they don't like to do in order to accomplish the purpose they want to accomplish."

Is your desire to do the will of God strong enough to form in you the habit of memorizing Scripture? I hope it is.

THE WORD

The following is a list of basic verses for the disciple who is just starting to memorize. These verses cover several foundational truths in the Scriptures and will give the follower of Jesus Christ a basic working arsenal. They will meet your personal needs as well as help prepare you to be able to give an answer to those who ask about your Christian faith. If you were to memorize just two verses a week, you would have them all memorized in nine months.

Guarantees—	Life: Forgiveness: Joy: Growth: Success: Victory:	I John 5:11-13 Acts 10:43 John 16:24 2 Timothy 3:16,17 Joshua 1:8 I Corinthians 10:13
Gospel—	Believe: Life: Receive: Grace: Sin: Gift: Substitute: New:	John 3:16 John 10:10 John 1:12 Ephesians 2:8,9 Romans 3:23 Romans 6:23 I Corinthians 15:3,4 2 Corinthians 5:17
Security—	Perfect: Sealed:	Philippians 1:6 Ephesians 4:30
Deity of Christ—	God: One:	John 1:1,14 John 10:30
Holy Spirit—	Baptized: Dwells: Temple:	1 Corinthians 12:13 Romans 8:9 1 Corinthians 3:16
Word—	Bread: Living: Daily: Memorize:	Matthew 4:4 Hebrews 4:12 Acts 17:11 Proverbs 22:18

	Meditate:	Psalm 1:2,3
	Priority:	Mark 11:24
	Pleasing:	I John 3:22
	His will:	I John 5:14,15
	United:	Matthew 18:19
	Unceasing:	I Thessalonians 5:16-18
Obedience—	Doers:	James 1:22
	Faithful:	Luke 16:10
Witnessing—	Unashamed:	Romans 1:16
	Opportunity:	Colossians 4:5
Power—	Boldness:	2 Timothy 1:7
Strength—	Can do:	Philippians 4:13
Provision—	All:	Philippians 4:19
	Abundance:	2 Corinthians 9:8
Real Love—	Definition:	1 Corinthians 13:1-8a
	Goal:	1 Timothy 1:5
Fruit of the Spirit—	Character:	Galatians 5:22,23
Christ's Return—	Anxious:	Philippians 3:20
	Soon:	Hebrews 10:37
Commitment—	Cross:	Luke 9:23-25
	Sacrifice:	Romans 12:1,2
	For Him:	2 Corinthians 5:14,15
	Life:	Philippians 1:21
	All:	I Corinthians 10:31
	First:	Matthew 6:33
	Together:	Hebrews 10:25
	The world:	Matthew 28:18-20

THE WORD

VI. FELLOWSHIP

No soldier could ever win a battle if he was all by himself. Even if he had a machine gun and the enemy had only rocks to throw, he would eventually lose when he ran out of ammunition. In the same way, no Christian can survive spiritually without the constant support and protection of other believers. Who you spend your time with is probably the single most important factor for growth. Take a look at what the Bible has to say on this subject.

Who?

1. Think about Proverbs 13:20.

a. How can you be a wise person?

b. What will happen to a person who makes unbelievers or rebellious people his closest companions?

2. Think carefully about 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

a. Why should we not be bound together or closely united with unbelievers?

b. List the illustrations Paul uses to contrast the differences between believers and unbelievers.

c. What command does God give us concerning unbelievers? (verse 17)

d. Who will be your close friend and companion if you obey these verses? (verses 17,18)

3. What can you be absolutely assured of if you make unbelievers your closest friends? 1 Corinthians 15:33

4. In 1 Peter 4:3-5

- a. What things does God want you to avoid?

