

May 1

# **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

**A GUIDED LEARNING BOOK**

**BY  
WELDON and JOYCE VIERTEL**

**CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

**2**

# **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

**SECOND COURSE :  
CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

by  
**Weldon and Joyce Viertel**

**CARIB BAPTIST PUBLICATIONS**

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## PREFACE

### Crisis in Marriage

Marriage as a monogamous union has been challenged at every period of history by other forms of union between the sexes. Within the last fifty years, the biblical standard for Christian marriage has come under numerous severe attacks, and many Christian groups have begun to compromise traditional principles. The stability of family life has reached a crisis.

Forty years ago, Emil Brunner spoke of this crisis in marriage as a wholly new phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> He identified the causes as internal and external: destruction of the economic unity of the family by changing from agrarian to industrial life; inadequate housing and congested living conditions in large cities; economic, social, legal, political, and intellectual emancipation of women; numerical surplus of women; invention of contraceptives; and spiritual changes based on a new emphasis of individualism or the freeing of the individual personality from the tutelage of collective groups. He suggested that the problems confronting marriage should be taken more seriously since they present the most difficult problems with which Christian ethics has to deal.

More recent authors have continued to sound a despairing note on the breakdown of family life. The alarming number of divorces, illegitimate births, broken homes, juvenile delinquents, irresponsible parents, and open marriages indicate the critical condition of the home today. The statement is often made that marriage is an outmoded institution, no longer serving a necessary function for men and women in society. This statement is based on the availability of reliable contraceptives which reduce the possibility of pregnancy and on the increased awareness of world-wide problems arising from population explosion. Couples conclude that if they choose not to reproduce, there is no need to marry. Greater sexual permissiveness has resulted in making the sexual experience more readily available to people outside of marriage than was true when moral standards were more rigid.

### The Continuing Importance of the Home

The breakdown of the home is a serious threat to society. Many contemporary psychiatrists define personality and its development in terms of interpersonal relations. Healthy personality development depends on healthy relationships. During the formative period of life, the most important relationships are within the home. Children of both sexes need assuring, satisfying relations with both parents in order to develop into socially adjusted and productive citizens. Sadism, sexual perversion, theft, and other antisocial activities will continue to accelerate as the instability of the home increases. Anxiety and emotional disability will increase as persons exist in a maladjusted society where they have failed to gain in the home basic training in social relations. The home continues to be the foundation and the primary teaching institution of a properly functioning society.

The purpose of this study guide is to examine the nature and purpose of marriage as set forth in the Bible and how to prepare for and develop a successful marriage. Some of the problems confronting Christian homes will be examined and solutions suggested. The goal of this study is to lay proper foundations for a Christian home and to suggest ways of developing strong husband-wife relationships which will contribute to successful marriages and to the happiness of each individual within each marriage partnership.

El Paso, Texas  
June, 1978

Weldon Viertel

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<sup>1</sup>The Divine Imperative (London: The Lutterworth Press, 1937), p. 340.

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTBOOK FOR LEVELS 2 AND 3

The Marriage Affair, J. Allan Petersen. Wheaton, Il. :  
Tyndale House Publishers, 1971; London: Coverdale  
House Publishers Ltd., 1971.

ABBREVIATIONS

AV or KJV	Authorized or King James Version**
LNT	Living New Testament
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version

\*\* Scripture quotations are from the Authorized Version except when otherwise indicated.

## **MINISTERIAL TRAINING BY GUIDED STUDY**

Ministerial Training by Guided Study is designed to introduce students on various levels of academic preparation to the Bible and related areas. This is not a correspondence course, nor the traditional lecture system, but a new approach in education. The goal of the programme is to make quality theological training available to all students. Family and church responsibilities and lack of academic prerequisites and finances prevent many men and women who have been called of God from improving their ministry through training. These obstacles can be overcome by an approach which emphasizes self-study and weekly small group discussions. The study guides are designed for students on three levels of preparations:

1. Students with some primary education
2. Students with some secondary education
3. Students with university qualifications

Although this course is designed primarily for pastors and ministerial candidates with no seminary training, laymen and lay preachers can also benefit from some of the courses. Pastors with divinity degrees might use some of the study guides as refresher courses while serving as leaders of study groups and conveners of the weekly seminars.

