

# EUROPEAN PARENT'S AND CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE

*Raising up the Next Generation for the  
Church Life*

**Outlines and Reading Materials**

July 26—August 1, 2015

*Male Ciche, Poland*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

House: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

## **RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE**

### **Message One**

#### **The Children's Work being to Build Children Up in their Humanity to be Proper Human Beings**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:7; Matt. 19:19; Prov. 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 6:1-2, 4; Rom. 9:21,  
23; 13:1  
2 Tim. 2:20-21; Gal. 3:24; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 3:2

**I. Today, many young people have been damaged with respect to their character; it is because of this that we have a children's work for the children; we need to build up their character—1 Tim. 3:7; Acts 6:3; Prov. 28:20a:**

- A. The children must be built up as proper human beings; this is a matter of character, that is, behavior and habit—Matt. 5:16.
- B. From their youth they must learn to honor their parents, love their brothers and sisters, and respect others—19:19.
- C. We do not need to give the young ones too much knowledge of the Bible; we should rather build them up with the proper ethics and morality that will constitute a proper character—Prov. 22:6.

**II. Character has very much to do with the Lord's service; consider those persons in the Bible whom God used; they were used by God because they possessed a character that was fit for His use—Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 2:21; 4:11:**

- A. Since Abraham, Moses, and Paul all had an excellent character, God greatly used them; the destiny of our usefulness to the Lord hinges on our character—Acts 15:40; Luke 24:27; Matt. 1:2.
- B. Character is a serious matter; the measure of grace we receive of the Lord and the degree to which the function of that grace is manifested are determined by the kind of character that we have—Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10.

**III. To build up a proper humanity is the way to prepare the children to be the best material to receive God's grace—Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:5; Matt. 16:18:**

- A. It is best to help the children grow up in their humanity by helping them know what a proper human being is; how to honor their parents, and how to be a proper child—Eph. 6:1-2; Col. 1:10; Prov. 22:6.
- B. Since our families are part of the fallen race, we parents must exercise God's ordination to restrict our children by ethical teachings, regulations, and discipline.
- C. For proper human living in your home, you must teach your children to behave properly by honoring their parents, caring for their brothers and sisters, respecting their neighbors, and not stealing—v. 6; Eph. 6:4.
- D. Because children are too young to behave according to Christ, they must be taught to behave according to culture; children are preserved by culture while they are growing up—Rom. 13:1; Gal. 3:23.
- E. In caring for their children, Christian parents need to preach the law to them; we should not first preach grace to the children; if we give them regulations according to the law, the law will keep them in custody for Christ—2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 13:1; Gal. 3:24.

**IV. To compile material for the teachers, we need a number of brothers who know the truth and are also skilled in writing—1 Tim. 3:15; 2:4; Titus 1:1:**

- A. We should give the five- and six-year-olds one thing and the seven- and eight-year-olds something else; we need some brothers and sisters who understand this principle to prepare the lessons—1 John 2:12-13.
- B. This requires the careful work of the brothers who compile the teaching material so that the children do not receive premature knowledge—1 Tim. 1:4; Mark 4:8, 11:
  - 1. The most important matter is to build up the humanity and character of the children; this is neglected by many parents today.
  - 2. There is the need for some brothers and sisters to spend the time to prepare lessons and instructions on how to use them—Rom. 12:7; cf. 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 John 2:27.
  - 3. We should not prepare uniform printed lessons to be read in each class; perhaps half a page of points, illustrations, and instructions is adequate; it should be easy to prepare lessons in this way.