- b. What response can you expect from unbelievers when you refuse to participate in these things? (verse 4)

5. What should be our purpose in being with unbelievers?

1 Corinthians 9:19

6. Whom did David choose as his companions? Psalm 119:63

“Let me tell you what I believe the need of the hour is. I believe it is an army of soldiers, dedicated to Jesus Christ who will believe not only that He is God, but that He can fulfill every promise that He has ever made and that there isn’t anything too hard for Him.” —Dawson Trotman

FELLOWSHIP

7. With whom did the Christians in Jerusalem spend their time?

Acts 2:42,44,46

- old friends
- the most popular person in town
- those who lived next door
- those who were fellow believers

8. How do you think the verses in the preceding questions apply to the following areas of your life: who you live with, who you spend your time with, who you marry?

What?

1. The book of Acts is written as an example for our lives. What were four things that the Jerusalem Christians did when they came together?

Acts 2:42

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

“The greatest challenge to Christianity today is a popular, bland, respectable faith termed secular humanism. It is often called ‘the American Way of Life.’ It is not godless, but it keeps God in His place—the pulpit. It is the orthodoxy of the nonbeliever... It simply says, ‘Take up your credit card and follow me.’” —LIFE Magazine

2. How often and with what intensity did they do these things?
 once in a while
 every Sunday
 continually, with great desire and devotion
 continually, but with reluctance
 with great eagerness once a month
3. What is one characteristic of the relationship that God wants us to have with other believers? Romans 12:10

Where?

1. Where did the Christians in the New Testament often assemble?
Romans 16:5 (also 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2)

2. Where did Paul meet with and instruct the Christians at Ephesus?
Acts 19:9 Paul used whatever homes or meeting areas that were available to meet in. (As we have in our churches.)

3. In what two basic places did Paul meet with Christians? Acts 20:20

Why?

1. There is one major factor for healthy spiritual growth that can come only as you constantly unite with other Christians. What is it?
Philippians 3:17

2. There are many spiritual qualities that you can never learn unless you are committing yourself to regular fellowship with a group of Christians. What is one of them? John 13:34-35

3. What analogies does God use to illustrate a group of Christians?

a. Romans 12:4-5

b. Galatians 6:10

c. 2 Timothy 2:4

4. What would happen to a young child that left his family and tried to make it alone, or to a leg that separated itself from the body, or to a soldier that went out to meet the enemy without the rest of the army?

a. Child

b. Leg

c. Soldier

- d. How can you apply these illustrations to your life? Be specific.

When?

1. What are we warned against in Hebrews 10:25?

2. According to Hebrews 3:13, how often does God want us to fellowship with and encourage other believers? (also Acts 2:46, Acts 5:42)

- once a week
- during our Bible study
- every day
- on Sundays only

3. What will be the result of anything less? Hebrews 3:13

“The Christian life is not just our own private affair. If we have been born again into God's family, not only has *He* become our Father but every other Christian believer in the world, whatever his nation or denomination, has become our brother or sister in Christ..” —John R. W. Stott

FELLOWSHIP

4. What practical steps can you take to get fellowship and encouragement from other Christians in your city, neighborhood, job, or school?
-
-

What we are talking about is – The Church. The New Testament Church was an amazing fellowship created by Christ Himself. The New Testament Church was compared to a family, and an army. The church had very close relationships and a very clear mission - to impact this world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- Each New Testament Church was led by a group of leaders. A plurality of elders/pastors. Acts 20:17,28. From these verses we see that elders = pastors = overseers = shepherds. And Philippians 1:1 reminds us that there were many servant/leaders/elders/pastors/overseers/shepherds - in each church.
- Church leaders were men of character. Titus 1:5-9. As they should be.
- And those leader/elder/pastor/servants came from within the church. They were raised up within the local church. Acts 14:23.

The New Testament Church was a very simple and yet incredibly effective organism that God created. Church leaders equipped their flock, and those churches were involved in all kinds of works of service and outreach. The New Testament Church impacted and shaped the world.

Thought Questions

1. What do you remember most about the study?
-

2. What changes in your life do you think should be made as a result of this study?
-
-

Memorize and think about:

“And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”—Acts 2:42

VII. CHRIST-LIKE LIVING

If the President of the United States came to town this week and stayed with you for a few days, to what lengths would you go to please him and to behave your best? If you are a true Christian, then Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, has made your body His permanent dwelling. Is He not infinitely more worthy of your very best than any man, the President included? Indeed, being a Christian is more than just going to heaven. It also involves the way we live our lives here on earth. Paul said we should imitate God. Being a Christian involves the responsibility and, through the Holy Spirit, the power to live as righteously as Christ lived.

