***Let's Change Your Thinking About Sex and Marriage***

How parents and the church must train children about God's reason for sex. Godly sex must be taught from early childhood through marriage.

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Contents

[Author's Comments 4](#_Toc536163616)

[Dedication 8](#_Toc536163617)

[Acknowledgement 8](#_Toc536163618)

[Preparing Children: 9](#_Toc536163619)

[Teach by Example 10](#_Toc536163620)

[Raise Godly children 11](#_Toc536163621)

[Their Spiritual Secret Place 13](#_Toc536163622)

[Child Discipline 14](#_Toc536163623)

[Respect for Authority 15](#_Toc536163624)

[Being Responsible 16](#_Toc536163625)

[Team Spirit 17](#_Toc536163626)

[Don’t Spoil 17](#_Toc536163627)

[Suggestions for projects for children: 19](#_Toc536163628)

[Preparing Teenagers 20](#_Toc536163629)

[Gender Relationships 21](#_Toc536163630)

[Their Spiritual Secret Place 23](#_Toc536163631)

[Can-Do Attitude 25](#_Toc536163632)

[Moral Boundaries. 26](#_Toc536163633)

[The Gospel 29](#_Toc536163634)

[Dating: 31](#_Toc536163635)

[Set Goals: 32](#_Toc536163636)

[Teach a Discipleship Lesson 33](#_Toc536163637)

[Sex before Marriage - Self Control. 36](#_Toc536163638)

[Preparing for Marriage: 37](#_Toc536163639)

[Suggestions for projects for Teenagers: 38](#_Toc536163640)

[God's Plan for Your Marriage 40](#_Toc536163641)

[God's plan for marriage is to reflect His image. 41](#_Toc536163642)

[God's plan for marriage is to build His Kingdom. 42](#_Toc536163643)

[God's plan for marriage is companionship with Him and each other. 43](#_Toc536163644)

[Gender Roles in Marriage 43](#_Toc536163645)

[Commitment in Marriage 45](#_Toc536163646)

[Financs in Marriage 47](#_Toc536163647)

[Intimacy in Marriage 50](#_Toc536163648)

[God's plan for marriage is to raise Godly children. 52](#_Toc536163649)

[The Role of the Church: 54](#_Toc536163650)

[Some examples of good gender mixing projects: 55](#_Toc536163651)

[About the Authors: 57](#_Toc536163652)

# Author's Comments

We target the instructions in this book to all who seek to enjoy life with one of the other genders: during dating years, engagement for marriage, early marriage days, and raising a family. In this book, we will refer to the one in your life of the other gender as your "partner". This may be a boyfriend/girlfriend, your date, fiancé, or spouse.

A revolution started in 1960. It has been called the Sexual Revolution (The **sexual** revolution of the **1960s** and 70s largely affected the way American society is now. In the **1960s** something called "free love" came about, deeming young people as hippies. The hippies preached that the beauty of sex and love was a form of art). Having just pasted our mid-80s, we are alarmed at the cultural shift in thinking about the most taboo subject that we grew up with -- sex. We know that what we are writing is countercultural now but necessary to return to a personal state of peace, joy, and hope. Even though it may seem out of date it has worked for us and we believe it can work for everyone.

Now that we live in a post-Christian era, our culture no longer seems to have an anchor to a stable foundation. Morality and ethics are adrift and seems to us to be increasingly self-destructive.

The teachings of Jesus and the instructions of the Bible can and should be returned to in order to reestablish solid moral and ethical standards for children, youth, and adults to really enjoy a fulfilled life. We are calling all readers to agree with the Biblical mandate that marriage is to be between a man and a woman for life.

As senior Christians, we enjoy the benefits of a stable lifestyle based upon the Bible, but we notice that our thinking about sex is no longer shared by the general populace. We also see the danger and evil consequences that are happening and are sure to continue degenerating as the current trend advances.

God, the Creator, exists and rewards those that diligently seek Him. The Holy Bible is divinely inspired and therefore we trust its content and have built our lives on its foundation.

We teach Christian Discipleship to alcoholics and drug addicts at a local recovery center and have used several of their true addiction accounts in a small book we have published for parents and students entitled ***Abstinence Beats Recovery***. God loves all people including addicts. We often wonder how their lives would have turned out if they had the benefit of a Godlier home as a child and young person. Free copies of our books are available for downloading from our website or they may be purchased through bookstores.

Though unpopular and considered culturally prudish, sexual abstinence until marriage beats the recovery consequence of ignoring God's instruction about how you should think about sex.

"The opportunity to work is a gift from God that, when rightly employed, serves life and draws us back to Him (God). However, if work, or family, community, school, politics, or any other good thing becomes an end in itself, it turns into an idol. It will eventually become a prison, a desert, even a graveyard of the spirit. These things serve the truth and human flourishing only if they are icons through which the light of Christ shines forth, making them a means by which the kingdom of God flourishes.

So, it is with sex, a divine gift that, if cherished properly, becomes a source of joy, abundance, and flourishing, of the couple and their community. When bound to God's purposes, sex unites a man and a woman physically and spiritually, and from that fertile union new life may come, creating a family.

However, if we think of sex in a disordered way, it can be one of the most destructive forces on earth. Look around you at the suffering of children brought up without fathers, the scourge of pornography destroying the imaginations of millions, the families broken by infidelity and abuse, and on and on.

For the Christian, there is only one way to use the gift of sex: within marriage between one man and one woman." (Introduction to Chapter 9 of Dreher's ***The Benedict Option***.)

The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband...the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife (1 Corinthians 7:4).

We have placed obedience assignments throughout the book. Obedience to these assignments will result in a lifestyle of joy, peace, and hope. These obedience assignments are designed to apply to those planning marriage and parents.

Check each box as an aid to your obedience progress.

Obedience Assignment:

Locate a private place where you can pray, study, and journal.

1. Find a secret place away from all human sound to read this book and the Bible daily.

Obedience Assignment:

Private secret places should be a well-lit secure place where your Bible, journal, and a good writing pen are kept.

2. Suggest that your partner also find a secret place.

Discuss your secret place(s), how you use them, and how daily communion with Jesus helps you. If you are planning marriage or are married and do not have wedding vows, write them together.

Write some of the features you would like your partner to include in his/her vows.

Obedience Assignment:

It is very important to establish and maintain clear communication between you and your partner. If you have advanced to the stage of duscussing marriage, it is extremely important to discuss and agree on the size of the family you want to raise. Equally important to discuss is the management of finances.