**V. When many of us were young, we received too much knowledge that only damaged us; we were given many stories, but we were not given the proper verses in a practical way—1 Cor. 3:2; Titus 3:9; 1 Cor. 8:2-3:**

- A. After hearing all the teachings and stories from the Bible, young ones become "slippery" so that nothing sticks to them; we must not spoil the young ones in this way.
- B. Those who have never heard the stories before are easily inspired by them; this is why we should withhold certain stories and simply help the children to know the things of humanity and of God in a practical way—Phil. 4:9.
- C. Then when they are saved and begin to attend the church meetings, what they hear will be new to them.
- D. We have to beware of two things; first, there is the possibility of premature spiritual knowledge; second, we can give away biblical truths too cheaply:
  - 1. Some teachers are too spiritual; they tell children teachings that are too high and too spiritual; this gives the children premature spiritual knowledge—1 Cor. 3:2.
  - 2. Other teachers treat spiritual things too lightly in an attempt to make the children understand; their speaking does not do justice to the spiritual weight of their subject; this gives away the truth too cheaply—John 5:39; 1 Tim. 6:19.

## RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION IN THE CHURCH LIFE

### Message Two

#### **The Function of the Law as a Child-conductor to Lead the Children to Christ**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:10; 3:9; Rom. 5:20, Gal. 3:19; Exo. 20:3-17;  
Rom. 7:7-8; 8:3; 3:19-20; Gal. 3:23-24

**VI. God's intention in His economy is to accomplish a goal, that is, for the Divine Trinity to gain man to be His organism; God's economy is not to work out man's goodness; to work out man's goodness is something of God's enemy—Eph. 1:10; 3:9; Mark 10:17-18:**

- A. Due to man's fall and his not knowing himself, God was forced to insert, to add, the law; to add implies that something was not there originally; it was added later in order to expose man's real condition and true nature and thus show man the true picture of himself—Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19.
- B. The law describes to us what kind of God He is, what kind of image He bears, and what kind of attributes He possesses; hence, the law as God's portrait is called "the testimony" of God in the Old Testament—Exo. 32:15; Psalms 78:5.
- C. God considers His law as His requirement upon sinners; the contents of the law mainly are the Ten Commandments:
  - 1. The first three commandments require us to have only God and not have any idols aside from God—Exo. 20:3-7.
  - 2. The fourth commandment requiring man to take only God and all that God has accomplished for man as man's satisfaction and rest—Exo. 20:8-11.
  - 3. The fifth commandment requiring man to honor his parents and trace back to his source, his origin, the God who created man—Exo. 20:12.
  - 4. The sixth through the tenth commandments requiring man to live out the virtues that express God according to God's attributes—Exo. 20:13-17.
- D. The law of God being able only to expose man's sinful nature and wicked deeds—Rom. 3:20b; 5:20a.

**VII. As the testimony of God, the law is a portrait or photograph of God, thus, the first function of the law is to reveal God; in decreeing the law, God's intention was to reveal to His chosen and redeemed people what kind of God He is—Exo. 19:3-6:**

- A. He is a jealous God—Exo. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; Rom. 9:13; 2 Cor. 11:2.
- B. He is a holy God—Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48.
- C. He is a loving God—Exo. 20:12-14; Matt. 22:37-40; Gal. 5:14.
- D. He is a righteous God—Exo. 20:5-6.
- E. He is a truthful God—Exo. 20:16; 1 John 1:5; John 8:44.
- F. He is a pure God—Exo. 20:17; Col. 3:5; Rom. 7:7-8.

**VIII. The second function of God's law is to cause His people to realize that they are fallen and far away from God; as a sinful and corrupt people, it is not possible for them to please God—Rom. 7:7-8, 11; Gal. 3:19:**

- A. The Children of Israel presumed that they could do whatever God required; they did not know that they were unable to fulfill His commandments and that they stood in need of His mercy—cf. Exo. 19:7-8.
- B. The function of the law on the negative side is to expose our sinfulness; apart from the law, we cannot know sin; but when the law comes, sin is exposed—

Rom. 5:13, 20; 4:15; 7:7-8, 11, 13; Gal. 3:19.

C. The law, therefore, exposes our condition, showing us that it is impossible for sinners to fulfill the requirements of God's law—Rom. 8:3:

1. The law of God not being able to give life—Gal. 3:21.
2. There being something that the law of God could not do in that it was weak through the flesh of sinners—Rom. 8:3a.

