

Catechetical Resources: The Sixth Commandment

Thou Shalt not Commit Adultery

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[Written for catechetical purposes during the late 1970s]

I. Introduction—The Christian Home (QU. 80-85)

We shall be spending a considerable amount of time on the introduction to the Sixth Commandment, since marriage is undoubtedly one of the most important earthly events in anyone's life. It is one that can provide tremendous blessings., provided that we live in it according to God's regulations; it can also cause many heartaches and much grief, if we disobey God's Word regarding marriage. In order that you might receive the full blessings of your eventual marriage, we shall consider what God Himself says respecting it in the following pages.

A. God Ordained Marriage in Paradise (82-84)

On the sixth day of creation God created the very first marriage by forming man's body from the dust of the ground and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). Then God, looking upon that first lonely man, said, "It is not good for man to be alone." Even though the world and everything in it were perfect, yet God determined to do still more for man. God decided to make a helper, not just a neighbor or a companion, but a helper exactly fit for the man, precisely what he needed (Gen. 1:18).

This is the way in which God created the home, the basic unit of society: "God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man" (Gen. 2:21,22). Thus the woman was literally taken from man's side, a beautiful token that she was always to walk by his side, not under him or over him.

Furthermore, God actually brought Eve to Adam, as Scripture says. Thus He made the first marriage, even as He makes our marriages today. Adam did not choose his wife, nor did Eve come to him, but God brought them together. Both Adam and Eve accepted what God had done, with Adam saying, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). She is actually one with me, my very own. As soon as our first parents accepted one another, they were married. And more, Adam foresaw that this act would be repeated endlessly in the years that were yet to come. He said: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

We can see from this institution of marriage that it consists of *one man and one woman*. God did not create two wives for Adam, and we can be certain that God never intended anyone to live with more than one spouse. God did allow plural marriages in some cases during Old Testament times. We may think, for example, of Jacob (Gen. 29:15-35), David (II Sam. 5:13), and others. Yet each such case brought with it many misfortunes, disagreements and jealousies. Marriage is monogamous. Therefore St. Paul writes: "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife (not wives), and let every woman have her own husband (not husbands)" (I Cor. 7:2).

God's institution of marriage is also life long. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall *cleave* (not leave her after a time) unto his wife," said Adam. Many another Bible passage tells us this same truth. For example, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth" (I Cor. 7:39); only after he dies is she free to marry another. Rom. 7:2 expresses the same thought. Our Lord also testified to these truths in Matt. 19:3-12: "... Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh, What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.... Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery...."

B. Many People Rebel Against God's Good Institution of Marriage

Many people rebel against God's good institution of marriage, even as they rebel against every other part of God's holy and perfect Word. For example, everywhere in America men and women live together for a time without any intention of being married. Unmarried college students set up housekeeping together. Unmarried women boast of their children whose fathers may be married or unmarried. A writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* asks, "Why not permit a flexible contract perhaps for one or two or more years with periodic options to renew? If a couple grew disenchanted with their life together, they would not feel trapped for life." Anthropologist Margaret Mead, a widely quoted author, suggested a two-part system, with Part I a dissolvable partnership without alimony by mutual consent and Part II a marriage for parenthood in which both would be responsible for the children, even though they should part. Someone else said, "Not everyone has the same kind of house, so why must they have the same kind of marriage?" The devil prods "swingers" to exchange married partners for a weekend, promising them joys, but producing nothing but heartache. Satan moves us to speak of the "gay divorcee," when in reality she is a sad, disconsolate divorcee. Again and again words like "till death do us part" and "obey" on the part of the woman, integral parts of every God-pleasing marriage, are omitted from the wedding ceremony. Some marriage ceremonies even omit fidelity to one's spouse.

In every single one of those instances, the Devil can only clap his hands in glee, for he knows full well that all of them are a defiance, a clear rebellion against the living God. He is undoubtedly well aware that anyone who pursues these courses can expect only heartache, trouble, tragedy, and quite possibly the loss of his soul, exactly what Satan wants of all of us. May God preserve us from such dreadful sins against His holy estate of matrimony.

C. God Blessed Marriage

Despite everything that the world and the Devil may say against this good institution, God blessed marriage in many wonderful ways. For example, after He had made the first marriage, "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). (Gen. 2 with its account of the institution of marriage is just a fuller description of Gen. 1:27,28.)

Again wise King Solomon wrote in Prov. 12:4: "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband"; and Prov. 18:22: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord"; and Prov. 31:12: "She (the virtuous wife) will do him (her husband) good and not evil all the days of her life."

Just consider for a moment what our Lord gives us in a faithful wife: exactly the kind of a helper which men need (Gen. 2:18), a mother for our children, a partner with whom we may share our joys and sorrows, one who stands by our side day and night, a housekeeper, a cook, a laundress, a seamstress, a nurse, and much, much more. Indeed, the Chase Manhattan Bank of New York has calculated that a wife, if she were paid prevailing New York City wages, would cost her husband some \$300 a week in the middle 1970s. She would be paid from about \$2 to about \$5 an hour for being a nursemaid, housekeeper, cook, laundress, food buyer, chauffeur, and dietician.

Husbands, are you listening? Do you let your wives know that you appreciate them as one of God's greatest earthly blessings?

Surely, a wife who has a godly husband has an equally great blessing from God, for he is the wage earner, confidant, head of the home, father to the children, support on whom to lean, guide in difficulties, and much, much more.

Wives, are you listening? Do you recognize in your husband one of God's greatest earthly gifts? Do you let him know how much you appreciate what God has graciously given you in your faithful husband?

The blessings of married life are evident in further ways too. For example, married people in general live longer than single people (in the 25-44 age group the death rate in the middle '70s is at least twice as great

for single people as for those who are married), they spend less time in the hospital, they have more material success, they frequently are happier and more content than the unmarried, and they are less involved in crime.

Yes, God ordained marriage as a blessing for mankind. He therefore said, “Marriage shall be honored by all” (Heb. 13:4, NIV), and again, “I will therefore that the younger women marry” (I Tim. 5:14).

Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church is surely in error when it requires celibacy of its religious. The celibacy requirement has caused a tremendous amount of grief and evil. For example, hundreds of priests leave the church annually in the 1970s, many of them to be married. Think, too, of the many sins against the Sixth commandment caused by these unrighteous requirements. The Lord reminds us of I Tim. 4:1-3, where St. Paul wrote: “God’s Spirit specifically tells us that in later days there will be men who abandon the true faith and allow themselves to be spiritually seduced by teachings of the Devil.... These men forbid marriage and command abstinence from food—good things which, in fact, God intends to be thankfully enjoyed by those who believe in Him and know the truth” (Phillips).

Note: when St. Paul wrote in I Cor. 7:7,8, that it is good to remain unmarried, he carefully qualified that with “amid all the difficulties of the present time” (I Cor. 7:26, Phillips). He also stated that this advice is for those who have the gift of self-control in sexual matters. “But if they find that they have not the gift of self-control in such matters, by all means let them get married” (I Cor. 7:9, Phillips).

Fortunately, most of us (as many as 95% of the average senior class in high school) eventually marry and thus receive this wonderful blessing of God. We ought to thank God for this gracious and good gift every day of our lives.

D. God Regulates Marriage

God also regulates marriage (84). Since God instituted marriage, He also regulates it so that married people might receive the greatest possible blessings from it. God regulates marriage through His Commandments (three Commandments speak of marriage and the Christian home) and through many other Bible passages and Bible stories. To receive the greatest possible blessing from our marriage, it is necessary to know these regulations of God. We shall examine them in the following paragraphs.

1. God moves people to desire marriage.

God begins this desire by giving us friends. Familiar Bible examples of friendships are Jonathan who ‘loved him (David) as he loved his own soul’ (I Sam. 20:17); Aquila and Priscilla loved St. Paul so much that he wrote, they “have for my life laid down their own necks” (Rom. 16:4). The earliest Christians “continued steadfast in... fellowship” with one another so much so that the heathen exclaimed, “See how they love one another.” God gave us friendships, and we in turn are to cultivate many friendships by being true friends.

God has implanted into the hearts of most young people an inclination toward members of the opposite sex. We respond to these feelings by associating with members of the opposite sex and by dating. That too is a fine blessing, for dating teaches one how to act toward the opposite sex. It gives one an opportunity to become acquainted with a number of individuals; and it helps one eventually to consider the choice of a spouse.

As with many other matters, there may be evils connected with dating. One of them is dating at too early an age. Sometimes one finds pressures for this sort of thing as early as age 11 or 12. Mothers sometimes encourage this unwise, dangerous, possibly even calamitous practice, for authorities everywhere agree that early, constant dating easily leads to tragedy. Such relationships can quickly progress from necking to petting to sexual relationships long before the parties involved are ready for marriage. Therefore fifteen should probably be considered the minimum age for occasional dating, and then it should be with a group or at least with one other couple.

Dating, like friendships, should be with various people. You don’t buy the first suit you see on the rack—should you not be equally careful about examining various people before you choose a mate for life? It is

true, of course, that highly successful marriages have resulted, even though the two parties dated each other only. Yet, in most cases it is certainly better to learn to know several people before committing oneself for life.

The problem of no dates in high school often troubles young people. According to at least one survey, approximately 30% of high school girls never date, while 30% go steady. The percentage of boys who never date is probably at least as great. Should you be in the category of those who never date, you should not be unduly troubled. Chances are that there is nothing wrong with you, although a regular, full self-examination is always good. Even though you have few or no dates in high school, the odds are all in your favor for eventually marrying.

2. As a result of this God-given inclination, two people may find that they enjoy each other's company so much that they wish to go steady.

Normally going steady in high school is to be strongly discouraged for at least three reasons: It prevents one from learning to know others of the opposite sex. Then a frequent later complaint is this: "If I had only learned to know one or more others!" Secondly, it is almost impossible for a high school student, especially in the lower grades, to know the difference between true love and infatuations. Most teenagers have from three to five infatuations during their high school years, and afterward they may wonder what they ever saw in those particular persons. Marriage as a result of puppy love will probably, as someone said, lead to a dog's life. Finally, steady dating, especially in the early high school years, may eventually stimulate the sexual desires so much that the couple commits the horrible sin of fornication, or it hurries them into a teenage marriage for which they are unprepared. Such a marriage of teenagers results in approximately six times more separations than marriage consummated when the couple is older. It is true, of course, that one occasionally hears of a highly successful marriage that began with steady dating early in high school, but the odds are against it.

Should anyone of you be going steady, you must learn not to stimulate one another sexually. You must avoid heavy necking and other sins against the Sixth Commandment. You must understand the difference between a kiss of affection and one that stimulates sexual desires. Learn to do together those things that are clean, pure, and wholesome, as St. Paul admonishes in Phil. 4:8. Do not become so involved with one another that you cannot break up, for you are not yet engaged. You may meet someone else to whom you are more attracted, and that can cause the other party great grief. At the same time one should not prolong the going steady unduly. Nor should one ever give the other party the idea that you will surely marry him or her, if you do not intend so to do.

God begins marriage with a proper engagement (Catechism note, p. 66). After going steady for some time, the two parties may consider becoming engaged. Engagement is the unconditional promise, freely given, of a man and a woman to become husband and wife with their parents' consent and blessing. Such an unconditional promise is everywhere in Scripture regarded as equivalent to marriage. For example, in Gen. 24, Rebekah was regarded as Isaac's wife from the moment that she consented so to be, even though she had never seen her husband. God repeated that thought through Moses in Deut. 22:23,24, where a betrothed or engaged woman is specifically called a wife. In Matt. 1:18-24, the Virgin Mary is called Joseph's wife and he is called her husband, even though they were only engaged.

If the promise to be married is made conditionally, that is no true engagement. For example, Gen. 29:15-20 tells us that Jacob agreed with Laban to work seven years for his daughter Rachel. That could hardly be called an engagement, for it had a condition attached to it. What if Jacob were unable to work the full seven years, or what if one of the parties had died during that time? Obviously, that was no true engagement, even as there is no true engagement, if the couple sets up one or more conditions before the marriage can take place. If a man says, "As soon as I earn \$200 a week, we shall be married," that surely is no engagement, for who knows if this condition will ever be fulfilled?

Normally there is no true engagement either, if one or both sets of parents object. In this case, as in every other, Col. 3:20 applies: "Children, obey your parents in all things. For this is well pleasing unto the Lord." It is true, of course, that parents may not arbitrarily forbid any marriage just in order to have the service

of the children in the home or for some other similar reason. Parents must not forget what St. Paul wrote: “To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (I Cor. 7:2). Gen. 2:24 also states the normal procedure: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife.”

Yet, should parents for valid reasons object to their child’s marriage to a certain person or forbid it, that command must be obeyed. In marriage one is bringing a new member into the family and permission of the parents, implied or expressed, must be obtained beforehand. A successful marriage is difficult enough to achieve at best. How can one then enter into a marriage, when one knows that he is disobeying the Fourth Commandment thereby? We must understand that parents can often foresee a never-ending tragedy in the marriage of their children, when the children themselves are probably blind to the critical faults of the proposed spouses. Many a person has regretted to the end of his life not following his parents’ wishes in this matter.

We know also that the more our parents or others criticize our proposed spouse, the more our Old Adam tends to defend him. Sons and daughters then often get the attitude: “I’ll prove that it can work out.” Afterwards, as millions have learned to their great sorrow, they understand that their parents were right after all, that they did have only their children’s welfare in mind. We must therefore listen to our parents.

Even though the Scriptural doctrine of engagement is clear, many people, even many within the church, feel that engagement is not the equivalent of marriage. They maintain that our engagement today is different from that of Bible times. Yet, the Bible’s position is certainly logical. When are two people married in the sight of God? When their promises are made before the altar? Then millions of people in years gone by would never have been married, for they did not have that type of ceremony at all times. Rather, let us cling to this: Two people are truly married in God’s sight when they make their unconditional promise to each other with their parents’ approval in the fear and love of God.

3. God expects us to do a number of things before we become engaged.

Since engagement is the equivalent of a lifelong union in God’s sight, it stands to reason that everyone who contemplates this step must do some serious thinking, fervent praying, and careful questioning before he enters this lifelong union.