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."
—Ephesians 5:1

Our Responsibility

1. God set the standard for righteous living that every person should pursue. How high is that goal? Matthew 5:48
 - better than your Christian friends
 - better than you were last year
 - a perfect life
 - a good life
2. How can we bring delight to God? 1 Samuel 15:22

3. According to Matthew 6:33, what should be our first and foremost pursuit, more than anything else in the world?

"To become like Jesus Christ is the only thing in the whole world worth caring for, the thing before which every ambition of man is folly and all lower achievement vain." —Anonymous

Power to Live Righteously

1. What was one important change that occurred when you believed in Christ, according to 2 Corinthians 5:17?

2. When you believed, you were given one very necessary thing through the Holy Spirit. What was it? Acts 1:8

3. What does God say He will give us strength for? Philippians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 9:8

a. How much strength? _____

b. How often? _____

c. In how many circumstances? _____

4. What promises does God give us for the times when we are tempted? 1 Corinthians 10:13

The Flesh

The flesh refers to a man's fallen nature, his tendency to live in pride, independence, selfishness, and in rebellion to God.

1. List the deeds of the flesh given in Galatians 5:19-21. Define each one in just a few words (use a dictionary if needed).

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

h. _____

i. _____

j. _____

k. _____

l. _____

m. _____

n. _____

o. _____

2. Concerning these deeds, why do we often experience internal battles?
Galatians 5:17

3. If at anytime we do wrong, what can we expect? Colossian 3:25

4. What attitude should we have toward the deeds of the flesh?
Colossians 3:5

"I am persuaded that God's happiness is inseparably linked in with His holiness. Holiness and happiness are like light and heat."

—Robert Murray McCheyne (19th century Scottish preacher)

CHRIST-LIKE LIVING

- a. What relationship can the dead carry on with the living?

- b. What does this say about our involvement with sin?

5. What are two steps you must take to guard against fleshly sins?

2 Timothy 2:22.

a. _____

b. _____

6. From Romans 12:21, how do you overcome the desires of the flesh?

The World

Whenever the Bible speaks of the world in a negative sense—that is, opposed to God—it is referring to the world system: its philosophy, lifestyle, ethics and purposes.

1. Everything in the world's system today appeals to one or more of what three areas? 1 John 2:16

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. How should 1 John 2:17 affect your attitude toward and involvement with the world?

3. a. Are we to withdraw totally from society and become hermits?
1 Corinthians 5:9-11

4. What is the main point God is trying to get across concerning the world? 1 John 2:15

5. What will certainly happen to our lives if we keep too close company with those who do not obey God? 1 Corinthians 15:33

CHRIST-LIKE LIVING

6. Before you were a Christian, how much of your thinking would you say was influenced by the world through any number of ways (TV, radio, people, etc.)? Ephesians 2:1, 2

- 0 percent
- 50 percent
- 75 percent
- 100 percent

7. What does God think about the world's way of thinking? Luke 16:15

8. In order to have a mind that produces pure thoughts and holds to God's truth, what must we do? Philippians 4:8

9. What is one pure thing with which we can fill our minds?
Psalm 119:9,11

10. Give one example of how your thinking has changed from the world's way to God's way since becoming a Christian.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine that were a present far too small; love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

—Isaac Watts (18th century English hymn writer)

The Devil

The devil is an angel who rebelled against God before the creation of the world. He is destined to spend eternity in the lake of fire. Presently, he is free to deceive and tempt those on earth.

1. What is the chief characteristic and therefore the strategy of the devil?
John 8:44

2. What is the devil's target and plan of attack? 2 Corinthians 11:3

3. Read Genesis 3:1-7.

- a. What does the devil like to do with God's Word? (verse 1)

- b. What does the devil like to make us think about God's character? (verses 4, 5)

4. Read Matthew 4:1-11

- a. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, what weapon did He use against the devil?

