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Practical Theology

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# **Creation, Marriage and the Christian Home**

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## **One: The Creation of Mankind**

In Genesis 1:26-28, God's summary of creation, we see "Where man comes

from". Some of you readers are familiar with some of the false views that go around today, such as the theory of evolution. There are people who call themselves Christians, and they hold that man comes from animals.

But according to God's Word, it is not so. In our passage, we read that God says, "Let us make man." So the whole idea of creating man was conceived in the mind of God. God said "Let us..." – in the plural, and this implies that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit decided way back there that man should be created.

So the whole idea of man was conceived in the mind of God.

This should help us realise that the God we are talking about is the God of the Bible, the Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ. It is not the God of one of the idols that many of our ancestors in Africa have worshipped.

But is God, the supreme being, the Creator, the Triune God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? When that conception was taking place, the idea of creation came. We shall deal more later as to this fact of creation, but it is enough here just to point out that it is God who created man. And, man owes his existence to God, and man's whole being and his movement are well known as far as God is concerned because He is his Creator.

Read Psalms 139:7-16 and see what the Psalmist is saying as he looks at himself and sees his own limitations.

So the Psalmist here knows that God knows him in and out because He is his Creator. He realises, too, that he owes

his entire existence to the Almighty Creator. People everywhere are the creation of God; they have been made by Him.

But one unfortunate thing has come in, so man broke his relationship with God. And that's why today you'll find people in different religions trying to reach out to God through different means.

For instance, recently it was reported that 4 million people in India go to the River Ganges to bathe. They did this in a festival recently, but none of those things would help. Many people in Africa have offered sacrifices, even human sacrifices, in the history of Africa, but none of these things would get man back to God.

There's only one way, and that is stated in John 14:6 where Jesus Christ says, "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no*

*man comes to the Father but by Me."*  
And so, before we think of the "Christian Home," man needs to get back to the basic fact that he owes his existence to God, and then to a direct relationship with God through Jesus Christ, because this relationship has been broken by sin.

Another aspect of the summary is "How man was made." In Genesis 1:27, 28, we see the basic teaching of God's Word concerning man and his nature. Verses 27, 28 say, *"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him. Male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'"*

How was man made? It is true that the Word of God does not tell us in detail as to the mode of creation, but some basic facts are given to us in this portion of the Scripture.

**First: man was created.** Created comes from the Hebrew word "*barah*," which can mean both coming out of non-existent material and coming out of existing material. In creating the universe, God formed the earth and brought everything into existence from nothing. But one fact that comes out here is that man is a creature. Man is a created being from the material that God Himself has made. But it emphasises the fact that God is the Creator and man is the created. Therefore, God is the Supreme Being, and He has the supreme control over the things that He has made. And that's why Jesus Christ stands above and is entirely

different from all other religious leaders: He is a Creator Himself.

In Colossians chapter 1 verse 16 we read, *"For by Him (that is by Jesus Christ) were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him."* And verse 17, *"He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."*

So the first thing we realise about man is that he is a creature, a created being, and that God Himself is the Creator, and that Jesus Christ, of course, as a member of the Trinity, is the Creator.

## **Second: Created in the Image of God**

But the second thing that we see about man is that he was created in the image of God. So you see, that is one dilemma

about man, in one aspect, he is a lowly, humble creature, almost nothing, when you compare him with God. But on the other hand, he is a king in that he is created in the image of God, in the likeness of God. So man is both lowly and also great.

Note that creation in the image of God is, of course, not physical; it doesn't mean that as you look at man, that is how God is. But that likeness in God can be looked upon in three different ways.

**First** of all, God knows what is right and what is wrong. And so, as God has that sense of right and wrong, man also has been given the ability to have that sense of right and wrong.

**Secondly**, God has a choice. He would choose "I will do this," or "I will not do this." And so man also has the ability to

choose. That ability, of course, goes with the responsibility of whatever he chooses.

**Thirdly**, man has a will; he determines, he decides and says, "I will do this," or "I will not do it." And this is in the likeness in the image of God.

God knew very well that the man who was given the right to choose, and also the ability and the will to choose, would choose to disobey God. God knew that very well and yet He created man. And of course, when you come to Genesis 3, you can see how man has chosen, really, to disobey God. But it is a fact that man was made in the likeness of God. And that is what makes man altogether different from creatures.