Study guides are used to direct private and group activities in the mastery of the content of a subject. They contain the basic content for each subject and recommend supplementary sources for a more advanced study. Questions are included to direct the attention of the student to the important facts in the lessons and to provide an immediate response to the material read. Weekly seminars of approximately an hour for each subject provide opportunities for the discussion of issues related to the subjects and their practical application in contemporary life. A teacher or tutor guides the seminar discussions, but the students from all three levels present and discuss their ideas. When students come to the seminar with a basic understanding of the lesson, the seminar can be dedicated to enrichment of the subject and to discussion of the practical use of the material in the life of the Church.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE STUDY GUIDE

### *Text and learning activities*

The study guide is designed primarily for home study. When the guide is opened, the text appears on the left side of the page, and questions requiring an immediate response to the material read are on the right. The student should read a paragraph before reading and answering the question or questions for that paragraph. If there are no questions for a paragraph, he may wish to make a few notes on that paragraph and move on to the next. The questions and answers should be covered with a strip of paper (see following insert) until the paragraph has been read and the student is ready to answer each question. Then the cover sheet should be moved down the page far enough to enable the reading of the question and the writing of the answer. The answer according to the text appears immediately under the question. After the student has written his own answer, he may then compare it with the given answer. If the two are not the same, the paragraph in the text should be read again.

### *Home study exercises*

A home study assignment appears at the end of each lesson. The study guide contains the basic content for each lesson, and the questions of the *basic assignment* are to be answered by all three levels. After reading the text and doing the learning activity on each page, the student should be able to answer most of the home study questions without further reference to the text. These questions are self-testing exercises. If a student is unsure of the correct answer, he has not learned adequately the material in that particular section, and he should review until he is sure that he understands the content. Some questions call for more extensive answers and require concentrated effort for mastery. The completed questions serve as a summary of the lesson and should be helpful as a review.

Students on Levels 2 and 3 are required to do *supplementary assignments* in addition to the basic exercises. The supplementary activities include sometimes a reading assignment in another book with questions to be answered.

Level 3 is required to do *advanced assignments* in addition to the basic and supplementary work. This work will vary according to the availability of library resources. Sometimes there will be questions over a parallel reading assignment in a recommended resource book. At other times, the questions will require independent or individual research. Bible dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and books on the subjects of the study guide are sources which should be consulted. A bibliography at the end of the study guide indicates where additional material may be found.

### *Seminar*

It is suggested that the students of all three levels in a geographical area meet for an hour each week with a teacher or tutor to discuss the lesson with reference to—

1. problems encountered in home study in answering questions or in understanding the textual material;
2. the application of the lesson to the practical work of Christian ministry and conduct;
3. the significance of the lesson as a whole and its place in the total programme of ministerial training.

The fragmentary questions of the lesson may sometimes be answered without getting a picture of the lesson as a whole. It is also possible to learn the facts about Christianity without seeing their application in the life of the Church. The student is responsible for getting the detailed information of the lesson in his home study. Understanding the over-all meaning of the lesson and its practical application should be the goal of the seminar.

Some seminar questions have been included with each lesson. Their purposes are—

- to stimulate interest (some are controversial questions which have not been resolved by scholars);
- to guide in the beginning of the seminar discussions;
- to direct attention to problems related to the material studied;
- to require original thinking which will lead to suggestions for the practical application of the material.

### *Teacher or tutor*

The teacher or tutor may offer other seminar questions which are more relevant in a given situation. He should feel free to use any approach he chooses as long as the discussion remains related to the material of the lesson. It is his responsibility to prevent the seminar discussion from departing from relevant issues.

The teacher may find that a brief test at the beginning of the seminar will be helpful. The test will encourage students to prepare more adequately their home study assignments and enable the teacher to evaluate the progress of each student. Two or three questions from the basic studies should be sufficient. Students who are not making satisfactory progress may need personal help and encouragement in preparing their lesson. They should not be overlooked!

cut to separate

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Use this sheet of paper to cover the learning activity on each page.

\* \* \* \* \*

When you have finished reading each paragraph, slide the sheet down just far enough to expose the learning activity for that paragraph. If there is no activity, continue to the next paragraph.

Write your answers.

Then slide the sheet down farther to expose the suggested answers.

Compare your answers with the suggested ones. If they do not agree, reread the paragraph.

Continue to the next paragraph.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Use this sheet of paper to cover the learning activity on each page.

\* \* \* \* \*

When you have finished reading each paragraph, slide the sheet down just far enough to expose the learning activity for that paragraph. If there is no activity, continue to the next paragraph.

Write your answers.

Then slide the sheet down farther to expose the suggested answers.

Compare your answers with the suggested ones. If they do not agree, reread the paragraph.

Continue to the next paragraph.