3. Early in marriage (even before marriage) discuss and agree on the size family you want to raise.

According to Barna Research, the two major causes of divorce are related to sexual intimacy and finances.

You must agree if you want children. If you do, discuss how many children you would like to raise. Agree on your method of discipline. Discuss the eventuality that you may not be able to bear children -- discuss your thoughts about adoption?

# Dedication

We dedicate this book to the deceived multitudes whose thinking about sex and marriage follow the sexual revolution but want to return to a more beneficial foundation for their lives, their children, and future generations.

# Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Barna Research Group for statistics and trends that we reference.

We also acknowledge Rod Dreher's book, *The Benedict Option*, Chapter 9, Eros, and the New Christian Counterculture, as our inspiration for writing this book.

Images used in this book are either original by the authors or from UnSplash, a free source of images over the Internet.

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# Preparing Children:

Babies are precious. Approximately half will be boys and half will be girls. This is God's divine method for assuring continual increase in the population. Children are not initially aware of their differences in gender, though natural curiosity sets in early as they mature. Where possible boys gravitate toward other boys and girls toward girls. As they grow, their masculine and feminine characteristics increase. Siblings and cousins usually develop closeness and fondness for one another when properly nurtured by Godly parents.

Children start forming their feelings about sex and marriage as they observe their parents.

Ideally, they will notice that Dad really cares for Mom. He loves her and does nice things for her. He treats her with respect and prefers her needs to his own.

Mom is supportive of Dad, helps, and encourages him. She must love him very much.

Mom and Dad both love their children. They keep them safe and provide for them since they are not mature enough yet to be self-sufficient.

Children are naturally selfish and display selfishness with siblings. They do not want to share toys, nor do they want to let others go first. Often their first word is "No".

Selfishness sometimes leads to bullying others. Strong wills and strong physical strength often encourage bullying towards other children. You must teach your children to follow Jesus' example of loving others rather than intimidating them. Teach them to report bullying by others to you.

Obedience Assignment:

It is never too early to start teaching proper relationships with others as Jesus taught.

4. Discuss bullying with your children and compare the way Jesus wants them to treat others.

Obedience Assignment:

It is strongly recommended that you perform these obedience assignments. You may also use our companion workbook/checklist.

5. Use your journal to list some ways you will demonstrate the Lordship of Jesus to your children.

## Teach by Example

Children begin making life-lasting choices much like the choices they see their parents making. They learn early in life that obedience brings rewards and while selfishness results in short-term benefits, long-term benefits and inner contentment are gained by responding to those who have authority over them. The authority of their parents establishes the foundation upon which they build respect and proper responses to other authority figures as they mature.

If the parents are Christian and live as Disciples of Christ, the children will likely follow their example. If the parents are not Christian, however, the children will not likely be curious about spiritual things.

We highly recommend that non-Christian parents investigate the empowerment to be gained by learning about and following Jesus. Investigate Christianity from a trusted Christian friend. Following Jesus leads to joy, peace, and hope for now and eternity. It also equips you to guide your children into responsible adulthood.

Obedience Assignment

Parents should not delegate their parenting responsibilities to others (i.e. nannies, day care, schools, church, etc.) The sixth chapter of the Bible book of Ephesians explains Godly relationships between parents and children.

6. If you are not Christian, investigate Christianity from a trusted Christian friend.

## Raise Godly children

As parents you will be the primary model for your children's lives whether you wish to or not. Such influence is within God's divine plan for the institution of the family. Most likely, you had your life shaped by your parents and you will pass on your character to the next generation. Of course, the ideal is that you will model God in whose image you have been created.

Children must be raised with confidence that Jesus loves them and learn (from observation) that the Bible is the true guidebook for life now and for eternity.

Obedience Assignment:

Encourage your child to read children books appropriate to their age.

7. Set aside time to read children's books to your children and tell them how much Jesus loves them.

Set special times to read and discuss Christian topics with your children. These will result in memorable times for both parents and children.

Just telling children that something is true because the Bible says it will have little or no effect on them unless they become convinced that the Bible is the inspired Word of God as demonstrated by **you**, their parents.

The most effective way to establish this confidence in children is to let them see your life based on the Bible's instruction. You need to have a secret place where you and Jesus talk. Keep your Bible and a journal in your secret place. Make sure your children see you use your secret place and journal.

Obedience Assignment:

Provide your children with illustrated children’s Bibles.

8. Give your children a Child's Illustrated Bible.

## Their Spiritual Secret Place

Encourage your children to have a secret place where they can daily talk with Jesus in private.

Taking children to church nurseries, Sunday school classes, Vacation Bible School, etc. are all good but inadequate. Spiritual formation in children must be established in the home! Too often parents delegate the responsibility for the discipleship of children to others. God entrusts You with being faithful followers of Jesus and to show, by example, how your children can best enjoy a quality life by also fully trusting in Jesus.

Obedience Assignment:

9. Let your children into your secret place. Show them your Bible and Journal. Explain them.

You must equip your children for adulthood. Be assured that the culture will exert great counter-influence on them. Monitor closely what they view because imagery has a lasting effect on children. Their Christian faith must be so foundational that they, in turn, will equip the generation that will follow them.

## Child Discipline

Fathers do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Both parents must work together to train their children and not lead them to rebellion by dominant, loose, or unfair leadership. It is an impossible task for one parent alone and that is why God has given spiritual responsibility to both. The husband should still ultimately oversee this training, but the responsibility is shared.

Obedience Assignment:

For that reason, you must come to an agreement on how to train and discipline yourchildren***.*** This includes discipline, spiritual training, academic training, athletic training, and areas of service.

10. Pray about and record in your journal how disciplines will be administered to your children.

Obedience Assignment:

Discipline is a major part of discipleship. Proper discipline requires much patience and determination. As parents, you must agree on the type of punitive (the rod) and non-punitive (deny TV watching for a day) disciplines you will practice.

11. Assure your children that you are always available to talk about Jesus and answer their questions.

Husbands should be the primary disciplinarian and discipline must never be given in anger (though you may be angered by your child's actions). The intensity or level of discipline should be equal to the offense.

Respect for Authority is another important character trait that children must be taught. This starts with insistence that they respect you as one delegated by God to have authority over them. They must be expected to obey teachers, the law, coaches, and employers as they mature. So, starting discipline as young as they are capable of understanding is the most effective means to influence them.

