

Dating, Marriage, Family

Pastor James Kim

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Introduction

I have never dated. Of course I never had a girlfriend. Not only the people around me, I also wondered whom I would marry. Nevertheless, I thought I would prepare for my marriage so as I was praying to God, I started to read books about marriage. Among the books that I read, I still remember the book titled "So You Are Getting Marry." One day when I was reading that book at the church, my friend came to see me and saw me reading that book and said, 'You don't even have girlfriend, why are you reading that book?' haha. But I kept reading that book because even though I didn't have a girlfriend, I just wanted to learn and prepare my future marriage. It was because I didn't know anything about marriage and I had a lot of thought about learning. Then I got married in about 6 months after I met my wife by matchmaking. It is totally God's grace that I married my wife. And my wife and I prayed and anticipated that God would give us four children as the gifts of God. Of the four children, the first baby fell asleep in my arms due to her severe sickness. After the first baby died, God gave us Dillon, Yeri, and Karis and enabled us to experience the love of God.

I had been praying for two things even before I met wife: (1) 'God, help me to love my future wife with God's love and help her to love me with God's love' and (2) 'God, help her to see little Christ in me and help me to see little Christ in her.' And I am still praying with these two prayer topics continually. I will continue to pray these prayers until the day I live in this earth with my wife. My earnest prayer is that God will answer my prayers and let me become more and more like Jesus so that I may be able to give the best gift to my wife before I die, that is my resemblance of Jesus. It is because I earnestly want my wife and my three children to remember little Jesus in my life after I die.

I devoted myself in building the Lord-centered family. It is my hope and prayer that the Lord builds my family in which the Lord reigns over and is in control, all the family members are submissive to the Lords' authority and thus experience the presence of God. The purpose is so that my family can become a role model and a witness community in this era where so many families are collapsing. It is my prayer that as the Lord continues to build my family, my family can show how God's grace is overwhelming to such sinners like us and we are living by God's grace alone.

As I was preparing a seminar on "Dating, Marriage, Family", I found many of my writing regarding dating, marring and family that I wrote as I was reading many daring, marriage and family books. I also found many writings that I wrote as I was meditating on the Scriptures relating to those topics. Since I had been writing my family stories from 2009, I wanted to add some of those stories in "Dating, Marriage, Family" seminar. As I was doing so, I thought about making this seminar material into a book. And that's what I did. I divided this book into three sections: (1) Dating, (2) Marriage, and (3) Family. Each section covers several topics. All those topics may not apply to all of us. Even so, I hope that you can think about the topics that apply to each of you so that you may pray and apply them in your life with the wisdom God gives you. May the Lord use this book as a tool to make it a little bit better daring, marriage and family for those whom He loves.

With gratitude for the grace of God in leading me to meet my beloved wife, to get marry and to have three precious children so that we may continue to build good memories in the Lord for His glory,

Pastor James Kim

(On February 13, 2015, as I dream the holy and glorious Church participating in the wedding of the Lamb)

Dating

Is there a perfect match?

Marianne J. Legato's book "Why Men Never Remember and Women Never Forget" shows that the most successful relationships take place between people who sensibly looked for a complement in their life partner, not a "perfect match". But it seems like many young single men and women are looking for their perfect match. I am sure those single men and women have their own lists about their marriage partners. But I think what is important is not whether that list is short or long but whether the lists are what I want or what I need. In other words, the marriage partner lists they have are mostly what they want and not what they need. One of the purposes of the marriage that God brings together men and women into one body is to be a companion of life that fills each other's needs. However, many single men and women seem to be looking for a perfect match, rather than seeking in prayer a life partner who fills each other's needs. I think it is because they don't know what they are lacking or they refuse to recognize it. Maybe they are denying what they are lacking and looking for their perfect match. But what is clear is that this is illusion.

There is no perfect match. The basis of my thought is Genesis 3:15-19. The fact that Adam was work-oriented and the woman Eve was man-oriented was a God's curse due to their sin. They weren't perfect at all. So there is never a perfect match, but rather a companion who fulfills each other's needs. So I think it is better for the single men and women to look for a marriage partner who fulfill their needs rather than looking for the perfect match. In order to do so, what should we do? We can think of three things.

First, we need to know the difference between men and women.

Without knowing the difference between men and women, we will not even feel the necessity of meeting each other's needs. I think men and women don't know each other that much. Since I was in ignorance about woman, I kept reading the books that thought me about woman. Also, since I didn't know about the difference between men and women, I kept reading the books that helped to understand those differences. As I am still reading those books that help me to understand about woman and the differences between men and women, the books help me to get to know who my wife is and what she needs from me. So I began to develop my ability to deal with her needs more sensitively than before even though I am far away to go. If I had tried to learn this earlier before I got married, I wonder how my relationship with my wife would have been like. I think we could have living more satisfying couple life in the Lord as we know and fulfill each other's needs better as a good companion.

Second, we have to prepare ourselves diligently.

It is only greed that we expect our marriage partner to be perfect without ourselves being ready. It is a wise choice to prepare ourselves for our future spouses whom God has prepared. Here, when we say 'preparation', the single men and women may tend to think a lot of economic preparation. But I don't think that is a priority. I think the priority is spiritual preparation rather than the economic preparation. For example, a single man must work hard to develop spiritual leadership to lead the future wife. Also, he must pray and work to become a loving garden of water so that he can love his future wife with Jesus' love. He should be prepared as a godly man who can guide his future wife with the Lord's love. A single woman must pray and look for this kind of godly man in Christ. Then what should a single woman prepare? In my opinion, she should prepare for her character, especially humility, and should have listening training. The reason is for her to be submissive to her future husband [Here, the word "submission" literally means 'listen under']]. When a single man and a single woman have dating, if they don't know how to listen to each other, there will be a lot of problem in that relationship. In psychologically speaking, a

woman speaks twice as much as a man (although there seems to be some men who speak more than their wives), but the Bible commands the woman to humbly listen to her husband.

Third, we should experience the filling of God while emptying ourselves.

Here, emptying ourselves refers to the 'spiritual cleansing' of emptying our hearts by repentance to God while acknowledging our sins, our weaknesses and my shortcomings. We have to spend a lot of time in this 'spiritual cleaning' so that we don't even have spare time to see other people's shortcomings, weaknesses and sins. In doing so, we must experience God working and filling our hearts with His goodness. For example, in the process of preparing ourselves, we must continually realize that our love is far too short from God's love. In the midst of it, we must gradually fill our hearts with the love of God, the fruit of the Spirit, as our hearts being washed away in recognition and repentance of our sins. Also, we must be filled with the voice of God and the will of God rather than the sound of our hearts and our will by recognizing and acknowledging our sins in front of God and by training ourselves to listen to His voice through the Word of God.

There is no perfect match in this world. Even if there is, there is no guarantee that the marriage will be successful and lead them to a happy family. We should stop trying to find the perfect marriage partner. Instead, we must prepare ourselves faithfully before God by learning the differences between men and women. And we must enjoy the grace that God filling our empty hearts with His goodness. In the meantime, we must meet our future spouse whom God has prepared for us and who needs us. Then we should build a mutual relationship, thinking about how we can help each other's needs. When we do that, we will be able to get married, and after we get marry, we will grow together into a beautiful mature couple.

Unrealistic expectation

“Unrealistic expectations always lead to disappointment” [Paul David Tripp, "What did you Expect?"].

The Christian singles should pray to God for their marriage. They must pray in for their future spouse whom God has prepared. And they should expect God to answer their prayers. In such expectation, they must wait for the answer of God's prayer by faith and at the same time they should have an encounter with another opposite sex in the Lord with open heart. Whether it's an encounter with a member of the church, with a co-worker in their work place, with a person whom their family members or friends introduced, or a meeting through the Internet, they need to pursue more aggressively in meeting the opposite sex for their marriage. One important thing in this process is that Christian singles should prioritize the most important encounter with God. And they must encounter themselves in their encounter with God. Here, having an encounter with themselves means getting to know themselves by knowing God. When the Christian singles get to know themselves by getting to know God, they will be able to see themselves in God's perspective. When they have such a right view of ego, they will not meet their future spouse with unrealistic expectations.

So many Christian singles seem to be dreaming to marry their future spouse with unrealistic expectations when they meet with their future spouse whom God has sent. Especially those couples who have never fought while they were dating seem to have more of these unrealistic expectations of marriage. If they marry, they think they will never fight each other and always be happy with their future spouse whom they love so much. What a pleasant fantasy this is. But what about reality? Think about it. How can a sinner man marry a sinner woman in this sinful world, and not sin against God in their marital relationship? How can two sinners gather together to form a family, and never quarrel and never hate each other even in their hearts? Although one may not hate his spouse to the death, he will hate his spouse in his heart and commits sin against God when he gets married. Nonetheless, those immature Christian singles who do not fully realize this sinful reality are dreaming their marriage with too much of idealistic expectations. They are not cold-hearted and objective but emotional and they are unable to face the reality. Therefore, they may prepare their own wedding ceremony as best as they can, but they are not prepared for their marriage. One of the things they are not prepared for is marital conflict. They may not feel the need to learn about how to deal with future marital conflicts because they love each other so much and have no conflicts while they are dating. Or even if there is conflict now, they tend to neglect in learning about how to deal with conflicts because they may think that they will be able to solve all their conflicts in love. When Christian singles are dating and are in love, who will buy a book about marital conflicts and prepare for their future marriage? That's why I personally think that conflicts are needed when Christian couples are dating. Not only when they are dating but also when they get married, they need conflicts.

Some of the couples who are afraid of being hurt by conflicts tend to keep distance from each other in order to avoid conflicts. So they try to know each other to some extent but not in depth. Maybe they do not have the courage to do that because they are afraid of getting hurt. Maybe they want to keep a marital relationship that does not hurt each other. But I think that even though they may not seem to be fighting each other on the surface and thus it seems like a good couple, their relationship cannot keep growing because their love is not really deep. As the couple lives together, their relationship should be deepened and should make progress in their marriage. But if they do not know how to deal with conflicts well then their relationship cannot be deepened and grow in the progress. I think there is a danger here. The danger is that the couple who keeps a distance from each other in order to maintain the status quo of marital relationship can have a different sex to come in between that space of the distance. And the

reason why the other sex is coming into the gap between the couple relationship is because the couple does not have close encounters and fellowship in the Lord and they are somewhat distant from each other. If the couple has an intimate encounter and fellowship in the Lord, they will know each other more deeply even through conflicts and hurting each other in deeper love for each other. And they would have made a commitment to make their marital conflicts and even hurts beneficial to their own marital relations. Therefore, their marital conflicts are beneficial process for them to know and to love each other dearly and deeply. However, the couples who are afraid to be hurt by their loved one due to conflict may not get hurt and thus escape from that moment, but their relationship cannot get deeper. There are so many differences between a man and a woman such as, different personalities, different thoughts, different viewpoints, etc. So how could there be no conflict between them? How could they not hurt each other even though I am sure they don't want to hurt each other? So if the couple have not committed themselves to overcome their differences even though conflicts and hurts, their relationships may look good outwardly to people around, but they are missing out the opportunity of marriage to know the depth of love the Lord has given.

The Christian couples must wake up from their fantasies with unrealistic expectations. If they do not get out of their fantasies, then they will have a great disappointment with each other when they get married. The Christian couples must have realistic expectations in order to avoid experiencing that big disappointment. And in order to have realistic expectations, it is necessary for them to listen to the married couples. Especially, they must listen well to the words of married couples who have been overcoming the real difficulties of marital relations by God's grace and wisdom. It is much better to listen to them than to listen to the people who are so negative about marriage (though you do not want to listen to them anyway). Also the Christian couples need to open their ears and listen to the good Christian counselors who wrote books about marital relationships. Here, the well-written books by Christian counselors refer to the books written on the basis of biblical principles. The reason I say this is because so many books about dating, marriage and family are based on a psychological theory based on people rather than on the biblical principles. As the married couple who listen to the exemplary married couples' words and listen to the Christian authors who have wrote the well-written Christian books about dating, marriage and family, the couple must listen to each other. In other words, the Christian couples should share truthfully with one another in prayers, based on the words of the married couples and the words of the Christian counselors whom they have already heard. As they have this kind of heart to heart conversation, they must get to each other more in depth. As the Christian couples get to each other, they should not be contented to know each other's similarities but they should devote themselves to get to know each other's differences. The Christian singles must face each other's differences in their honest sharing. When they do so, I think they can reduce some of their unrealistic expectations. As a result, they will not be disappointed by unrealistic expectations, but rather they will be able to enjoy what they have received from the Lord that they have prayed and waited in expectation.

When you stand at the crossroads of choice (when you get married)

“Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband” (Ruth 1:3-5).