In Bible times the parents frequently chose spouses for their children. Abraham did that for Isaac, as Gen. 24 tells us. Chinese parents followed the same custom for many years. Parents would seek those qualities that make for a good spouse, and many, possibly even most of these marriages were happy ones, lasting and filled with love, as was the case with Isaac and Rebekah, Gen. 24:67. Advantages of such a practice are obvious: a mature person chooses a spouse, the girl is not subject to the problems of the marriage market, and a marriage is assured.

Since our culture frowns upon such an arrangement, the future bride and groom must, to a great extent, themselves do the choosing. That requires serious thinking with open eyes. Benjamin Franklin gave some excellent advice, when he said that one should keep his eyes open before the marriage and close them somewhat afterwards. Many people do the opposite, for “love is blind.” Later the rude awakening arrives, when one—realizes that his spouse is not perfect after all.

Pat asked Angus where he was going with the lantern. Angus answered: “I’m going to court my girl.” Pat replied: “Well, I never wasted all that kerosene in my lantern when I went courting.” Angus said: “‘Tis a pity that you didn’t! Just see what you got.”

Our Lord tells us: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17). This means, for one thing, that a child of God will *pray fervently* before he takes any great and important step in his life. That is exactly in keeping with the Word of our Lord who said: “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6). If this is true of less important matters, then it is surely imperative that we pray earnestly before entering into marriage, a step that will profoundly affect us all our lives. Then, too, we shall be assured of those precious promises that God gives

to every true prayer: “Ask, and it shall be given you” (Matt: 7:7) and “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jas. 5.:16).

Dr. Luther, as usual, gives us some excellent advice in this matter. He wrote: “God must be recognized as its (the marriage’s) Founder, and on bended knees one should call upon Him with humility and in faith to grant a companion and a consort.” In all seriousness a girl should “be taught to step before God and to say with all confidence: Behold, dear God, I have now come to those years in my life when I would like to become married.... Give me a pious boy, and graciously help me enter the marriage estate; or if it please Thee, give me the spirit to remain chaste.”

Dr. Luther also wrote: “In this way a boy, too, ought to pray for a girl and should not begin everything of his own accord but pray God to begin it.... Such young people are real children of God.” Again, “Dear Lord God, if it be Thy divine will that I continue to live without a wife, help me to do so. If not, bestow upon me a good pious girl with whom I might spend all my life whom I hold dear, and who loves me.”

Serious thinking with open eyes requires asking and answering correctly such questions about one’s prospective spouse as the following: *Do we have a mutual faith?* That is by far one of the most important qualities to seek in any spouse. No other single point is stressed so often in the Bible as this one: Marry someone of your own faith. for example, Abraham sent his servant on a long journey to find a believing wife for his son Isaac (Gen. 24). Isaac charged his son, Jacob, not to marry a heathen woman (Gen. 28:1, 2). Esau married a Hittite woman and brought much grief to his parents (Gen. 26:34, 35). In his farewell address Moses specifically commanded his people: “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them” (The heathen) (Deut. 7:3). In his old age his heathen wives turned the heart of Solomon away from God, even though Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived (I Kings 3:13; 11:4). Through His prophet God commanded the Israelites, “Ye shall not give your daughters unto their (the unbelievers’) sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves” (Neh. 13:25). There are indeed many Bible passages and Bible stories that tell us to marry someone of our own faith.

It is true, of course, that the Bible also tells us: “If any brother (a Christian) has a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.” The same truth holds good for the believing woman also (I Cor. 7:12,13). Yet, the disadvantages of marriage to an unbeliever are so obvious and so overwhelming that one wonders how anyone could possibly consider it. Spouses in such a union cannot have daily devotions or attend church together. Probably they cannot even discuss God’s Word, the greatest thing in life. They will not be able to join in bringing up their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). They cannot receive mutual comfort, strength, and admonition from God’s Word for a blessed life on this earth. They will never see each other in heaven, and finally, the struggle in such a marriage is often so great that a Christian partner may lose his own faith, as many have lost it to their everlasting sorrow.

The same principle applies to *marriage with a Roman Catholic*. In years gone by the Protestant party of such a marriage was required to sign a document, stating that all children would be brought up in the Roman Catholic faith and that he would never do anything to interfere with his spouse’s faith. These requirements were somewhat relaxed in the early 1970s so that the Roman Catholic party is now required only to do all in his power to bring up the children in the Catholic faith.

Yet, just consider the tremendous handicaps of such a marriage. The Roman Catholic party looks upon the mass as the high point of his worship, while the Protestant party knows that it is idolatry. The Roman Catholic party wishes to support his church liberally, while the Protestant party must stand by and see some of the family’s money support a false faith. The Roman Catholic party will do everything possible to bring up the children in his faith, while the Protestant party knows that if a child believes everything that the Roman Catholic Church teaches, he will probably not be saved. Why should anyone bring calamities like this upon himself and upon his marriage?

Marriage to another Protestant presents equally great problems. Frequently such a Protestant will have an altogether different attitude toward God’s Word from, your attitude. He is convinced that the Lord’s Supper is just a memorial meal, while you know that it is a sacrament. He may not believe in infant baptism, but you know that it is necessary. He and you will not be able to worship together publicly, and your conscience may

bother you when you worship together privately, for God says that we are to avoid in spiritual matters those who differ from the true Word of God (Rom. 16:17). The handicaps in such a marriage are tremendous also.

What shall we say about a marriage to a *Lutheran of another synod*? In our day that can be almost as catastrophic as any other mixed marriage. Much depends upon the other party's attitude toward Scripture. Does he believe, for example, that God created the world in six days, or does he believe in godless evolution? Does he consider the great miracles of the Bible myths or truths? Does he believe that Christ's body is mouldering in some Palestinian grave, while His spirit lives on? If he truly believes God's Word and joins our Synod out of conviction, then the chances for a successful marriage are much greater than they would be otherwise. If he does not believe the truths of Scripture, then beware, for such a marriage will surely produce many a heartache.

Marriage to people of a different race, even if the two have the same faith, presents a different problem. One would be hard pressed to find Scriptural objections to such a union, for God "hath made of one blood all nations of men" (Acts 7:26). Indeed, if one race considers itself superior to another, that is Pharisaism, strongly condemned by our Lord in passages like Luke 18:9-14. We are all sinners in need of a Savior. No one race is any better in God's sight than others.

Yet, other problems arise in a union with someone of a different color. Our culture for the most part is not ready to accept such a marriage. Children that are neither black nor white, for example, frequently have a difficult time in life, and the respective families often are not ready to accept such a union.

It is true, of course, that many a person believes that mixed marriages can be successful. At one time in the early '70s a television series dealt with such a union of a Jew with a Roman Catholic, portraying it as a successful union. Yet, how in the world could such marriages ever be successful, if both parties are faithful to their beliefs? Divorce statistics clearly show how such mixed marriages cause many problems, for one survey after another has proved that divorces occur at least from three to five times more frequently in mixed marriages than in marriages where both parties are of the same faith.

Consequently, young people should beware of dating someone of a different faith. Such dating, especially if it is repeated, could easily result in learning to love the other party without ever settling the greatest question that must be asked before marriage: Do we have a mutual faith?

Ruth, the great-grandmother of King David, summed it all up beautifully with her famous: "Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16). With such a mutual faith, one is well on his way toward a successful marriage.

A second question to ask oneself before the engagement is this: *Is the mutual faith* that we have indeed *practiced*? One can make ever so many fine confessions of faith, but if the Christian life does not follow, then one comes under the condemnation mentioned by St. James in his Epistle (2:17): "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead."

Therefore the future wife will surely need to ask questions like these: Will this man truly be a good head of our home in keeping with Eph. 5:23? Is he mature enough to become a good provider, husband, and father to our children? Is he reasonably industrious, responsible, respectful, considerate, unselfish, thoughtful, friendly? Does he drink excessively or smoke?

The future husband will need to ask and to answer similar questions. Will this woman be a responsible helper who generously serves, and whose great joy and ambition it is to care for our home and our family? Is she sufficiently mature to become a reasonably good, competent homemaker? Does she love children and will she help to train them well? Will she be a thrifty manager of the household budget? Is she thoughtful, unselfish, friendly? Does she regard Prov. 31:10-31, the greatest passage in the Bible that describes the godly housewife and mother, as her ideal?

These points and others will be treated more fully later, when we speak about the first major purpose of marriage. They are mentioned here to show the need for a faith that reveals itself in one's words and actions, important under all circumstances and particularly so in the close relationship of marriage.

A third question that we should ask before marriage is this one: *Do my future spouse and I have a certain degree of similarity and mutual interests*? Amos 3:3 asks: "Can two walk together, except they be

agreed?” The implication is that it is impossible or at least extremely difficult to live harmoniously in marriage without at least some agreement in a number of areas.

A future spouse will then ask himself: Do we have similarities in age, IQ, education, interests, culture, aims, hobbies, and the like? Naturally, two persons will never have the same interests in all respects. Granted also that differences in education and the like can to some extent be overcome by working at them. For example, if he regards fishing as the ideal way to spend every vacation, while she is much more interested in travel than in sitting in a boat watching and waiting, both can compromise and adjust their thinking a bit. If her great interest in music is opera and the classics, while he much prefers country western, both can learn something about the other’s preference.

Yet, if differences are great, problems will surely arise. Dr. Luther said: “Marriage is most suitable between equals. An old man and a young girl do not fit well together.” (In many cases, however, several years difference in ages may be meaningless, for Dr. Luther’s marriage was a tremendously successful one, even though he was 16 years older than Catherine.)

Another question to ask is this: *How old are we, and how long have we known each other?* Even though 18-year olds are legally adults, statistics show that teenage marriages will be broken as many as six times more often than in the case where both parties are in their 20s. Approximately one-half of all marriages eventually end in divorce, if the bride is only 18. If the bride is pregnant at the time of the marriage, the divorce rate is approximately 75%. Yes, the odds against the teenage marriage enduring are tremendous, although we must always remember that a mutual faith that is practiced lends stability and durability to a marriage like nothing else in the world.

One of the great problems with young, teenage marriages is this: A person of that age frequently is almost totally unprepared for marriage socially, economically, and in other ways. He is often not mature enough to know the difference between real, lasting love and “puppy” love that soon dies. Then tragedy almost invariably results.

We shall not then be surprised to learn that surveys have shown marriages to be happiest when both spouses are approximately 28. That surely does not mean that we normally advocate waiting until at least that age before the marriage. For one thing, many people will have difficulty in practicing sexual control, if they wait until they are almost 30. Adjustments also are frequently easier at a younger age, before one’s life habits become settled. It also may be more desirable to begin one’s family at a younger age when we have considerably more stamina to grapple with the problems of raising our children.

It might be interesting to note that the average marriage age in the United States during the early 1970s is approximately 22 for men and approximately 20 for women. Scripture itself fixes no age, but it certainly takes for granted that spouses will have reached a certain degree of maturity before they contemplate marriage.

The same principle applies to the length of time that future spouses have known each other. True one occasionally hears of couples that were married after they had known each other for only a few weeks or months and ever after have many blessed years together. Yet, normally the ratio of happy marriages is in almost direct proportion to the time the spouses have known each other before they begin their home together. (One author, when asked if he believed in love at first sight, replied, “I think it is much better to take a second look.”)

What are father and mother like, and do they approve of the marriage? Certainly this is one of the most important questions that can be asked by any prospective spouse. Someone gave this excellent bit of advice: “Marry the daughter of a good mother.” While someone else said: “Choose a good mother and marry any one of her daughters.” It is also true that in many cases your spouse will be similar to father or mother in another 20 or more years. Is this what you want?

An equally important question, already mentioned in connection with engagement, is this: Do our parents approve? If they do approve and give you their warm blessing, you have a tremendous advantage over a marriage that is begun with father’s curse and mother’s tears. All too often a union consummated contrary to the wishes of the parents leads to sorrow and tragedy, as was pointed out earlier.

What are the forbidden degrees in marriage? God strictly forbids marriage to someone who is a close relative. Lev. 18 is the major section in the Bible that treats this matter. This section is summarized in Lev. 18:6:

“None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness. I am the Lord.” “Next of kin” includes all those from whom I came, like my grandparents and parents and their households and all who proceed from me, like my children and grandchildren and their families. These prohibited degrees in marriage apply to everyone, not only to the ancient Israelites, as we can tell from verses 24 and 25 of Lev. 18. There God specifically spoke of heathen nations defiling themselves in these things I Cor. 5 mentions a specific case within the Corinthian congregation of a man marrying his stepmother. St. Paul was horrified at that thought and asked the congregation “to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

The question of marrying one’s sister-in-law after her husband has died is unclear. Some church bodies at one time strictly forbade such a marriage, while others raised no objection (see verses 16 and 18). Our Synod has not raised any objection to this type of marriage.

Lev. 18 does not forbid the marriage of first cousins, but Wisconsin’s law and that of various other states does forbid such a marriage, unless the bride is 55 or older, beyond the age of having children. In such cases we must, of course, obey the law of the state. If we decide that we want to marry our cousin, then we must move to a state that allows such a marriage. We cannot be married elsewhere and then return shortly to the state that forbids such a marriage.

The wisdom of God’s prohibition of marriage between close relatives has been amply proved by medical science. For example, children born to such a union may have serious genetic defects. Even children born of first cousins generally have much more risk of some type of physical defect than children born of marriages in which the parents are not closely related. The reason is simple: All of us carry “recessive genes” that tend to be blotted out in time, unless we marry a close relative who has the same defective genes. Then they may be reinforced in the child, making them seriously defective in some way.

The so-called Levirate marriage, mentioned in Deut. 25:5-10 and in other passages, whereby a brother has a child by his sister-in-law whose husband has died, was for Old Testament times only. God did not want any family to die out in Israel. Therefore He said that this regulation was to be in effect “that the firstborn which she beareth should succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel” (Deut. 25:6).

Some utilities that are often highly prized are comparatively unimportant. One of them is outward beauty. True, Sarah, Abraham’s wife, was a beautiful woman, as Scripture tells us (Gen. 12:11). So were Rebekah and Rachel (Gen. 24:16; 29:17). If your chosen spouse is beautiful, that is fine, but it should never be made a prime factor. Physical beauty fades with the years, while we know well enough that many a woman who is not particularly attractive physically has become an outstanding wife for some fortunate man. We also know that marriages of believers with unbelieving women because they “were fair,” led eventually to such frightful wickedness that God destroyed the world with the great Flood (Gen. 6). (A man asked his friend, “Tell me, Harry, did you marry that pretty nightclub singer, or do you still cook your own meals and wash your own socks?” Harry answered, “Yes.”)