These two things: man is a lowly creature and insignificant, but man is also great in

that he was created in the image of God and was given some qualities which no other creature has been given.

### **Third: Created Male and Female**

But the third thing we learn about the creation of man is that "He created male and female." That means man and woman.

So when we talk of man, we are not talking of just the masculine, but of man in general; therefore, both wife and husband were created by God. Later on, we shall deal more with the roles each member of the family has to play, but this basic fact is necessary: man and woman are both related to God; they are both responsible to God. They were created by Him.

It is true that creation came later, and there are explanations about the

creation of woman, but the fact remains that God created male and female and before recognising or thinking of the Christian Home. We must recognise that there is a vertical relationship between man and God, woman and God.

## **Two: Created to Multiply and Subdue the Earth**

In our series on "The Christian Home," we started off by considering the creation of man. Let us consider Genesis 1:28 where the Word of God says, *"And God blessed them; and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."*

Why did God create man? Has that question ever come to your mind? There are some false views, of course. One view says that God needs man. And in fact God is not complete without man. But that is absolutely ridiculous. Because throughout eternity God has existed without man, and He was existing as truly

God, the omniscient, the all-powerful one. If you talk of fellowship, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit always enjoyed the fellowship within that Godhead. And look at angels, which we believe were created before the creation of man. They were the hosts of Heaven, and God could have enjoyed His fellowship with them. But why did God create man? Certainly, it was not because God lacked something.

**First** of all, God created man out of His own free will, as an object of blessing. You see, in this passage, it says, "*And God blessed them.*" He wanted to create a being in His own image on whom He would shower His wonderful blessings. This blessing could carry the idea of fertility, because, according to the Old Testament, the Jews' understanding of blessing was largely focused on fertility. And so God had that in mind when He

created a being. He would create him with the ability to reproduce.

And so, when God created man, He gave him the command to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and to subdue it.

**Secondly**, He created a being who would multiply and fill up the earth. Now this command for man to multiply, to be fruitful, and replenish the earth, begins, of course, to be fulfilled immediately when the first children were born to the world.

But in Genesis 6:1, this commandment had already begun to be fulfilled. Here, in chapter 6, verse 1, it says, *"And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them."*

Just a few hundred years later, at the time of Noah, we see that this commandment was considered as already being fulfilled, so it cannot be a final thing. In fact, we see judgment coming here because man began to turn away from God. God brought the judgment of the flood in the days of Noah, when all the people were wiped out except eight souls—Noah and his family.

In chapter 9, verse 1, God saw the need to renew the command, and so He gave them the command again to multiply and replenish the earth. Again, in Genesis 11, when you come to the Tower of Babel, you have the account of judgment coming when men began to abuse the privilege God gave them. And we don't have any further command of further multiplication.

However, it is a fact here that when God created man, He meant him to multiply and replenish the earth. The second command that God gave is so that man can subdue the earth.

In this passage from Genesis 1:28, we read these words again: "*Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.*" He also said to him, "Subdue." And then He said, "*Have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*" So in that creation God said to him that he should use the earth, that means, man should use nature to his advantage.

So God has appointed him as a representative ruler over nature. Which means man should not let nature run away with him; he is given the ability to subdue the earth and utilise it, as he is

here a representative of God. Of course, this must be to the glory of God.

**Third, God created man not only to subdue nature but also to rule over the sea, the sky, and the land.** God gave him power over things in the sea, on the land, and in the sky. So, in a way, we may call man the "King of the Earth", and what a wonderful privilege God has given to man. But when you talk of science today, people complain, for instance, of man's trip to the moon and walking on the moon. I personally believe that God has given man the brains, of course, not only to utilise these things, but to realise that he owes his existence to the Almighty God. Unfortunately, man has failed to fulfil the purpose of his creation in this world.

Furthermore, we want to examine briefly the greatest tragedy that has ever

befallen man. When you later discover that you cannot fulfil God's demands on you as a father, mother, son, or daughter, your weakness is traceable to this tragic event we are going to look into here.