Obedience Assignment:

12. Discuss those who have authority over you and your children.

Authority figures for all people are:

* Parents
* Employers
* Law enforcement agents
* Teachers
* Coaches
* Spiritual Leaders
* God

Obedience Assignment:

Introduce your children to local political leaders, law enforcement agents, spiritual leaders, first responders, etc.

13. Take your children to the local Police Station and introduce them to the officers on duty.

## Being Responsible

Being responsible for chores in the home is a major character-building discipline. Teaching them to recognize things they should do rather than having to be told will serve them well.

Obedience Assignment:

Help them understand the responsibilities that you have as their parent. Make sure they know that you need them. Keeping things picked up in their room and helping with home chores really helps Mom/Dad. For example:

14. Increase home chores for your children as they mature. Reward them for doing a good job. Especially when they show initiative.

* make up bed,
* take out garbage,
* place dirty clothes in clothes hamper,
* mow grass,
* clean windows,
* lead family prayer at meal time,
* prepare dishes to be washed, etc.

Make sure they know that Jesus rewards those that obey Him. Establish a sense of earning rewards for being responsible

## Team Spirit

Team sports are a wonderful way to learn to work with others rather than just lead selfish lives.

There are many opportunities in most communities for joining peers in organized sports at a young age.

Obedience Assignment:

Take your child (children) to watch team sports. Explain how teamwork functions. Talk to them about joining an athletic team of their age group. Let them know that you would like for them to join and that you want to watch them demonstrate teamwork.

15. Talk to your children about team sports they might like to join. Encourage them to participate.

Explain why most sports are gender divided. Use this explanation to instruct them how to treat children of the other gender.

## Don’t Spoil

Spoiled Children are thankless and bitter. Because they get their way all the time, they are bitter whenever any authority figure does not give them what they want or when life becomes difficult.

Children ill equipped for adulthood are one of the greatest signs of parental failure!

Obedience Assignment:

16. Be careful to not give your children everything they ask for. Have them learn the value of earning.

Teach them to be content with essential things. Show them how children in third-world countries live. Explain about “self” and what Jesus taught about self.



Instruct your children in the following six major attributes of life:

* Know your purpose, have authentic faith
* Disciplines
* Boundaries
* Friends
* Authority
* Putting Others First

We have prepared a series of children’s books for you on these six topics. They may be downloaded or purchased from our website: [www.equippingstudents.com](http://www.equippingstudents.com).

There is a huge transition period between childhood and the teen years of youth. Many mistakes may be made if your child is not properly prepared for this new phase of life.

# Suggestions for projects for children:

* Build a tent from sheets and blankets in your house
* Camp out for the night in their blanket tent.
* Show how to cook an egg. Let them do it
* Plant some flowers. Let them help
* Wrap a small gift like a Christmas package
* Draw a treasure map and let them find the treasure (the gift package)
* Visit the local zoo
* Fish for perch
* Go on a bike hike through a park
* Dad take your daughter on a fun day out
* Mom take your son on a fun day out.
* Read to your children
* Form a family circle and tell stories about when you were their age

If space permits:

* Camp overnight in your back yard.
* Build a bonfire (if lawful) in your back yard. Roast wieners or marshmallows.
* Invite neighbor children their age for an overnight campout in your yard.
* Compete your neighbor children in a water-boiling and string-burning contest.

# Preparing Teenagers

 Children pass through puberty and enter into a much more stressful life. Puberty starts internal changes with the introduction of hormones that produce testosterone in boys and estrogen in girls ([www.puberty](http://www.puberty) or www.adolescense).

This is a growing phase of life transitioning into adulthood.

Interest in the other gender begins a process of pulling away from parents to be with peers. They become less dependent upon you as their parents and learn to be responsible and accountable. Both parents and youth need to be prepared for this most delicate phase of life. Young boys and girls become very aware of their differences and normal curiousity results in their investigation of the other gender. Parents should have already prepared them for this stage of development.

The teen years should be a most pleasant and enjoyable period of life as your child learns to properly relate to both genders.

Barna Research Group data shows that 48% of post Christians are Mosaics/ Millennials (age13 to 29)! This age, youth through early adulthood, represents the future of Christianity! The practice of the teachings of Jesus is the foundation needed for a successful, fulfilled adulthood.

The generation they bring into the world will respond to them much like your children respond to you.

Peers and media now have more influence on youth than parents, spiritual leaders, and even God!

Absence of influence by Christian nuclear families (husband, wife, children), and healthy churches result in whole communities becoming vulnerable to satanic attacks. Moral and ethical standards are adrift for lack of sound Judeo-Christian foundations. This has resulted in evil and sinful practices becoming culturally acceptable and encouraged (The Barna Research Group).

## Gender Relationships

Obedience Assignment:

Keep the communications open about proper relationships with the other gender. Assure your teens that they should enjoy being with both genders. Encourage them to socialize with groups made up of both genders.

17. Assure your teens that it is proper to enjoy being with both genders.

Obedience Assignment:

With proper parental training, teen boys and girls should be ready for proper interaction with the other gender on a social level.

18. Discuss with your pre-teens and teens about the temperaments and physical differences between the genders

Freedom to discuss sexual topics must be maintained between parents and their teens. This is the most curious topic on their minds at this stage of life.

Obedience Assignment:

If your teen is a boy, discuss the proper way to relate to girls. It is best to become familiar with the other gender in mixed groups before venturing into dating alone. Initially, double dating will likely help your teen to ease into proper solo dating. In all cases, the boy should respect the more sensitive feminine characteristics of girls. Opening doors for her and allowing her to enter first is always a good way to demonstrate proper attention. Assisting her with her chair at any dining experience is another way to respectfully treat or relate to a date. Initially, it is best to not date the same girl repeatedly though your son may prefer to be with the same one.

19. Talk to your son(s) about the proper way to relate to girls when in a group or alone on a date.

If your teen is a girl, discuss how she should respond to a boy’s efforts to show her respect and preference.

Obedience Assignment:

Teach her to be ready on time and to express her appreciation for an enjoyable date.

20. Talk to your daughter(s) about how to properly respond to boys when in a group or alone on a date.

## Their Spiritual Secret Place

Set the example by making your teen aware of your secret place where you meet daily with Jesus.

Obedience Assignment:

Offer to help them locate a comfortable secret place to read from their study Bible and journal daily.