CHRIST-LIKE LIVING

- b. Compare Matthew 4:6 with Psalm 91:10-13. What part did the devil purposely leave out?

- c. How do you think that ignoring the context of a passage can be a deceptive use of God's Word?

- d. Psalm 91 promises God's protection for the righteous, just as the devil stated. How did the devil wrongly use the verse and what was Jesus' response?

- e. Why is it important to know the fullness of God's commands?

5. What will always overcome the devil's lies and deceptions, and make him flee from us? Ephesians 6:16; 1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7

“God give me a deep humility, a well-guided zeal, a burning love and a single eye, and then let men or devils do their worst!”

—George Whitefield (18th century English preacher)

The Fruit of the Spirit

1. List the qualities mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 and briefly define each one.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

h. _____

i. _____

CHRIST-LIKE LIVING

2. The first characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit, love, summarizes the others and is the fulfillment of all God's commands (Romans 13:8-10). What are some characteristics of genuine love according to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8?

LOVE IS NOT	LOVE IS
a. _____	a. _____
b. _____	b. _____
c. _____	c. _____
d. _____	d. _____
e. _____	e. _____
f. _____	f. _____
g. _____	g. _____
h. _____	h. _____

Love is not simply an inner feeling or emotion. It includes intentions, choices and actions that benefit another person. The clearest way to identify true love is by the kind and beneficial actions it produces, often at great personal expense. Romans 5:8; John 15:13

3. Determine one way that you can show love to another person this week.

4. What will other people think of God when they see His children walking righteously? Matthew 5:16

Thought Questions

1. List two spiritual qualities you feel are most lacking in your life.

a. _____

b. _____

2. Do you want these qualities so much that you would ask God to help change you no matter what it would take?

3. If yes, ask God right now by faith to change you. If you cannot say yes, sincerely ask God to make you hunger for righteousness.

Matthew 5:6

4. From what you learned through this study, write down some practical steps you will take this week to help you grow in the two areas you listed above.

Memorize and think about:

"But prove yourselves doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." — James 1:22

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

VIII. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

The Christian family is one of the greatest statements to the world that God is in our midst. The love and commitment demonstrated by a husband and wife show the power of God mightily at work. Obedient and joy-filled children demonstrate that God's ways of raising children are not outdated, but perfectly address the challenges of the 21st century family.

"A good marriage is the union of two forgivers."
—Ruth Bell Graham

Marriage

1. What kind of person should you look for in a spouse?

a. 2 Corinthians 6:14 _____

b. Proverbs 31:30 _____

c. Proverbs 20:6 _____

2. What are some of the purposes for marriage?

a. Genesis 1:28 _____

b. Genesis 2:18 _____

c. Malachi 2:15 _____

d. 1 Corinthians 7:9 _____

e. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 _____

Roles and Responsibilities

1. How does God view men and women in His sight?

Galatians 3:28-29

2. What do the following verses tell us about the role and responsibilities of a husband?

a. Ephesians 5:22-33 _____

b. Colossians 3:19 _____

c. Peter 3:7 _____

d. 1 Timothy 2:8 _____

“The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.” —Theodore Hesburgh (former president of Notre Dame)

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

3. What do the following verses tell us about the role and responsibilities of a wife?

a. Genesis 2:18 _____

b. Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6 _____

c. Ephesians 5:33 _____

- d. Titus 2:3-5 _____

4. If husbands and wives treated each other as commanded in the above verses, how do you think that would impact most marriages?

5. If one spouse does not fulfill his or her God given roles in marriage, what impact do you think that would have?

"If love is a dream, then marriage is the alarm clock."

—John Hagee (preacher and evangelist)

Thought Questions

1. What are some practical ways of living out this type of love in a marriage relationship?

2. With respect to the way we treat one another, is marriage exceedingly different from any other Christian relationship? Explain your answer.

Memorize and Think About:

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails..."