In Genesis 2:16, 17, we have the words, *"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'"*

This is the ever-abiding conflict of the ages. God states the positive, with a warning of the consequences of disobedience. Satan challenges God's call to loyalty. The eternal values are obscured by the transient lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Things that will make for a happy,

united family in time and eternity are dismissed. The joy found in drunkenness, immorality, and selfish living is preferred to the things of eternal value. Thus man gropes in darkness. Physical and spiritual death have come and have become his permanent lot.

But thank God, He has done something about this, so the great gulf that has come between man and his Creator has been dealt with by God Himself. In Hebrews 9:27, 28 (the Revised Standard Version) this is what the Word of God says: *"And just as it is appointed for men to die once and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him."*

So we see that death has set in. Man, having changed his loyalty, has refused to obey God and has chosen to obey the voice of Satan. He has fallen and is therefore condemned to death. But God has done something about it. And so Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of a woman, suffered and died for the sins of the world.

Therefore, if anyone is identified with Jesus Christ and accepts Him as his personal Saviour, the judgment of God, which is not a physical death but a spiritual death--that is, eternal separation from God--is removed because Jesus Christ has suffered in our place. Also, It is only as the father, mother, and children receive the Lord Jesus Christ that they can be in the place where they can follow the instruction that the Word of God gives us concerning the family.

So my appeal to you is, first of all, to realise this great gulf that has been established between you and your God. Then, also to point out the fact that Jesus Christ has done something about it. He suffered there on the cross, He bore the judgment; He has removed the curse. Therefore, as you accept Him today, you are His child today and forevermore.

## **Three: God's Purpose for Marriage**

We come to the origin of the Christian home. Most of us are familiar with this common saying, "North or South, East or West, home is the best", but how far is this really true? In your case, does your husband really look forward to coming home as the best place to be after all the transactions in his office, firm, or factory? Does your wife really feel that her black office, i.e. the kitchen, the table and the bedroom truly make home the best place to come to or to be in? How much do your children look forward to coming home from school? Unless your answers are positive, the above saying does not apply to you. If you, however, really want to make home the best of all places, then follow God's direction.

### **First, the origin of the Christian home.**

The founder of the Christian home is

God Himself, the Almighty Creator of man and woman. In Matthew 19:6, Jesus Christ says, *"What God has joined, no one should put asunder."* In order to answer his critics, the Pharisees, Jesus went beyond all marriages which had been tempted with human weaknesses, to the very origin of marriage.

He brought the focus to the accounts in Genesis 2:21–24. *"So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, He made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh."*

According to verse 25, "the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

Instead of moulding another man out of the earth as a rival for Adam, or taking from Adam's head to rule him or even from his feet to be trampled upon, God took a rib from man's side, under his arm to be protected and closest to his heart to be loved, and with it he built a woman, another sex.

Adam, without one rib, is therefore incomplete. Man and woman, therefore, need each other. Out of the two halves, God performed the first wedding in human history. Verse 24 again says: *"Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."* This is the first statement of marriage of any kind. Adam and Eve did not have a father or mother,

and yet God said to them, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."*

Obviously, this first wedding was to be a model for all sons and daughters of men who will have parents in the future. This shows the significance of marriage. This is also a strong argument in favour of the principle of one husband and one wife. That Jesus Christ Himself performed His first miracle at a wedding ceremony is a further, convincing proof that God views marriage with extreme favour and respect. If you are already married, how does your marriage compare with this first wedding service performed by God?

If you are yet to be married, would you be happy to invite Jesus to your wedding, even as the wedding at Cana of Galilee took place? In the months and

years ahead, would you be prepared to hang this motto on your walls and really mean it? I am sure many of you have seen this motto. It's a beautiful one. This is what it says: *"Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation."* Would you have that motto in your home and really mean it?

If, however, you are a Christian, then of course you have Jesus in your heart, as a husband or a wife or even as a child. And if you have Jesus Christ in your individual lives, you have made a very good beginning in your Christian home; you are following the model of the home established by God Himself. As you do that, Jesus Christ will truly become the Lord of your home.

How many homes today, though their members may call themselves Christians,

are places where young children are not afraid to come back? I have heard of some children in a Christian boarding school who would rather stay back at school during a holiday than go home to their parents. What a sad situation!

## **Second, God's Purpose For Marriage.**

Let's now ask ourselves: "For what purpose did God institute marriage?"