21. Make sure your teens have a well-lit comfortable secret place away from all human sound to read the Bible and journal daily.

Ask your teen to talk about what they want to accomplish in life. Encourage them to write a note to you about their aspirations.

Have your pre-teen and teen keep a journal for daily entry in their secret place. If they are not already practicing the discipline of daily Bible reading, have them start with the book of John. Then return to the book of Matthew.

Young people should be aware of their purpose in life. They should initiate changes to the culture rather than being tossed about by various cultural trends and influences.

Have them be honest about their convictions about sex. Are they uncertain about how they should think about sex?

Encourage them to discuss their uncertainties with you.

Obedience Assignment:

Be very careful to avoid trying to push them into what you want them to become.

22. Have them write what they want to accomplish in life.

God has instilled certain characteristic skills, and gifts in your teens. They will be more successful and happier using their God-given talents rather than just trying to please their parents.

Obedience Assignment:

True Christian spirituality is a relationship with Jesus. Such a relationship requires daily discipline. Specifically the disciplines of solitude, Bible reading, prayer, and journaling. These disciplines should be practiced in their secret place daily. Assure them that you are also practicing them daily.

23. Ask your youth to write their relationship with Jesus and show it to you. Tell them that this is *Their Story.*

Write and receive notes with your teenager. Email and text messages are great but hand-written notes are better. Try to make your notes personal and private. Ask your teenager to write about their relationship with Jesus. Tell them that this is *Their Story*.

There are more demands for a teen’s time than there is time. So, if your teen disciplines themselves to use their secret place daily for Bible reading, prayer, and journaling, they must give up things.

Obedience Assignment:

Have your teen make a list of things they have given up making time for daily Bible reading, prayer, and journaling. Ask them to share their list with you.

24. Have them list some things they have given up to make time for Bible reading, praying, and journaling daily.

## Can-Do Attitude

The attitude of youth determines their accomplishments and failures in life. Having a "Can-Do Attitude" helps them to be obedient to Jesus and accomplish great things with Him in His kingdom.

Just because something has not been done before should not be accepted as a reason that it cannot be done now. All great discoveries are the result of an individual's ***Can-Do*** Attitude. The greatest barrier to success is the fear of failure. The hardest part of any voyage is taking the first step. Be an encourager about risk taking and discuss this with them.

We all have our limits when we act alone, but we have a promise from the Bible that we can do all things through Christ. He promises us that we are never alone.

It is essential that your teenager be able and willing to express their relationship with Jesus. Have them use their secret place to write their story and share it with you.

Assure your teenager that you want to discuss spiritual matters and gender relationships with them. Ask them to write an honest single sentence about how they are doing spiritually.

## Moral Boundaries.

Boundaries should be set beyond which they will not cross. Modern culture tends to ignore such boundaries resulting in much evil. Set the example for your teenager and instruct them to follow you.

The best way to have teens develop and practice sound morals is to practice daily communion with Jesus. His Spirit will become an invaluable guide in making moral decisions. One should treat others as one would like to be treated. This principle should be instilled in youth in relating with their peers.

Christianity is about proper relationships: with Jesus, parents, and other people they know. Developing proper relationsships with the other gender must start early and be continually practiced in life.

Christian families are designed to teach proper relationships by example. Children's relationship with their parents start their proper relationship with God. Teenagers who feel that their family has failed them in this regard, should vow to do better for the next generation.

The Bible is clear about the boundaries that are best for children and teenagers. Though the culture often teaches otherwise, these boundaries are not set to prevent them from enjoying life. Indeed, they are proclaimed so they can enjoy a quality, free life.

Obedience Assignment:

Discuss moral disciplines with your teens.

25. Work with your teenagers to identify some moral disciplines.

Disciples of Christ should maintain moral disciplines. Some examples of Christian moral disciplines:

* Honesty
* Not Cheating
* Caring for others
* Being friendly to all people
* Not Stealing
* Not Lying
* Integrity
* Patience
* Humility
* Trustworthiness
* Loyalty
* Justice
* Forgiveness
* Self-Control

Discuss moral disciplines with your teenagers and provide them with applications of each.

Obedience Assignment:

Ask if they have trouble in practicing any of these disciplines.

26. Have your teenager list any of these moral disciplines that they need Christ's help in practicing.

Promise to pray for them.

God created His universe, and still owns and controls it. God has established His rules for the proper operation of His universe. Each of us have been created by Him with a God-given purpose.

Unfortunately, we live in a culture that has grossly perverted the rules God has established for our benefit. Our spiritual enemy, Satan, places temptations in the life of your teenager to draw them away from their purpose and the quality lifestyle that God has planned for them. He especially uses sex in perverted ways to trap them since sex is such a strong influence on both genders.

Peer pressure is used to tempt them to cross their God established boundaries. They can be distracted from God's purpose for their life by many things. Unless they practice daily communion with Jesus, they will be tempted to succumb to selfish distractions.

Explain that the Christian gospel (good news) can be stated with one scripture: John 3:16.

Females are more effective in holding to moral boundaries. This especially applies to drugs, alcohol use, and sex.

Each teenager has a free will and is able to make good or bad choices. The choices made now will have long lasting results such as qualifications for the work force, college, marriage, future families, and eternity.

There is a big difference in sex drive following puberty. God's purpose for this characteristic is to cause a mutual attraction between males and females for marriage.

Obedience Assignment:

Encourage your teenager to make a list of peer students that are good friends. Indicate if any of them are away from God.

27. Have your teenager make a list of peer students they consider to be good friends. Are any of them away from God?

## The Gospel

Take time to discuss John 3:16. Memorize this verse with your teen. This is the Christian Gospel.

Talk with your youth about their friends of both genders. Do any of their peers not have sound moral foundations and appear to be away from God?

Obedience Assignment:

The Gospel (Good News) can be stated in one scripture: John 3:16. Memorize this scripture.

28. Make sure your teenager can recite John 3:16 and explain that this is the Good News, the Christian Gospel.

Obedience Assignment:

Tell your teen about your story and bridge to the Gospel. Explain what a bridge between one’s story and the Gospel is. Work with your teenager to write a very brief bridge between their story and John 3:16.

29. Help your teenager write a bridge connecting their story to the Gospel.

Obedience Assignment:

Suggest that they mentally repeat their story, bridge, and John 3:16 often. Be prepared to repeat this short witness verbally.