This point should be noted particularly because in our day advertising agencies stress the physical so much that commercials finally become almost nauseating. Just use “Go-get-‘em” perfume or “Come-to-me” hair oil, and the opposite sex will surely flock to you like bees to a flowering clover field. Don’t you believe it for one minute. Rather read and carefully remember what St. Peter wrote in his first Epistle, 3:3,4: “Your beauty should not depend on an elaborate coiffure, or on wearing of jewelry or fine clothes, but on the inner personality—the unfading loveliness of a calm and gentle spirit, a thing very precious in the eyes of God” (Phillips).

How do we know if it is true love? That, finally, is, of course, a major question, and it cannot be answered with a rule or a scale. In general, however, one may say that true love is a matter both of the mind and of the heart.

You must be able to say in your own mind that this particular person possesses the qualities that would make him or her a faithful Christian spouse. (We have examined various qualities in the previous paragraphs of this section. For example, we asked about a mutual faith that is practiced, essential similarities, and a desire to

live according to the role that God has outlined for husbands and wives.) You must be able to say that this person possesses a large number of those qualities which Scripture requires of a Christian spouse. If they are present to a reasonable degree, then and only then can one proceed to the next part: the matter of the heart.

As a matter of the heart, one will ask questions like the following: Is there a pleasant glow in your heart when you think of the other person? Does your heart beat a little faster? Do you thoroughly enjoy each other’s company, and is there a real desire to share your thoughts and feelings? Can you have true companionship together, even when you have no particularly planned activities? Has your affection for each other stood the test of time? Are you still devoted to each other after a separation of some weeks or months? If you can say that and if your mind agrees, then by all means hold fast and pray that God will bless you both.

If you define true love in this way, that it is a matter of both the mind and of the heart, then you will also be on your guard against the “real-gone,” highly romantic idea that my hero in shining armor will suddenly ride around the corner on a white horse, sweep me off my feet, and we shall live happily ever after. That is simply not the way of married life.

A pre-marital guide for actors. Someone, the author of these notes as forgotten who should receive the credit, devised a pre-marital guide that has some good thoughts, exactly in keeping with the points that we have been making in this entire section: think carefully, ask a number of pertinent questions, before becoming engaged and committing yourself for life. You may wish to use some of the ideas in this guide. They are printed for you in the following paragraphs.

Pre-Marital Counseling Guide For Pastors

		None	One	Two or More
1. How many brothers and sisters do you have?	Man	0	10	15
	Woman	0	10	15
2. Comparative Nationalistic and Cultural Background		Same 20	Fairly similar 10	Very dissimilar 0
3. Comparative amount of education		Each same 15	Man more 10	Woman more 0
4. Comparative ages		Similar 15	Very dissimilar 5	
5. Comparative occupations		Same type 10	Fairly similar 5	Very dissimilar 0
6. Work record		Regularly employed	Irregularly employed	
	Man 20	Man 0
	Woman 10	Woman 5
7. How long have you known each other? (Bases on frequent associated)	6 mos. or less 0	1 mo. to 1 yr. 5	1 to 3 yrs. 10	3 yrs. or more 20
8. How long have you been engaged? (Based on being together 2-3 times per week)	1-3 mos. 0	3-12 mos. 15	1-2 yrs. 10	2 yrs. or more 5
9. No. of social organizations to which you now belong:	None = 0; One = 10; Two or More = 15			

10. Present amount of religious activity (Attendance at church, etc.)

	Man	Woman
Member but no attendance at church	0	0
Not a member and not attendance	5	5
Attend no more than once a month	10	10
Attend two or three times a month	25	20
Attend Four or more times a month	30	25

11. Will you both attend the same church? Yes = 50; No, but both Prot. = 25; One Roman = 0

12. Is either person a non-believer? Yes = 0; No = 50;

13. Until what age did you regularly attend Sunday School? (We would substitute: Christian school)

Man	10 or under = 10;	14 or under = 10;	19 or under = 20
Woman	10 or under = 0;	14 or under = 10;	19 or under = 20

14. How would you rate your parents' marriage?

Man	Happy = 20;	Average = 10;	Unhappy = 5
Woman	Happy = 20;	Average = 10;	Unhappy = 6

15. Do your parents favor your proposed marriage? Yes No

Man	10	5
Woman	15	0

16. How do you get along with your future in-laws?

Man	Very well = 20;	Not too well = 10;	Dislike them = 0;	Unacquainted = 5
Woman	Very well = 20;	Not too well = 10;	Dislike them = 0;	Unacquainted = 5

17. Do you double date with other couples? Yes = 10; Occasionally = 5; No = 0

18. What hobbies do you two have in common? None = 0; One = 5; Two = 10; 3 or more = 15

19. How have you handled disagreements during your courtship?

Had none = 0;	One gives in = 10;	Talk it through = 15
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20. Does the wife plan to work (outside the home) after (a few months) of marriage?

Yes = 0;	No = 5
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21. Who will be in charge of family finances? Husband = 0; Wife = 0; Cooperatively = 10

22. How many children do you hope to have?

One = 5;	Two = 10;	Three plus = 15;	None = 0
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23. Will you live with either of your parents during the first year? Yes = 0; No = 25

24. What books have you read on physical adjustment in marriage? None = 0; 1 or 2 = 10

25. Has either person been married before? Yes = 0; No = 25

26. Why did you come to a pastor to get married?
 Custom = 0; Parents did = 0; We desire God’s blessing on our new home = 10
27. Do you plan to have grace at meals and daily family devotions?
 Both = 20; Neither = 0; Grace at meals = 10
28. Do you ever use prayer to solve any of your problems?
 Man Frequently = 20; Occasionally = 10; Never = 0
 Woman Frequently = 20; Occasionally = 10; Never = 0
29. Would you like to have the pastor who married you call on you in your new home? Yes = 5; No = 0

The Scoring

To score this guide correctly you must have three columns:

	MAN	WOMAN	BOTH
Total highest possible score on all 29 questions:	155	145	370

Add these three scores together and you arrive at a total of 670. Don’t expect your score to be anywhere near that high.

When one person takes the test, he must always have a “possible” marriage partner in mind whose score must be included in his total.

Highest possible score	670
Excellent score	Above 575
Good score	425 to 575
Fair score	325 to 425
Questionable score	Below 325

4. God does not require a marriage ceremony.

In Bible times a man sometimes simply took his betrothed to his own home without any formal ceremony. At other times there was a more or less elaborate wedding feast, sometimes lasting for days, as we know from the wedding at Cana (John 2).

The state requires a marriage ceremony performed by an ordained clergyman or a judge. Other stipulations of Wisconsin’s family code include the following: A girl may marry at 16 and a boy at 18 with parental consent; a girl may marry at 18 and a boy at 21 without parental consent (these stipulations will probably be changed as the result of the legal age being lowered to 18). A marriage license is obtained from the county clerk with application to be made at least five days and not more than 30 days previous to the marriage (there is also a certain amount of agitation to increase the waiting period to more than five days). You must have a Wassermann test for venereal disease, which is void after 20 days. You must obtain a license in the county where at least one party to the marriage has been a resident for 30 days. Two witnesses are required. The marriage of a non-resident in Wisconsin who is prohibited from marrying in the state where he resides is void, as is also the marriage of a Wisconsin resident in another state, if such a marriage is prohibited in Wisconsin. If you lack the legal capacity to be married in Wisconsin and marry within 12 months after you leave the state, the law assumes that you left for the purpose of evading Wisconsin’s law, if you return within 18 months after you leave. In this case you might be prosecuted when you return and if you are convicted you are liable to a fine of from \$200 to \$1000 and up to one year in prison. Worse than that, such a marriage can never become a valid

one in Wisconsin and this can bring up all manner of problems. You must take an oath that the information given on the marriage license is correct under penalty of \$200 to \$1000 and up to one year in prison.

In all normal situations *the marriage takes place in the bride's church*. Therefore it is necessary that the engage couple consult with the bride's pastor immediately after a preliminary date has been set for the marriage. Some of the topics to be discussed at that time are the following: A final decision on the date in keeping with the pastor's and the church's schedule; the choosing of a time for the pre-marital consultation; and a beginning of the plans for the wedding ceremony. Should it be impossible for one reason or another to hold the wedding in the bride's church, the good custom requires a consultation with the bride's pastor nonetheless.

For the marriage ceremony one will surely want to keep two things in mind above all: 1) "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40); and 2) Invite Jesus to your wedding as did the couple at Cana (John 2). You may wish to design your own wedding invitations, and some of our people have done an excellent job with that, stressing particularly the presence of the Lord and His blessing upon the future homes. However, for the ceremony itself you should consult with the bride's pastor who normally will have had considerable experience in these matters. He will help you in preparing your wedding ceremony, all of whose parts will contribute to a dignified, reverent service in keeping with sound Christian teaching and tradition. He will arrange to publish the banns on the Sunday previous to the marriage, both as an announcement to the congregation and as an invitation to the congregation to join in prayers for the couple about to be married.

An elopement, on the contrary, is probably always undesirable for a number of reasons. It bypasses the parents who are surely vitally concerned. It prevents one from having the prayers of the congregation. It violates wedding etiquette, and it may create hard feelings on the part of many people.

Should you desire a private ceremony, the pastor will be able to arrange that for you. He will probably suggest that you have the ceremony before the altar in church with only the witnesses and a few other selected people present. Such a marriage in church is preferable to one in a private residence, and infinitely better than an elopement.

If the bride wears white at her wedding, she thereby tells the congregation that she is a virgin. Indeed, even though engaged couples are regarded as married in God's sight, they may not have sexual relations with each other before the marriage ceremony. That would be a violation of state statutes that require a marriage ceremony before living together as husband and wife. It will also offend members of the congregation.

Who pays for the wedding expenses? The KIS (Keep It Simple) approach to the wedding itself is always a good one. Dress that is overly elaborate or immodest, highly expensive decorations and meals, too much drinking and the like are hardly in keeping with the dignity of one of the most important events in one's life. Nor is unnecessary extravagance in keeping with the principles of Christian stewardship.

Most brides will know who pays for which expenses, and they can enlighten their future husband. In general, the bride and her family pay most of the costs, while the bridegroom's expenses cover the matters like gifts for his bride and the men in the wedding party; flowers for the mothers; fees for the clergyman, organist, and custodian.

E. God instituted marriage for the sake of mutual helpfulness (85).

That is what God said, "I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18, RSV). God knew that life in this sinful world can be highly difficult and trying. He therefore determined that two people are to live together, with each one complementing the other for the welfare of the home. If each spouse carries out his God-given role, life in this world can become much much easier. Indeed, the home can then, under God, become a priceless blessing.

1. Each spouse has a God-given role in marriage.

Scripture tells us what these roles are in various places. One of the clearest and finest of all such Bible passages is Eph. 5:22-28:

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (NIV)

From this memorable Bible passage we learn exactly what God wants the husband's role to be: He is the head of the home. That does not, of course, mean that the husband is to be the cruel dictator ruling over every facet of each member's life. Normally most major decisions in the home will be made cooperatively, for marriage is certainly a partnership. That is all indicated by the way in which God created the woman, taking her from Adam's side to walk by his side.

God's Word for husbands does mean, however, that the husband will normally be the major wage earner, the provider and protector of his family, the one who leads the household in the way that God wants it to go, the one who finally makes the decisions when there is a disagreement, and the one who is answerable to God for the way in which the life of his family is conducted.

Furthermore, we must also note a lovely comparison that St. Paul made in these fine verses from Eph. 5: He compared married life to the relationship between Christ and His Church. Christ loved His Church so much that He gave His life for it, and that is the high and holy model for the husband's love toward his wife. That is the way in which the husbands are to give themselves for their wives.

St. Paul uses the same lovely picture of Christ and His Church to portray the God-pleasing relationship of wives to their husbands. From the very beginning (Gen. 2:18)—God determined that the wife's role is to *serve her husband and her family* generously. This is the way the Church feels and acts toward Christ. It loves Christ heartily and desires only to serve Him in return for all that He has done for us. "So let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." The wife's role will then be, according to God's own directives, a subordinate one to that of her husband. It is not less important, for the old saying is certainly true that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Who can measure the influence and the help that a godly wife and mother has for her family? That role of service should be the highest ambition for every Christian wife and mother.

Other Bible passages and Bible stories reinforce these outstanding words of St. Paul in Eph. 5. For example, I Pet. 3:7 requires that the husband give honor to his wife. Prov. 31:10-31 is the longest and certainly one of the greatest descriptions of the godly housewife and mother. Among many other things it tells us that "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness" (Prov. 31:27). Ps. 128:3 also has a beautiful picture of the godly housewife: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house," providing rest and refreshment for the body, comfort in trials and sorrow, and the like.

When we say that spouses are to practice mutual helpfulness, we mean that they are to help one another continually in temporal, as well as in spiritual matters. Examples are numerous, for this involves the daily living within the Christian home. It means lightening each other's burdens wherever possible (a husband can occasionally change the babe's diapers without any adverse effects whatsoever), especially in difficult times. It means criticizing one another constructively without nagging (it is not only a matter of what you say, but how you say it). It means being concerned about one another's health ("how nice you look now that you have begun to lose weight"), doing kind deeds, especially when the other spouse has had a trying time ("let's take our meal out tonight"), and the like.

More important is the help that spouses give to each other in spiritual matters by conducting daily devotions, encouraging one another's church attendance when spiritual life becomes lukewarm, reading and discussing the Word, correcting or admonishing one another, cooperating in training the children, helping one another to reach our final goal in heaven. Many a Christian wife has thus had a profound spiritual influence on her husband and vice versa.