As we mentioned earlier, marriage is the foundation of the Christian home. It was instituted by God the Creator Himself. Jesus Christ underscores its importance by performing the first miracle at a wedding. But why do people not just mate for reproduction as animals do? Are children necessary for the validity of marriage? In many situations in Africa today, if a couple does not have children, the marriage is considered invalid. In many cases, in fact, the

husband would seek a second wife because his wife is not bearing children, or vice versa. But is having children the only reason for marriage?

The Word of God gives us four reasons for marriage.

### **First, marriage is instituted for companionship.**

In Genesis 2:18, the Word of God says, *"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him a helper fit for him for a helpmate.'"* It is not good for a man to be alone. Adam was living in the midst of plenty, in a perfect setting. He has the animals, the trees, the beautiful nature, and everything to enjoy there, but something was missing.

God himself saw that it was not good, that it was not the ideal for a man to be

alone. Marriage, therefore, is the normal thing for man. To stay unmarried is the exception to the rule. That is why remaining single has to be a special gift from God Himself. Even Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:7, *"I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another."* The apostle Paul, from the evidence we find in the scriptures, remained single, and he appreciated it greatly, as he saw it as a gift from God. So, he was saying that if any Christian would choose to remain single today and considers it a gift from God, that is fine, but otherwise marriage is the normal thing for a man and a woman.

A husband and wife are not fulfilling the conditions of marriage if they do not enjoy each other's company, for marriage was instituted for companionship. It grieves God when

husband and wife get so mad at each other that they fail to talk to each other. Yet this type of thing does happen! If that is the case with you, apologise to each other and to God, and come back to the enjoyment of the company of each other and of the Lord Himself. You see, marriage can be compared to a triangle, with God at the top (the apex), and on one side the husband, on the other the wife. Thus, you have both the vertical relationship between each family member and God and the horizontal relationship between the husband and the wife.

## **Second marriage is instituted for unity.**

In Genesis 2:24, we read: *"Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."* Adam and Eve did not have a father and mother, but God knew and

planned that Isaac and Sarah, or John and Janet, or James and Joy would someday have parents.

The time would come when they would have to say goodbye to their parents. But after breaking loose from their parents, the grown-up boy and girl would need to establish ties with new partners as husband and wife. They would become one flesh.

The union obviously will include the physical. The conception of the child takes the physical connection of father and mother. Then gradually the child grows. In this new union within marriage, husband and wife draw closer and closer as they enjoy their physical union. This comes about through working together, sitting together, talking together, and, of course, sleeping together.

But the union is not only physical; it is psychological and even spiritual. When we say John resembles his father, it may mean physical features, but it may also mean character traits. I have been told many times that our youngest son, Bulus, walks and talks just like me. In marriage, unity should include psychological harmony, the way we think, our sense of values, and our philosophy of life. That is why it takes a Christian husband and a Christian wife to fulfil God's ideal of union in marriage.

**Third, marriage is simply for the enjoyment of each other sexually, socially and psychologically.**

There has been an ironic view of looking at sex as part of the curse. In Genesis 2:35, Adam and Eve are called man and wife, and their physical condition is described as naked and not ashamed. This indicates that sex was an enjoyable

practice before the fall and the curse. Even after the fall when God declared judgment upon him in Genesis 3:16, sex remained one of the most enjoyable things in life for man and wife.

God told Eve, *"I shall greatly multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children yet your desire shall be to you husband and he shall rule over you."*

In spite of the pain of pregnancy and childbirth, the woman will still enjoy sex with her husband. The Word of God commands, *"enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun."* (Ecclesiastes 9:9). Sex within marriage is right and beautiful. It is the climax of the joy of marriage socially, psychologically, and physically. That is

why husband and wife should preserve their purity for each other.

While sex within marriage is God's beautiful gift to man and woman, sex outside marriage is a terrible sin. It will be judged by God, in this life and on the Judgment Day. The reason is that marriage is for the purity of life, as seen in 1 Corinthians 7:1-2. *"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me. It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."*

While verse one forbids a man from touching a woman, i.e. from having a sexual relationship with just any woman, verse two commands him to take his own wife as a safeguard. This is because God knows that within man there is a sexual urge that needs to be satisfied.