**IX. A third function of the law is the function of subduing us; when we are exposed and subdued, we shall become humble before God; if we did not have the law, we would never realize how sinful we are, and we would never be subdued—Rom. 3:19; cf. Matt. 19:16-26.**

**X. The law of God has a positive function in God's hand; the law has become the custodian and child-conductor of God's chosen people to bring them to Christ—grace—Gal. 3:23-24:**

- A. In caring for their children, Christian parents need to preach the law to them; we should not first preach grace to the children—Duet. 6:7, 20-21; 2 Tim. 3:15.
- B. If we give them regulations according to the law, the law will keep them in custody for Christ; thus, we should first give them the law in a strong way.
- C. The law will expose them, guard them, and keep them, serving as a custodian to keep them for Christ.
- D. The law was used by God as a custodian, a guardian, a child-conductor, to watch over His chosen people before Christ came, and to escort and conduct them to Christ at the proper time—v. 24.

## **RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION IN THE CHURCH LIFE**

### **Message Three**

#### **Seeing the Children's Need for Redemption, the Source of Wickedness and the Way of Restriction, and Revering God for a Proper Human Life**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:10; 3:9; Rev. 21:2; 1 Pet. 1:17-18; Rom. 6:4-6; Gal. 2:20;  
1 Pet. 2:17; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 3:5-8, 9-10

#### **XI. God's economy is that God became man so that man may become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead to produce the organism of the Triune God, the Body of Christ, which consummates the New Jerusalem—Eph. 1:10; 3:9; Rev. 21:2, 10:**

- A. A great part of God's economy is His redemption; redemption indicates that something is wrong, requiring a rescue and a remedy—Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14:
  - 1. Redemption is needed because after God created man for the fulfillment of His economy, the subtle one, Satan, came in to seduce man from the line of God's economy to sin—1 Pet. 1:18-19.
  - 2. Man fell into sin, and sin as the sinful nature of Satan was injected by Satan into man's nature; as a result, the God-created man became sin, poisoned by Satan—Rom. 7:8, 11, 17, 20.
- B. The Bible shows us that in God's redemption the first part is to terminate, to destroy, the fallen old man—Rom. 6:4-5; Gal. 2:20.
- C. The second part is to rescue what was created by God, the God-created humanity; something remains of the humanity created by God, and God is not willing to give it up but will maintain it and bring it back to Himself.
- D. In the third part of His redemption, God uplifts the redeemed God-created humanity; this means that God uplifted the redeemed humanity by dispensing Himself into it—Eph. 4:24:
  - 1. To bring back the lost God-created man is actually to resurrect the God-created man; in resurrection God used His own life, nature, and element as the substance to uplift the redeemed created man—2:5-6.
  - 2. God's intention is no longer with the old man; in the sight of God, the old man has been finished, terminated, and thus he no longer exists—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20.

#### **XII. We need to see clearly the source of wickedness and the way of restriction revealed in Romans—1:18-32; 2:1-16:**

- A. Whether we are good or bad, religious or non-religious, we are under God's condemnation; we need to see the source of evil, the source of wickedness and due to this source mankind is evil—3:9-20.
  - 1. The first element in the source of wickedness is holding down the truth in unrighteousness; there is reality in this universe, and the prime reality is God Himself—1:18.
  - 2. Although mankind knew there was God, they tested and tried Him, eventually deciding not to hold Him in their full knowledge; they disapproved of holding God in their full knowledge—1:28.
  - 3. In the ancient times man knew God, but did not glorify Him as God; neither did they thank Him, worship Him, or serve Him; refusing to glorify God, thank God, worship God, and serve God is a major aspect of the source of wickedness—1:21, 25.