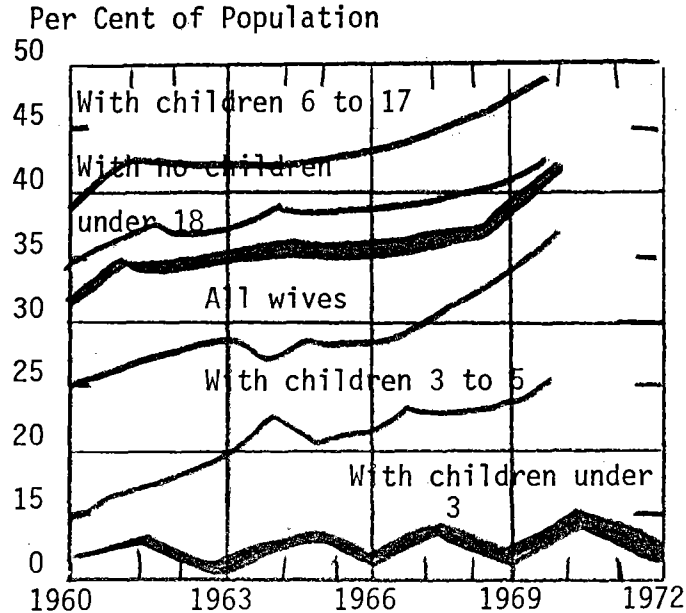
It need not surprise us unduly to learn that *millions* of people everywhere in our country oppose God's directives to husbands and wives. The Woman's Liberation Movement and others chide the college graduate for "wasting" her education in the home, when this is really the God-ordained sphere for the wife's extremely important work in all normal cases. They often omit from the marriage ceremony the "till death do us part," substituting something like "as long as it works out," despite God's clear, "let not man put (the marriage) asunder" (Matt. 19:6). They want marriage to be a partnership in every detail, even though God Himself has decreed a head for the home (Eph. 5:23), even as there must be a head for every institution. They are so insistent upon complete equality that everywhere they are promoting the "equal rights" amendment to the United States Constitution in the early and middle 1970s.

In reality every one of God's good words regarding marriage and the home are meant for our blessing. They elevate woman, even as Christianity has always elevated woman. Their transgression can only lead to untold evils. Phyllis Schlafly was one of those who completely opposed the "equal rights" amendment of the 1970s, stating: "Woman never had it so good ...the amendment will make women subject to the draft ...will abolish a woman's right to child support and alimony (to have it determined by the court) ...it would deprive the American woman of many of the fundamental privileges we now enjoy, and especially the greatest of all: 1) not to take a job, 2) to keep her baby, 3) to be supported by her husband."

A closely related movement that may interfere with God's good directives for husbands and wives is *the trend toward wives working outside of the home*. Admittedly, there are cases where the wife must or may work outside of the home. For example, when the husband is unable to support the family, when a couple is newly married, or when some emergency arises. The situation is also much different when there are no children in the family or when they have reached high-school age or beyond. We have examples of that in the many married women who have raised their children and then return to teach either part-time or full-time in our Christian schools. With the experience they have had in raising their own children, these consecrated women often become excellent teachers, and we do owe them a great debt of gratitude.

Yet, even in situations like that mentioned in the previous paragraph, we must remember that the woman's primary, God-given responsibility remains the care of the home. Compare that with the following figures: In the early 1970s, some 30% of the women in America with children under six years of age were working outside of the home. In 1890, less than 5% of all married women were working outside the home. In 1950, it was 20%; in 1960, 33%; in 1970, over 50% of women with children 6 to 18 years of age were working outside the home. The graph that follows is from *Financial Facts*, March, 1971. It illustrates the trend in recent years.

**Labor force participation rates of married women by presence and age of children,
March 1960 to March 1970.**



*Source: Bureau of the Census,
National Consumer Finance Association*

Surveys show that homes with mothers having outside employment generally spend more for alcohol, tobacco, dress, furniture, and recreation than do homes where only the husband is employed. Can't we get our mothers to understand that the greatest thing in all the world that they could possibly do is to "train up a child in the way that he should go" (Prov. 22:6)? That requires a full-time mother, especially in the child's formative years. That is the ideal. The most blessed and creative career for every godly mother is that of a homemaker.

2. Spouses must make adjustments in marriage.

Since all marriages are composed of two sinful human beings, since we can be certain that some difficulties and differences will surely arise in any such living together, and since all of us by nature selfishly desire to have our own way, spouses must learn to make many adjustments. The "they-lived-happily-ever-after" state is, of course, never reached in this sinful world. However, any marriage will be made happier by adjustments on the part of both spouses. They can grow together in patience and love. They can seek to eliminate as much friction as possible (if leaving your socks lying on the floor irks your wife, pick them up—the bending may even help you physically). Spouses need to work on these adjustments particularly during the first months and years of marriage, for 75% of all divorces occur during the first two years of marriage. When you pass that period, the odds are all in your favor, although divorce after two years of marriage is becoming more frequent in the 1970s. These adjustments include the following:

Religious adjustments will surely become necessary above all in a new Christian home. We do not mean religious adjustments in the sense of changing one's faith, for it is assumed that you will be marrying someone who is one with you in the true faith. Religious adjustments are mentioned in the sense of carefully practicing those Christian virtues that apply particularly to marriage. We shall mention a few of them in the following paragraphs.

Daily family reading of the Bible will surely lead to priceless blessing. You may have a thousand books, newspapers and magazines by the dozens. Yes, you may even have an unopened Bible in your home. But if you

do not regularly read the Word together and thus grow spiritually, as God will have us to grow (II Pet. 3:18), then you are robbing your home of that which our Lord Himself called the one thing needful (Luke 10:42). One of the first things that all Christian newlyweds should do is to determine when they will have their daily devotions and what form they will take.

Daily prayers on behalf of the home, sent to the throne of grace, should certainly be a vital part of daily devotions in addition to reading the Word. They may take the form of a prepared prayer from a collection or a stanza or more from *The Lutheran Hymnal* (see, for example, hymn numbers 621, 624, 625). In most cases, however, it may be advisable for father or mother to pray an *ex corde* prayer, one that comes from the heart. A little practice will make one very proficient at such prayers. One might begin with a simple “Lord, we thank You for all the blessings You have given this household. Please continue to guide and help us day by day. We ask it in Jesus’ name.” Special intercessions or thanks can and should be included.

Regular church worship is also imperative. Beginning before the marriage and continuing throughout their married life, spouses should look upon Sunday as a holy day, not a holiday. The psalmist pointed the way, when he wrote: “I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord” (Ps. 122:1), a fine model for every Christian family to recall on Sunday mornings. Thus our worship will provide spiritual refreshment for our souls, and the rest of the day will provide rest for the body so that we are ready for the tasks of the coming week.

“*Let not the sun go down upon your wrath*” (Eph. 4:26) is excellent advice for everyone, especially for married couples. Everyone knows that disagreements and conflicts will arise in married life because of sin, but the husband must not storm angrily out of the house in the morning (he may not live till evening), nor may the couple go to bed at night without a sincere try at reconciliation. Our God commanded each one of us: “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). If we do not forgive our spouse his little sins, how can we ever expect our Lord to forgive us our multitude of sins?

Ogden Nash wrote of this in his own inimitable style:

To keep your marriage brimming
With love in the loving cup,
Whenever you’re wrong, admit it;
Whenever you’re right, shut up.

St. James cautions us to learn how to control our temper with his “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord” (Jas. 5:17). While St. Paul wrote: “Live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18), words that have particular application for all Christian spouses.

St. Paul also encouraged everyone to *sing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”* (Eph. 5:19). So the Christian couple can sing some of the great hymns in *The Lutheran Hymnal* as a part of their daily devotion or at other times. Such a custom will surely also produce blessings.

Social adjustments include learning to live with one’s spouse after living alone or with others and learning to say, “We, ours, what is best for our home?” instead of, “I, me, what do I wish?” It means the plain coming back to earth after the highly emotional days of engagement to learn that one’s spouse is after all a sinful human being. Someone wrote that before the marriage he would comfort her with “Do not cry, buttercup, I just can’t bear to see you cry.” After a few months of marriage, he is more apt to say, “Well, waterfall, what are you weeping about this time?” This is a part of becoming husband and wife.

Social adjustments mean learning to make plans together, instead of having one spouse dominate. When one spouse threatens he’ll go home to mother, if the other does not let him have his way, that is hardly trying to adjust to living with one another. Husbands have to say to their wives frequently, “I love you,” otherwise they will probably not believe it, even if you show it with your actions. Husbands must learn to help their wives, especially if the wives are expected to work outside of the home. Perhaps the wife could prepare the evening meal and the husband agree to do all of the cleanup work after the supper hour, or one might do the dishes while the other one does the housecleaning. Husbands cannot sit in an easy chair and read the paper, while their wives

are holding two jobs, one within the home and one outside of it, and frantically trying to get the evening meal ready. Spouses must learn to have some recreation together, for example, hiking, swimming, boating, traveling, bowling, entertaining, and the like.

Social adjustments include *learning to live with one another's family and friends*. Her parents are now his parents too, and he must treat them accordingly. The same holds true of grandparents on both sides. Of course, they are interested in their grandchildren, and you must satisfy that interest. You must visit and write to parents and grandparents, especially after the children are born. You cannot be like the wife who complained to her husband, "You never have anything good to say about my relatives." "Oh, yes," he replied, "I do—you have a much better mother-in-law than I have." Each spouse must remember that father and mother cared for him from birth through many successive years, through sickness and health, joys and sorrows, education and recreation, mealtime and nighttime. They will always be interested in their children and their children's spouses, and the sons and daughters must reciprocate.

Financial adjustments are frequently some of the most difficult, especially for teenagers. The less stable teenager is often married, and he is frequently totally unable to cope with the financial problems involved in operating a household. He may actually believe that two can live as cheaply as one, he may obligate himself of an impossible amount of monthly time payments (be exceptionally careful with charge accounts), or he may be totally unable to understand how much money the other spouse needs for his or her responsibilities. (Someone said our problem is not the high cost of living, but the cost of living high, something that all newlyweds are to bear in mind.)

Budgets must be prepared mutually on the basis of the total income, after questions like these are answered: Who is to be the treasurer of the family? The husband? The wife? (One bride, who was selected as the treasurer, pleaded, "We've been married only six months and already we're \$3000 in debt. What shall I do?" Another wife was the treasurer in the family for 30 years, and she never failed to provide for all of the necessary household expenses plus giving her husband all the money that he needed during this time. What more could any man desire?)

What part of the budget will be used for Church and charity (surely no less than 10% in all usual cases). How much for household expenses, fixed expenses, clothing, and the like? What part should be set aside for savings and for emergencies? (A married couple will want to review their budget from time to time and make the necessary or preferable changes, but they should not forget that the church and charity items should be the first ones allotted from the income, and, when given in the right spirit, they have this precious promise of God: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

Both husbands and wives should continually strive to improve their abilities as consumers. A good way to do that is to read some of the major consumer magazines like *Consumer Report*, *Consumer Bulletin*, *Changing Times*, *Money*, Newspaper articles and books also may greatly aid the married couple in becoming financially mature.

Occasionally husband and wife may enjoy shopping together, especially for larger items that can be advantageous for both. More frequently a husband might prefer his wife shop alone, especially for groceries, since her frequent starts, stops, reverses, and hesitations can be irritable for him. Furthermore, less money may be spent if the wife does the shopping alone.

When all is said and done, spouses need to spend time in making financial adjustments. Each must have money of his own, and both spouses must approve the family budget, at least in most details.

Physical adjustments for both spouses include learning to live in a different home, different cooking, different hours, different responsibilities about the home, different recreation, different vacations, and the like. The husbands must know that his wife will not cook like mother, nor keep house like her, but she will surely try to please her husband, and he must be patient. Even if she does not cook like mother, that is not the end of the world by any means. Many an excellent cook knew practically nothing about the art when she was married.

The wife must learn something about nutrition—that is her responsibility for the entire family. At a special occasion she may ask his mother for one of his favorite dishes. She must care for her appearance and for her home. Both spouses must make suggestions in a kindly and responsible manner, both helping to keep the house clean, orderly, and in good repair.

Physical adjustments also include sexual adjustments, surely an important part of one's marriage. Indeed, sexual relationships within marriage are one of God's great blessings, one of the highest forms of expressing one's love toward his spouse. On the other hand, the lack of sexual adjustments frequently causes problems for the home, including bitterness, arguments, and divorce. If you or your partner receives no satisfaction in these sexual relationships, then both must discuss the matter, and must make the necessary adjustments.

It is not a part of this course to speak at length about sexual adjustments within marriage. Most Christian publishing houses carry books that will present the Christian aspect of human sexuality, while many doctors have written books that stress the physical aspect. Your pastor will undoubtedly be able to supply you with titles of recommended books. They should be read before and possibly after the marriage. However, a word of caution is in order: Physicians or others who write of the purely physical aspects of sexual relationships often seem to feel that they are the all important thing in marriage, and that is simply not true.

Legal adjustments include a number of items. For example, the wife needs to change her name on her driver's license, insurance policies, social security card, bonds, or stocks, any real estate that she may own, and the like. The wife will use her first, possibly her maiden name, and her husband's last name. The choice is hers, but once made, it should not be changed.

The husband will need to notify the Social Security Administration, his draft board, his employer of a change in income tax deductions, and the like.

Both spouses will undoubtedly want to change the beneficiaries of their life insurance policies so that the remaining spouse becomes the beneficiary. They need to notify the city of a change in address for voter registration and the state motor vehicle department of a change in address. Charge accounts probably need changing also.

A must for both spouses to discuss and act upon is the accurate keeping of records for income tax and for other purposes. Their marriage certificate, cancelled checks and receipts, income tax forms, records of interest payments, etc., must be kept in a safe place. Some items, like exact records of any real estate transactions, stocks and bonds and their cost, the will, and the like, should be kept in a safety deposit box. All couples should have an up-to-date will—that may prevent much grief in case one of the spouses should die.

In this section we have been showing how Christian spouses are to live together in mutual helpfulness. If you follow the will of our God in this matter, your home will surely be a foretaste of heaven itself, and you will be blessed far beyond anything that you ever imagined possible. It will not be perfect, since every home is composed of sinful human beings. Even in non-sinful matters, you must learn to accept some bad together with much good in your spouse. Yet a truly Christian marriage is a tremendous blessing. Our Lord spoke of the blessing in Ps. 128, a favorite Psalm for wedding texts, and one that Christian spouses everywhere might well learn and meditate upon regularly:

Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands. Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house. Thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

F. God uses marriage to create and train His children (85).

Just as surely as He created the first man and woman in Paradise, so *God creates every child* that is *born today* through husband and wife in marriage. God certainly would not need to create children in this way. He could have continued creating human beings in exactly the same manner as He created our first parents. He, however, chose not to do it this way. Instead He uses means, in this case the egg of the female and the sperm of the male, to create human beings.