Writing to Christian's in the pagan society of Thessalonica, Paul tells us this in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7. *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of one should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in lustful passion, even as the Gentiles which know not God; that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."*

In some African cultures, fornication is not only tolerated but is encouraged as a test of fertility before marriage. This practice is definitely forbidden by the Word of God. This is where Christianity condemns a non-Christian cultural

practice. Whether the culture be African, American, Asian, or whatever, the Word of God stands for purity. The young man and the young woman should not have any sexual relationship before marriage. Sex belongs only to marriage.

#### **Fourth, marriage is childbearing.**

God commanded Adam and Eve to "*be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.*" After God's judgment upon the sinful generation of Noah, which left only the eight members of the family of Noah alive, God repeated the command for procreation, i.e. for childbearing, in Genesis 9:7. God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.*"

In fulfilling this command, man once again became selfish. Instead of spreading out and glorifying God through his use of God's creation, man

aspired to usurp God's position by building a tower to reach heaven. God once again intervened, scattering man across the earth.

The command to multiply was, however, not repeated again, but man continued to grow. Today, the population explosion is becoming a threat to human existence. We shall see more of this later, but let us remind ourselves that God established marriage for companionship, unity, the pleasure of husband and wife, purity of life, and, finally, childbearing.

### **Lack Of Children**

Therefore, if one of these four reasons is missing, such as the lack of children, the marriage is still valid. If God does not give you children, do not reject your partner or become bitter. Continue to love each other and enjoy the other

aspects of married life. You can adopt a child to bring added joy to your family.

I know of a Christian family in Nigeria that has never had any children. They adopted three children, and all are living very happy lives, praising the Lord. This is because they realise that marriage has dimensions beyond childbearing.

## **Family Planning**

Then comes another one, which is controversial, and I feel that, as Christians, we should speak our minds on it. It is the subject of family planning. The question of family planning is a burning issue today, in which opinions differ even among dedicated Christians. All we want to point out here is to present the facts as we see them and are convinced about them. The final decision about what a husband and wife should

do depends entirely upon you and the Lord. Since the question of a Christian home affects the father, the mother, and the children, it is necessary to discuss the problem frankly and fairly.

When people hear of family planning, they immediately jump to the conclusion that it means you must not have more than one or two children. Family planning is not only birth control, though it includes that. It simply means planning to have children when the husband and wife feel that they want and can afford children and can responsibly bring them up. Sometimes it includes efforts to get children when barrenness is the situation. It may be necessary to adopt children when they do not come naturally.

Family planning also means that the couple can decide whether they want,

can have, and can care for two or twelve children. It is irresponsible to bring into the world children that one cannot afford to care for sufficiently.

- **Arguments Against Family Planning.**

Let us first examine some of the arguments people bring against family planning.

**Firstly**, they argue that it is contravening God's operation in nature, but in our study of God's command to man, He chose man to subdue nature.

**Secondly**, they argue that this is a disobedience to God's command in Genesis 1:28, where He tells man to multiply and replenish the earth.

**Thirdly**, some people say it is a clever method the colonialists have devised to reduce Africa's population so that they may come back and win the war someday.

In fact, one day I heard a very learned professor of a University in Nigeria saying something like this, "*The Americans and the British are so clever and are telling us to reduce our population so that they may come back and rule us again and subdue us.*" I was surprised that people could be so naive, because this is, in fact, the system practised in Western nations.

**Fourthly**, they say that Africa has plenty of land yet to be utilised.

**Fifthly**, they argue that it is murder to practice family planning.

- **God's Word and Family Planning.**

We cannot go into every one of these reasons, but let us briefly look at what the Word of God says. The Word of God does not give us a plain answer either for or against family planning.

**First** of all, in the Old Testament, pregnancy is God's gift according to Genesis 4:1. Abortion on demand is sin, but not family planning, because in the question of family planning, life has not yet become a reality.

**Second**, we find that the command to reproduce also goes with the command to subdue the earth. (See Genesis 1:28). Man is given the power to use God's creation for his enjoyment, to the glory of God. The barren earth in Adam's day

is not the same today. God told man in those days that he should subdue and multiply and fill the earth. But we also know very well that the earth is full of people today, and therefore, the population explosion is becoming a problem. God's command to man is not only to multiply, but also that man should use his intelligence and knowledge, with regard to the children he brings into the world.