The two sons of Elimelech, Mahlon and Kilion, were at the crossroads of choosing whether to marry a Jewish woman of their own, or a woman of Moab, where they were living. But they were not the only ones who were at the crossroads of choice. Their mother Naomi stood at the crossroads of choice as well. In other words, the marriage issue between Marlon and Kilion were not only their own but also their mother, Naomi's issue as well because her sons' wives were her daughters-in-laws. Naomi stood at the crossroads of choice whether to take the Jewish women to be her daughter-in-law or the Moabite women to be her daughter-in-law. Naomi had to choose one of them. Naomi and her two sons chose to take the Moabite women against the command of God (Ruth 1:4). They made a practical choice. They should return to the land of Judah and married the same race. But Mahlon and Kilion married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth (v. 4). As a result of their practical choices, Malone and Kitty lost their lives like their father (v. 5). Their mother Naomi lost not only her husband Elimelech but also her two sons Mahlon and Kilion. And not only she became a widow, but her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, became widows as well. This reminded me Boaz who chose to marry the Moabite woman Ruth (ch. 4). The reason is because like Mahlon and Kilion, Boaz did not marry the same race, a Jewish woman, but he chose to marry the Gentile woman and a widow Ruth. What is different? Why is Mahlon marrying Ruth a pragmatic but unbiblical choice, and Boaz's marriage to Ruth is impractical, but a biblical choice and a choice of faith? When Ruth married Mahlon, Ruth was not a woman who believed in God of Israel. Rather, she believed in Moabite gods (1:15). But when Ruth married to Boaz, she did not choose her own people and her Moab gods, but she already chose her mother-in-law Naomi's God and her people (v. 16). In other words, Ruth was a believer in God when she married Boaz. So Marlon's choice of marrying a Gentile woman, Ruth, was a pragmatic choice but it was unbiblical choice. On the other hand, the choice of Boaz, who married the believer Ruth, was a biblical choice and a choice of faith. The Boaz's choice of marrying the woman of noble character Ruth (3:11), who feared God (Prov. Ch. 31), was the biblical choice that was made by faith.

I hereby ask two questions about the Christian marriage. The first question is whether it is okay for the Christian singles to marry a foreigner? From Korean Christian parents' perspective, I am sure many of them want their children to marry the same race Koreans. I am sure they are some parents who are firmly opposing their sons or daughters marrying the foreigners. Some other parents prefer their sons or daughters to marry Koreans, but allow them to marry foreigners if they want to. Just as the Jewish parents who made their children to marry only with their own race Jews in the Old Testament times, even now the Orthodox Jewish parents are still making their children to marry only with their own Jews. Why do the Jews marrying their children only with the Jews? The reason is related to the second question. The second question is, is it okay for the Christian singles to marry non-Christians? God made his people Jews married to their own Jews in order to prevent them from being deceived by the gentile spouse and forsaking God and serving idols. Therefore, God's intention of the same Jewish race marriage was to keep their faith in God. So I think even though the Christian singles marrying unbelievers who do not believe in Jesus is a pragmatic choice but it is an unbiblical choice. I think Christian singles who believe in Jesus must marry the same Christians. If so, what if the Christian marriage is a Christian believing in Jesus, but not of the same race?

My personal thought is that it is okay to marry a Christian who is a foreigner. Of course, some parents may prefer that their children to marry the same race, but there is no biblical basis for that. I think what is important to the parents is whether their son's girlfriend is like Ruth who is a noble woman who fears God. Nobody knows whether a Christian single sister who believes in Jesus is a noble woman or not. And I think we, the parents, should not be greedy about the marriage of their children. We must not look at our future son-in-law or daughter-in-law with greedy eyes and seek worldly success and wealth. If we do not fear God like Naomi and make our children to marry non-Christians is killing the souls of our children. We Christian parents must make biblical choices by faith. The Christian singles must make biblical choices by faith. We must choose the one God has chosen. We must choose a noble man or woman who fears God. I hope and pray that the Christian singles are able to make such wise choice.

Prepare your marriage!

Marriage preparation (1):

"Our society seems to spend more time preparing for a wedding than preparing for a marriage" (Dr. Gary Collins).

I agree with what Dr. Collins said. It seems many singles are investing more time in preparing for their wedding than preparing their marriage. It seems they think a lot about who to meet for their future spouses have what kind of wedding and so one but do not know how to prepare themselves for their marriage. It seems like they know how to prepare for their wedding, but they do not seem to know how to prepare their marriage. When I think about preparing for marriage, I personally think that we should prepare ourselves more than our future spouse. In other words, I think that we should prepare ourselves before God in terms of what kind of spouse we should be to him or her rather than keep on praying and expecting for what kind of future spouse that we want to meet. In order to do that, we must first develop good habits of examining ourselves before God and reflecting ourselves by the Word of God. The habit of reflecting ourselves by the Word of God is essential in preparing for marriage. As we do so, we must devote ourselves in personifying the Word of God in our lives. If we do not keep on personifying the Word of God, then we will not be able to discern the future spouse whom God has prepared for us. We will just praying and looking for a future spouse whom we desire or want instead of God's desire and His will. How can we expect to see our future spouse who is transforming if we ourselves are not transforming? In order to cultivate ourselves well, we must constantly check our own faith life and faithfully devote ourselves to the Word of God and prayer. As we do so, we will be able to pray rightly with right expectation and look for our future spouse whom God has prepared with the right perspective. Therefore, when God leads us to meet our future spouse, the indwelling Spirit will give us clear conviction. We will not run about in confusion.

Marriage preparation (2):

'When the expectation of marriage does not fill quickly, there are often impatience, insensitivity, self-centered attitude, inadequate relationship skills, and great disappointment or disillusionment' (Dr. Gary Collins).

Those single brothers and sisters in Christ who are not preparing their marriage well seem to have unrealistic expectations about marriage. As Dr. Collins said, 'As they approach marriage, most men and women seem to think that their relationship is unique and will not be attacked by the threat of destroying many other relationships.' They may think that their marriage will be very happy and joyful. Although they desire to have great satisfaction for their great expectation in their imaginations of marriage, but as real married couples know, the greater the unrealistic expectation the greater the disappointment. And the bigger the disappointment, those who fail

to prepare their marriage properly will lose their patience sooner, will more likely to think about divorce and will conclude hastily. What is the problem? Why do we marry with unrealistic expectations? I am sure there are number of reasons, but my personal thought is that it is a consequence of the lack of the right marriage preparation. A person who is not well prepared for a marriage is married with his immaturity, and thus his immaturity will expose the impatience that he wants to quickly fill his expectations of marriage. And, in such a hurry, when his expectations are not fulfilled, he will become more self-centered in marriage. In the end, rather than treating his spouse with the selfless love of Jesus, he will end up treating his spouse with selfish mind, and it is hard for that relationship to last long.

Those single brothers and sisters in the Lord who prepare themselves well for their future spouses recognize their immaturity first. Thus, they pray humbly and faithfully to fulfill their responsibilities by complementing their immature areas by praying to God for a more mature transformation. Otherwise, if they do not even recognize their own immature areas and are busy just finding a spouse and preparing for a wedding, then they even cannot make the right choice for their spouse. Therefore, those single brothers and sisters in the Lord who are preparing for marriage should first get to know their immature areas as they examine and reflect themselves with the Word of God. And then they must lay down all their immaturity in front of the Lord and ask Him for help. And they must humbly and faithfully bear their own responsibilities. In doing so, they can break down their unrealistic expectations that they had about marriage in immaturity and can be ready for their marriage with wisdom and realistic expectations. As their high unrealistic expectations of marriage collapse in front of the Lord more and more, they will be able to pray wisely, expect and wait for the more realistic parts of their marriage.

Marriage preparation (3):

'A man and woman must learn to resolve their differences and recognize each other's needs and personality' (Dr. Gary Collins).

While a single man and woman are dating each other, they do not know their differences or tend to close their eyes even though they know each other's differences. However, after marriage, the differences they closed their eyes begin to surface as conflicts. But the problem is that because they had not learned how to resolve their differences while they were dating, their point of view regarding their marriage conflicts due to their differences is bound to be negative. In the end, the foundation of marriage begins to break down because they ignore or deny each other's differences (Collins). When the single man and woman prepare for marriage, they must naturally get to know each other's differences. Here, "naturally" means as they get to each other, I think they should train their hearts to accept each other's differences. They should never ignore or deny the differences between each other. They should not just keep on closing their eyes on the differences between the two. Rather, they should have honest and upright conversation regarding each other's differences in order to build each other up. When they learn such a conversation skill little by little while they are dating, they will be able to prevent and reduce conflicts caused by each other's differences even after marriage.

After marriage, I began to see the difference with my wife positively. When I was dating her, I could hardly see any difference between my wife and me. Even if I saw the differences, I don't think I took them seriously so I just passed over them. However, after we got marry, I began to take our differences seriously because we were hurting each other when conflicts arose due to our differences. In the midst of that, by God's grace I (I am

sure my wife too) began to see the positive side of our conflicts. And that positive side is that I came to know my wife more. In other words, through our differences, I became more aware of my wife's needs and I began to recognize her personality more. I began to think that marital conflicts are one of the best ways to get to know my wife in depth. Of course, conflicts hurt each other's heart. But I think as much as we get hurts, conflicts can help us to become the wounded healers. In other words, although we receive wounds from each other through conflicts, God uses those wounds to make us wounded healers.

The single men and women who are dating must pursue God's wisdom to resolve each other's differences. Of course, they must first seek God's wisdom by faith in God. And then with God's given wisdom, they must study and learn their marital responsibilities. They should read books on conflict resolution and apply in their lives. Although they may make many mistakes in application, they must keep on learning to solve conflicts even through such mistakes. In doing so, they will be able to develop their relationship into a harmonious one that meets each other's needs and grow into more mature relationship.

Marriage preparation (4):

'When a man and a woman get married with unclear role awareness and vague expectations about themselves and their responsibilities, the subsequent marriage falls into confusion and conflict,' (Gary Collins).

In preparing for marriage, each man and woman must learn diligently what his and her own responsibilities as a husband and a wife in the future in order to reduce confusion and conflict in marriage. Furthermore, it is good to know their future spouse's responsibilities in addition to their own. The reason is because if they know not only their own responsibilities but also their spouses' then they can reduce frustration and conflict caused by vague expectations or unrealistic expectations. But the problem is that when they are dating, they do not prepare these things well. It seems that the single men and women who are dating lack this desire and consciousness to learn each other's responsibilities and role sharing for their future marriage. As a result, they are in a state of confusion and conflict in their marriage due to their vague expectations, lacking clear knowledge of their own responsibilities and roles and the responsibilities and roles of their spouses.

According to Lederer and Jackson, the collapse of marriage usually does not start from consciously malicious behavior, but it starts with a spouse speaking insincerely and acting carelessly. I think it is true. I agree that the collapse of marriage comes from the laziness of learning rather than from consciously malicious behavior. The couples who are reluctant to learn have two common failings related to both role in marriage failure, as Leander and Jackson say: 'First, they fail to identify, determine, and distribute the areas of each other's roles and responsibilities. Second, they cannot evaluate each other's difference not as an indication of inferiority, but merely as the difference itself. These two common failures can be attributed to the couples' neglecting in learning. I think that couples who lack the attitude of learning do not deserve to expect happiness in their marriage.

The Bible clearly records the husband's responsibilities and the wife's responsibilities. The husbands should be devoted to love their wives, to discipline their children fairly, and to lead their families wisely. And the wife must obey her husband and learn to respect him. And she must support and help her husband in raising their children. But most dating couples seem to be barely learning these biblical responsibilities before marriage. It is

often the biblical knowledge that they know in their heads. And they do not want to take their responsibility by learning hard about how to apply the biblical knowledge in their future marriage life by realizing their lack of wisdom and praying to God in faith for the wisdom. There are many good Christian books about dating, marriage and family. There are also a number of non-Christian books that may be helpful. It is necessary to try to practice while reading such books. In the meantime, we must make efforts to make what we have learned our possessions.

I think we, the husbands, lack wisdom about how to love our wives. And we tend to think that we do not have child raising responsibility but our wives' so we take a passive attitude. And like Adam, we refuse to lead our wives and family and thus sins often come into our families. What about our wives? It seems like they refuse to obey their husbands without knowing how to respect them. It is necessary to gradually learn at least intellectually before marriage as they clarify both husband's and wife's responsibilities by applying these individual responsibilities to their future spouses. In doing so, there will be order and peace in their families.

The importance of being

“Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:21-24).

The first thing the single men and women should do in terms of preparing their marriage is to cultivate their own being. Only then they will be able to see the being of the other person (who he or she really is), not just his or her outward manifestation. It is important that they continue to work on their being even after marriage. Before marriage, where there is not much conflict, each other's being is very much hidden. But when they get married and live together, each other's disguised being will be exposed through a lot of marital conflicts. So they can see each other's being much better than before marriage. When they prepare their marriage by focusing on each other's being and imitating Jesus Christ, they will be able to see how two sinners can live a marriage life by the grace of God. We cannot think about our being separated from the love God. As we are people of love, we can experience joy and happiness when we obey the Jesus' twofold command of love God and love our neighbor. But all the covered action of love that comes out from the absence of being is meaningless that can shake the foundation of marriage. We have to be serious about the importance of being. We should find our being in God's being and imitate His Son Jesus. As we do so, we must do the things that God does to us to our spouse in our marriage.

You should prepare your marriage with a healthy heart.

You need to prepare your marriage rather than your wedding. One of the most important things in marriage preparation is to heal the wounds in you. Not only you should heal your wounds for yourself but also for your future spouse. Especially you must heal your wounds that you received from your parents when you were growing up. In order to do that, you must forgive your parents in your heart just as God forgave you in Jesus Christ. You must prepare your marriage with the healthy heart.