Many Bible passages testify to this truth. For example, Ps. 113:9: “He (God) makes the barren woman ...to be a joyful mother of children.” Ps. 127:3 tells us, “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord.” Christians of all ages have always recognized this truth, as did Jacob of old, who said, these are “the children which God hath graciously given thy servant” (Gen. 33:5). Joseph acknowledged the same truth, when he said: “They are my sons, whom God has given me” (Gen. 48:9). We confess the same truth in the First Article of our faith, when we confess, “I believe that God has made me and all creatures.”

God has made the creation of children one of the major purposes of marriage, stating, for example, in Gen. 1:28: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” Again, when the Bible speaks of husband and wife being of “one flesh” (Gen. 2:24), this refers to sexual relations between husband and wife for the purpose of having children. St. Paul writes about the same matter in I Tim. 5:14, “I will therefore that the young woman marry, bear children, guide the house.” Indeed, God has given man and woman sexual desires for the express purpose of perpetuating the race and replenishing the earth. He implanted similar desires in the creature world to insure the continuation of the various species.

God’s “be fruitful and multiply” is opposed by many people. They resolutely set themselves against the clear Word of our God. They insist on the pleasures of sexual relationships, but they prevent God from creating children thereby, children whom He wants to spend eternity with Him in glory.

These God-defiers present many arguments and reasons for their sinful stand. For example, parents say that children are too much bother, they cost too much (indeed in the 1970s, it can cost parents \$100,000 and possibly more to support a child from birth through college), they interfere with the married couple’s selfish pleasures and life styles, they tie one down to diapers and dishes, the economy isn’t conducive to having children, and the like. Again, they claim it is much better to take care of two children adequately than six inadequately. They may actually go so far in their wickedness as to adopt for their motto “none is fun,” the slogan National Organization of Non-Parents have.

People with such ideas are denying God’s Word which says: “Children are a heritage of the Lord” (Ps. 127:3). “Happy is the man who hath his quiver full of them” (Ps. 127:5). How do we know if it is better for the family to have just one or two children or to have six? Do not all of us know of examples of large families having advantages that small families could not possibly provide? Aren’t those children frequently more resourceful and better equipped for life than children from a small family?

Other voices everywhere are raising the horrible picture of overpopulation. They claim that our present rate of population increase is so huge that it can only lead to disaster. Soon, they maintain, we shall face the prospect of mass starvation, lowering of the living standard, and such pollution of water and air that human life will eventually become difficult or impossible.

As example of this line of thinking, consider the following statements made by supposed experts:

World population in 1830 was about one billion; in 1930—two billion; 1960—three billion; 1970—3.6 billion; 1980 (estimated)—4.5 billion; 1990 (est.)—5.8 billion; 2000 (est.)—7.5 billion.

At the current growth rate (middle 1970s) California will have a population of 1.5 billion people within 100 years. That is about 7 times as many people as live in the entire United States in 1975.

At the current growth rate, in 600 years every person on earth will have exactly one square yard of living space.

An estimated 10,000 to 15,000 of the world's people die every day from malnutrition. In the middle 1970s, world population is increasing at the rate of approximately 2% annually. If world population is 4 billion (a reasonable estimate), this means there will be 80 million more people in the world a year from now than there are today, or some 200,000 more people each day of the year.

Unless we act now to control the population tide, we invite disaster. Please send your tax deductible contribution to ----- today.

“We must slow population growth for future world stability,” said Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations in the early 1970s. Population control will improve life.

People pollute, therefore, we must reduce the number of people in the world.

One does not have to do much reading in the 1970s, nor does he have to attend many university classes, to learn that millions of people almost everywhere in the world claim that God's clear directive, “Be fruitful and multiply,” is evil. Larger population, they claim, is inherently evil, while a decreased or stable population is desirable, good, mandatory.

What methods do these groups advocate for reducing world population? Group like ZPG (Zero Population Growth) and Planned Parenthood demand birth control for everyone (married and unmarried), much greater use of birth control measures, abortions on demand, and an absolute limit of 2.1 children per family or even less until there is no more population growth. Others mention that “the lifestyle must be decided by every couple” (regardless of God's wishes). Numerous individuals and groups promote the use of the anti-fertility pill, pills to take after fertilization has taken place, intra-uterine devices, sterilization for women, and vasectomies for men, regardless of the grave physical dangers connected with them. Others demand free abortions for everyone, extra taxes for parents with large families, a quota system requiring hard-to-get stamps for each live birth (bachelors and homosexuals can supposedly sell their stamps at a good price), family planning for everyone, a permanent bureau within HEW to deal with the “population problem,” more women in outside jobs so that they have no time for children, and the like. So this, the advocates claim; and we shall avoid calamity, have a much better life, possibly even a utopia.

What are the results of all these anti-scriptural propaganda and movements? Well, the birth rate has been greatly reduced, especially in the developing countries. Indeed, in the middle 1970s the birth rate has actually dropped below replacement levels in many countries, including West Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. In the middle 1970s, the United States had the highest number of parents in the reproductive age in its history. At the same time it had the lowest birth rate in all of its history with slightly less than two children per family (2.11 children per family are needed to replace ourselves). The United States birth rate is not even one-third as great today as it was in years gone by. Indeed, many population experts foresee a slight increase in our population during the next few years and then a gradual decline, beginning as early as 1980 or as late as 2000. Other results in the United States are the sale of the “pill” by the millions to married and to unmarried women, abortions at the rate of possibly 4000 a day, an estimated 1 million vasectomies (there were only 40,000 in 1960), and possibly the same number of sterilizations (both of these operations are generally irreversible). There is a drastic increase in the number of older people. The movement will surely jeopardize the entire Social Security program. Yes, the entire movement toward a static or declining population will have tremendous effects upon almost every facet of our lives.

What should be the Christian's attitude toward all of this population reduction propaganda? We who are children of God by faith in Christ need to evaluate this widespread program in the light of God's Word, as Christians have always done. "Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good," says our Lord in I Thess. 5:21.

Let's see, if the world is really so badly over populated that nothing but mass starvation will eventually befall us all, if our present growth rate continues. Here are a few population density figures of various representative countries in the early 1970s: Australia has about 4.1 persons per square mile; Canada, 5.4; Argentina, 22; U.S., 60; Mexico, 62; China, 232; India, 415; Great Britain, 584; West Germany, 606; Japan, 708; The Netherlands, 800. India is commonly cited as the country where overpopulation will surely lead to disaster, yet West Germany, Japan, and The Netherlands all have vastly more people per square mile than does India. All three are vastly more prosperous than India. Does this then mean that India needs more people for greater prosperity? Without question there are other factors besides large population that account for India's poverty and malnutrition. Experts have repeatedly told us that India could become self-sufficient in grains and other food items, if proper methods were used to produce and distribute them.

Also, if warnings that the world will soon be unable to feed itself are true, then why has the American farmer lost many of his foreign food markets? It has been estimated in the 1970s that the American farmer could double his food production, if necessary. Instead, as late as the early 1970s, American farmers were paid billions of dollars to take as many as 60 million and more acres of farm land out of production, while the cost of storing surplus grains was a fantastic amount of money.

Additionally, the 1970s are seeing signs of a food revolution with new strains of wheat, rice, corn, soybeans, and the like. The greatly increased yields frequently make news headlines. Soybeans can provide an almost limitless source of protein at perhaps one-tenth the cost of beef (figures are apt to change in time). Other sources of food can be expanded tremendously.

All that has been said in the previous paragraphs is not meant to minimize the world's hunger problem. Malnutrition and starvation are real events for millions of people. In the middle 1970s there may be as many as one-half billion people who never have a full stomach from the day that they are born until the day that they die. It is true also that tens of millions eat no more than one tiny meal a day, while others do not even have that. Yes, the threat of mass starvation is real.

Yet, the reason is not primarily inability of the world to feed itself. Rather the reasons are ones like these: Ignorance of proper farming methods, lack of proper transportation, economic problems (governments cannot even give away surplus food without incurring the wrath of merchants), greed and faithlessness of various employees, and gross superstition (all those millions of sacred cows, for example, that roam around India, consume food that could nourish millions). These are matters that should be attacked and improved, instead of the rebellion against God's good, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

Another thought: Demographers or population experts have often proved to be wrong. The classic example is the often quoted Rev. Thomas Malthus, an English clergyman, who in the late 1700s wrote his famous *Essay on the Principles of Population*. He predicted, on the basis of supposedly reliable statistics, that in about 100 years (by 1898) Great Britain would have a population of approximately 128 million. He overestimated by about 98 million. Yet, his so-called Malthusian Theory is a basis for much of the contemporary world's cry, "Reduce population."

Remember also that demographers' warnings run in cycles. In the 1930s, many were predicting calamities for America because of the low birth rate. Will they return to those fears when America's population growth reaches zero or actually declines? Furthermore, every honest person will admit that demography is an inexact science. For example, the World Bank in October, 1972, predicted that at the present rate of increase the world's population would quadruple in 100 years to about 15.3 billion. On the other hand, it also conceded that world population might reach only 6.7 billion in that same period. These figures are not calculated to produce much trust in demography.

A question: In view of the world's increasing population, should we not be much more concerned with preaching the Gospel to these people, rather than with preventing their being born?

Above all, a Christian will quietly say to himself, as Christians have always done, that God has not lost control of the world so that man must take it into his hands. The great truths of the First Article are these: God made me and God preserves me and all creatures. We confidently look to our God, therefore, and pray, “O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast,” (Ps. 36:6); and “I have been young, and now am old. Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread” (Ps. 37:25). Our Lord cited the examples of His care for the birds and the flowers to show us that He will surely care for us. Don’t you ever doubt that God is in His heaven in full control of this earth. And we shall confidently follow His wishes, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Gen. 1:28), and cast “all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (I Pet. 5:7).

Then, too, we shall experience the truth of God’s Word that children are a blessing, not a burden. “Children are an heritage of the Lord” (Ps. 127:3). Ps. 128:3 tells us that the Christian home has “children like olive plants around thy table” and Prov. 31:28 promises the Christian mother that her “children arise up and call her blessed.” Consider how highly children were valued in Bible times, especially in homes that for years had no children, like those of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 15); Elkanah and Hannah (I Sam. 1), Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1). Shall we regard them any less highly?

Everything that has been said in the preceding paragraphs does not mean to claim that all birth control is automatically a sin, especially not when it may involve the health of the mother. Yet, parents who willfully refuse to have any children, or at most one or two, are denying themselves some of the world’s greatest blessings, privileges, and responsibilities. Our course is clear: Prize children highly, bring them to Jesus, do all in your power to spread the Gospel to unchurched children and adults all over the world, so that they might enjoy heaven with us.

God uses parents to train His children in the way that He has commanded in His Word. Just as God created marriage, pronounced it “very good,” and then regulated it so that it remained good, thus He also creates our children and then regulates their training for His glory and their good. He does not simply create a child and then abandon it, but in His Word He tells parents, to whom He has entrusted His children for a few short years, how they are to bring them up. He holds parents responsible for the way in which they train His children.

Among others, God uses particularly two Bible passages to tell us *in general* how He wants His children to be guided, helped, instructed, indoctrinated and trained. Prov. 22:6: “Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it”; and Eph. 6:4: “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (directed to the head of the home, but including mothers also).

This training or bringing up God’s children necessarily includes above all else thorough instruction and inculcation of God’s Word into their hearts and minds. Among many others, two of the noteworthy Bible passages in which God gives parents this command are Deut. 6:4-9 and Ps. 78:1-7. They read as follows:

Hear, O Israel. The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the ways and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Give ear, O my people, to my law. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their

children. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

The best thing that any parent can ever do for his children and the one thing that every parent can do is to teach them God's Word. This teaching should begin early in life, as grandmother Lois and mother Eunice taught Timothy from the time that he was little (II Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Dr. Luther in his heading for each part of the Small Catechism wrote: "As the head of the family should teach it in all simplicity to his household." The time to start training a child in church going is on the day of his baptism. The time to start simple prayers is on the day the child is brought home from the hospital, when mother or father might pray a short, "Lord, please watch over our son," as they lay him into his crib. As the child learns to talk, he can be taught to say "Amen" at family prayer time. As he begins to recognize pictures, he can be taught about Jesus, the Savior and Friend of children. When the child is several years old, father and mother can read a few simple verses from the Bible or from a Bible history book, explain them briefly, and then conclude with prayer. This custom of having family devotions follows the excellent examples of Noah (Gen. 8:20, 21) and Abraham (Gen. 13:18) and of many others who built family altars unto our God. It is an excellent way to teach our children the Word, as God requires us to do it. Pertinent Bible passages are Col. 3:16 and Mark 10:13-16.

A second way of teaching our children God's Word is through *parental example*. Of Job the Bible says (Job 1:5) that he repeatedly sacrifices on behalf of his children, so concerned was he that they might have sinned. God Himself said to Solomon that David, his father, walked before God "in integrity of heart, and in uprightness" (I Kings 9:4). Yes, David did fall deeply into sin, yet he was also the man after God's own heart, the one who set a generally excellent example for his sons and daughters. Thus our own children too can learn a great deal about faith in God, prayer, love for the Word, humility, obedience, decency, temperance, and a host of other Christian virtues from the examples set by parents. Woe unto us, if we should ever lead one of our children away from God through our continued evil example. Then it would be better for us, if a millstone were hanged about our necks and we would be drowned in the depths of the sea (Matt. 18:6).

Teaching God's Word properly also includes loving correction, chastening, and using the rod where necessary. Parents must restrict their children from doing evil, even if it means *using the rod*. The High Priest Eli failed in this respect. He admonished his sons, "It is no good report that I hear" (I Sam 2:24). Yet the Lord Himself said of Eli, "His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (I Sam. 3:13). The result was that "the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever" (I Sam. 3:14). Dreadful calamities befell Eli's house, because the father did not restrain his sons (I Sam. 4).

Therefore wise King Solomon wrote on several occasions that parents must use the rod at times. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son. But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.... Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. 13:24; 19:18). Such correction and chastening, must begin while the child is still young. Otherwise the child can easily become unmanageable.

Obviously parents must cooperate with one another in this matter of bringing up children in the way that they should go. Both should teach the Word, both must present good examples, and both must cooperate in chastening the child. If father chastens his son and mother says something to annul that chastening, we can easily understand what effect this will have upon the child.

Both parents must also know that proper training of the child requires a great deal of patience and understanding. We cannot just tell our children once and expect them to remember forever after, for they are by nature sinful. Neither can we mold them into a certain pattern one time and expect them to remain in it for the rest of their lives. They will not stay molded.