4. Then mankind exchanged God; it is terrible to exchange God, for God is the glory and the reality of the universe; to exchange God means to give Him up for something else (idols)—1:23, 25.
- B. There is a way to restrict this wickedness and we need to see the way of restriction; all of us, especially the young people, need to pay our full attention to this way of restriction:
  1. The first item in the way of restriction is knowing God by His creation; the invisible things of God, His eternal power and divine nature, can be apprehended by His creation—1:19-20.
  2. We must hold the reality of God in righteousness, approving of keeping God in our full knowledge; we need to glorify, thank, worship, and serve Him—1:18, 21, 25, 28.
  3. We need to do things according to our nature; as human beings, we have a nature which God created good, and we need to act according to it—2:14-15.
  4. Along with our good nature, we also have a conscience; the conscience is a wonderful entity, and we should listen to it—2:15.
  5. In addition to our nature and our conscience, we have the reasonings in our mind; we need to take care of our nature, our conscience, and the reasonings within us—2:15.

**XIII. In the book of Proverbs we see the principles for man to live a proper human life; the first principle for man to live a proper human life is revering God; we should not only worship God but also revere Him—cf. Isa. 6:1-7; 26:10; 1 Kings 22:19; Dan. 7:9; Rev. 1:13-17:**

- A. To revere God is to consider and regard Him in everything, never forgetting that He is the wonderful God who has created us—John 1:3; Heb. 1:2:
  1. Revering God stops us from doing evil—Exo. 20:20.
  2. Revering God also causes us to be touched by the sufferings of others and to show mercy and compassion to them.
- B. To revere God is to fear God—1 Pet. 2:17; cf. Rom. 3:18; Psa. 36:1:
  1. The fear of God is a holy fear, a healthy, serious caution that leads us to behave holily—1 Pet. 1:17; 2:17; 3:2, 16; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:28-29.
  2. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge—Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33a.
  3. The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life—14:26-27.
- C. To revere God is to trust in Him—3:5-8; Psa. 37:3-5; cf. 22:9.
- D. To revere God means that we honor God—Prov. 3:9-10.

## **RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION IN THE CHURCH LIFE**

### **Message Four**

#### **Building Up the Children's Character to be Vessels unto Honor**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:8-9; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8, 10-12

**I. Whereas our words represent our person, our character is our very person; a person's usefulness, the things which can be entrusted to him, the responsibilities he can bear, and the things he is able to accomplish altogether depend on his character—cf. Phil.4:8:**

- A. Character has very much to do with the Lord's service; consider those persons in the Bible whom God used; they were used by God because they possessed a character that was fit for His use—Dan. 1:3-4; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 4:11:
  - 1. Since Abraham, Moses, and Paul all had an excellent character, God greatly used them; the destiny of our usefulness to the Lord hinges on our character—Acts 15:40; Matt. 1:2; cf. Heb. 11:17-19, 24-27; 2 Tim. 4:7-8.
  - 2. Moses' character was nearly perfect, as we see in the Old Testament—cf. Heb. 11:23-27:
    - a. First, he received the knowledge of God from his parents when he was young; this is a factor that contributed to the development of his character—cf. Acts 7:20-21.
    - b. Second, God prepared an environment, bringing him to the Egyptian palace to learn the culture of that age; this also was a factor in the cultivation of his character—cf. vv. 22-23.
    - c. Third, God sent him to the wilderness for forty years for character training—cf. vv. 23-29.
    - d. Once a prince in the Egyptian palace, he now shepherded a flock, learning patience and humility and spontaneously acquiring a lowly character—Num. 12:3.
  - 3. Paul in the New Testament was a man who is tender, helpful, accommodating, and frank; he was full of Christ, and the fire of Christ was burning within him and upon him.

**II. Our character is constituted of our inborn nature plus our acquired habits' whereas disposition is inborn, character is cultivated; a person's character is thirty percent nature and seventy percent habit:**

- A. For this reason, a young person must pay full attention to character building because acquired habits are more important than inborn nature.
- B. Never neglect your daily living, for it builds up your habits which is able to mold your character; beginning today you need to have a change in your concepts concerning everything great and small:
  - 1. In our sleeping, in our rising up, in our dressing, and in every detail of our life we should be very strict to be built up in a good character and learn to take care of even the small matters in a proper way—Mark 1:35.
  - 2. We must be strict in our speaking; we have to learn what to say when we talk to others; we should not be free and loose to express ourselves—Titus 2:8; Eph. 4:29; 5:4; Col. 3:8; cf. John 7:18.
  - 3. Every matter related to our life should be in order:
    - a. You need to have a set time to rise up, a set time to pray, a set time to read the Word, and a set time to study; everything must have a set

time.