Marriage preparation, economic preparation?

"Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house" (Proverbs 24:27).

The Bible tells us that we must prepare the things we must prepare in order to build a house. In other words, the Bible is telling us to do the economic preparation before marriage in order to make the family (Park Yun-sun). What would happen to the couple if they did not have economic preparation while they were preparing for their marriage? Would they be able to have a wedding? Perhaps even if they have a wedding ceremony, they will continue to struggle with economic problems and will have constant marital conflicts.

In fact, according to the questionnaire survey of 278 married couples in the job portal career, 25.5% of the respondents said that the reason for the couples' fighting was economic problem (internet). In addition, among 1,053 divorce counselors who visited Korea Family Law Counseling Center in 2005, 1,024 women (1,102 women, 202 males) were separated from their spouses because of economic conflicts, living incompetence and debts. The economic problem (33%) was the top reason for separation (Internet). We know all of these facts to a certain extent. If so, then we must ask the question, 'How should we have economic preparation for the well-being of our family?' as Proverbs 24:27 says. I found the answer in Proverbs 6:7-8: "It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest."

Do you know the Aesop's Fables "The Ant and the Grasshopper"? In this famous fable, while the ant works very hard in summer, a grasshopper mocks the ant and sings: 'Hey, ant, you prepare winter in this summer. Is something wrong with your head?' Despite such ridicule, the ant kept on working hard for the cold winter even on a hot summer days. However, the grasshopper was not working every day but was singing. So when the winter came, the grasshopper had no food to eat, so the grasshopper begged for food. As we read this fable story in childhood, we learned that we should not be like grasshopper but be like ant. We learned that we should live diligently like ant and not live lazily like grasshopper. But now that I'm getting older, thinking about this Aesop fable, I am not only learning the lessons that we should be diligent like ant, but also we should learn the wisdom of preparing for the future ahead of time. In Proverbs 6: 8, the Bible encourages those who are less than the ant to go to the ant and learn the wisdom of preparing for the future. This is what Proverbs 30:25 says: "Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer." Why do ants prepare winter food in summer? According to Park Yun-sun, summer is the harvest time in Palestine. So, at this time, the ants collect what they will eat in the winter. Like this, the ants prepare food for the winter in harvest time. Like ants, we must prepare diligently for the future in the time of harvest.

We must do the economic preparation for marriage (Prov. 24:27). Also, we must learn how to manage the finances wisely with the right biblical finance view.

Fear

"The problem is that they have picked up the spiritual telescope upside down. Because of fear they enlarge the size of the problem over the size of God" [Tommy Tenney, "God's eye view"].

Although single men and women want to have relationships with the opposite sex and to date but fear seems to precede. There is fear of how the opposite sex thinks of me and of rejection as well. Anyone can have fear of rejection. I also remember having experienced the fear of rejection several times during my college years. As I was studying psychology in college, I used to think about three words frequently. The three words are "Denial", "Suppression", and "Rejection". According to my wife, I did "sister ministry" in college (When my wife saw my college album before we got married, she asked me 'Did you do sister ministry?'). When I was doing sister ministry few times I felt romance but I was in denial and I suppressed it. Whenever I felt romance, I told myself so many times that 'I don't love her with romance but I love her as a sister in the Lord.' And when the surrounding brothers or sisters asked me whether I loved her or not, I denied my feeling by saying 'No' to them. After all, when I kept denying my feeling, I believed myself that I didn't love her romantically but I loved her with the Lord's love. And I wanted to be with her. In this way, I was not honest to my own feelings, but I denied it and repressed my emotions. I still remember I had crush on a sister in Christ for a year. During that year, I kept suppressing my emotions so much that I looked older than my age. So when I graduated from college, few freshmen wrote on my graduation album 'grandfather'. Haha. When I couldn't suppress my feeling anymore, I tried to confess my love to the sister in the Lord in fear. Of course, in the end, I was "rejected". After I was rejected, I called her and I even said thank you to her for rejecting me. Haha. It is still funny to think about this memory.

When I think of the word "fear," I remember 1 John 4:18, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." When I think about this word, I think that if we love someone with true love of God, we should not be afraid. There should be no fear. The Bible says that perfect love drives out fear. So if we love someone with true love of God, we must have conviction rather than have fear. And this conviction comes from faith in God. If I borrow the words of Rev. Tommy Tenney, here the faith is holding the spiritual telescope properly and look to God. When we do so, we can see the possible problems (such as rejection of the opposite sex, fears, anxiety, etc.) small and see the greater God and have confidence in Him. Then we can approach the opposite sex whom we love and reach out to her/him in faith. And that faith is toward God, not in the response or outcome of the other. In other words, that faith even leaves the outcome to God. However, if we take this spiritual telescope upside down and look at our opposite sex whom we love, we cannot help but wonder in fear and in uncertainty because the problem is enlarged. There will be no boldness and courage, and even if we do, we will not be able to reach out to him/her with passion.

When we have romance, we must take our spiritual telescope right and look upon our great God. As we look upon God in faith, we need to ask God to fill us with His love, the fruit of the Spirit. We must acknowledge and confess that we can love other opposite sex only with the love of God. And as God fills our hearts with His love, we can approach her/him with the love of God. If there is fear in us, I think it's better to put a distant with her/him and to get close to God. We need to be honest with ourselves whether we have picked up the spiritual telescope properly and are looking at her/him (or situation), or we have picked up the spiritual telescope upside down, so that there is fear in us. Then we must go to God with my weakness as we face the problem, the fear in us. In doing so, God's perfect love will drive out fear in us. And with God's perfect love, we will be able to love her/him.

Romance

When I think about the word “romance”, I remember that I had a crush on a sister in the Lord when I was in college. We went to the same Christian club and one day she shared about her older brother who was sick and who might not live long. When I heard her testimony, and I felt sympathy and I would like to become her ‘older brother’. So after that day, I made a lot of effort to approach her so that I can be a big brother to her. I even did three days fasting (just not eating ha) because she was doing three days fasting. Haha. As time went by, there was a rumor that I was dating her because we spent time together a lot. Around that time, she was actually dating another brother in the Lord. So I spoke to myself number of times that I didn’t love her romantically but as one of the sisters in the Lord with His love. Not only I spoke to myself like this, that was what I told others who asked me about our relationship. However, after she broke up with that brother in the Lord, I started spending more time with her, and my romantic feeling began to express that was suppressed until that time. And I began to guard other guys who came near her to love her with Christ’s love. For example, when I was studying with her at the library, I had very unpleasant feeling when a brother approached her and spoke to her. Then one day she noticed this and she wanted to talk to me outside of the library. And she said to me, ‘You are too overprotective.’ At that time I was shocked. And I took it as her rejection because she didn’t like me even though all along I tried to love her as sister in Christ. So I just quit studying, pack my stuffs and went to the beach by myself. Since then, I avoided her and didn’t have conversation with her for a year or so. After graduating from college, I got married, and the last time I heard the news that she got married too so I sent her a greeting card. And that was it.

The reason I am sharing this story is because when I reflect back, I had romantic feeling toward her even though I told myself and others that I loved her with Christ’s love. Although I began to love her with Christ’s love (?) because I was drawn to her because I sympathized with her (which I think it’s not healthy), my feeling toward her gradually became romance. I knew this because when I was struggling because of her, the Abraham’s story of offering Isaac to God came to my attention. And I asked myself, whether I could offer her to God if God asked me to do so. My biggest struggle was whether I loved her more than God or not. But eventually, my answer was I loved her more than God. The more time I spent with her, the more I became far away from God. I was driven by romance instead of God’s love. Here, I am not saying that romance is wrong. I believe that God has given each one of us a beautiful romance. However for me, my romantic feeling was not driven by the Fact, the Word of God. I remember the pastor who taught me and others during the bible study in college said that feeling should be driven by faith in the Fact (the Word of God) by showing us a picture of a locomotive. In other word, emotion must be led by the fact and faith. But my feeling was not led by the Word of God and faith. That was why my relationship with her was not beautiful in God’s sight and others’ sight. In the end, I wounded her heart and was not good example to other brothers and sisters in Christ who knew us.

When the single Christian brothers and sisters in the Lord spend a lot of time together in a church community, they can have romance. When I see those singles who fall in love in the church, it looks beautiful to me. Also, I want to pray for them and help them (if they need my help). That’s why I started posting my personal view about dating (marriage and family as well) on my personal website. But one thing I want to share this writing “Romance” with caution here is that there are some singles who may make mistakes like me. I think about what I did in loving the sister when I was in college. I think about how it could have been beautiful in God’s sight and other people’s sight. If I write few things, I think, first, I should have spent more time with God than her. I spent a lot more time with her whom I could see with my own eyes and whom I thought she was pretty, than God whom I could not see. Haha. Although I worshiped God and fasted with her, my heart was not directed to the Lord, but to her. Now when I think about the words I spoke to my mind, they were almost all excuses and rationalization. If we spend more time with a sister or a brother whom we love than our God, then it will be very difficult for our romance

to be led by the Fact, the Word of God. Such romance cannot be controlled and led by God's love. That's why I think it is better to go near to God and pray to Him as we put some distance with an opposite sex toward whom we feel romance. I think that it is good to pray continuously at the Morning Prayer meeting, Wednesday night prayer meeting and so on. And if we put down our will in front of God and devote ourselves in following God's will, then our romance can be led by God and His will. I also think that it is good to focus on ourselves rather than focus on the opposite sex when we feel romance toward her/him. In other words, it is much important to prepare ourselves before God than to expect her/him to be someone s/he is not. Some of us have very hard time to be objective but deeply fall into romance. They tend to be very focused on her/him and not preparing themselves before the Lord. As we examine ourselves before God, we must check ourselves whether we have God's purpose, goal and vision. We must frequently check to see whether we are faithfully fulfilling His purpose, goal and vision that the Lord gave to us. I think this preparation is very important, especially for us, the brothers in the Lord. If we are negligent in this and keep on pursuing the sister whom we love, then the mature sisters in the Lord will not feel spiritual attraction to us. How can we lead their beloved sisters in the Lord in order to fulfill the Lord's will if we are not driven by His will, purpose, goal and vision? However, if we fall into deep romance, we will not even think about these things at all.

As we focus on God at first, secondly, we must focus on the opposite sex as we focus on ourselves. At that time, we can ask many questions to ourselves, but one of them should be 'Is it just romantic feeling toward her/him or is it a romantic love with the conviction that it is the Lord's will for us to be together?' The reason why this question is important is because without conviction that it is the Lord's will, that romantic love can be degenerated. Look at what happened to Amnon's 'love' toward Tamar. Amnon, son of David, who fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David, and became frustrated to the point of illness on account of Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1-2). After listening to the words of his friend Jonadab who was a very shrewd man (v. 3), Amnon raped Tamar (v. 14) and then hated her with intense hatred (v. 15). "In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her" (v. 15). Amnon's love toward Tamar was degenerated. Likewise, our love toward our beloved one whom we feel romance can be degenerated as well. And the reason is maybe because we are driven by romantic love that is without conviction that God has brought us together. That's why our emotion is changing. That's why sometime we love and other time we lose interest. Therefore, we must let the beautiful romance to be led by the Word of God and His will. As we keep on meditating His Word and pray to Him, we must humbly seek God's will (and put down our own will) and examine ourselves before God. And if our motive, intention and will are inadequate and unclean, then we must repent. The romance and romantic relationship that is not driven and led by the Word of God is very dangerous. And that's what I did when I was in college. As I had experienced its' consequence, I was ashamed of myself, and I am sorry only to God but to that sister in the Lord. Although she is a sister in the Lord, I lost her because of my fault and my sin. I didn't keep the brotherly love relationship with her in the Lord. It was my sin and I experience the bitter taste of my sin and its consequence.

I hate matchmaking

I have a friend whom I met when I was in college and we lived together as roommates for a year. Out of the six friends who lived together, everybody got married except this one. So I tried to set him up three or four times with sisters in Christ but it didn't work out. And since my friend didn't want me to set him up, I gave up. When I thought about the title "I hate matchmaking" this friend came into my mind. I guess it was maybe because he didn't like matchmaking. I am not only my friend but most singles brothers and sisters in Christ want to date instead of being arranged a match. Since I got married by matchmaking, I wonder why some people hate matchmaking. I also have some negative thoughts about why they do not have open heart toward matchmaking. For example, I am sure they are various reasons why they try to avoid matchmaking, such as fear (due to unwanted encounters), ego hurt (how long are they trying to insist their self-esteem?), annoyance (does it makes sense?), and so on. But as they get older, they have to admit that dating is not easy. After graduating from college, it is not easy to date because it is not easy to meet an opposite sex. If they cannot meet at their churches or work places, then it will be difficult to date after all. So I agree on matchmaking.