God uses the church to help parents to train their children properly. Our Lord asks that of His Church in various Bible passages. For example, in almost His last words to His disciples, Jesus commanded all Christians to teach everyone, including children, "all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19). Again, our Lord gave the explicit command to all who love Him, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15).

The Church has always recognized this teaching obligation toward its children, albeit not always carrying it out as well as it might. It has developed various educational agencies to help the parents in their

God-given responsibility. Those agencies range from Sunday school, Saturday school, confirmation instruction, Bible class, and the like to the full-time K-12 (or beyond) school.

By far the best educational agency that the church has ever developed is the full-time Christian school. In our circles individual congregations band together to conduct high schools, grades 9-12, making, in effect, a K-12 system.

Such schools cap and do truly seek first the kingdom of God, as Christ commanded in Matt. 6:33. They are the only schools in all the world that daily study the Word, as our Lord said, "Search the Scriptures" (John 5:39). "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16). They alone base all of their instruction and all their activities on the Word of God, as St. Paul wrote: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). They can and do show "to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wondrous works that He hath done" (Ps. 78:4) in such important subjects as science, history, mathematics, and English.

Where else but in such full-time Christian schools can we find full agreement between parents and teachers on the objectives of a true education that prepares the child for time and for eternity? Where else, except in the church's schools, can Christian parents find an educational institution that truly helps to train the soul, mind, and body of the child, as God wants us to do it?

Therefore Christian parents, yes, indeed, every member of the Christian congregation can do nothing less than to support such full-time schools, adequately, pray for them and promote their welfare, and send their children to them. It should be unthinkable for a Christian parent to do any less than that. Should the congregation not have such a school, then it might be possible to send the child to a neighboring congregation that does have one, or failing in that, one could work wholeheartedly for starting and maintaining such a school in one's own congregation.

Evil results from not following God's Word, while blessing will follow when parents comply with His Word regarding the training of their children. This truth is impressively presented in Deut. 28, a part of Moses' farewell addresses to his people. There Moses said, "If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and his statutes . . . then all these curses shall come upon thee" (Deut. 28:15). Then follow curse after curse for some 50 verses, curses that will surely come upon the disobedient and the neglectful.

What else, except such curses, can we expect in America when we see how callously millions of parents revolt against the clear Word of our God regarding the training of their children? Instead of training a child according to God's wishes, they place their children into day-care centers (may God preserve us from them). Instead of following Abraham's example of leading their children in the paths of righteousness (Gen. 18:19), they permit their children to go their own ways. Instead of making a real home for the family, they promote the idea that home is merely a filling station and a motel. Instead of teaching God's Word to their children, they permit public schools to teach the godless theory of evolution, pornographic literature, and the idea that this life is all that matters. Instead of sending their children to a church school, some parents deliberately deny their children the daily instruction of God's Word that they would receive there. Instead of strong, thoroughly Christian homes, America's homes are by and large disintegrating.

Other specific examples of this total disregard for God's Word regarding the training of children are prevalent everywhere. A young man told his co-workers one day that he had just taken his girlfriend to the hospital to have his baby, but, no, he was not about to take care of the child, because the state is required to care for it till it is 18. Again, in some city areas as many as 75% of the black households were found to be headed by a woman. Most readers of these words will undoubtedly have experienced similar examples of the total disregard for God's Word.

What results can one expect from this parental refusal to train children properly. Delinquency, runaways from home, riots, theft, dope addiction, prostitution, endless relief problems, and the like. Surveys have shown that as many as 80% of the people in the large cities of our land are afraid to go out at night for fear that they will be mugged or robbed, often by delinquent youths. Even in the smaller cities of our land, almost every morning local news reports have one or more items regarding burglaries and other crimes. Welfare roles are

sometimes carrying the second and third generations of some families, primarily because parents do not set standards for their children and do not discipline them effectively. The prophet Hosea (8:7) had a word, which America must heed if it is to escape calamity: “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.” What else can we expect, if we continue in our stubborn refusal to bring up our children in the ways of the Lord?

On the other hand, Moses also said in his farewell address: “If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commands ...all these blessings shall come upon thee” (Deut. 28:1). Then Moses continued for verse after verse in enumerating the blessings that follow the keeping of God’s commands. Wise King Solomon wrote it this way, “Righteousness exalteth a nation” (Prov. 14:34).

Parents, pastors, psychologists, and others everywhere have experienced the blessings that result from God-pleasing parental training of their children, especially when this is begun in infancy. Indeed, one well-known psychiatrist maintained that five things would almost invariably determine what a child would be like in later years: 1) The discipline of the child by the father; 2) the supervision of the child by the mother; 3) the affection of the father for the child; 4) the affection of the mother for the child; 5) the cohesiveness of the family. With several omissions, those five points come close to saying exactly what God told us long ago regarding the rearing of children.

We do not mean to say, of course, that a child from an evil home will himself invariably be wicked, nor that a child from a God-fearing home will in every instance be a true Christian. In the one case God can work miracles of grace, as we well know. In the other instance, the human heart has the frightful power to say no to God.

Yet, parents have their obligations given by God. They must carry out these responsibilities for their children. Then let all of us pray that God would use our feeble efforts to produce a true Christian young man or woman. Almost invariably these desired results will surely happen to a greater or lesser degree, when parents follow the directives given by God.

G. God also instituted marriage to provide for the chastity of man and woman (85).

God not only created everything, but He desires that everyone of His creatures, including man and woman, reproduce themselves, as we have learned from Gen. 1. In order that His will be done in this matter, God implanted sexual desires within the hearts of most people. True, some people are able to control those desires without having sexual relations, like St. Paul (I Cor. 7:7). Yet, for the most part these desires lead naturally to sexual relations between husband and wife. Therefore St. Paul wrote: “But if they find that they have not the gift of self-control, in such matters, by all means let them get married” (I Cor. 7:9, Phillips).

These sexual desires are a good part of God’s creation, if they are used in keeping with His directives. They are not something dirty or shameful, as our Lord specifically says, “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Heb. 13:4).

Unfortunately, the devil continually tries to use this good desire for his damnable ends, as we shall show in part II of this paper. That is why the Heb. 13 passage immediately adds: “Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

God specifically stated in I Cor. 7:1-7 that husband and wife do not have complete rights over their own bodies, but must share them with their spouses. “Do not cheat each other of normal sexual intercourse” (I Cor. 7:5, Phillips), unless both decide to forego for the sake of fasting and prayer.

This does not mean, of course, that the husband has the right to overindulge in sexual relationships, since God also said, “Husbands ...be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect” (I Pet. 3:7, NIV). It does mean that husbands and wives must work for an agreement in this matter in that neither one may deny such sexual relations with the other spouse. In this way the normal sexual desires of both spouses are satisfied and neither is so easily tempted to commit adultery.

Thus God gave both the desire for sexual relations and marriage to satisfy these desires, in this way providing for the chastity of husband and wife.

II. What is Forbidden in the Sixth Commandment?

Our Catechism answers this question with: The temple of God (our body) is defiled by all unchaste and indecent thoughts, words, and deeds. That is, by such thoughts, words, and deeds of which it is a shame even to speak, and which corrupt and destroy body and soul. The holy estate of marriage is defiled when either husband or wife is unfaithful to or separates from the other.

One fact that we must recognize at the outset is this: God has set barriers or limits to what married and unmarried people may and may not do, as we shall learn shortly. These bounds or barriers are always excellent, exactly what we need for our blessing. The devil, of course, does not agree. He tries to persuade us that these barriers “inhibit our freedoms.” Consequently, he tempts us to overstep them or to break them down. Follow his suggestions and that will surely lead to evils, tragedies, and perhaps even the loss of one’s soul.

Another point must be made by way of introduction to this section: St. Paul writes in Eph. 5:3, 4: “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.” He stresses the same truth in Eph. 5:12: “It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.”

In view of such Scriptural directives, one might wonder if he should just stress the positive, the clean and decent life, as Luther did in his masterful explanation to the Sixth Commandment. This is certainly true, that America’s sins against the Sixth Commandment are so vile and outrageous that it almost nauseates us to talk about them.

Yet, St. Paul also repeatedly warned against adultery and fornication, and he spoke frankly about the shameful homosexuality of the contemporary Roman world. We shall try to follow his example, pointing out America’s sins against the Sixth Commandment and their dire results, strenuously avoiding any suggestive or curiosity-arousing treatment.

We shall do that in order that you might know how filthy and morally sick much of our contemporary society is. We pray that you be warned by the clear Word of our God against a similar waddling around in the septic systems of sin. We also ask God that you will learn to abhor the filth, to try to win the sinner and to seek the good, the pure, and the lovely (Phil. 4:4).

A. What sins against the Sixth Commandment does God specifically forbid to married people?

We have heard previously that God sets certain barriers around marriage, which no married person may overstep. Any such overstepping of the bounds is a grave sin against this Commandment that can surely lead to no end of tragedies. In the following paragraphs we shall speak particularly of three horrible, sinful acts, often committed by people who are married. This does not mean that they are the only sins committed by these people against this Commandment (others will be treated in a later section). Nor do we want to forget that one may commit sins against any Commandment in thought and word, as well as by deed.

Adultery is the voluntary sexual relations between a married person and someone who is not his spouse. Adultery is such a horrible sin that God repeatedly warns against it in His holy Word. For example, let us read Exod. 20:14; Lev. 18:20; and Matt. 5:27: “Thou shalt not commit adultery.... Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbor’s wife, to defile thyself with her.... Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’” Despite God’s clear Word, adultery is committed regularly almost everywhere in America. It is practiced by “swingers” who exchange wives for weekend parties, by married men or women who have sexual relations with someone who is not their spouse, and by spouses who decide to exchange spouses permanently.

Adultery was practiced by a 51-year old teacher who claimed her moral life had nothing to do with her teaching, but the judge decided otherwise, and upheld her dismissal. It was approved by a speaker at a 1971 LCA Convention of Lutheran women, “When a husband and wife have no intention of deceiving one another,” which gives a pious ring to a dreadful sin. It was condoned by a Methodist minister, writing in *Playboy*

magazine, “Extra-marital sexual communication harms marriage no more than does extra-marital verbal communication,” as if having sexual relations with a woman were in the same class as bidding her “good morning.” It was excused by a woman writing in *Mademoiselle*, “The assumption that a woman is promiscuous if she sleeps with a lot of people leaves no room for the possibility that she might be an affectionate person with a large capacity for intimacy,” just as if this “affection” gives her the right to violate the laws of God and of man. Everywhere people promote the rights of consenting adults to any possible form of sexual relationships within and outside of marriage. These examples reflect a typical attitude of millions of people in our country. Wise King Solomon characterized their attitude long ago, writing, “An adulterous woman ...eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith, ‘I have done no wickedness’” (Prov. 30:20).

Can we not understand that God is most serious about His warnings and threatenings against adultery? Just consider what He says in passages like the following:

Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbor’s wife, whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry. But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold. He shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding. He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul (Prov. 6:28-32).

The man that commits adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death (Lev. 20:10).

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness ...of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

In view of God’s clear words and His fearful punishment for this horrible sin, how can any Christian ever think of committing adultery? This should be unthinkable for a child of God who truly desires to serve his Lord. Even the sinful desire for someone else’s spouse should lead us to a quick and sincere repentance for our sin. When the devil comes with his appealing words about “sexual freedom,” just remember that he really means “sexual slavery” that can lead to nothing but disaster, as countless people have learned.

One more word must be said about this matter: Even an adulterer can truly repent of his sin, as King David repented in great sorrow. He was forgiven by God (II Sam. 12), and as a result gratefully wrote those wonderful 32nd and 51st Psalms. Yet, we must also remember that, even though his sins were forgiven, David paid for the consequences of his sin for the rest of his life. That was exactly what Nathan, the prophet, said: “Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house (II Sam. 12:10). Thus we, too, may pay for a similar sin as long as we live.

Divorce is strictly prohibited by God with two clear exceptions. God made marriage and God determined that it is to be a lifelong arrangement. “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6) is the unmistakable word of our God. (For a complete presentation of this point, one might well read the words of our Lord as written in Matt. 19:3-12 and Mark 10:2-12.)

God makes marriage lifelong for our good. He knows well enough the endless grief that can come from a divorce: Children are gone. The divorced person is unwanted by his married friends. Income is decreased. Former spouses are antagonistic toward one another. There is worry and loneliness. There are emotional breakdowns. Children miss one or the other of the parents. The guilty party commits adultery in remarriage (Matt. 19:9), and the like.

God Himself is the only one who can break the marriage. He does that through the death of one or the other of the spouses. In that case, the remaining spouse is free to remarry, as Rom. 7:2, 3 tell us: “A married woman, for example, is bound by law to her husband so long as he is alive. But if he dies, then his legal claim over her disappears. This means that, if she should give herself to another man while her husband is alive, she

incurs the stigma of adultery. But if, after her husband's death, she does exactly the same thing, no one could call her an adulterous, for the legal hold over her has been dissolved by her husband's death" (Phillips).

We do not have to look far to understand that men and women everywhere in America take it upon themselves to break their marriages. In fact in the middle 1970s America has just about the highest divorce rate of any country in all the world, with approximately 1 divorce for every 3 marriages (some 700,000 divorces to some 2,100,000 marriages). That is about 5 times the divorce rate of Canada, 3 times more than West Germany, about double the rate in the USSR. Even the USSR, which at one time granted divorces on request (the other party was notified by postcard), has considerably tightened its divorce requirements, for it recognizes the need for a stable family life. Yet, one American state after another has made divorce exceedingly easy. Nevada, for example, has a six-weeks residence requirement, after which divorce may be granted for "extreme cruelty," something that allows almost every applicant to break his marriage. Florida has a "no-fault" divorce, since 1971, with the only requirement being a six-months residence. Other states have introduced legislation to follow Florida's evil example.

Is it then surprising that we read of divorces granted for almost every conceivable reason? A husband obtained a divorce because his wife took \$147 of his \$147.50 weekly paycheck. A father obtained a divorce because his wife left him two to four nights a week to play pool from 7:00 p.m. till 2:00 a.m., while he cared for her child by a previous marriage. A factory worker filed for divorce, not because he had to work nights to support his wife and her five unemployed brothers, but because they were so noisy during the day that he could not sleep. A wife obtained a divorce from her husband because he, a four-foot midget, stood on a chair and punched her in the eye. Repeatedly wives leave husbands and children for a business career. In some quarters the slogan seems to be, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." This is what someone called serial polygamy.