Some people bring up the case of one man called Onan, in Genesis 38:9. Onan, we are told, was told to have sex with the wife of his deceased brother in order that he might produce children in honour of his brother. Onan threw it out, so that the wife might not conceive. Because God judged him, some people base their argument on this to say that family planning is wrong. But the heart of the matter is that it was the selfishness of

Onan that God was against. Because he did not want his brother to have children.

In Matthew 19:12, Jesus Christ tells us that some people can be made eunuchs (i.e. without having children) for the purpose of the Kingdom of God.

There is no clear prohibition of birth control in the Old Testament, and apparently, birth control was in fact practised (read Leviticus 15:16-19 and 20:10-21). Sexual sins of different kinds are condemned, and yet family planning is not included among those sins that were condemned. So we cannot find the answer in the Scriptures that family planning is definitely wrong.

In the New Testament, there is no clear objection to any method of family planning. Neither is there a direct

encouragement for the practice except for the matter of becoming eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

The following principles can be deduced in favour of the practice.

**Firstly**, a man must be able to adequately cater for his own family. In 1 Timothy 5:8, it says that one who cannot provide for his family is worse than an unbeliever. Therefore, a person must bring into the world only the children that he can adequately take care of.

**Secondly**, to cater for children's needs more than just providing material things. The home must not be like a barrack with everyone going their own way. Proper nurture and a sense of personal love are the prerogatives of each individual child. (Read Colossians 3:21; Ephesians 6:4).

**Thirdly**, a sexual relationship is not bound up with the birth of children, but it can be an end in itself.

**Fourthly**, for husband and wife to become one flesh, wisdom on regulating childbirth is required. Therefore, we conclude that family planning is not necessarily wrong. Again, as we said at the beginning, it's up to each individual to decide. Pray and ask the Lord to show you what to do. Regarding the different methods for family planning, I will leave this with you. You can consult a hospital or a local clinic. This decision must be made between husband and wife.

I will say this: to give family planning to an unmarried young person is definitely encouraging immorality, and this is condemned in the Word of God.



## **Four: Contributing to the Home**

Having addressed the issue of family planning, let us now turn to the role of each member of the Christian Home. I want you to read this beautiful poem: What makes a home Christian?

*Where family prayer is daily said,  
God's Word is regularly read,  
and faith in Christ is never dead:  
That is a Christian Home.*

*Where father, mother, sister, brother,  
All have love for one another,  
And no one ever hates the other:  
That is a Christian Home.*

*Where Jesus Christ is Host  
and through Whom we have eternal rest  
and in Him are forever blessed;  
That is a Christian Home.*

In Joshua 24:15, we read this, "*But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" I want to add these words to the beautiful poem. A Christian home is one in which each family member is directly related to Jesus Christ. He or she seeks to manifest Christ in the home and in the community through the proper role assigned to him or her in God's Word.

We shall start off by looking at the role of the father, the assigned head of the home. Then we shall look at the mother, the heart of the home, and then the children are in the home's hands.

For this study, I want you husbands and wives to sit down together with your Bibles in hand and pray first, then read this passage: Ephesians 5:21-33 (other references in conjunction with this

passage are 1 Peter 3:1-7 and Colossians 3:18-25).

A good Christian family produces a good Christian community.

- **The Husband: the Head of the Home**

From my research in the Word of God, I have found eleven commandments that will be very helpful to husbands.

Dr. Byang Kato believed the husband is the head of the home, the wife is the heart and the children are the hands.

Here is his advice for husbands

1. Respect for your wife. Realise that she is an equal partner with you before God.
2. Recognise the woman's weakness and help her in every way. 1 Peter 3:7 tells us to remember that she is the weaker vessel.

3. Share your secrets with her exclusively. Don't share your secrets with any other woman but your wife. You two are one, and she is a part of your body (Ephesians 5:31). The fourth
4. Seek her advice in all your major expenditures, that is, the big things you want to spend money on.
5. Care for her needs and those of your family as much as possible. 1 Timothy 5:8 tells us that he who does not provide for his own family is worse than an unbeliever or an infidel.
6. Cooperate with her in disciplining the children.
7. Meet her reasonable sex demands. 1 Corinthians 7:5 tells us that husband and wife should not deny each other that.