I and my wife met by matchmaking. The pastor of the church where my parents-in-law were serving arranged the match between my wife and me. He still is in the same presbytery as my father who is pastor as well. Under the agreement of the pastor and the both parents, my wife and I met on October 13th, 1996, at lunch time after 11 O'clock worship at Victory Presbyterian Church. I still remember when I first saw my wife. On next day Monday, I started to spent time with my wife and her parents and siblings together for three days. At that time, I did not think that 'I met my wife by matchmaking.' In other words, the term "matchmaking" did not affect me at all. I just met with my wife and spent time together naturally. When I look back on my marriage, I remember the story of Abraham in the Bible who arranged his son Isaac's marriage. Abraham didn't want his son Isaac to get a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites (Gen. 24:3) (in modern term, I think Abraham didn't want his son marry a non-believer) but want him to get a wife from his own relatives (v. 4) (in modern term, I think Abraham wanted Isaac to marry a Christian). So he told his chief servant (v. 2) to go to his country and his own relatives and get a wife for his son Isaac (v. 4). When we read the whole chapter 24 of Genesis, where this story is described in detail, we cannot see that Isaac got married by dating at all. In modern terms, he got married by matchmaking. Of course, some people may say that why I am trying to say that matchmaking is good based on the Old Testament Abraham's story regarding his son Isaac. But I am just trying to find some principles from the Bible. I am not claiming that we should all marry by matchmaking. I am just sharing my thoughts that we don't have to hate matchmaking and thus we should have open mind toward matchmaking. When I think about Isaac's marriage by matchmaking in a sense, I have a scene that comes to my mind. The scene is when Abraham's chief servant went to the Abraham's country in obedience to his master's command and went near the well outside the town, he prayed to God saying, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'-let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master" (vv. 12-14). Before he had finished praying Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder (v. 15). And without saying a word, Abraham's chief servant watched Rebekah closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful (v. 21). I was challenged by this verse 21 what he did. How beautiful it is for the Abraham's chief servant to watch Rebekah closely to learn whether she was the right person whom God prepared for his master's son Isaac's spouse.

I'm not saying that everyone should find their spouses by matchmaking. They are so many couples who got married by dating and live together well. I am just sharing the idea that it is good to have an open mind toward

matchmaking. And like what the Abraham's chief servant did, I think we should pray to God and humble gaze at a sister/brother in Christ in silence, to know whether s/he is the right person whom God has prepared for us for our future spouse. We should not be over confident of ourselves. We should not think that without God's help and guidance, we can find our own future spouse and get marry. Meeting our spouse is not what we do. God must lead us to meet her/him. The marriage can stand firm and beautiful when God arranges our marriage. If we are not giving God a space to work for us to meet our future spouse, I think that is pride and sin. If we do not yield our will to the Lord, no matter how much we seek to find our future spouse, or even if we get marry through dating, the Lord's good, pleasing and perfect will not be accomplished in and through our families. So let us yield our will to the Lord. Let us pray to God that His will be done instead of our will. May He send you a godly and right person to you so that you may build the Lord-centered family.

Do I have to date?

I have not experienced dating until I meet my wife. Maybe that's why I can ask a question, "Do I have to date?" I have seen friends around me who did date well (?) when I was in college. I saw them dating a girl and then broke up and then dating another girl. I remember people said that when you date often you can get to know a woman better. However, I carefully made my argument to those around me: 'If you keep on dating so often, it is a waste of time and a waste of material.'

My wife is the first whom I dated. Of course I met my wife through a matchmaker. Then, after two months, we were engaged and then married four months later. But I have no regrets at all. I am just thankful. I do not want to compare here with other brethren. It is because each person can have different views about dating. Actually, I am sure that we all have different view about dating. So I just want to share my view about dating. My answer to the question "Do I have to date?" is both "No" and "Yes". My answer is "No" because I think it is not necessary to date someone if it is not aiming at marriage. However, I would like to answer "Yes" to dating that is aiming at marriage. Some may think that my thought is extreme when I said "No" to the dating that is not aiming at marriage. But I think if the dating is not aiming at marriage, then it's waste of time, material and energy. It's okay though. It seems that this world acknowledge or even praise those who date a lot and look down on those who didn't. Actually, since I never dated any girl in my life, I never kissed a girl too. I remember a young girl who even called me "stupid" because I never kissed the girl. Haha. I can be seen as a fool. It's okay with me. My thoughts are still the same. I think that we should not date thoughtlessly. I also think that we should not hurt an opposite sex by dating her/him. Especially, I don't think it's good idea to date her/him because people around date without the purpose of marrying her/him. We do not have any right to hurt God's beloved sister or brother in the Lord. Let us not date thoughtlessly.

Gossip

In the course of dating, a single man and woman should be careful not to gossip about each other. He should not gossip about his girlfriend in front of his friends. Of course, she should not gossip about her boyfriend in front of her friends as well. In addition to these gossip, the single man and woman who are dating should not listen carefully to the bad things that surrounding people say about their girlfriend or boyfriend. This, of course, presupposes the situation when the romantic relationship is not going well.

One day when my college alumni gathered, one of the sisters in Christ came to me and poured complaints about her husband. So I rebuked her in love. I told her not to gossip about her husband. Of course, this subject of gossip may be better applied to the marriage relationship. But it seems that gossip (or even slander) toward each other is increasing in the dating relationship, especially when that relationship is broken or after it is broken. Long time ago, when I was chatting with a sister in the Lord, I saw her wisdom. At that time, she seemed to have some difficulties with her boyfriend. So when she shared with her close friends, I think they said something negatives about her boyfriend in order to comfort and encourage her. So she told her friends gently not to say anything about her boyfriend anymore. I think that she did wisely.

The pattern that appears when a couple breaks up in the church is a gossip. If a brother or a sister whom we love is hurt by his or her girlfriend or boyfriend, people gossip about them. Of course, we know that they are trying to comfort our own brother or sister in the Lord. But their gossip that hurts our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ does not glorify God. It's not treating them as they are, who are loved by God and who have the image of God. The brothers and sisters in the Lord should gather together to comfort and encourage each other (Heb. 10:24-25). But if they gather to gossip about another brother or sister, this is not the brotherly love in God's sight and not a community that is pleasing in God's sight.

I am sure the single men and women hear many voices from many people around them. Their parents, siblings, relatives and friends may say a lot of thing about their marriage. So they will many different voices. But they need to be careful what they are listening. They need to filter their voices. In order to do that, they must be quick to hear God's voice first. Those who ask for God's comfort rather than the people's comfort listen to God's voice, understand God's will and obey His words. Especially when they have difficulties, pain, and hurt in dating, they may be tempted to gossip about their girlfriend or boyfriend in front of those friends who came to them to comfort and encourage them. This is sinning against God and it must be stopped. They must go to God in silence. Especially those who are hurt may want to go to the people around them instead of going to God. If so, then they may lose their spiritual discretion and may not be able to practice God's love. When they are hurt and wounded, they must to God and pour out their pains and wounds and receive God's true comfort and healing. They should no longer hurt God's heart by gossiping about fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who have God's image in their dating relationship. If they try to cope their difficulties emotionally, then their emotional wounds will be deepened and will be very difficult to be healed.

I hope and pray that this pattern of gossip will be stopped which I often hear when I think of young people who are like the dew. Also, I hope and pray that the image of Jesus who was unjustly persecuted, betrayed, wounded and crucified may be restored in us. I pray that God's loving community will be restored by listening to the Lord's voice and obeying Him by looking at Him rather than criticizing and gossiping in the subjective and emotional judgment of the wounded people. Let's be careful with our mouth!

How should I date in the church?

I think that dating in church is ideal on the one hand, but on the other hand it is not so easy. The reason I think it is ideal is because, first, a single man and a single woman are meeting in one faith. Of course, it does not mean that they are not meeting in faith because they meet at work or at school. However, another reason why it is ideal to meet and date in the church is because not only they are meeting in one faith but also they can serve the Lord together. It is indeed a precious blessing to be able to serve one Lord in one church and one faith.

When the man and the woman in the church meet in the Lord and put the Lord first in their relationship rather than prioritizing their relationship before the Lord and grow up and be matured in faith, then their relationship can be healthy and firm. However, if they do not prioritize the relationship with the Lord but the relationship with each other, then their relationship with the Lord will gradually become distant from the Lord. Then their unhealthy relationship cannot be a good example to others in the church and may even have bad influence to them. Therefore, it is ideal to date in the church, but in order to maintain and pursue that ideal dating relationship, they must commit themselves to the Lord first. In order to do this, the single man and woman who are dating should be a stepping stone to each other in their faith journey to the Lord. But instead of becoming the stepping stone but becoming an obstacle to each other in the process of going near to the Lord in their faith journey, then there is a high probability that their dating relationship will not be a good example to others in the community.

In order to set a good example of dating relationship in the church, the couple must first seek the Lord-centered relationship. The Lord-centered dating relationship is a relationship in which each single man and single woman personally and together prioritizes the vertical relationship with the Lord. I am sure there is a time when they prioritize the vertical relationship with the Lord and then gradually put the horizontal relationship with each other first without realizing it. But if they realize this even later, I think it is a good thing because I am sure there is a lot of young single men and women in the church who prioritize their horizontal relationship over the vertical relationship with the Lord. Then we cannot say that their relationship is the Lord-centered relationship. I believe that the man's role is especially important in sincerely pursuing the Lord-centered relationship. It is because he has a responsibility to lead his girlfriend closer to the Lord, while he faithfully lives his Christian life by prioritizing his relationship with the Lord. If he ignores this responsibility and is more attracted to his girlfriend, for sure he cannot be a stepping stone between the Lord and her and cannot lead her closer to the Lord. And if she is not being led by him and thus puts her dating relationship with him as the priority, then their dating relationship will be a good example to others within the church. Of course, if she is wise, she will rebuke him in love when she finds out that he is not prioritizing the Lord and will encourage him to focus on the Lord in their relationship. In doing so, both of them will be able to be a good model in the church as a dating couple and have positive influences to the fellow brethren in the church. If we think more specifically, the single brothers and sisters in Christ who are dating have to be very careful about their words and behaviors in the church in order to be a good example to others in the church. That means that they need to be mindful of the community. But if they are being selfish and just think about their own dating relationship instead of thinking about the whole church community or at least a group that they belong to, then their selfish words and actions can eventually hurt the members of the community. Of course, the members of the community who are upset and are hurt by the couple should not talk negative things about the couple which is not helpful to that couple at all. Rather, it is their responsibility to embrace and love the couple with the grace of God and with the love of Christ. In other words, the members of the church community must create an atmosphere where the dating couple feels free to date in the truth. In order to do so, the members of the community should consider the dating couple. Until the couple says openly that they are dating, the community members should be very careful not to say things about them that may not be helpful. Although the church members love the couple and have good intention in talking about good things about them to other church members, their words can be

twisted it or the other members may misunderstood. So it's better to be slow in speaking about the couple. If the couple openly tells the church members that they are dating, then the church members should respect their dating relationship and help them to openly date in the community. They should bless the couple with the Lord's heart and pray to God that God may lead their dating relationship to the Lord's centered. It is also a good idea to wait until the couple asks for help from the church community members. When the church members know what the couple needs and help them, the couple will be comfortable in dating in the church. When the dating couple and the church community members consider each other, then they will be able to shine the light of Jesus Christ and keep the unity of the church.

The couple who has the Lord-centered dating relationship in the church may have unexpected things even when they refrain from words and deeds by considering other church members in order to be a good example to them. One of them is "rumor". There can be bad rumor that can be spread in the church that hurt the couple's hearts. The reason is because of our sinful nature. There can be a member of the church who spread the bad rumor regarding the dating couple within the church because s/he has been tempted by Satan due to jealousy, hatred and etc.. How should the dating couple respond when they heard such rumor about them? I don't think excuses or advocacy will help. Rather, I think it is much better to silence the rumor with their good deeds. In other words, if the couple look only to the Lord and pursue the dating, then they will not be so sensitive to the rumors in the church. I think it is wise to listen to the words of the members of the church and consider. But it is not necessary for the couple to listen even to the bad rumors. If the couple is mature enough even to listen to the bad rumors and make them beneficial to them and their dating relationship, then I think it's okay for them to listen to the rumors. But if they cannot, then it is better to become deaf and dumb. The couple can be deaf to such bad rumors, and open their ears to the voice of the Lord and enjoy their dating. Also, there is no need to open their mouth and speak out about the bad rumors they heard. Rather, it is much better for the couple to open their mouths and to devote their time in pouring out their hearts to the Lord in prayers. If the dating couples are pursuing the Lord-centered healthy relationship in the church, then they will not be so sensitive to what they hear in the community. Although they cannot completely avoid listening to all the rumors in the church about them, even if they hear they will be able to take their burdens and even hurts to the Lord in prayers and will be able to use them as an opportunity to get closer to Him and be faithful to their dating relationship as well.

I personally think that it is good to make lots of good memories when the couples are dating. Especially when they make many beautiful memories in the community called the church, I think the couple's heart is rich. Of course, there can be many bad memories as well when they are dating. But I believe that by making much more good memories in their dating relationship, they can overcome all the bad memories by covering them with the good memories. In order to do so, the couples should grow in faith, love, and hope and serve the Lord in one heart and one will and serve the members of the community. When two people become one in faith, their faith must grow and become stronger. Also, as two people love one another, the love of the Lord must become more and more filled in their hearts. And as they look to the Lord, their hearts must be filled with hope. I am sure the Lord will be pleased with such couples who glorify God.