— 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a

The Blessings of Parenting

1. What are three ways God expressed His blessing in Deuteronomy 7:13?

2. How does God view the birth of children? Psalms 127:3-5

3. What should be the typical outcome of good parenting?
Proverbs 22:6

4. Although parenting can be extremely trying at times, what should be a parent's confident hope? 3 John 1:4

“Affection is responsible for nine-tenths of whatever solid and durable happiness there is in our lives.”

—C.S. Lewis (20th century author and apologist)

Love

1. From the following verses, what is one of the greatest callings on a Christian parent's life? Mark 12:31; John 13:34

2. What are three ways a father deals with his children?

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

3. How is love expressed? 1 John 3:16

4. What are the three things God the Father communicated about His Son in Matthew 3:17 and Matthew 17:5?

5. How can parents communicate these to their children?

6. Our Lord wants parents to have faith in their children. To believe in them. How can a mom or dad apply Mark 5:35-36? and 2 Timothy 1:5?

Training

1. What should parents' love for their children result in? Proverbs 13:24

2. What is one way that God's love is expressed toward us?
Revelation 3:19

3. What did David fail to do with his son? 1 Kings 1:6

4. What are the benefits of discipline?

Proverbs 19:18 _____

Proverbs 29:17 _____

Hebrews 12:7-11 _____

"You must not think it a strange and unusual thing, that little hearts can be so full of sin." — J.C. Ryle, nineteenth century Anglican Bishop

5. How deliberate and active should we be at teaching our children the things of God? Deuteronomy 6:6-9

6. In what should we train our children? Ephesians 6:4

7. How important is it for parents to live out the things they teach?
Luke 6:40

8. Whose influence could potentially shipwreck a child's character?
1 Corinthians 15:33

9. What character traits would you like to see your children have by the time they leave the home?

In regards to children and the Bible: "They cannot be acquainted with that blessed book too soon, or too well."

— J.C. Ryle, nineteenth century Anglican Bishop

Honoring Parents

- As we train our children, we need to train them to love and honor their parents. How does Luke 2:51-52 show us Jesus's heart and example towards his earthly parents?

- Just as parents are commanded to honor our mom and dad, so too our children are commanded to honor us, their parents. What is the treasure and promise found in doing this? Ephesians 6:1-3

- What are some different aspects of 'honoring'? What is implied in 1 Timothy 5:4?

Thought Questions

1. How will the things you've been learning in this "Life Now Exploration" affect what you want to pass on to your kids?

2. How will you help develop these character traits in your children?

"Let us see your miracles again; let our children see your glory at work. And may the Lord our God show us His approval and make our efforts successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!" —Psalms 90:16-17
(New Living Translation)

Memorize and think about:

"Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband." — Ephesians 5:3

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you." — Ephesians 6:1-3

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." — Ephesians 6:4

For Further Information on Marriage and Parenting

Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires, the Respect He Desperately Needs by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs. This is a good and practical book on marriage.

Steve Nelson, pastor and father, has a good website filled with resources. Steve is a Pastor with The Rio Church. His materials are especially geared towards younger children. Lots of wisdom. And a little humor. www.btozparenting.com

Rick Whitney has a website geared for fathers, www.gcnwdads.com. There are many articles aimed at encouraging the heart and spirit of a Christian dad. Written for dads with teens. He also has a parenting DVD series tailored for small groups.

A Few Thoughts on Divorce

1. Which of the following best represents the marriage relationship according to Malachi 2:14 and Deuteronomy 23:21-23?

- A casual agreement just between two people.
- A solemn vow made before God.
- An expression of two people's love for each other.

If divorce was simply the mutual agreement not to break a promise made between two people—that would be one thing. However, the Bible says that the marriage union is not just of human origin.

2. Who created the bond between a husband and wife? Malachi 2:15a; Matthew 19:6

MARRIAGE ~~ANSWER~~

3. Whose well-being does God think will be affected by divorce?
Malachi 2:15b

4. There is one occasion where divorce is permissible. Read Mathew 19:1-9. What is the one cause that our Lord speaks about here that would allow divorce?

5. According to Malachi 2:16, what does God think of divorce?

6. From the verse, why do you think this is the case?