- b. We need to be polite and should rush to do the unpleasant jobs and let others do the easy ones; this is not life but is the sign of a good character.
- C. The cultivation of a person's character is almost complete by the time he reaches the age of fifteen and if a person's character is not changed before he is fifty years old, then it will be impossible to change his character.

**III. Character is the way you behave as a person, plus the person behind such behavior; a person's character is his disposition which has become his way of living—1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8:**

- A. When our inborn nature combined with our acquired habits become the way we live, the result is our character; neither your spirit, nor your soul, nor your body can replace you; nearly your whole being exists in your character—cf. 2:9-12.
- B. A person who is loose in his character cannot be three-dimensional and is like a flat, two-dimensional surface which cannot be a vessel and cannot contain anything—cf. Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7; Acts 9:15; 2 Tim. 2:20.
- C. Character is a serious matter; the measure of grace we receive of the Lord and the degree to which the function of that grace is manifested are determined by the kind of character that we have—Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10.

**IV. Today, many young people have been damaged with respect to their character; it is because of this that we have a children's work for the children; we need to build up their character—Acts 6:3; Prov. 28:20a:**

- A. The children must be built up as proper human beings; this is a matter of character, that is, behavior and habit—Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15.
- B. From their youth they must learn to honor their parents, love their brothers and sisters, and respect others—Matt. 19:19.
- C. We do not need to give the young ones too much knowledge of the Bible; we should rather build them up with the proper ethics and morality that will constitute a proper character—Prov. 22:6.
- D. The most important matter is to build up the humanity and character of the children; this is neglected by many parents today:
  - 1. The teachings of Confucius and Chinese ethics build up character according to the self with self-pride and self-confidence.
  - 2. The kind of character building we practice is absolutely different; we should build up the children in the way of realizing that they can do nothing in themselves because they are fallen and need a higher life—John 15:5; Phil. 4:13.

**V. We must realize that life and character are not independent of each other; our life and our character should be blended as one; although character does not equal life, life can become a great part of our character; the life within us can be mingled with our outward character.**

## **RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE**

### **Message Five**

#### **Compiling Children's Lessons that Build up a Proper Humanity and Lead the Children into a Proper Enjoyment (1)**

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:40, 51-52

**I. When we speak of the children's work, we are referring to children who have not graduated from elementary school but are more than five years old; these are the target of our children's work:**

- A. In Christianity, doing the children's work is considered to be like operating a school; hence, it is called Sunday school:
  - 1. In the Sunday school classes they may use textbooks; we do not agree with this method; we feel that our children's meeting should not have the flavor of a Sunday school—Rev. 18:4; Heb. 13:13.
  - 2. From our experience we feel that if we regard the children's work as a school and teach our children from textbooks, it will be of more harm than benefit to them:
    - a. This method educates the children with premature knowledge; later, when the children grow up, they will not be very open to listen to the truth.
    - b. The children hear too many Bible stories in Sunday school, and their hearing becomes dull; when they grow up, they will not be moved by what they hear—cf. Heb. 5:11.
    - c. Hence, the material that we prepare for the children's work should not be influenced by the material used in the Sunday schools in Christianity; not only should we not use their material; we should not even reference it.
- B. We should begin by teaching the children how to be a proper human being; we should show them that man is different from the animals and different from the trees, plants, and flowers:
  - 1. After this we should speak of man's character and conduct; we should teach the children to honor their parents and be loving, pure, obedient, honest, and proper in their conduct; we must be careful not to give them a religious thought or concept.
  - 2. When we speak of the difference between man and the animals, we can mention that man was created by God and also that the heavens and the earth were created by God and a little about how man was created in God's image; we do not need to say more than this.
- C. In caring for young children, we must be careful not to make them religious, not to pass on mere religious knowledge, and not to tell them too many Bible stories; furthermore, we should not force them to pray, if we practice these matters, we will be successful—Matt. 9:16-17; 2 Cor. 3:6; John 5:39-40; 16:12-13; cf. Matt. 2:4-6:
- D. The first thing we should do with elementary age children is to help them to know how to be persons with a proper humanity; we must help them to know what a proper humanity is and how to behave as human beings—Luke 2:40, 51; Prov. 1:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:21:
  - 1. At first we should simply help them to grow up as proper persons with