Conflict

The more the couple knows each other as they are dating, the more they can reduce the conflict in their relationship. When the single man and the single woman date, I think it is inevitable not to argue, to fight, to get hurt and even to say let's break up. Then I am sure they will struggle, worry and pray to God with tears. But the problem is that many young couples lack skills or wisdom about how to deal with conflict. So I want to think briefly about the conflict in three ways:

First, it is natural that there are conflicts between two different persons.

However, if the couple enlarges this natural thing in anger as if it was a big deal, and says 'He doesn't love me anymore', 'She is not the one that I thought she was', etc. and say to each other 'Let's break up' or something, this is not healthy respond at all. There is conflict in any relationship. We must keep in mind that conflict is extremely natural.

Second, we have to deal with the conflict openly.

Conflicts should never be hidden. We tend to avoid it when major conflicts arise. The reason is because we have not learned how to solve small conflicts. Because we do not have the skills necessary to solve small problems, if there is a conflict, one person is angry and the other person is mainly swallowing inside. After all, in many situations, we tend to pass over the conflict instead of openly dealing with it. So there is greater chance for a person or both in couple relationship to explode. If so, then there is a high probability that the problem has already have gone down the drain. Therefore, we have to deal with conflicts openly.

Third, we must make conflict an opportunity to know each other.

If the couple has been dating each other for long time, they may not know each other well. The difference between a man and a woman is the homework to be learned for life. Although the man and the woman cannot know each other perfectly, they must devote themselves to get to each other. And the good opportunity is conflict. The reason for this is because conflicts expose the differences between men and women. The wise couple knows how to use conflict as an opportunity to get to each other intimately.

Wound

Sometimes, in the Korean drama, I see a woman who is wounded by her boyfriend cries in tears. I also see a man who is wounded by his girlfriend drinks until he gets drunk. My wife, who was looking at the drama, told me once or twice that she couldn't understand. The reason is because when we were dating for six months until we got married, there was no time for us to have conflicts and fights. It was because we met in the early morning and dated until night and we had no time to fight and wound each other. That is why it is more my own subjective view rather than from experience to think about the wound that are exchanged in the dating relationship. However, I cannot help but to consider the subject of "wound" in the dating relationship because I see, hear and feel myself that they are couples around me who are wounded in their dating relationship. So I just want to talk about the subject "wound" carefully so that at least we can think about it and struggle with it so that we may not wound each other in our relationship.

I am sure there are a lot of wound in the dating relationship. The shedding of tears in pain will be a natural result of the wound. Therefore, people who know this (whether in knowledge or through experience) will control their romance well or control it and will not make a dating relationship quickly. There may be a case in which a single woman or man do not even start the dating relationship even though s/he has someone whom s/he feel romance because s/he is wounded before. Of course hurt is not the only reason. But what is certain is that no one likes to be wounded. That's why those single men and women who are afraid of getting hurt in relationship and are cautious, they will not get into dating relationship hastily.

When I was in college, I had secret crush on a girl who was younger than me. I do not know why I liked her. I was then overwhelmed by the romantic feeling on her so I had to suppress it for a year (few people even joked that I look young now compare to when I was in college. Haha). So when I graduated from college, three freshmen girls wrote on my yearbook 'grandfather'. I had hard time suppressing my feeling toward her and also trying to avoid her because we were at the same Christian club. So even when I saw her at the Christian club once a week, I had to act naturally and tried to treat her as a sister in Christ. But thankfully (?) I did not know what happened to me but the one-sided crush on her for a year ended. It was really a one-man show. Haha (I can laugh at now but then ... haha). Those single men or women who are like me, having a secret one-sided crush will have a lot of heart trouble. It is not easy at all if they go to the same church, are in the same small group, and even go to short-term mission together. But I personally think that it is good to be careful not to wound each other. Of course, I am not against those young men who courageously reach out to a girl who they fell in love with and try to express their love for her. But I think it is good to be careful not to be stumbling block to other church members. I am sure some people who read writing may or may not agree with what I said. I understand and it is okay. There are some men who want to courageously confess their love to the girls whom they love even though the girls may reject them. I did too because I only had secret crush on three girls). I still remember after I graduated from college, I approached one of those three sisters in Christ and shared my feeling towards her instead of keep on concealing it and suppressing it. She followed me well as a big brother in Christ even after we graduated from college. So when I was serving in my church and asked her to help our church vacation bible school, she gladly helped me and my church. At that time, one elementary kid thought that we were dating. Haha. Since we had been seeing so often and serving together in the church, I guess there was romantic feeling in me. So one day, I just went near her house, parked my car and just stayed inside the car for a while. And I thought about whether to call her up and tell her to come out or not so I could confess my feeling to her. Finally, I took the courage, called her up and asked her to come out. At that time, I prayed and made my mind that if she said 'No' after I confessed my emotion to her, then I would accept it as God's will and not to pursue the relationship. After all, she was "No" and I felt miserable. But as I was heading home, I called her and said 'Thanks for saying no to me.' The reason is because I couldn't control my felling and confessed

my feeling to her without any conviction in the Lord. Actually, when she said 'No' at that time, my heart was comfortable.

After all, when I look back at that time and look at some of the people around me now, I think it is mainly I "give" wound to the other person first and then I am wounded in the attempt to have relationship with the opposite sex. Of course, we tend to sympathy that we are wounded rather s/he is wounded. Maybe one of the reasons is that we fall into (extreme) victim mentality when we are wounded. In the end, in such victim mentality, our heart is being filled increasingly with resentment and hatred toward the opposite sex who has wounded us. It seems that this hurt eventually dominates all our reason, emotion and will and turns it into despair or anger toward the other person. It is a scary consequence. The more scary thing is that there can be resentment and anger toward God as well. So not only that we may close our hearts to other person but to God as well. Like this, the wound from the dating relationship can be fatal. It can make us to give up even our souls. Since the consequences from the dating relationship is very serious, I want to think about wound based on the Scripture. Although I don't know much about it, I would like to write say few things.

The first thought is of course Jesus' wound.

Of course, when we are wounded in a dating relationship we may only think about our wound instead of the wounds of Jesus. But if God is gracious to us and if we can deliberately think about the wounds of Jesus, then we should think about why Jesus was wounded on the cross. The reason is because Jesus was wounded for us instead. Of course, the Jesus' wounds are different from our wounds from our dating relationship. In our dating relationship, we are wounded "because of" each other and not "for" each other or "instead of" each other. If we can have this kind of wound in our dating relationship, then I think this kind of relationship is something higher than normal dating relationship that is pursuing the higher love that is love of Jesus

The second thought is "wound capacity".

Jesus was wounded for us. Then, shouldn't we be wounded on behalf of our loved ones? If we can be wounded instead of them, then I think it is truly marvelous or mature love of the Lord. However, too many dating relationships seem to be absurdly lacking in capacity to be wounded for or on behalf of the others. Of course, some people can say that they are wounded for or instead of their loved ones. However, it is doubtful how much such a wound can be accommodated. Furthermore, I think we may be in the illusion that we cannot really see whether it is the wound capacity that is worthy of the Lord or the wound that we deserve.

The third thought is the word "healing".

I think about how it is possible for the wound to be wrapped and healed. Of course, the Bible says God heals us. In particular, when we look at Psalms 147:2, I think the Lord heals our broken wounds first and then heals our external wounds. However, considering the Lord's healing, I wonder how the Lord heals the broken-hearted. I think the Lord heals with the love of Heavenly Father that is greater, wider and deeper than romantic love. Only by the love of Heavenly Father can we heal the wounds we have in our dating relationship. Just as the bigger ocean covers the stream, when God's greater love covers our wounds from relationship, God's healing begins.

In the process of dating, there can be deep and wide wounds from separation. Then we can dislike everything even our beloved ones, and our God. And we can give up on us. But God never give up on us who are wounded and will never let us go. Rather, He is our Heavenly Father, who is searching for us and come near to us who are wounded to hug us in the arms of His love, His sons and daughters who are wounded, whom He considered

precious and honor. When we throw ourselves in the arms of the Lord, when we are in the arms of Jesus on the cross and when we touch His scars in faith, our wounds will be healed.

Purity

When I tried to share my brief thoughts on "purity," I remembered the book "The Passion and Purity" written by Elizabeth Elliot. If you read that book, you might be surprised to see there are such couples like Jim Elliot and Elizabeth Elliot when there were dating. When I saw glimpse of their devotion to keep their purity before God before their marriage, I wondered how many such couples are there in these days. Nowadays, pre-marital sex seems to be a trend (?). There are many cases where young dating couples are living together and have sex before their marriage. It seems like even Christians think that premarital sex is okay. In this worldly trend where the unbiblical and sinful is flowing, it is very hard to go against the flow and follow the biblical principle of keeping the purity even before marriage. That's why the Christian singles must pray and struggle seriously about how to deal with it. When we look at many seminar articles about dating, many young couples ask the question about how far they can go in terms of physical contact when they are dating. I see a lot of answers about that question in the articles but my personal thought is that there are so many things to be careful about when a single man and a woman with a vigorous youthful blood meet and love each other. For example, I think it is not good that a single man and a woman who are dating stay in a same room or in the car for too long late at night. The reason is because there is a lot of temptation to have sex. Especially when the single man suggests to his girlfriend to stay together in the room or in the car late at night, I think she should cope wisely not only for her purity but also for his purity as well. I think it's better to avoid spending time in the room or in the car late at night. Although I think the man's responsibility is bigger in keep the purity, but both man and woman have to work hard.

I am sure some couple may ask what if they are already engaged, can they have sex before marriage. But there is something we should keep in mind. It is said that there are so many cases where a boyfriend is raping his girlfriend. And many single women who are raped by their boyfriends because they put off their guard. It is because they think they know their boyfriends well so they meet their boyfriends with an easy mind. I think the nearer they are, the young single men and women should be more polite and more be careful to keep their purity. But this will not be easy for both men and women. They may ask back what's wrong with having sex since they have already been engaged to get married. But if they are a genuinely loving fiancé, then they will be able to wait until they get married.

A long time ago, one of the Hollywood famous movie stars Tom Cruise was on TV often, and his wife was pregnant and gave birth to a baby but they didn't have wedding ceremony. At that time, he said that because he had to film the movie "Mission Impossible III" and had to move around some countries, he had to delay his wedding ceremony because he didn't have time. In addition to Tom Cruise, some of the famous actors and actresses in Hollywood give the impression that having a baby before marriage is very natural. So now it may seem foolish to keep purity before marriage. The people in the world may consider those who keep their purity before marriage a fool. Nowadays due to marriage, divorce, remarriage, and divorce cycles, it seems like it's hard to tell who is whose child. I think that this Hollywood spirit is now planting the wrong idea of purity about marriage to all of us. But we Christians who live in this kind of world must ask ourselves, 'How should I keep my purity?' The Bible says that fearing God is the foundation of wisdom (Prov. 1:7). If Christian young single brothers and sisters in Christ fear God, they will keep their purity. And they will be ready to devote their purity to only one man, or one woman, whom God has prepared for their marriage. But the single brothers and sisters who pursue this noble love are without popularity in this world. Nevertheless, those who live a life of faith before God must keep their purity according to the God's absolute truth.

Then what if the single men and women already had sexual relation with their opposite sex before they met their fiancé? In my opinion, if they repented and have assurance of forgiveness, then they should confess it to their

fiancé before they get married. Of course they want to hide it because they are afraid, but I think they should confess it and ask their fiancé for forgiveness. It is not enough to receive forgiveness from God. If they truly have assurance of forgiveness after they repented their sin to God, then they are already forgiven and free so there is no reason not to confess to their fiancé. Rather, if they love their fiancé sincerely with His love, then they will have courage to ask for forgiveness.

We are now living in a world where the word "purity" is no longer seen by the worldly people. Now the word "purity" is not an important topic of conversation to the single men and women who are dating in the church. It seems that there are a lot of people who think that they can have premarital sex because everyone has it. Therefore, the Christian single men and women need to be more alert, self-controlled, praying and cleansing their thoughts with the Word of God. And they must keep their own purity as we fear God. The church must keep its purity until Jesus' second coming so that we can participate in the wedding of the Lamb.

“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Pet. 1:22).

The differences between men and women

The differences between men and women (1)

‘A woman worries about the future until she meets her husband. A man does not worry about the future until he gets a wife.’ ["Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

I think the above statement has a lot of meaning but I do not know all those meaning. Why do women worry about the future until they meet their husbands? I think it is because women are man-oriented. In Genesis 3:16, God says to the woman “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” Here we can see that women are husband-oriented. She has a desire to help and support her husband. Also she needs a man's rule. The woman is not ruling the man, but the man is. So the woman worries about the future until she meets the man who can control her. No matter how heroine the woman is, she needs to be ruled by the man. So a woman cannot help worrying about the future until she meets her husband. If the woman was task-oriented, the woman would not worry about the future until she met her husband. The man does not worry about the future until he gets the wife is because he is task-oriented. In Genesis 3:17 God said to Adam, “... Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.” That is, the man is work-oriented. The man has to work. He must work with sweat and eat the product. So the man can work and live on his own. From the man's point of view, it seems that the concept of "getting" is stronger than the concept of "meeting" a woman. Of course, he sees a woman with a view to marriage, but I think even seeing the woman is work for him. So the man aims to get his woman and does not worry about the future because he is doing so with the solution-oriented. But after he got his woman which means after he has achieved his goal then he starts to worry about the future. In other words, after achieving the goal, the man seems to have no idea how to live with the woman. It seems he just think he should just live vaguely. So the man has to worry about the future if he does not have another high goal in living with the woman and share it with her.