Now our Lord has some very specific instructions regarding divorce. He said: "I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery. And whoso marrieth her which was put away, doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9). (Fornication is here used in the sense of adultery.) This is a thought that is repeated with only slight variations in Matt. 5:32. So, if a spouse should commit adultery, may God preserve us from such an evil, he has broken the marriage. In that case, the innocent party, if he or she is truly innocent, may go to a judge and say, "My spouse has broken our marriage by committing adultery. I should like to have you recognize this by granting me a divorce."

The innocent spouse doesn't necessarily have to seek a divorce in a situation like this. Indeed, there may be compelling reasons not to seek a divorce. The guilty spouse may be truly repentant, a separation may do irreparable harm to the family, or possibly there might be other reasons for trying to live together again according to God's directives. Of course, it may be highly difficult to forgive and to forget this sin of the married partner, but that must be done to a great extent, if the marriage, after one's spouse has committed adultery, is to succeed in the future.

Another case of breaking the marriage is mentioned in I Cor. 7:15—*malicious desertion*. There St. Paul, in speaking about marriage, writes, "But if the unbelieving (spouse) depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases." If the unbelieving spouse simply leaves and refuses to return, he or she has broken the marriage and the innocent party, if he or she is truly innocent, may again petition for a divorce.

A similar case of malicious desertion happens when either the husband or the wife refuses to have sexual relations with the other spouse. We have previously stated that one of the purposes of marriage is to have sexual relations with one another. The spouse that refuses such relations has broken the marriage by maliciously deserting his partner (I Cor. 7:3-5). Even though the two may be living together under the same roof, the marriage is indeed broken and the innocent party may petition the judge to recognize this fact by granting a divorce.

Scripture recognizes no other cause for divorce than those mentioned in the previous paragraphs. For example, if a wife is ill, if the husband is a drunkard, if the husband does not provide for the family, these and similar circumstances do not break the marriage. Granted, there may be extreme cases when a temporary separation is recommended, but even that should be done with the idea of coming together again as soon as

possible. (One can see the extreme necessity of marrying a Christian. Should one spouse sin against the other, he can then be admonished by the Word of God. If he is God's child, he will listen and amend his sinful ways.)

Well, then, what shall we say about the objection brought by the Pharisees to Christ: "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" (Matt. 19:7; Mark 10:4). Moses did indeed allow divorce under certain conditions different from those mentioned in the previous paragraphs (see Deut. 24:1-4).

Yet, our Lord immediately answered the Pharisees' question by stating the reason for Moses' action: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). Some people had so hardened their hearts against the Word of God that they were determined to put away their wives and marry others, no matter what God or anybody else said about this. Moses then allowed the divorce in order to protect the innocent party. Had he not done so, the wicked spouse might have killed his wife just to be free to marry another.

Following Moses' example, the state today also allows divorces for reasons that are totally unacceptable to God and to His children. A child of God must be guided by our Father's Word in the matter of a divorce, not by the liberal laws of the state. And God's Word is clear. A divorce for any other reason besides adultery and desertion is a dreadful sin, a breaking of the marriage vow, a committing of adultery in remarriage (Mark 10:11, 12), and a defiance of God. You can be certain that our nation will pay dearly for such contempt of God's barrier around marriage that says "till death do us part." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked" (Gal. 6:7).

B. What sins against the Sixth Commandment does God specifically forbid for unmarried people?

We have previously stated that God placed barriers around both married and unmarried people for their protection and blessing. Our God did something similar at Mt. Sinai when He commanded Moses to "set bounds" so that the people would not come on to the mountain or even touch it, lest they die (Exod. 19:20-25). In a similar manner our God set bounds around the unmarried estate and said, "These things you, the child of God, must not do, and other things you must do for your own temporal and spiritual welfare. If you break down these barriers, you will certainly suffer evil, calamity, tragedy."

Thus God strictly forbids fornication, the voluntary sexual relation between the unmarried. For example, He tells us in I Cor. 6:13-20: "The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord.... Your bodies are members of Christ.... Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God-forbid.... Flee fornication." The entire 7th chapter of Prov. is a powerful warning against fornication. There wise King Solomon spoke of a prostitute enticing a young man, and "he goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter... Let not thine heart decline to her ways.... Her house is the way to hell" (Prov.7:22-27). The Prophet Jeremiah thundered against similar sins, threatening, "They that commit adultery, and assemble themselves by troops in the harlots' houses ...shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord" (Jer. 5:7-9). And shall we ever forget that God twice tells us that unrepentant fornicators and adulterers will not inherit heaven (I Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21)?

Just contrast these clear and good words of our Lord with our filth-loving, morally-depraved, contemporary society, which everywhere condones and even advocates fornication. Examples are almost endless. In 1971, the head of Yale's Sex Counseling Service stated, "It's just as okay not to have it (fornication) as to have it." A 16-year old girl wrote to the *New York Times*, (10-1-71): "It is obvious that the answer to the problem of unmarried pregnancies is not to tell the teenager to stop having sex. The solution is that we be taught methods of birth control and where to obtain contraceptives." (Teenagers everywhere fight for the right to have contraceptives and abortions without parental consent.) Every spring in the 1970s, hoards of young people crowd the beaches of Fort Lauderdale, Palm Springs, and other areas to fornicate, often, as one student said, with a different girl each night. A pastor said, "A girl used to feel guilty if she went to bed with a guy. Now she's often guilty if she does not." One teenager, after raping his teacher, said, "Why not? Didn't she spend the whole year telling us how to do it? (That is but the natural result of teaching courses on sex matters without the moral guidance of the Word) Amy Vanderbilt, long-time arbiter of etiquette, said, "I think it would be perfectly

ridiculous to marry someone you have not been intimate with, don't you?" A favorite expression of some fornicators is "If you love me, prove it." The number of rapes in America is almost unbelievably large, with all of the resulting tragic consequences.

One would expect this type of shameful, debauching practices from the followers of Satan, who is intent upon destroying everything good and pure and chaste. But words fail us when we note that clergymen within the Christian Church advocate the same filthy, soul-destroying practice. For example, *Church and Society*, (March and April, 1971), suggested that the Church encourage or work out arrangements whereby the lonely, the single, and the retired can live together and have sexual relations to satisfy their desires. Devotees of Situation Ethics, promoted far and wide by Joseph Fletcher, an Episcopalian clergyman, claim that one must determine his behavior upon the situation involved, not upon some "puritanical" moral code given us by God. That kind of thinking will, of course, allow for any sin against any Commandment. One then can easily excuse his fornication by saying, "I am just trying to show my love to that person."

How can any Christian commit fornication when he knows that he is thereby doing something hateful to God who gave Himself into death for us? Can we not understand that God loves us, wants only good things to happen to us, and therefore restricts sexual relations to marriage? Thereby our God wants to protect our bodies from disease, our conscience from terror, our future from calamity, our faith from harm, and our souls from possible eternal destruction. Can we not understand that fornication almost always involves many more than two people? (The two sets of parents, possibly an unborn babe, and God.)

The child of God can therefore do no less than to pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God. Keep me from the horrible evil of fornication." If despite all of that, one deliberately commits fornication, then he must know that God sees our sin, and God had said, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I Cor. 3:16, 17). Again, our God said of fornicators that they have made their bodies one with a prostitute. In Old Testament times Phinehas took his spear and thrust it through the bodies of an Israelite and a Midianite woman who were fornicating, a clear sign of God's fearful anger against this horrible sin (Num. 25:1-9).

God's punishment upon this sin begins already in this life in various ways. For a Christian there is the seared conscience, which continually accuses us with, "You have sinned against your God." There is, despite medicine's attempts to relieve infection, conception, and detection, the distinct possibility of having an illegitimate child. This, in turn, compels one to make a painful choice between keeping and caring for a child for 18 years (at a cost of some \$25,000 or more and without a father), or giving it up to an adoption agency and have the child wonder forever after why his parents gave him away.

There is furthermore the probability of contracting venereal disease, next to the common cold the fastest growing communicable disease in America during the middle 1970s (there is one new case every 10 to 15 seconds). Gonorrhea, the most prevalent venereal disease, with some 2 million cases annually in the middle 1970s, is an infection that may spread and seriously affect many members of one's body. Syphilis, also a leading venereal disease, can lead to degeneration of the bones, the heart, the brain, and other organs, finally causing insanity or death or both. Children born of mothers with venereal disease may suffer incurable brain damage.

In 1974, there were an estimated 2,050,000 cases of people having Herpes VD, incurable by any known medicine. This may cause cancer and many other ailments. Indeed, it is estimated that one of every five students contract some form of venereal disease before graduation from high school.

Authorities tell us that there are strains of venereal disease so potent that no known medicine can treat them. They also tell us that the three deadly "P's," the pill, promiscuity, permissiveness, are at fault for the fast rising venereal disease rate (normally there is just one way to contract venereal disease, through fornication). Unfortunately, one can often have various types of venereal disease without knowing it until it is too late. God tells us that the worst possible earthly punishment for fornication is only a tiny prelude to the eternal condemnation that awaits every unrepentant fornicator.

In that familiar Epistle, Eph. 4:1-7, our God exhorts every one of His children by the Lord Jesus to abstain from fornication. For He has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness. Then pray that we do His will in this matter, for His glory and for our welfare.

God strictly forbids homosexuality, the sexual relations with members of the same sex (often called lesbianism when two women are involved). In fact, He does this so clearly and so frequently in Scripture that one wonders how in the world any Christian can ever question it. One of the clearest Old Testament examples is written in Gen. 19, the story of the homosexual Sodomites, who gave their name, sodomy, to this vile sin. Their sins were so dreadfully great that God finally wiped Sodom and Gomorrah off the face of the world. He did that so thoroughly that we do not even know exactly where these infamous cities once stood. Both cities are mentioned in Scripture as examples of God's wrath against these frightful sins (II Pet. 2:6-8; Jude 7).

Other Old Testament Bible passages that condemn homosexuality are Lev. 18:22-25 and Lev. 20:13: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind. It is an abomination ...in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you, and the land is defiled.... They (the homosexuals) shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them." The fact that God speaks of the heathen nations defiling themselves with these sins shows that it is not just a civil law for Israel, but one for all people of all times. Other Old Testament Bible passages which show that homosexuality is a heinous sin are Gen. 19:5; Deut. 23:-17; I Kings 14:24; and II Kings 23:7.

The New Testament also clearly condemns homosexuality. For example, St. Paul writes in horror about the "vile affections" of the heathen, who had fallen so deeply into idolatry that "they burned in their lust" towards members of the same sex (Rom. 1:25-27). I Tim. 1:9-10 places homosexuality into the same category with murderers of fathers, kidnappers, and the like. I Cor. 6:9, 10 tells us: "Do not be deceived. Neither ...adulterers ...nor homosexuals ...will inherit the kingdom of God" (RSV).

In contrast to God's clear Word on this matter, millions of Americans in every city of the land openly defile the living God by their acceptance, defense, and promotion of homosexuality. For example, *Life* magazine (12-31-71) stated that there are from 2 to 20 million homosexuals in America (there is no doubt that the number has increased since then). That every large city and many campuses have homosexual organizations. That homosexuality is the subject of many books, articles, and films. That these people actively fight for their perverse way of life, and that their rallying cry is "Gay is good."

The horrible part of this dreadful evil is that many psychologists, authors, and millions of laymen see nothing wrong with it. They maintain that homosexuality should be accepted as a variant way of life, that homosexuals are not dangerous to morals, that no one should feel guilt or shame about his homosexuality, and that homosexuality should be just as acceptable anywhere as heterosexuality.

America has actually fallen so deeply into this sin that we have the deplorable spectacle of some churches promoting or at least condoning homosexuality. One of the first, if not the first church in America, to ordain a homosexual minister was the Church of Christ in the San Francisco area. Its delegates voted 62 to 34 to allow William Johnson, a professed homosexual, to become an ordained minister in its church. The Rev. William Johnson said, "I was ordained ...on June 25, 1972,.... I am glad that I am gay.... I believe that my position is rooted in the Gospel of Christ." According to *Trends*, a Presbyterian magazine, which in its July/August, 1973 issue promoted homosexuality, the Rev. James E. Sandmire said, "I'm a gay man and a minister. I expect to go home tonight to my gay lover with whom I have lived for 13 years. Tomorrow I expect to preach to my congregation and to administer communion to them. And I think God will feel quite good about it all." There are also records of Methodist ministers performing the marriage of two professed homosexuals. In the middle 1970s the Rev. Tray Perry, ordained a Baptist minister, has his Metropolitan Community Church in Los Angeles, that, together with some 70 other similar churches, ministers particularly to homosexuals, "God loves gays, too," is their cry. Of course, He does, but He condemns their homosexuality.

In view of these horrible, widespread perversions, one might well wonder how long God will withhold His destruction from our beloved country. You can be sure that judgment will come, unless we heed the

cry of the ancient Prophet, “O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord” (Jer. 22:29) May all of us pray earnestly that everyone who has ever sinned in this matter will repent and then follow the command of our Savior, “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).

C. What sins against the Sixth Commandment does God forbid to both the married and to the unmarried?

God strictly forbids pornographic literature. For example, He clearly tells us in Eph. 4:29: “Let there be no more foul language, but good words instead ...which God can use to help other people” (Phillips). Eph. 5:3-4 tells us: “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting.” “A good man gives out good—from the goodness stored in his heart. A bad man gives out evil—from his store of evil. I tell you that men will have to answer at the day of judgment for every careless word they utter—for it is your words that will acquit you, and your words that will condemn you!” (Matt. 12:35-37, Phillips).

Contrast these clear commands with the horribly filthy, prevailing conditions in America. The amount of pornographic material that is on sale everywhere is almost unbelievably great. Many of these obscene publications, that are more or less dedicated to emphasizing sexual lusts, can now be sent through the mail, because the United States Supreme Court is unable to decide upon a definition of pornography. Many, and perhaps most of the novels published in the early and middle 1970s have large sections that are pure filth. Dozens of magazines that at one time were comparatively free of pornography now have lowered their standards so drastically that almost every issue has its filthy pictures and stories. If a Lutheran high school library would discard every book or magazine that has any kind of smutty acts or filthy pictures in it, it really would not have much material left.