30. Have them practice reciting their Story, their bridge, and the Gospel

Obedience Assignment:

Use times at the dinner table, when the family is together to openly discuss your spiritual life and encourage all family members to also share theirs. Positive and negative experiences should be included.

31. Encourage open discussions with your teenager about their spiritual life. Both positive results and problem areas should be discussed.

Obedience Assignment:

Ask your youth to voluntarily do a good deed for someone of the other gender.

32. Ask why they should do a good deed for someone their age of the other gender.

Ask why they should do a good deed for someone of the other gender.

A: It helps both parties involved in the deed to foster proper friendly relationships.

Dating: Dating should be encouraged following proper instruction of how a boy should treat a girl and how a girl should respond to a boy. Parents should arrange for their sons and daughters to interact with the other gender and closely monitor where they go on dates. Encourage them to discuss their dating experiences with you without showing overprotection. Show them that they can be trusted.

Obedience Assignment:

Make sure your youth can recite John3:16.

33. Make sure your teenager can recite John 3:16 and explain that this is the Good News, The Gospel.

All teenagers are seeking love and acceptance. God loves them and accepts them just as they are.

## Set Goals:

Explain the importance of setting and completing goals on a weekly basis.

Obedience Assignment:

Explain the value of setting goals, accomplishing them, and being accountable for reporting their accomplishment. Have them cite the goals they accomplished to you. If they have difficulty thinking of goals, help them. Encourage them to include goals with the other gender.

34. Work with your teenager to set goals for a week and hold them accountable to you for their accomplishment.

For example:

* Use their secret place every day
* Tell a friend about their secret place
* Invite a friend to see their secret place
* Tell a friend their story, bridge, and the Gospel

Work with them to practice goal setting and sharing their results with you.

Suggest these six specific goals your teenager should set for the week: 1) Do a good deed for a teenager of the other gender; 2) Continue daily Bible study and dated journaling; 3) Pray specifically for those on their list and for their classmates; 4) Tell their brief story about the results of their faith in Jesus to one on their list; 5) Meditate on their bridge to the Gospel; and 6) Memorize Philippines 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"

Obedience Assignment:

Learning to be accountable is extremely important for teenager to practice. Have them share with you about how they fulfilled their goals.

35. Have your teenager report to you about how they fulfilled their goals.

## Teach a Discipleship Lesson

God created sex as a beautiful expression of love between a man and his wife. Satan has perverted sex into a powerful tool for his purposes: Evil.

An adult man and woman (preferably you, their parents) should teach a discipleship lesson that emphasizes the moral boundary of proper sexual behavior.

Your teenager should understand that an important part of their discipleship training includes public prayer and leading others to pray publicly. Ask that the Holy Spirit will lead them to set bold moral lines across which they will not cross.

You may need to prompt your teenager to tell about their true feelings about spending daily time in communion with Jesus in their secret place. How is their daily time in their secret place equipping them for the day?

Obedience Assignment:

Is the new discipline something they look forward to or do they consider it an obligation that they should perform? Can they truthfully say that their personal quiet time with God is helpful in coping with the issues of their life or not? You must always stress that these times of sharing be honest and truthful, never flavored with statements that sound good just to impress you!

36. Encourage open discussions with your teenager about their spiritual life. Both positive results and problem areas should be discussed

You must call on your teenager to share about their progress with their goals during the past week. Accountability questions should always be answered with sentences and you should never accept a one-word answer. This is an important part of their discipleship training.

1) Share about the good deed they did this past week.

2) Tell about their Secret Place, and how they spend time studying the Bible, journaling, and praying each day.

3) How did the teenager they shared their Story with respond?

4) Have them tell you their Story and Bridge to the Gospel

5) Have them recite Philippines 4:13; “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”.

Obedience Assignment:

You must reassure them that they can make a spiritual impact on their school through the discipline of ***Self Control***. This is one attribute of the Christian life that cannot be concealed.

37. Ask why they should do a good deed for someone of the other gender.

Our natural inclination is to gratify *Self* and *Self* will dominate us. Jesus instructed us to take up your cross of execution ***daily*** if you truly want to be His disciple. Most teenagers have never understood this radical command from Jesus.

Self has an unquenchable appetite, which will lead a teenager into all sorts of addictions!

Your teenager must depend upon the Holy Spirit daily to be most influential for Christ on their campus. Rather than being selfish, they should display the characteristics (fruit) of the Holy Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

Satan's greatest tool to ruin a person's Christlikeness is selfishness! That is why Jesus called for its daily execution.

Whereas God's plan is to prepare males and females for genuine intimacy in marriage, Satan's plan is to steal, kill, and destroy the beautiful life God has in store for them by tempting them with instant gratification (John 10:10).

Breakup of the nuclear family (father, mother, children) results in all sorts of cultural dysfunctions, morally and ethnically. The church is to counteract such disorder but is failing due to families failing to obey Jesus' instructions for proper family life.

## Sex before Marriage - Self Control.

How far is too far? Where will your teenager draw the line? Where the line is drawn is where Satan starts his temptations.

God is not against sex since He created it and He is not against teenagers since He created them as well. God knows it is best for them and the Christian movement that they abstain from having sex until marriage.

Sex is for married people because sex is not physical; it is relational. It is to be reserved for the unique, committed, multifaceted relationship of marriage. Only between man and wife can sex be the wonderful and intimate experience that God intends.

Obedience Assignment

God designed sexual attraction between males and females. As young people age, this attraction increases and will go through a progression of stages. Stage 1 teens may just enjoy being with each other.

38. Explain the stages of attraction between males and females to your teenager.

Stage 2 teens may advance to showing affection by holding hands. Holding hands will likely advance to Stage 3 in which the boy embraces her by placing his arm around her shoulder and she is permitting it.

As this progression continues, it is usually the female that determines where the limit or boundary will be drawn. The male is typically the more aggressive and the female more cautious.

She will set the limits as she discerns if his intentions are being expressed because he cares for her rather than using her. Self-control on the part of both the boy and the girl helps them cooperate with each other.

Stage 3 will ultimately lead to both wanting to experiment with a kiss.

If the relationship continues unchecked, it will likely lead to more intimate contact beyond kissing. This is natural but must be controlled by both boy and girl.

## Preparing for Marriage:

Preparing your children and teenagers for marriage is your most important job as parents. Teaching your children about how to respect and treat the other gender lays the foundation. Guiding your teens through proper gender relationships and dating establishes the framework for a lifetime of healthy, happy, and rewarding marriage. Your success in this part of your marriage will result in it being passed on to the following generations.