Imagine that a man-oriented woman and a work-oriented man meet and live together by marriage. Since they are opposite sex and are different, how can they live together with these synergies? I personally try to get to know a woman. Of course I am trying to get to know my wife, but I am learning about the difference between men and women through books. I think we should study this too. The reason is because if we do not learn, we will be ignorant in approaching our woman. So I try to apply what I have learned from the books to my wife at home while learning about the woman. In other words, as I am learning about the woman and as my understanding of my wife becomes more and more increasing, I want to give my wife the space as a woman and want to accept my wife as she is. For example, even though my wife might seem to have strong and independent, but she relies on me, her husband. As I look at her, I try to understand her point of view and try to understand her. And as I try to satisfy her needs, I try to rule her. For example, I would rather listen to my wife when she expresses her feelings in our conversation and I try to express my feeling and communicate more truthfully to her. And she seems to be grateful. When I share my heart and feelings truthfully to her, my wife listens to me and she is pleased to know me. When I explain to her a reason why I did what I did, sometimes she shows tears of love because she understands my circumstances and my heart. And she hugs me. Indeed, my wife is also husband-oriented.

The difference between men and women (2)

‘A woman must know only one man in order to understand every man, whereas a man, even if he knows all women, does not even understand one woman’ [“Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry”]

A man does not understand a woman properly. I think it is more appropriate to say that the man cannot understand the woman. After studying psychology at college, I have said few times that I want to write a book about the psychology of a woman as half joke and half serious. But I had to give up too soon because I thought it was impossible to know woman’s mind. Haha. Even if I gave up writing a book about woman, I am still reading books about woman in order to understand only one woman that is my wife.

The woman seems to be very complicated. One interesting example comes from the book, "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry": ‘The women want men to be sensitive, but on the other hand they don’t like men to be too sensitive.’ How many men in this world will be able to notice this subtle distinction? Many times I thought I know a woman but actually I don’t know her. With the man's logical thinking, he cannot understand why a woman is like this or that and what she wants or what she doesn’t want. The reason for this is because the man cannot understand what woman wants with their logical thoughts. He can understand her when he approaches her emotionally. So I think that if he wants to understand her, he can follow Jesus's way of how He loves the church. I want to call it the "incarnation" method. As Jesus incarnated on earth because He loves us and to save us, the man must humble himself to love the woman as Jesus loves the church. In a more specific application, when a wife speaks emotionally to a man, the man should humble himself and listen to her actively in emotional level rather than to listen to her logically. In doing so, he will be able to feel her feelings little by little. Of course, if he thinks logically, sometime what she says sounds ridiculous. But if he listens to her emotionally, he will understand why she feels in this way or that way. Then she seems to feel secure because she realizes that he sympathizes with her feelings. When she thinks that 'Oh, he understands me now', then he should lead her to the stage of reason from the stage of emotion. In other words, after a consensus is formed at the stage of emotion, the man has the responsibility to guide the woman slowly, carefully and intelligently to the stage of reason, to illuminate the woman's emotions with biblical principles.

Then what is the responsibility of the woman? A woman must know just one man. The woman in Genesis was responsible for knowing only one man, Adam. A woman should not try to get to know her man by looking at this man or that man. The reason is because she will not become the wife of many men but the wife of one man. Then what should she do to know her man properly? I want to find the answer in the Bible. What does the Bible say how the church should love Jesus? Ephesians 5:22 says the church should be submissive to Jesus. Here, the word "submission" means "listen from below." In other words, the woman must humbly listen to the man's words in order to know him. This is not easy. Psychologically, the women speak more than the man. So, in the woman's perspective, she wants the man to listen to her words. But the Bible tells the woman to listen to man's words. Why did God command it? In Genesis, the first woman Eve supposed to listen to God through her husband Adam and not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But she listened to the serpent (Satan) instead and ate fruit from the tree. Therefore, sin entered into the world, one of which is that the wife rejects the husband's guidance because the wife does not listen to her husband. Of course, it is a sin for a husband to refuse to lead his wife. But it is also sin for a wife to refuse her husband's guidance and disobey her husband's words. Therefore, in order for the woman to know the man, she must listen to the man humbly. More specifically, the woman should train herself to

listen to the man's words logically. If she listens to his words emotionally, she can get upset, and then there can be conflict.

The first man Adam in the book of Genesis refused to guide his wife Eve. So Eve heard Satan's voice rather than quick to listen to God's voice. As a result, both Adam and Even have committed sin against God by eating fruit from the tree. But in the New Testament, Jesus listened to the voice of God the Father and obeyed His will until the death on the cross. In other words, Jesus came to this earth, wearing the sinless human body, and died on the cross on behalf of our sins in order to lead us, His church. Therefore, the man must approach his woman with incarnation method in order to lead her. In order to understand her properly, he needs to form a consensus while listening to her at the stage of emotion. Then he must lead her to the logical level of the Scripture. The woman should humbly listen to his words. As she does so, she should hear God's voice through him. When they do so, both man and woman will be able to understand each other better.

The difference between men and women (3)

‘A woman chooses silence to punish a man, but a man loves silence.’ [“Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry”]

The more I learn about the differences between men and women, the more I experience some true things in life. For example, a man is solving-oriented, so while he is listening to a woman in a conversation his brain is thinking about solving a problem and he is familiar with suggesting a solution rather than listening to a woman until she finishes talking. But the woman wants to make a bond with the man as she expects him to listen to her instead of giving solution. In this way the woman speaks to reinforce her bond with others. So from her point of view, a man's suggestion of a solution may seem to suggest that the man is right and that she lacks the ability to solve the problem. The woman can be dissatisfied with the man who keeps on saying words and does not let her speak to the end. Among the difference points of communication between men and women, I would like to think about the "silence".

As we know well, men like silence (even though women do not want to accept it). Why? What's a reason that men like silence? According to Barbara and Allan Pease, in their book “Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps”, when women are inside caves, and when men go out hunting, the men had to be silence in approaching the target animal so that the animal doesn't run away. It is a little funny, but seems to make sense little bit. In addition, while a woman's brain can speak 6,000 to 8,000 words a day, a man can only speak 2,000 to 4,000 words a day, and we can see why men are more silent than women (Pease). If that is one of the reasons why the men are silent, how about the women? Why are the women silent? According to Pease, the reason is that her silence is one of the means of punishment. If the woman confides her feelings or problems to a person, it means that she believes the other person. But if she does not trust or like the other person, or does not agree with the other person's words, she keeps silence in order to punish the other person.

What should we do about men and women's differences about "silence"? Should we have to ignore the differences and look at each other with different perspectives? Or should we just accept the differences? We must strive to narrow the differences between men and women about this silence. By doing so, we can establish more complete romantic and/or marital relationship. Here are some thoughts:

First, basically we need to know and recognize the difference between men and women about silence.

The men and women are different in regard to silence and there is nothing wrong about the difference. A man must know why a woman is silent, and the woman must know or at least recognize why the man likes silence. We should not respond to the emotions we feel about being silent.

Second, the man should try to communicate with the woman rather than keep his silence that he likes.

Of course, it may not be easy for the man to talk first. However, in love for his woman, he must first open his heart and try to communicate to her. This means that the man needs to lead the conversation. To do so, the man must learn the woman's indirect method of conversation. It is a good idea to start a conversation with a woman from the indirect conversation method rather than by approaching and talking to the woman by the man's direct method of conversation. Or if he is not able to talk first to her and if she comes to talk first, he should at least try to put his whole mind to answer her. He should try to answer her by standing in her position and by remembering her indirect conversation method. And she doesn't need to talk back a lot because she likes to listen to him. Here, of course, the role of a woman is also important. If she is a wise woman, she can draw out what is in his heart and open his heart to talk. But if she is a fool, she pours out a nag, so he will close his mind. Pease's words are funny: 'If a woman wants to punish a man, the simplest way is to keep talking to him and keep changing the topic.' If she keeps on nag him or pour out a lot of word to him because he doesn't talk, then the man will be angry or leave her. So the woman needs wisdom to make her man to come out of silence and open up his mind and have conversation with her.

Third, the woman must respect the man's silence.

The woman does not have to be anxious that the man does not speak to her. The reason is that when a man enters the cave and takes his own time, he will come out of the cave again in due time. Therefore, the woman needs to wait. However, at this time, a woman who is insecure and lack of perseverance keeps on nagging to a man. Her goal is to pull him out of the cave and make him to say even a word. Then he can get emotional and then she can get emotional as well. Eventually when both man and woman become emotional, he can make a meaningful noise out of anger and she can make a meaningless sound in anger. It is important for the woman to remember that the man is not silent because he doesn't like her. This is merely an interpretation from a woman's point of view about man's silence. She should keep in mind that the man often has time of silence and he needs to do so. Unlike the woman who needs to talk in order to relieve her stress, the man needs time to think alone in silence. The woman who breaks man's silent time alone will only stir up conflict. I briefly wrote about the silence that the man and the woman should acknowledge and try each other. Both of them should put effort to know and acknowledge the difference between man and woman in regard to silence.

The differences between men and women (4)

'Both men and women exaggerate. The difference is that men exaggerate facts and data, while women exaggerate emotions and feelings.' ["Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

I think this makes sense. I also think both men and women exaggerate. But it is interesting to note that there is a difference. And if we know this difference, I think it will be beneficial to those who are in a dating relationship or a marital relationship. First of all, about women exaggerating their emotions and feelings, Allan and Barbara Pease, the authors of "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry" give an example: '... If a man disagrees with a woman in front of friends, she would later say, 'You always suppress me and never allow me to say my opinion! You always do this to me!' If the man listens to these words, he tends to interpret the words literally. So he would never understand when (or "always") he has ignored her opinion. But what she means is not as the man thinks which is about the number of times, places, or dates that he ignored her. But what she means is that she is asking him to act sweetly in front of her friends. But how many men can interpret her exaggeration? The reason for this is that, from the perspective of a man who exaggerates facts and data, he tends to listen to her words (such as, "always", "never", "whenever") that exaggerate her emotions and feelings logically with his reason. Therefore, in order for him to read her intention of exaggerating of her emotions and feelings, he first has to lay down his logical thinking. Then he should try to listen to her on the level of emotion. Of course, I think this takes a lot of effort, of practice and even of failure. I am sure it is not really easy to hit a woman's intention of her emotions and feelings at first place. If he keeps on listening to her words of exaggeration and interprets them constantly in the way of self-logical way of thinking based on the data and fact, then it will end up with hurting their self-esteem, and in the end they will get angry at each other and will have unnecessary conflicts. The man should not refute the woman's words of exaggeration on the basis of facts or data. It is better for him to try to feel her emotions more than trying to understand her feelings.

How then should the woman listen to the man who exaggerates facts and data? For example, living in a competitive society if the man tells her what happened at work, how should she listen to him when he exaggerates the amount of his work and of his income, the amount of fish he has caught, the number of beautiful women he dated her? First of all, she must respect him who exaggerates the facts and data that she hears from him even though she feels his sayings don't make any sense. For example, if he says that there were 5 beautiful women he met before he met her even though it was one woman, she may feel jealous. So if she gets angry at him and says, 'What a useless brag!', then his ego can get hurt. But she does not need to be disturbed and to feel hurt when he exaggerates his facts and data. She just needs to listen to the story of the man who exaggerates the facts and data and just acknowledges what he says. It means to build a man's pride. It means that she should acknowledge him even though she knows he exaggerates. Then it would be nice to praise him. Of course, it does not mean that she should acknowledge and praise him that he dated 5 women before he met her since it's not true but a lie. The man who exaggerates to his girlfriend or wife is weak in his pride. However, for example, when he says a bit of exaggeration about his work, his favorite sports, etc., it is helpful to each other to acknowledge and praise him. Of course, it is not desirable to exaggerate in romantic relationships or in marital relationships (even in all human relationships). Nevertheless, there are times when we get to know that men and women are exaggerating without our knowledge or awareness. It seems to be a human instinct. If we live a life that speaks truthfully, we do not have to exaggerate. Nonetheless, both man and woman who are weak exaggerate in their conversation. But if they can understand the differences, it will help their dating or marital relationships.

The differences between men and women (5)

'The woman's conversation is indirect speech and the man's conversation is direct speech.'
["Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

If someone asks me to choose one of the areas where a woman and a man are different, I would say “conversation method”. When I first read the book, "Man from Mars, Woman from Venus", I first felt strongly that the conversation between men and women was very different. As I was reading this book, especially a lot of examples of dialogues between men and women, I was surprised and suspicious of their differences on the one hand, and on the other I was little wonder about them. In the meantime, when I met my wife and got married, we listened to the author of the book, Dr. John Gray, speaking in a seminar in my car and we both laughed. But after we got married, there are many parts that we both felt the differences in our conversation and were able to sympathize with them.