the full understanding and realization of what a proper humanity is.

2. To this end, we can have many lessons and use demonstrations and illustrations; we can bring a small animal or some flowers and talk about the difference between man and these things.
3. We must also help them to know how to honor their parents, love others, and know the proper elements of human morality, such as humility, patience, and kindness—Exo. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-2; 4:32; cf. 2 Tim. 3:2.
4. In this way we can build them up as proper materials for the Lord's use; to receive the Lord and enjoy Him requires us to have a proper humanity as good material.
5. Within the six years of the elementary age, there are about three hundred Lord's Days to build up the children in their human character; it is very helpful for us to do this.

**II. To compile material for the teachers, we need a number of brothers who know the truth and are also skilled in writing; the material does not need to be in five or six levels; we need only three levels—elementary, intermediate, and advanced—cf. Titus 2:1-8; 1 Cor. 3:1-2:**

- A. The material for the elementary level should be entirely from a child's perspective; we should tell them that man is not the same as the animals and explain to them why man is different—cf. Gen. 1—2:7.
- B. Gradually, as we proceed to the intermediate level, we can give the children a little more Bible knowledge:
  1. We can convey to them a deep impression that there is a God in the universe, that man fell and committed sin, and that the Lord Jesus is our Savior.
  2. We do not have to give too much doctrine, but we should impress them with the facts in the Bible.
- C. Then when the children proceed to an advanced level, they will almost be ready to follow the messages in the big meetings:
  1. The children do not need too much doctrine; they only need a general knowledge of the truth.
  2. This requires the careful work of the brothers who compile the teaching material so that the children do not receive premature knowledge.
- D. There is the need for some brothers and sisters to spend the time to prepare lessons and instructions on how to use them:
  1. There is no need to compose the lessons in full; we can simply give some guidelines, such as which week to speak concerning honoring our parents and some hints on how to illustrate this lesson.
  2. After being trained, each teacher can choose the particular illustrations he will use; we should not prepare uniform printed lessons to be read in each class.
  3. Perhaps half a page of points, illustrations, and instructions is adequate; it should be easy to prepare lessons in this way.