8. Show her love even during her difficult times, for example, during her periods, and even when she has some nasty things to say, just show her love.
9. Get her to share your enthusiasm for your work.
10. Abstain from extra-marital relationships, that is, having sex or friendship with other women. Stick to your wife.
11. Seek to promote the unity of your marriage.

- **The Wife - the Heart of the Home**

The husband is the appointed head of the home, but you cannot have a head without the body. The head cannot meet the body's needs without the heart, so we may view the woman as the heart of the home.

If the head gives direction to the body, it is the heart that gives provisions, pumping blood to all parts of the body. Maybe that's why God chose the rib to make a woman, because the rib is the closest to the heart (see Ephesians 5:21; 6-1-9; 1 Peter 3:1-7 and Colossians 3:18-29).

Playing your proper role is, of course, different from discrimination. We hear of "Women's Liberation" today—in some cases, of course, to cry for liberation may be right. For example, why should a woman teacher get paid less than her male counterpart when they are both teaching?

But certainly, when it comes to playing a role, it is wrong for a woman to claim to be the head of the family. It is obvious

from the Word of God that the husband is the head of the family.

Proverbs 31:10-31 tells us what a woman does. Here are the basic principles.

1. The care of her husband. Verses 11-12 tell us this: *"the heart of her husband safely trusts in her, so that he shall have no need of her spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."* So, whatever the wife is going to do, whether working or anything else, she must make sure that she has satisfied and taken care of the needs of her husband.
2. The care of the children. It says, *"she riseth also while it is yet night and giveth meat to her household and a portion to her*

*maidens.*" So, whatever she does, she wants to make sure the children given to her are her number one priority. If her going to work will make the children feel like orphans, because they lack the attention they need, then she had better quit.

However, if she can provide for their needs and, at the same time, give them the attention they need, she can work. But these first two things are the first priorities: caring for her husband and caring for her children.

3. Her testimony in the community where she is.
4. And the last one is the question of wisdom. This covers her fear of the Lord and is the most important.

So a woman should remember her husband, the children, and then her testimony in the community through her wisdom and fear of the Lord.

Since we gave the eleven commandments for the husband, let us do the same for the wife. Here are the eleven commandments that we give to the wife.

1. You should recognise your husband as the head of the family. Seek and follow your husband's advice on all major issues regarding your shopping and the type of things you should buy.
2. Unite with your husband as much as possible in child discipline.
3. Respect your husband's career and cheer him up when he is

discouraged in his work. Make your home a place that he will be happy to come back to and find encouragement.

4. Share your personal interests with your husband.
5. Meet your husband's reasonable demand for sex.
6. Remember to take care of your husband's clothes - washing them and cleaning them wherever possible in your situation. Try to make him comfortable and appear decent.
7. Share your secrets exclusively with your husband. Do not gossip with other women.
8. Show your interest in handling the Christian home.
9. Avoid extramarital sex.
10. Look at marriage as ordained by God.
11. Be hard-working.

- **Children: the Hands of the Home**

We shall now look at the role of the children in the family (Colossians 3:18-22, taking special note of verse 20; another relevant passage is Ephesians 6:1-9).

Before we look at what is expected of children, let us remind parents of their responsibility to their children. Today, the problem of children causing havoc in different nations is caused by parents' irresponsibility towards the children.

Some parents are just interested in producing lots of children, but they don't take time to ask, "*Now what will the child be?*" Remember, we have said, if the father is the head of the family, and the wife is the heart, the children are the

hands. They are the extension of the family. Would you like your child to be what you will be, or what you have been, or will you want him to go astray? Many parents today are producing delinquent children—children who are not responsible.

I know, of course, that is not your wish, so let's take this as a warning. And I know there are many parents who are anxious to bring up their children in the knowledge of the Lord, and they do their very best to bring them up to His glory.

But what about the children? Ephesians 6:1, 2 says, *"Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother."*

Therefore, your responsibility as children is:

1. To obey your parents. Colossians 3:20 says, "*Children obey your parents in all things.*"
2. Respect them and honour them so that your obedience is not just in fear but in respect and consideration that God has given you to them. You should obey and respect them even as you would also respect the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord give you a very happy Christian home.