At first I could not detect the indirect conversation method of my wife. Then as I started talking to her I began to notice that my wife was using an indirect conversation method that was different from my own. For example, when we went out to eat, I asked my wife what she wanted to eat. Then she usually said ‘Should we eat Tofu?’ and couple of second later ‘How about Chinese food?’ Although I wanted her to tell me directly what she wanted to eat, I don’t think she ever expressed her thought directly to me. Since she did not want to tell her thoughts directly to me, I had to wonder what she wanted to eat. So I asked her again what she wanted to eat, but she still didn’t say directly. Haha. I thought she didn’t tell me directly what she wanted to eat because she was considerate. But later as I learned the difference between men and women through the books I have come to this thought that maybe she want me to know what she wants to eat even though she doesn’t tell me directly what she wants to eat. The reason is because the woman tends the man to know what she wants. But this is not a conversation that considers the man’s position. She must know that if she considers him she must learn his direct conversation method so that it may helpful to him for her to say directly what she wants. In short, the woman should learn the man’s way of conversation. And she should try to use the man direct speech method for him.

Then what is the responsibility of the man? He should learn the woman’s indirect speech method. He should not try to lead the conversation in a manly manner. When he uses her indirect speech method, he must not lead her unconditionally as he wants, without being able to detect what she wants. He should be sensitive to her feelings. He must feel her emotion in her indirect speech, but especially in her body language. To do so, he needs to put down his rational and logical thinking. If he does not do it and listens to her in a logical way of thinking, then he will think about what she says in his own way, and almost cannot feel what she is trying to say and what she is feeling. In order to feel what she feels and to know what she is talking about, he not only has to put down his logical thinking, but also needs to put down his solution-oriented mindset. Of course, here I am not claiming that the man should put down his logical, solution-oriented mindset completely. What I’m trying to say is that the man has to put down something he needs to put down in order to talk with the woman in heart to heart conversation. And he must talk to her at the emotional level. If he listens to her logically what she feels, the he will almost certainly say in his mind, ‘Why does she make a ridiculous sound?’ Also, when he listens to her talking about what she feels in solution-oriented way of thinking, then he will not listen to her until the end, and he will definitely present the solution to her. And he thinks to himself that he does so because he loves her.

I do not know how much the young couple can actually apply in their dating relationships if they learn in advance of these conversations skills. But for sure it’s better for them to learn. The man must learn the woman’s indirect speech method, and the woman must learn the man’s direct speech method. If the couple does not try to learn each other’s speech method, they will quarrel and will not be able to produce positive fruit in their relationship. If they are able to perceive and learn from each other’s speech method and create positive fruits that enable them to communicate in mutual positions, men and women will be able to enjoy the heart-to-heart conversation and experience God’s presence in their dialogue.

The difference between men and women (6)

‘If a woman advises a man unilaterally, the man feels insulted ... A man likes to advise others and present solutions, but he doesn’t like an one-sided advice, especially the advice of a woman. ‘ ["Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

A man tends to advise his woman quickly instead of trying to make her to feel that he is sympathizing with her by opening his heart and ears and actively listen to her when she shares her problems. Why does he do that? The reason is because the man thinks that she wants a solution when she talks about her problem (Pease). Surely the reason why she opens up her heart to him is not because she wants the solution from him but rather for him to sympathize with her. But because he listens to her from his own solution-oriented viewpoint, he is quick to suggest a solution rather than quick to listen to her. Then she is frustrated when he does that. She is frustrated when she sees a man who cannot even listen to her story properly. And because she does not feel love from the man, she finally closes her heart and stops talking. And she may not ask for any more sympathy from him.

What about the woman? It is not easy for the man to open his heart to the woman and talk about his problem. But the woman does not seem to be aware of this fact. The reason for this is because it is not difficult for her to tell her problem to others. But the man is different. It is really hard for him to open up his heart and talk to his girlfriend or his wife about his troubles or sorrows. When he does so, it is because he really wants her comfort and encouragement. Let's say that she gives an advice to him unilaterally after she has listened to him. Then his pride really gets hurt. The man tends to solve the problem himself, but because he cannot he opens his heart to his girlfriend or wife after he has struggled again and again. But if she just gives him an advice without understanding his tendency, he does not want to open his heart anymore to her. Of course, in her perspective, she advises him because she loves him so that she can be helpful to him even a little. But that is only her opinion. Sometimes the man wants his woman to just listen to him. He wants her to take his story seriously. She has to keep in mind that he does not want the solution from her. She just needs to open her heart and listen to him. She should keep in mind that he does not want any advice or solution.

Some time ago, my heart was heavy and I opened my heart to my wife who followed me to the church office and shared my troubles. At that time, rather than comforting me by listening to me to the end and sympathizing with me, not only that she gave me an advice but she also said that the cause of the problem was me instead of another person. When I heard that, I really lost strength. And I quickly closed my heart. Then I did not speak any more to my wife. Then I think my wife was uneasy when she saw me not speaking and being in silence. Eventually, I told my wife that I wanted her to understand my heart, not the cause and solution of the problem. When she heard this, she apologized to me. And then we went home and tried to have conversation again. At that time, my wife listened to me carefully. And I said ‘Thank you’ to my wife for her advice. It was because what she said was not wrong.

Advice should be carefully given whether a man gives to a woman or the woman gives to the man. I am more and more realizing that I should not give an advice lightly. But I have to, I should give advice to a wise man or woman because he or she will be wiser still. But if I give advice to a fool, then he or she will hate me. I think the best thing is to advise a person when the person wants advice from us. Of course, we also need gentleness, wisdom and humility to give advice. I think it’s best for the woman to advise the man when he asks for it.

What is God's will about marriage?

“However, his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD, for He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel” (Judges 14: 4).

Should we Christians be married only to Christians who believe in Jesus? Although he or she does not believe in Jesus now, can I marry and witness him/her?

Today, in verse 14: 4, the Bible says that Samson's parents “did not know it was of the LORD.” Here, what does "it" refer to? It refers to “Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines. So he came back and told his father and mother, ‘I saw a woman in Timnah ...; now therefore, get her for me as a wife’” (vv. 1-2). In other words, what Samson's parents did not know was that Samson was trying to make the Philistine woman as his wife. So Samson's parents said to Samson when he wanted to take the woman of the Philistines as wife: “Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” (v. 3) In Samson's parents' perspective, I think that they could speak to their son whom they loved. In particular, they knew that the angel of the Lord appeared to the Samson’s mother and said she would conceive and would give birth to a son (13:3) and he would be a Nazirite to God from the womb (vv. 5, 7). So her husband Manoah, the Samson’s father, asked the Lord to teach them what to do for the boy who was to be born: “O LORD, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born” (v. 8), “When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule for the boy's life and work?” (v. 12) And they would certainly have kept Samson from drinking wine or other fermented drink, not letting him anything unclean, and no razor was used on his head (vv. 4-5, 7, 14). But what would the parent's heart be like when their beloved son Samson who was so nurtured best said he would marry a Philistine woman? Surely they could say to Samson, “Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?” (14: 3) But the Bible says that “this was from the LORD” (v.4). How should we understand this? Did God really make Samson, the Nazirite, marry a Philistine woman? How could the holy God make Samson, the Nazirite, to marry to the Gentile woman? I think not. In other words, it was not God made Samson to marry the Philistine woman, but He allowed him to marry her. It means that God allowed the marriage of Samson and the Philistine woman which was the Samson’s choice but God did not pair them. That was how much God loved Samson. God who respected Samson's free will had allowed him to marry the Gentile woman who was chosen by Samson. Theologically, this is God's permissive will. This is not God's directive will. And the purpose God allowed Samson to marry the Philistine woman was to make Samson to confront the Philistines (v.4). In other words, God allowed Samson to marry her so that he would begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the (13:5).

What is God's will regarding marriage? Is it God's will for a Christian to marry an unbeliever? My personal thought is that we should think separately about being married to the unbeliever and become one flesh and marrying the unbeliever and witness to him or her. Surely salvation of the unbeliever is the will of God, but I think it is not the will of God to marry the unbeliever who does not believe in Jesus. Of course, when we choose to marry an unbeliever, God, who respects our free will, allows the marriage so we can say it is God's permissive will. It is also the will of God so I do not know whether we can say that it is God's will to marry unbelievers. However, when we consider the first marriage of Adam and Eve, which began in Genesis, and the marriage of the Groom Jesus and the bride, the Church, in Revelation, I don't think the believer and the unbeliever can marry and become one flesh. Since the marriage between a man and a woman refers to the marriage between Jesus and the church, how can an

unbeliever in a bridal church participate in the wedding of the Lamb? The blessed people who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9) are God's chosen people whom God loved and chose before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Only the disciples of Jesus Christ can participate in the marriage feast of the Lamb because all of their sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross and are justified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:25). Obviously, the Bible says that the bridal church that can participate in the marriage feast of the Lamb is holy and without blemish before God, a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish (Eph. 5:27). Then how can a believer marry an unbeliever and become one flesh? How can righteousness and wickedness have in common and what fellowship can light have with darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14) "What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?" (v. 15) Is it really true that we Christian who believe in Jesus marrying an unbeliever God's will?

Which church should I go to when I get married?

Do I have to go to the church where the groom was attending or should I go to the church where the bride was attending? One of the concerns of the Christian brothers and sisters in Christ who are about to get married is to choose a church to attend together after they get marry. Of course, if both of them are attending the same church, they can continue to go to that church even after they get marry. However, if they go to different churches and get marry, then it can be a matter of struggle in choosing which church to go to. Of course, if they do not want to struggle with it, they can decide together to go to a third church. But most people want to keep going to the same church. In the case of the bride, I am sure she wants her future husband to go to her church together after they get married. Especially if she has been in the church for a long time (and if she grew up in that church and her parents are also church officials) her desire and expectation of attending her church with him will be greater. So maybe she might expect her future husband to say to her 'Let's attend your church after we get marry.' On the other hand, in the groom's perspective, he may surely think that his bride will follow him and attend his church after they get marry. This thought will be strong especially if he has been attending that church for a long time and his parents are the church officials. In this situation, the prospective groom and the prospective bride can struggle a lot. Not only that, they can even disagree and argue. In particular, the stronger their view of faith, they will be more conflicting opinions and more conflicts. I am sure since they have strong faith, they will ask God. Then, if God also gives them the wisdom that he gave to King Solomon, they can divide in terms of attending churches like for two Sundays they can go to the groom's church and another two Sundays they can go to the bride's church. This is not serving two masters but just two churches but one Lord. Perhaps no couple will make decision like this. The reason is that it is not easy to see that as decision based on God's wisdom. Here they must think of the wisdom they seek of God. If the couple seeks God's wisdom and God gives them (at least one of them) wisdom, he or she will fear God and seek God's will. And he or she will try to find God's will in the Word of God.

Then, what does the Word of God tell the couple which church to go after they are married? Let's look at Deuteronomy 24:5 – "If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married." Long time ago, one of the elders in my church told me that we had to fit our first button well. At that time, I understand why he said as referring to his relationship with his wife. And I accepted his word and took it as a lesson that the beginning is important in marital relation. And I thought as if the first button was misplaced all the buttons below it would be misplaced, if the beginning of the marriage goes wrong, then the rest of the marriage can be unfortunate and unhappy. That's how much the beginning of marriage is very important. Then, how should we spend the beginning of our marriage? In Deuteronomy 24:5, God specifically told the men of Israel that if they were recently married, they must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on them. What was the purpose? The purpose was to allow the men to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to their wives. But what about the reality? Of course, this cannot be literally applied in the present age. For example, most men now go to the army before marriage and there will not be many men going there as soon as they get married. Also, can a man now spend one year at home as soon as he gets married? It is practically impossible, and the new bride will not want her husband to do that either. The reason is that the most couples need to work in order to live. So how can the men stay home freely for a year without working? However, when I apply Deuteronomy 24:5 to newlyweds, it seems that a lot of husbands in the early days of their newly-married life are too busy. They are bustling because of work. They are so busy that they cannot even have much time with their wives, if not to make them happy. Those couples who both work are more difficult to spend time together. Since the wives are working too, it seems that the couples cannot even sit together and have dinner. And it seems that there are some weekend couples even though they are newly wedded couples. It is confusing whether the job exists for the family or the family exists for the job. We must know clearly that the job exists for the family, not other way around. The important thing is the family. And the most important relationship

in the family is the marital relationship. That's why God told the newly wedded husbands not to be sent to war or have any other duty laid on them for a year so that they were free to stay at home and bring happiness to their wives (Dt. 24:5). That's how important the newly wedded marital relationship to God.

Then, based on the words of Deuteronomy 24:5 how can the prospective groom and bride decide which church to attend after they get marry? Here, I have thought of three principles. I hope and pray that these three principles will help those who need to decide which church to attend after they get marry.

First, the important principle in deciding which church to attend after getting married is that the happiness of the two (husband and wife) should be given priority.