## **RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE**

### **Message Six**

#### **Compiling Children's Lessons that Build up a Proper Humanity and Lead the Children into a Proper Enjoyment (2)**

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:15

- III. In order to do the children's work well, we need to pay attention to these three aspects: the teaching material, the training of the teachers, and the leading of the elders; after brothers are designated to compile material, the leading of the elders and the training of the teachers should follow—2 Tim. 2:2; Eph. 4:12-16; Heb. 13:17.**
- IV. At the end of each lesson that we give them, we can impress them with a short verse from the Bible; by ministering the lesson, we will lay a good foundation for them to receive something brief from the word of God—2 Tim. 3:15:**
  - E. We may tell them, that as children they need to be proper human beings who behave in a good way to honor their parents; we can even use illustrations from nature; this will interest them very much—cf. Rom. 1:20a.
  - F. Then at the end we can read them, "Honor your father and your mother" (Exo. 20:12), explaining that this is the word of God in the Bible; we can ask them to keep it in mind, recite it, and explain to us what it means.
  - G. The next time they come together, we can have them tell us what they heard the previous week and whether they put it into practice; we may ask them in what way they honored their parents in the past week.
  - H. We must not give them anything in a premature way; rather, we should prepare the lessons according to their age:
    - 1. We should give the five- and six-year-olds one thing and the seven- and eight-year-olds something else.
    - 2. Premature knowledge damages children; we need some brothers and sisters who understand this principle to prepare the lessons.
- V. Gradually, we can help them to know who God is, not in a religious way but in a very practical way; we can lead them to the point that they realize there is an almighty One, who is God—Exo. 3:6; 20:2:**
  - I. Following this, we can help them to know God's creation and even the fall of man; for this purpose we should not merely tell stories; instead, we should present these matters in a very practical way, using many illustrations:
    - 1. The best time to present the fall of man is after we have helped them to know what a proper humanity is.
    - 2. We can tell them that we are all fallen creatures and that there is sin within us that weakens us; to speak concerning the fall in this way is very realistic—Rom. 7:18.
    - 3. In the same principle, we can tell them how the Lord Jesus came to accomplish redemption, not as a mere story.
    - 4. We can use the lessons concerning proper humanity and the proper way to behave.
  - J. Then we can point out to them that the Son of God has died for us, and we can

tell them about the cross, the death of Christ, and redemption without passing on mere religious knowledge—1 Cor. 15:3-4; Eph. 1:7.

- K. After they reach a certain age, we can go on to tell them that Christ is life, not as a mere story but based on their failures and desires—John 11:25; 14:6; Col. 3:4.
- L. Without giving them too much knowledge, we can help them in a practical way to realize what God, creation, humanity, the fall, redemption, and Christ are, and eventually we can help them to receive the Lord and be saved in a definite way.

**VI. Perhaps there are brothers and sisters among us who are especially experienced and burdened for the children and who are preparing songs for the children:**

- M. The poetry must be composed for the young ones in a very skillful way; it is better not to have songs if the songs that we have are of such a low standard.
- N. The brothers and sisters should also prepare songs for the children's meetings; we should not treat the little ones like the older saints and have them sing the same songs that we do.

**VII. Parents like to hear their children sing:**

- A. The parents may be unhappy if you persuade them to believe in Jesus; but they will pay attention to their children's singing; when they hear the songs they will be touched.
- B. In the home meetings, we need to help even the children to call, speak, or sing a hymn and to quote or speak the word of the Bible.
- C. Everyone, both young and old, likes singing; singing is very sweet, you must be like a nursing mother, making your little ones feel pleasant by giving them something sweet.

## THE SECRET OF THE REIGNING LIFE OF JOSEPH

### *Special Fellowship*

#### **Keeping Ourselves for a Proper Marriage in God's Economy**

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:17-19; 1 Tim. 4:12; 5:1-2; 1 Thes. 4:3-4; Heb. 13:4; Matt. 24:37-38; Luke 17:28-29; 21:36; Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 6:9; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Jude 7; Rom. 1:24, 26-27, 32; Heb. 12:16; 1 John 2:1; 1:7, 9; 1 Cor. 6:11

#### **I. In the Lord's recovery today all the saints need a renewed mind so that they would not be fashioned according to this age, especially in the matter of marriage—Rom. 12:1-2:**

- A. The unbelievers live in the vanity of their minds, being darkened in their understanding because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart, and are past feeling, having no feeling in their conscience—Eph. 4:17-19:
  - 1. Being past feeling means not caring for one's conscience; instead of regarding his conscience, fallen man gave himself over to lasciviousness—v. 19.
  - 2. After man fell, God ordained that man should be under the ruling of his conscience; we should be full of feeling concerning our purity, even being a pattern in purity—1 Tim. 4:12.
- B. In the normal relationship between males and females in the church life, the governing principle is purity—1 Tim. 5:1-2; 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:22.
- C. In the church life contact between the sisters and the brothers is unavoidable; hence, to be protected from any defilement a proper relationship must be maintained in sanctification and honor—1 Thes. 4:3-4; Heb. 13:4.