Obedience Assignment:

As your children mature, repeatedly check your progress in preparing them for marriage in your workbook.

39. Check your progress in your workbook. Are you preparing your children for marriage?

Young ladies place far more emphasis on wedding preparations than young men. Girls are more emotional and young men are more pragmatic.

Though boys and girls have different temperaments, they both should seek to do things together. Both must be willing to compromise rather than insist on only doing what they prefer.

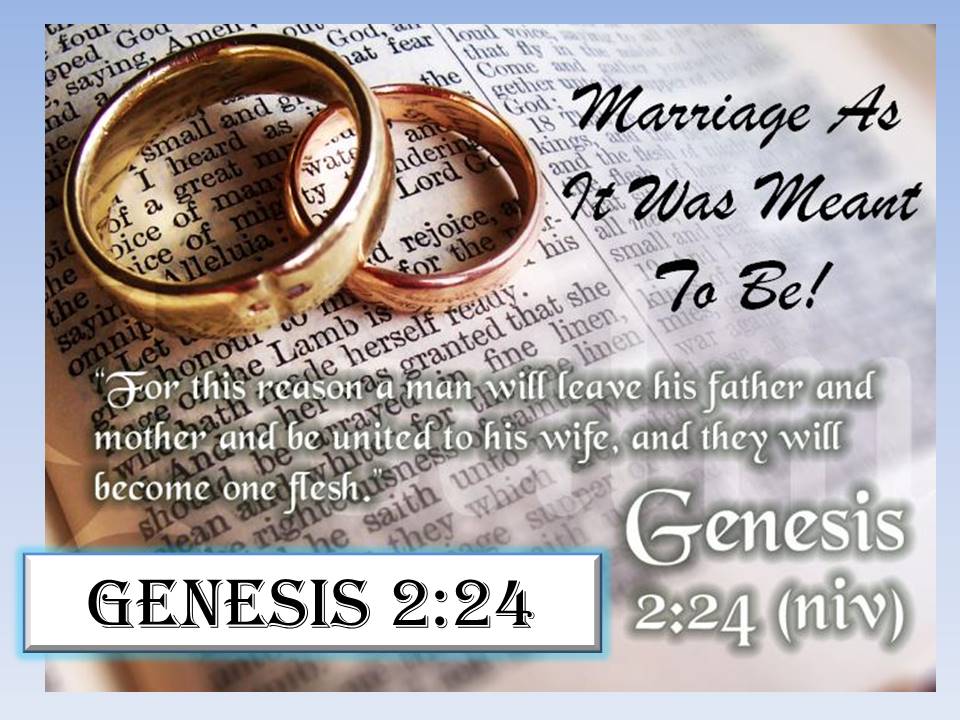
Failure in marriages has become the greatest hindrance to the spread of the Christian Gospel. Satan knows that and starts early in teenager's lives to pervert what quality family life is intended to be.

Unless they are convinced that self must be dealt with as Jesus instructed (death to self), Satan cleverly and subtly tempts with addictive habits of sexual perversion to destroy the foundations upon which intimate marriage is intended to be built!

# Suggestions for projects for Teenagers:

* Take them on a canoeing or kayaking trip
* Take them on an overnight camping trip in a public park
* Show how to prepare a meal. Let them do it.
* Work with them to plant and care for a vegetable garden.
* Visit a local museum
* Take them on a fishing trip
* Go on a bike ride through a park
* Dad take your daughter on a fun day out
* Mom take your son on a fun day out
* Show trust by inviting a mixed group of peers to a party or to watch a new movie
* Take them to a dress shop or sporting goods store to select a new dress or some equipment for sports.
* Take them bowling. Organize a bowling tournament with mixed peers.

# God's Plan for Your Marriage

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Genesis 1:26).

"So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27).

"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). They (man and his wife - male and female) become devoted to one another as husband and wife in marriage.

From the very first pages of the Bible, we read the importance of marriage as God defines it. The sexual revolution rejects God's plan for sex and substitutes liberal thinking with no responsibility or accountability. Many destructive effects have followed this rejection.

Leaving the safety, security, and love of parents is especially difficult but must be the case for the new couple to invest their full safety, security, and love in one another. The transition is difficult to make but becomes easier as the newly married devote all of their time together. Independence from parents will transition into dependence upon one another.

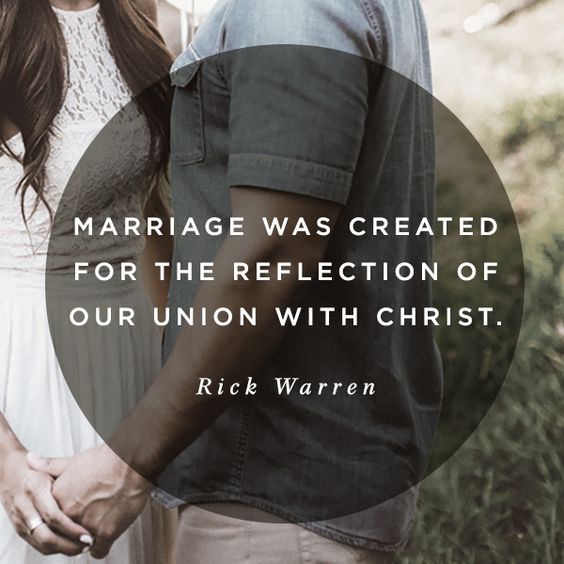
The vows exchanged on their wedding day will frequently be challenged and will only survive as they focus on God's plan for their marriage instead of their individual selfish rights. The first year of marriage is called a honeymoon for good reason. The couple needs time to themselves to make many personal adjustments to accommodate each other. The ease or difficulty to be encountered during this important phase of married life will greatly depend upon the foundations the new husband and new wife have built during their childhood, dating and engagement years.

Obedience Assignment:

If practical, display your wedding vows in a conspecious place so they can be reviewed often.

40. Review your wedding vows together on each anniversary.

## God's plan for marriage is to reflect His image.

Your love for one another should reflect the love, joy, and peace you share with Jesus. Others will be watching how you handle the various situations you encounter. Other young couples that are contemplating marriage will be greatly influenced by how they see you handle not only your first year but also the years that follow. The image you cast must always be genuine and never for the purpose of impressing, manipulating, or influencing others.

You are ambassadors for Christ and your marriage is your passport to properly represent Him. He will bless you as you bless others.