Unfortunately, many of these magazines and books that are more or less dedicated to pornography sell hundreds of thousands of copies, even millions of them. They provide huge revenues for their publishers, and they pollute the minds and hearts of their readers. That is the kind of moral climate in which we are living, the age of pornography that provides poison for our souls.

Sadly, few people recognize the terrible sins connected with all of this pornography. A 1970 report of a Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography concluded: “There is no evidence that exposure to explicit sexual materials plays any significant role in delinquency.” One wonders how ridiculous learned men can become. If literature plays no part in forming opinions and character, then why study it at all?

Even people from whom one would expect a certain sense of decency either quietly condone or actively promote pornographic literature. They include school boards and other school officials everywhere in America, who require the reading of purely filthy books. These books are frequently so dirty that parents in various areas of the country have staged violent protests against them. Of course, these protests are met by the devilish contentions that no one may go on a book burning or a book censoring campaign.

This emphasis upon sexual lusts in our literature is so widespread that even some people of the world recognize it for what it really is. An example occurred when someone at *Newsday*, a Long Island newspaper, deliberately set out to create a bad book by asking each one of 24 writers to write a chapter with an “unrelenting emphasis upon sex” and with a careful avoidance of any excellence in writing. The book was published. It sold tens of thousands of copies, and one critic wrote of it, “The book is witty and written in good taste, and brings out many new angles in man-woman relationships” (*Life* 8-22-69 p. 69).

How can any Christian possibly support the pornographers by buying such filth, reading it, and even having it in their homes, when we full well know the will of our Lord in this matter? God has told us, “Whatsoever things are honest ...pure ...lovely, ...of good report ...think on these things” (Phil 4:8). Those are the things that we, who are cleansed by the Lord Jesus Christ, are to seek.

God strictly forbids filthy films and dirty dramas. A quick reading of movie reviews in the middle 1970s reveals that most of them either partly or totally glorify sins against the Sixth Commandment like adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and other sexual perversions. Even the advertisements for many of them have

become so bad that a number of leading newspapers, not particularly known for their morality, have refused to print them. Among these newspapers in the early 1970s were the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *San Diego Union and Tribune*, *Houston Post*, *Boston Herald Traveler*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and the *Detroit News*. Of course, the devil through his henchmen, protested violently that no newspaper should be able to dictate what people can see. Yet, these papers have at least for a time taken the same stand as that of the *San Francisco Examiner*: “We can no longer permit our advertising columns to be exploited by panderers of moral pollution.”

Anyone acquainted with Broadway productions knows that matters there are generally (if this is possible) much worse than film. Complete nudity is often featured. Filthy plots are presented. Homosexuality, fornication and adultery are glorified, and millions of dollars are spent annually to support the dirty minds that prepare these plays. All the while the watchword seems to be, “The more shockingly filthy the play is, the larger the audience is, while a clean, entertaining production suffers at the box office.”

In this matter also the Word of our God is decisive for us, His children: “Flee youthful lusts” (II Tim. 2:22). “Go not in the way of evil men” (Prov. 4:14). We simply dare not support the makers of lewd entertainment, nor attend their productions.

God strictly forbids the general trend toward immodesty, nudity, unchaste thoughts, and lust. We have repeatedly cite passages in which God has made His will known toward these matters. Yet, almost every daily newspaper brings evidence of this trend toward filthy living. For example, Hugh Hefner has opened many Playboy Resorts at a cost of millions of dollars, all of them featuring scantily clad “bunnies” for their huge clientele. In beauty contests, the contestants parade their bodies before everyone, almost like a prostitute selling her wares; and calling, “Look me over, world.” (There can be a great deal of difference between such a parading of one’s body and the wearing of decent swim suits at the beach.) Taverns feature dancers who do little more than to disrobe before large crowds that buy drinks at three times the regular price. Colleges and universities everywhere in America feature co-ed dormitories and thereby promote fornication exactly at a time in the life of young people when sexual desires are particularly strong. (There is just one major reason for co-ed dormitories, and it is not for the purposes of playing checkers with members of the opposite sex.) “Streakers” run about completely unclothed.

Fashion designers often feature clothes that the world calls daring, but that the Christian can only call immodest or lewd. One can understand that the unbelieving world would love such wickedness, but how can any Christian woman wear a dress with such a plunging neckline or such a short skirt that it leaves many a person offended? Christian mothers, who generally try to do the will of the Lord, even allow their daughters to go to church or partake of Holy Communion, while wearing such immodest apparel. (These matters reached the climax of sorts when a man and a woman completely disrobed in church before partaking of Communion at a June 1970 convention of the Southeast Minnesota District of the ALC.)

How can that be—can we not understand that immodest dress can cause a man to sin by giving him unclean thoughts? Haven’t we learned the truth of Matt. 5:28: “Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart”?

Even such an unchristian columnist as Ann Landers recognizes the evil in immodest clothing. She printed a letter from a young man which read in part: “No normal guy can look at all that flesh and not get ideas ...so please give it (advice) to the girls. They need it.” She agreed and wrote: “Girls: do not let your clothes issue an invitation you do not mean to fulfill. When you turn a guy on, he can be awfully hard to turn off.”

This almost universal trend toward immodesty and lewdness is the result of man’s fall into sin. In the beginning man and woman needed no clothing, neither did they show a trace of shame or embarrassment. But as soon as our first parents fell into sin, they became aware and ashamed of their nakedness. They sewed fig leaves to cover themselves (Gen. 3:7). God Himself then provided clothing for them (Gen. 3:21). Ever since that time clothing has been a part of our lives. Nakedness, on the other hand, is a sign that the sense of shame is lost or discarded. It and immodesty are signs of rebellion against our God.

Therefore the earnest cry of the Apostle Peter and of other sacred writers should deeply penetrate into our hearts. “Save yourself from this perverse generation” (Acts 2:40). Again, “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation” (Matt. 26:41). Let our mothers and daughters and everyone else heed the word of St. Paul,

“Give no offense to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the Church of God” (I Cor. 10:32, RSV). St. Paul stated the same principle in I Cor. 8:13, a fine practice for all of us to follow. If your clothing or acts give offense to anyone, then mend your ways at once.

III. What Does God Require of Us in the Sixth Commandment? (86, 87, 90, 91)

We have spent a great deal of time on the first two parts of this Commandment, often stressing the negative aspects. Since the command, “Thou shalt not” already includes to some extent what we should do, this section that follows will then be relatively short.

A. Lead a chaste and decent life in thought, word and deed.

Let your *thoughts* be chaste and decent. We know that evil thoughts, which often lead to sinful words or works, arise in our hearts. Our Lord said, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts” (Matt. 15:19). On the other hand, “The thoughts of the righteous are right” (Prov. 12:5). Our God also admonishes us to think on those things that are honest, pure, lovely and of good report (Phil. 4:8). Surely, we who have been cleansed from all our sins by our Savior, will want to obey His Word and will, by asking Him to guide our thoughts continually toward the good, the true and the holy things.

Let your *words* be chaste and decent. Again, since we have been cleansed from sin by our Lord, how can the new man within us do anything but try to follow St. Paul’s directive: “Let your speech always be gracious” (Col. 4:5, RSV), “for a man’s words depend on what fills his heart” (Matt. 12:34, Phillips). If our Lord warned us, “Every idle (worthless, careless) word that men speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matt. 12:36), then we who love the Lord must concentrate on speaking only what is in keeping with our faith.

Let your *deeds* be chaste and decent. Follow the excellent example of godly Joseph, who, when he was tempted by that filthy Mrs. Potiphar, answered, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9) Do what St. Paul writes in Rom. 13:12-14: “The night is nearly over. The day has almost dawned. Let us therefore fling away the things that men do in the dark. Let us arm ourselves for the fight of the day! Let us live cleanly, as in the daylight, not in the ‘delights’ of getting drunk or playing with sex, nor yet in quarreling or jealousies. Let us be Christ’s men from head to foot, and give no chances to the flesh to have its fling” (Phillips). Seek the decent and the good in reading material, in recreation, in films and drama, in TV programs, and the like.

B. Use the right means to remain chaste.

It is easy for us to say and to accept the thought, “Yes, we must lead a chaste and decent life in thought, word, and deed.” However, to carry out this resolve is a vastly more difficult matter, simply because all of us are sinners. Our natural flesh loves dirt, filth, and immorality. Nor can God’s law help us in putting away the evil and in living the clean life. The Gospel alone gives us the power to live a godly life. Therefore we should continually recall what it cost our Lord to make us His children and what kind of a life His children should lead.

Specifically, there are several things that we can and must do, if we are to live chastely and decently. One of the outstanding Bible passages that will provide a sure guide for us in this matter is Eph. 6:10-18. We shall examine several of the points that St. Paul presents in that section.

“Take the shield of faith” (Eph. 6:16). Our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a shield so strong that the fiery darts of the Devil, that old Evil Foe, cannot pierce it. When his temptations come flying against us, what we need to do is to rely upon our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and say, “My faith will not allow me to do this or that evil. I am God’s child. This or that is what He expects of me, and this is what I shall do with His help.” That is exactly what Dr. Luther did in his famous confrontation with the princes of the empire and of the

Church, when he said, “Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise.” That is also what Joseph did when he was tempted to fornicate (Gen. 39:9).

“Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17). The Word of our God is the offensive weapon with which to win the victory over Satan, the world and our flesh, all of which constantly tempt us to uncleanness. Our Lord used that powerful Word in His time of severe temptation and each time gained the victory (Matt. 4:1-11). Even when He was offered the entire world, if only He would bow down before Satan, our Lord said, “Get thee hence Satan, for it is written....” There are dozens of Bible passages that one can use when tempted. One of the excellent ones is I Cor. 6:13, 19-20, the passage which tells us that our bodies are not for fornication, but they are God’s temple. (We shall return to this thought in our explanation of the First Article.)

Pray knowing that “the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. 5:8). Pray, remembering the command of our Lord, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). This is certainly a most necessary admonition, for we know how easily even the great men of God at times fell into temptation. Pray that God may continually give you a clean heart, as the Psalmist prayed (51:10): “Create in me a clean heart, O God. And renew a right spirit within me.” Pray also for others that they may lead a chaste and decent life, even as Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah. With the help of God you will overcome.

Avoid evil company and sinful pleasures. Prov. 1:10 admonishes us, “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” Prov. 23:31-32 are a clear warning against overindulging in alcoholic beverages that lower or eliminate the inhibitions to the point where we may do things that we never would consider when we are perfectly sober. Many another Bible passage and story also warn us against keeping evil company.

Consequently, if you know that someone will tempt you to uncleanness, there is only one thing to do: Run, do not walk, to the nearest exit. You cannot pray, “Lord, lead us not into temptation,” and then deliberately place yourself into company or places where you will surely be tempted to sin. Can one play with fire and not be burned?

Granted, in our sex-related culture, it is often difficult to shun the unclean. Yet we can and must seek the company of God-fearing, chaste people. That is entirely in keeping with the well-known and precious words of Ps. 1:1: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

An old proverb says, “Resist the beginnings,” and that is surely Scriptural. We must resist anything that can eventually lead to sins against the Sixth Commandment. Ps. 119:115 is an appropriate word in this connection: “Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.”

Practice brotherly admonition, seeking repentance. Jonah was sent to warn the wicked citizens of Nineveh, they repented at his preaching, and God spared the city (Jonah 1-4). Jesus strongly rebuked the Pharisees, and some undoubtedly repented, although many continued in their wickedness (Matt. 23:13-29). In the same manner, we who are Christians must admonish a brother or sister who sins against the Sixth Commandment, in keeping with the principles laid down in Matt. 18:15-17. Such admonition is always to be given with the idea of moving the sinner to repentance. We certainly cannot stand idly by and see our brother harm or destroy his soul without trying to warn him. Much less, when he entices us to sin, can we say, “All right let us sin.”

Just try to imagine how many sins in word and deed would be avoided, if everyone of us would do as Christ commanded: “If your brother commits a sin, go and take the matter up with him, strictly between yourselves” (Matt. 18:15, NEB). In so doing one could possibly save another from a lifetime of misery or an eternity of damnation.

When a sinner has truly repented, one must then assure him of forgiveness in Christ, as the Psalmist wrote: “There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared” (Ps. 130:4). Then, too, we “Who are spiritual” must “restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). When the sinner repents and is assured of forgiveness in Christ, then it is necessary to tell him, as Jesus told the repentant adulteress, “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Seek the good, the pure, the holy. That is what our Lord asks us to do in such Bible passages as Phil. 4:8, where we are told to let our thoughts dwell on these things. St. Peter also admonishes us to live “lives of holiness and godliness” (II Pet. 3:11, RSV), especially in view of the imminent end of the world. And Jesus Himself pronounced a blessing upon the pure in heart (Matt. 5:8). Seeking those things are a sure antidote against the filthy poison of Satan and our flesh.

In particular, we ought to remember the Scriptural words of Dr. Luther’s explanation to each one of the Commandments: “*We should fear and love God....*” The fear to offend God with any sin and the love toward Him and His Word will surely aid us in living the kind of life that He requires of His children in the Sixth Commandment. The fear of God helps to keep us from sinning, while the love of God is the motivating force that moves us to a clean and decent life.

C. Let each honor and love his spouse (91).

This part has already been treated extensively in the Introduction (Part I).

IV. What is the Role of our Savior in the Sixth Commandment? (92)

A. He kept the Sixth Commandment perfectly, and His perfect righteousness has been reckoned to our account.

One of the fine Bible passages that expresses this truth is II Cor. 5:21: “He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (NIV). Jesus made this miraculous exchange whereby He took our sins upon Himself and paid its penalty, while at the same time He gave us His righteousness that we might stand before God pure and sinless.

B. He also furnished us with the perfect example for keeping the Sixth Commandment.

May we ever hold His perfect life in front of our eyes, striving with all the powers that He has given us to follow His perfect example. The hymn writer expressed it in this way:

Let us ever walk with Jesus, Follow His example pure
Flee the world, which would deceive us And to sin our souls allure.
Ever in His footsteps treading, Body here, yet soul above,
Full of faith and hope and love, Let us do the Father’s bidding (*The Lutheran Hymnal* 409:1).

May all of us, pastors, teachers, parents, and young people, ever live the chaste and decent life which follows from faith and leads to blessing! May we always teach our families, friends and others to do likewise!