#### **II. The conditions of evil living that stupefied the generation of Noah before the deluge and the generation of Lot before the destruction of Sodom portray the perilous condition of man's living before the Lord's coming and the great tribulation—Matt. 24:37-38; Luke 17:28-29:**

- O. In the days of Noah the people were befuddled by eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage—eating, drinking and marriage were originally ordained by God for man's existence; but due to man's lust, Satan utilizes these necessities of human life to occupy man and keep him from God's purpose—Matt. 24:37-38.
- P. In the days of Lot the people were stupefied by eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building—Luke 17:28-29; cf. Ezek. 16:49-50.
- Q. To participate in the overcomers' rapture that we may enjoy the Lord's parousia and escape the great tribulation, we must overcome the stupefying effect of man's living today—Luke 21:36.

#### **III. The principle of marriage is oneness: one husband for one wife—Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Thes. 4:3-4; Heb. 13:4:**

- A. Adam and Eve becoming one flesh, one complete unit, is a figure of God and man being joined as one; God created us not as complete men but as "male and female"—Gen. 2:18, 21-23; 5:2; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6.
- B. The Lord's word not only acknowledges God's creation of man but also confirms God's ordination regarding man's marriage, that is, that one male and one female are to be joined and yoked together as one flesh and are not to be separated by man—Matt. 19:4-6.

- C. Concerning the matter of marriage, God has laid down definite guidelines on whom one can marry and whom one cannot marry; the Bible shows us clearly that the marriages of God's people should be restricted to those among themselves only—2 Cor. 6:14.
- D. We live in an age of Sodom; the whole world today is a Sodom; many men and women live together without being married; certainly this will bring in God's judgment—1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 6:9; Lev. 18:22; 20:13:
  - 1. Today people commit fornication like those at the time of Sodom; homosexuality is human fornication in its extreme; and those who engage in homosexuality commit fornication to the uttermost—Jude 7.
  - 2. In the Bible God exercised a special judgment over Sodom because the people there indulged in lust without any restriction—Gen. 19:1-29.
  - 3. Nothing offends God more than this indulgence; nevertheless, many young people today, even young women, have no sense of shame regarding this—Rom. 1:24-28, 32; Eph. 4:19.

**IV. Fornication means to violate God's governing and controlling principle, resulting in confusion—Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:18:**

- R. The apostle Paul strongly charged the newly converted Gentile believers to be sanctified unto God, to abstain from fornication, the most gross sin in the eyes of God, that they might avoid its damage and contamination—1 Thes. 4:3; Heb. 12:16.
- S. Nothing damages the saints and the church life more than fornication—1 Thes. 4:3; Heb. 13:4.
- T. To possess one's vessel is to keep it, to preserve it; to keep or preserve man's vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, is the safeguard against committing fornication—1 Thes. 4:3-4.
- U. Because we have been regenerated, our body is now the temple of the Holy Spirit; therefore, you must keep your body in an honorable way—Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:19.
- V. All the young people in the church life should exercise certain restrictions upon their contact with one another and with those who are unbelievers.
- W. Never contact a member of the opposite sex alone, but, for your protection, always have the presence of a third party; this word is a great help and protection to us.
- X. Fornicators mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:10 are not those who have simply committed a certain sin, but those who live in that sin and remain in it, refusing to repent—vv. 9-11; cf. Rev. 9:21.

**V. "My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous"—1 John 2:1; 1 Cor. 6:11:**

- Y. *If anyone sins* indicates that the regenerated believers can still sin; though they possess the divine life, it is still possible for them to sin if they do not live by the divine life and abide in its fellowship—1 John 2:1.
- Z. If we confess our sins, He, according to His word and based on the redemption through the blood of Jesus, forgives us because He must be faithful in His word and righteous in the blood of Jesus; otherwise, He would be unfaithful and unrighteous—1:7, 9.

**VI. If there is any matter that requires prayer, it is marriage; and if there is anything for which you need to present yourself to the Lord, it is your**