Obedience Assignment:

Public display of spousal affection is a way of encouraging others in their marriage. You are being watched when you least expect it.

41. Display your love and affection for your partner by holding hands in public.

## God's plan for marriage is to build His Kingdom.

If your foundation is proper, you have become a team of three. The two of you have vowed to yoke yourselves with Christ in Kingdom building. A Kingdom is where the King is. God's "kingdom" or "rule" is the range of His effective will, where what he wants is accomplished. When you submit your marriage to God, your rule or dominion then increases.

Your marriage is designed by God to add to His Kingdom. People will want to have a life like the one you display as well as set Godly examples for generations to come.

Jesus never intended for us to labor alone in His kingdom. You are to be a co-laborer with Him. Jesus tells us that His yoke is light and designed to bring restful peace (Matthew 11:30).

## God's plan for marriage is companionship with Him and each other.

God created you for the purpose of being His companion - eternally. Good companionship is wonderful and true fulfillment can only be accomplished with it. The experience of great companionship is enjoyed with the partner God has chosen for you and will be a reflection to others of what a fulfilled life can be like. All people are seeking such fulfillment but, unfortunately, too many seek it in the wrong ways and places.

Obedience Assignment:

Marriage illustrates the relationship Christ has with His Bride - The Church. As a Christian with foundations built on proper spiritual foundations, you will be prepared for an eternal life beyond your fondest imagination and you can lead others into such an abundant life. Be willing to share your life in Christ with others.

42. Share how Jesus helps you and your partner when asked by others.

## Gender Roles in Marriage

There is no greater cause for tension within proper marriage relationships and the culture than gender roles. Whereas the Bible is very clear on this subject, current human rights and feminist ideologies tend to inject confusion and uncertainty.

To avoid such uncertainty, God records in the Bible how the ideal marriage should be structured.

"The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’ (Genesis 2:18).

“To the woman he said, ‘I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband.’" (Genesis 3:16).

There should be no doubt about God's plan for the union of a man (male) and woman (female) in marriage. That is the only way possible for new human birth to occur.

God is a God of order; He understood that the institution of marriage could not function properly if it did not have clear leadership. This is true of all institutions: military, business, school, church, etc.

The husband is not supposed to be a dominating tyrant and the wife is not called to be a doormat. The love of the husband for his wife is to be sacrificial as Christ loves His Church and gave Himself for her.

Obedience Assignment:

For some, the wife will be independent in the area of caring for the home, even though she is still under her husband's leadership. For others, the wife will oversee finances and other administrative details of home life. Good leaders recognize other’s strengths and lean on them.

43. If you are a husband, write in your journal about your love for your wife and your willingness to support her.

Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 5:22). The implication is that she must first submit to the Lord. The husband is a representation of Christ's leadership, no matter how frail that representation may seem.

Obedience Assignment:

It is essential that as time passes, each should recall the Godly roll he or she has been called to serve in marriage.

44. If you are a wife, write in your journal how you respect and respond to your husband as his helpmate.

Never shut each other out with a newspaper, TV, or iPhone!

Obedience Assignment:

With time, it is easy to allow distractions to interfere with giving personal attention to your partner. Personal attention is always needed to maintain intimacy in marriage.

45. Agree to special daily times when you will not be distracted and can give full attention to your partner.

## Commitment in Marriage

Marriage is a covenant with each other and God. These vows are binding commitments to each other in the presence of God, parents, and friends. You are committing to remain faithful to each other until death separates you.

You must never contemplate options like divorce when (not if) you go through unpleasant and disappointing situations.

To be married is to give oneself to another person in the most intimate and inclusive of human relationships, to support him or her for good in every way possible - physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

There will certainly be times when you will think your situation is far to the right of "better" or into the depths of "worse". "Poorer" experiences may exceed the "richer" ones for a while, and "sickness" will interrupt the "health" norm. However, you have vowed to "love" and "cherish" each other through the bad times as well as the good as long as you both shall live.

Obedience Assignment:

It is essential that as time passes, each recall the Godly role he or she has been called to serve in marriage.

46. Memorize John 15:5 and Philippians 4:13.

When times become testy, remember that you can do nothing to help in such situations apart from Jesus (John 15:5) but you can do all things in Christ who strengthens you (Philippians 4:13).

God hates divorce and expects you to keep your vows for the rest of your life on Earth.

The next topics will be about the two major causes for divorce - finances and intimacy in marriage.

## Financs in Marriage

Stress over money is one of the highest reasons for divorce because of its tendency to steal the hearts of one or both mates in marriage. The consumer mindset and cultural pressures to own the latest technology, live in the most expensive house, drive the latest model car and wear the current fashions will always result in a larger cash outflow than you will have as income. The temptation to resort to debt becomes tremendous. Interest charges to credit only adds to the financial hole that is so easy to get into.

Married couples caught up in the dilemma of debt too often yield to their spiritual enemy's temptations of compromising their moral foundations. He can and will use the things of this world that money can buy to lure you away from God and each other (II Corinthians 4:4).

Such compromise can (and will) lead to a sense of guilt which only worsens tension between you. 'The desire for wealth and success can pull couples away from God and therefore pull marriages apart. The Bible is clear that we cannot serve both God and money. No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other (Luke 16:13).

Obedience Assignment:

You must discuss these financial matters before marriage and have an agreed upon plan for family financial management. You should agree to who will be the family provider - husband? - wife? - both work? Who will be the family accountant and pay the bills?

47. Discuss and agree on how your family finances will be managed.

Obedience Assignment:

It is essential that you establish a budget, discipline yourselves to stick to it, make adjustments as new circumstances come up, and they certainly will come up (i.e. children, sickness, job loss, accidents, etc.).

48. Agree on a monthly budget.

Some items to include in your budget:

* Food
* Clothing
* Furniture, home improvements
* Rent/mortgage payment
* Insurance
* Transportation
* Entertainment
* Vacation
* Tithes
* Savings
* Education
* Miscellaneous

Be content with each other and enjoy a frugal lifestyle. Simplicity means you should not trust in your wealth to provide for you.

Remember that God is the one who commands the door to open for a job, a raise, a scholarship, housing, etc.

Be cautious about becoming "engrossed" in the things of the world - video games, social media, sports, or other time-consuming things. Practice moderation and remember that the best things in life are free.

Local, state, and national parks offer free trails, beautiful and peaceful sights, and display the creative reality of God being with us. Picnics and overnight campouts are wonderful opportunities to enjoy each other even if they are conducted in your backyard.

Minimizing or eliminating debt must be a goal. Total debt probably cannot be avoided for a while but keeping it to a minimum must be strived for. Love fulfills the law – “let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8).

Obedience Assignment:

Plan on purchasing a "starter" home to start building equity. There is no equity in rent. Consider a mobile home as a temporary measure. They are furnished and can easily be upgraded if it becomes necessary.

49. Discuss your plans for a starter home. Allow for children.

You should immediately set up a savings account and contribute to it monthly (if only very modestly). Rather than paying out interest, let interest work for you as it compounds accumulatively.

Increase your giving to God's work. Give in keeping with your income. Remember that God created everything and still owns it. You are given temporary custody of health, bright minds, and material blessings. As a steward of these blessings, you can gain great joy by sharing or giving to those less blessed.

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

## Intimacy in Marriage

Obedience Assignment:

Only the two of you can fulfill the total intimate needs of one another. Marriage is to be the most intimate relationship anyone experiences in life. Because you are body, soul, and spirit, you must cultivate each aspect of your being in order to develop intimacy. You must cultivate friendship (soul), your sexuality (body) and your spirituality (spirit) in marriage.

50. Write in your journal the time and situation when you first became aware of your partner.

This requires constant renewal. Allow special times for intimate dates and set them as your highest priority.

Your friendship has been under development since you first realized the other existed. Only in the state of sacred marriage can you fully develop your sexuality and spirituality. God has ordained this way of life.

God means for sex to be a powerful means of increasing intimacy in marriage. That is the reason He created you male and female. Sex is God's "litmus test" of marriage. Properly exercised in mutually consensual ways, sex is a gauge of a couple's intimacy and how a couple increases closeness and mutual dependence.

With sex, it is important to consider Satan's tactics as your enemy. He will try to ruin your marriage by employing perverted sex more than any other weapon in and outside of marriage (i.e. pornography, adultery, lust, etc.). “Same-sex” is not marriage in God’s plan but an abomination to Him. Recall that failure to manage finances and intimacy are the two greatest causes of divorce! "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife - and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

One flesh means for unity and intimacy in marriage. Of course, there are other expressions of intimacy such as holding hands, touching, a kiss, helping one another, etc.

Another of God's purposes for sex is a means of mutual enjoyment and pleasure. “May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth” (Proverbs 5:18). Since puberty, your bodies and your emotions have been altered to attract the opposite gender. Again, emphasis must be drawn to the exhilarating good that is provided in marriage and the degrading evil, disappointment, and harm that will result from improper exercise of sex outside of marriage (for now and generations to follow).

Obedience Assignment:

For this reason, God's purpose for sex is a protection from sexual immorality and other temptations. Therefore, your sexual needs are to be totally fulfilled within marriage - never outside of marriage.

51. Use your journal to write the moral boundaries beyond which you will not go.

It is strongly recommended that you review these instructions and your vows on each anniversary.

Work at keeping your communication channels always open .

## God's plan for marriage is to raise Godly children.

A major purpose of God is a means of procreation (having children). God desires for couples to give birth to, and raise Godly children. Your unique anatomy gives you the ability to have children. God blesses marriages by instructing couples to "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:27-28).

Marriage is an introduction into a much bigger responsibility; to your mate and your children if you are blessed with some. The temptation to spoil them rather than prepare them for adulthood will be strong. However, you are crippling them for this life and perhaps misleading them regarding eternity if you do.

Children can raise you to the heights of ecstasy or plunge you into the depths of despair. Do not try to relive your life through them. They must be raised to live a quality and free life in Jesus so they will be prepared to enter into marriage with the proper foundation when they mature.

# The Role of the Church:

The church is not the primary entity responsible for the nurturing of children and youth but is the fallback source of children/youth training in cases where the family is dysfunctional. The church should have classes on God’s intention for sex and marriage for children, teenagers, and young adults. Such classes should be taught by mature Christian adults whose marriage illustrates what they are teaching.

Godly families are the foundation upon which influential churches affect their communities and change the world.

The church should budget and staff for mixed gender classes, activities, and projects for Godly sex education leading to Godly marriages that will last. Young parents should monitor these classes to learn how to train and discipline their children as they mature.

Obedience Assignment:

Parents should be taught to set examples for their children in such a manner that during the next generation, the children will become parents that pass Godly examples to their children. Failure to make Disciples of Christ will result in future generations forsaking the church and allowing the world system to become their primary source of influence.

52. Make an honest assessment of your church’s attention to Godly instruction to families, their children and teens.

Obedience Assignment:

During your time in your secret place, make some creative notes on projects your church can plan to properly mix genders for children, youth, and young adults.

53. List some creative ways your church can properly mix the genders of children, youth, and young adults.

Obedience Assignment:

Be willing to share your thoughts about proper gender mixing with your church leaders and offer to organize some yourself.

54. Share your thoughts about proper gender mixing with your church leaders. Offer to sponsor some of your concepts.

# Some examples of good gender mixing projects:

* Backyard cook out
* Fishing trip and fish fry
* A hike and picnicic
* Conduct a bowling party
* Conduct a Day Camp
* Teach proper dancing
* Sponsor a dance
* Perform a Community Service
* Visit the local Police Station
* Visit the Fire Station
* Take a group to a selected movie
* Visit an addiction recovery center
* Visit a rest home
* Visit a Veteran’s organization
* Teach a Community Class on Godly Marriage- include children, youth and young adults.

Plan these projects for children, youth, and young adults.

Invite students from local schools and other churches in the community to participate.

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**Books by the Authors:**

**Abstinence Beats Recovery**

A compilation of true stories provided by Alcoholics and Drug Addicts about how they got started and the consequences they have suffered. A book written to warn students of the perils of addiction.

**Let's Change the World**

A process for becoming a co-worker with Christ to Change the World. Matthew 28:18-20 is your mandate to go and make Disciples of Christ of all nations and Jesus will always be with you.

**Let's Change Your Church**

A process for becoming a co-worker with Christ to change your church into an Obedience Driven Church. Your church's mission is to change the world.

**Let's Change Your School**

A process for students to become co-workers with Christ to Change their schools and start a sustained global Christian Discipleship Movement.

**Let's Change You**

A process for sharing Christ's yoke, to be transformed, and start a sustained, global Christian Discipleship Movement.