When the Bible Deuteronomy 24:5 says that a recently married man to stay home for a year and bring happiness to the wife, it gives us the lesson that the newly wedded couple should put their marital relationship first and live happily. Therefore, in deciding the church where the prospective groom and the prospective bride will attend after they get married, the standard of the decision should be the happiness of the couple. This means that the couple should not prioritize they happiness of both of their parents over their happiness in deciding which church to attend after they get married. It is not to say 'Since my parents are church officials, we should attend my parents' church when I get married.' Of course they should honor their parents and obey them. But they should obey their parents "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1). The Bible says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (5:31). But they are parents (especially mother?) who still cannot leave their grown up adult sons or daughters even after they got married. And there are lots of prospective grooms and/or brides who have been psychologically conditioned by their mothers. As a result, instead of thinking themselves first in deciding which church to attend, they think of their parents first. I do not think this is a good decision. I think the good decision is the couple to decide together which church to attend after they get married based on their own happiness which God wants.

The prospective groom and the bride must first think of their own happiness. God wants them to marry and live happily. Also, God wants them to be one flesh and enjoy each other in the Lord. Therefore, the prior standard in deciding which church to attend when the prospective groom and the prospective bride get married is their happiness and joy.

Second, the important principle in deciding which church to attend after getting married is that the groom can be free to stay at home for one year.

Of course, what the Bible Deuteronomy 24:5 says is that a man who has recently married must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him but for one year to be free to stay at home. But I applied this principle to the church. The reason is that if the prospective groom and the bride are married and go to the same church (whether it's the church where the prospective groom used to go or the prospective bride used to go) where he used to serve (very diligently and passionately because he considered serving the Lord's church as very important), he will continue to serve the church even after he gets married. How valuable and precious he devotion and service to the Lord's church in the prospective groom's perspective and the church members' perspectives? But what if the prospective bride worries that she will have hard time adapting to her future husband's church when he will continue to serve his church like when he was single? Then he should seriously pray to God and struggle with the decision that he already made in terms of the church and his service to the church. In particular, he should think in terms of his wife rather than in his position and in the position of the church people (even the position of the pastor). If she wants to sit with him and worship God together and wants to promote the progress of their faith in a newly wedded couple group but if he wants to keep on serving the church like when he was a single, then it is his responsibility when she has difficulties in adapting to her new church, that is his church. Of course, I am sure not every new bride

may want it. No, even if she wants to, she can obey her husband by being patient with difficulty situation and let her husband to continue to serve in the church. Or other new bride may not be reluctant to serve in the church with her husband. I am sure each couple will be different. But if his wife keeps on having difficulties not only in adapting to his church and her faith is not progressing because he keeps on serving in the church, then he should think seriously. Of course, in the new groom's perspective, he may want his wife to serve the church with him. But this may not be easy for her. The reason is because even though he is used to his own church, she is not. So the wise husband will not hasten but will let his wife to take time to adapt to the new church (from her perspective). And he will be patient and will help her to adjust to his church. Among the ways of helping her, he must first try to think his church "my new church" from his wife's point of view rather than "my church" from his point of view. To do that, he must lay down his own thoughts and get to know his wife's thoughts. And he must listen to her words in order to get to know her thoughts. He should not just listen to his wife's words lightly based on his thoughts and his standards.

My personal thought is that it is good for the newly wedded couple to think about which church to go in order to be free for a year. Of course this is not to say that they should choose a church that they do not have to serve. It means to choose a church in which they can worship God together, do bible study together, pray together and joint a small grow together so that they faith can grow together instead of focusing on serving. I think serving is not the priority but worshiping God together and promoting the progress of their faith together is. It is not too late to serve in the church again after a year (though a minister may not like it). The purpose of this is to seek and enjoy the happiness of the couple in the Lord by prioritizing the marital relationship from the beginning of marriage.

Third and last, the important principle in deciding which church to attend after getting married is that the new bride can spend happily for a year because of her husband.

The secret of the happiness of the couple, taught in Deuteronomy 24:5, is that the new groom does not have "any other duty laid on him" and for one year "he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife". Here, "bringing happiness to the wife" means make her to be blessed and to rejoice in her (Prov. 5:18). How can he make her to be blessed and rejoice in her? I have found an answer in Colossians 3:19 – "Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them." The secret is to love her. Then how can he love his wife so that she can be happy? There are three things we can think of:

(1) The newly wedded husband should treat his wife with respect.

Look at 1 Peter 3:7 – "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." The research of modern social science reveals that there are three basic things that a wife needs most in marriage. The first one is said to be treated as precious (to be understood and respected). The newly wedded husband should treat his wife with respect. In God's sight she is precious and honored (Isa. 43:4). Then can her husband despise her, the precious and honored daughter of God

(2) The newly wedded husband should love his wife as he loves himself.

Look at Ephesians 5:28, 33a: "In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ... However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself" Just as he cares for the needs of his own body, he should foster her growth and development by fulfilling her wife's needs. And he must love his wife with purpose. Its purpose is twofold: "to make her holy" (v. 26a) and to present her as a radiant wife (v. 27a). The method of achieving that purpose is written in Ephesians 5:26a - "... cleansing her by the washing with water through the word" and 1 Peter 1:22 – "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers,

love one another deeply, from the heart.” The newly wedded husband must teach the word of truth of God and obedience to the word of God to his wife, so that she may imitate the God’s holy life, which is separate from the world. Thus, he must nurture her to be the radiant wife before the Lord who manifests the Lord’s glory.

(3) The newly wedded husband should be able to sacrifice for his wife.

Look at Ephesians 5:25 – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” The newly wedded husband must practice sacrificial love to his wife and the goal should be for the wife only, to take care of her, and not to expect to receive something in return. And he should be able to sacrifice from little things. For example, if he listens to his wife, spends time with her together, throws away garbage, goes to the kitchen and wash dishes, and show his wife a small amount of interest, she will feel greatly loved by him. The newly wedded husband should make his wife happy by loving her. Then what church can help the newly wedded husband make his wife happy? Is it a church that the newly wedding husband sacrificially loves and serves more than his wife? Will his wife be valued by her husband if she goes to such church? Will he be able to promote the growth and development of her faith by fulfilling her spiritual needs if they go to that church? Can he love his wife for biblical purpose? Will she be more holy and be honored as a radiant wife before Him? If she goes to the church with her husband, will they be able to learn the words of truth and obey them to clean their souls and to love one another deeply, from the heart? (1 Pet. 1:22). The church that the prospective groom and bride should attend together is the church in which he loves her so that she may feel and think that her husband values her, he loves her as himself and thus fulfill her spiritual needs, he loves her sacrificially and he loves me with the clear biblical purpose.

God wants the newlyweds to be happy. So God says, “If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married” (Dt. 24:5). However, it seems like some couples are unhappy rather than experiencing the feeling of happiness progressively because newly married couples do not choose their church to attend before marriage. Therefore, the prospective groom and the bride must choose the church to go together. In order to help those young couples to make the wise choice I have thought of three principles based on Deuteronomy 24:5. May God give the precious groom and bride precious grace.

Marriage

The foundation of marriage

The foundation of marriage (1) - "Maturity in the Lord is a prerequisite for maturity in marriage"

'In studying the subject of marriage, we must first begin with the biblical teachings of nature and character of God. When we understand that God is Lord, we are naturally drawn from him and will learn how to apply His gracious laws about the foundation and purpose of marriage.' Marriage is a big concern for the singles. That's how much marriage is so important in life. However, it is also true that marriage is not prepared as well as interest in marriage. Here, the preparation I am talking about is the foundation of marriage.

I think too many singles seem to think of the house rather than the foundation of marriage. It seems that they are busy building the house in the feeling of "love" with big dream of the house instead of worrying about the foundation of marriage. In the end, since they build the house on a poor foundation, they experience collapse of their ideal house, starting from its roof, after the wedding. Looking at this sad reality, I would like to think about what the foundation of marriage should be.

Even if the storm of adversity and hardship comes, the marriage built on a biblical foundation is the marriage built on the rock. The foundation of marriage is the Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that Jesus Christ is Lord means three things:

The first is the reign or control of the Father God.

This means the sovereignty of God. Marriage is in God's sovereignty. The life that acknowledges God's sovereignty is to believe and acknowledge that God knows me the best, loves me the most and that He is here to give me the best thing.

The second is the authority of the Son Jesus.

Believing and acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord of marriage means to obey Jesus' twofold commandment of love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and love our neighbors as ourselves (Mt. 22:37, 39). Therefore, in marriage, pledging in front of God and the guests is a commitment to love God as a couple, and also the commitment to love one another with the love of God. That obedience to the commandment must become the authority of the family.

The third is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

It is amazing grace to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in marriage. I have personally experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit at the wedding worship, through the God's Word Psalm 34:8a "Taste and see that the LORD is good ..." and through the hymn "Thou, My Everlasting Portion". I could not help but pour tears of emotion. I will never forget that moment of experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit, how the indwelling Spirit powerfully worked in me to experience His goodness. With that experience, the Holy Spirit has brought me and my wife until this day and will continue to lead us until He calls us to heaven. As we become more aware of the Lord of Jesus Christ, the foundation of our marriage will continue to be firmly established. Therefore,

the Christians singles who are preparing for their marriage must get to know the Lordship of Jesus Christ and experience His presence in their lives. Of course, some people may say that meeting is more important than this. However, a home architect who is not committed to building the foundation can never build a solid house. They may be able to build their house in a nice way for people to see, but when storm of pain and adversity come the house will eventually collapse. That is why we must do our best to recognize and acknowledge the Lord of Jesus Christ, the foundation of our marriage. Therefore, I hope and pray that all of us can dream our marriage that experience God's presence while we are obeying His commandments.

The foundation of marriage (2) - Remember the 4 "P"s of marriage.

Keep in mind the four P's: (1) Purpose: Glory of God, (2) Principle: Love of God the Father, (3) Pattern: Suffering of the Son Jesus, (4) Power: Fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Purpose of marriage: One of the most popular books among Christians seems to be Pastor Rick Warren's "The Purpose-driven Life". When I think about the reasons why many people are interested in that book is maybe because they may not live with a clear sense of purpose. I think marriage is the same. I am concerned that many young men and women who want to get married do not know why God wants them to marry. When some of them say they want to marry for "God's glory" but do not try to marry in the right way for that purpose, I cannot help but ask the question whether God's glory is revealed or not.

When I think about how important marriage is and marriage ceremony, I think more important is to experience God's sovereign work in bring the couple together before their marriage. If they do not experiencing the God's work in bring them together and His goodness, faithfulness and grace, then the foundation of their marriage will be fragile. In particular, without having the conviction of God's word in marriage ceremonies, and the fact that two newlyweds march toward the world without this conviction, is like launching a sailboat on a stormy sea without a goal.

Principle of marriage: The Bible 1 John 4:7 and 16 says "God is love". A marriage that reveals the glory of God manifests God of love.

Pattern of marriage: We know in our head that the love of God is agape love that is more precious than any other love in the world. The marriage to which the principle of love is applied is the dedication to walk the path of crucifixion that Jesus walked eventually and the commitment of the couple to bear the burdens of suffering together. But how many young single men and women who are preparing for marriage are prepared to suffer for the Lord's sake?

Power of marriage: There is power of marriage when the couple's purpose of marriage is the glory of God, when they vow to live by the principle of love and when they devote to walk along the path of Jesus' suffering together. The power is that in the presence of the Holy Spirit, the couple becomes one and enjoys the deep fellowship with God in their marriage. Also that power is the power of love.

If we are dreaming of this powerful marriage, we should deeply think about 4 P's at least once.

The foundation of marriage (3) - You can build healthy marital relationships and family by freeing yourself from negative thoughts about marriage.

It is hard to find healthy couples and family models in our age. If we look at each of our families and see our parents arguing and fighting a lot, then it is obvious that we cannot have a lot of positive thought about marriage but have lots of negative thoughts. Too many young Christian singles are also suffering from negative thoughts about marriage. Although they should get marry or want to get marry, they may have fear of marriage because of their parents' unhealthy marital relationship. Why do we have negative thoughts about marriage? This is because the curse of Adam and Eve, the first couple of mankind in Genesis, brought curses to all human kind. The curse is also applied to the family, which has led to many negative thoughts about marriage. Despite being a paradigmatic couple, Adam and Eve brought about the destruction of the family by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil which was against the God's commandment. This is referred to as the "Old Covenant" in terms of covenant theology. In other words, the Old Testament Genesis model of Adam and Eve is old. But we Christian couples are no longer under their model and curse anymore. We are under the blessing of the second or the last Adam, Jesus. We are looking for the model of Jesus and are following Him. This is our blessing in the "New Covenant" era.

We can see God's blessings to us in the New Covenant era starting from Ephesians 5:22. This scripture, which describes the marriage of Jesus, the Groom and the church, the bride, talks about our beautiful marriage that God intended through Adam and Eve before the fall. We must look for and pursue this model of the marriage of Jesus and the church. But I think too many Christian singles and couples still seem to be following the models of the Old Covenant model of Adam and Eve. We are still looking at the old model in the old instinct. Despite the better and more complete model of Jesus and the church, it seems that we are stuck with the old model. Although we do not want to and we do not like it, we are tasting the depth of the sinfulness of the first model Adam and Eve and we are not tasting the depth of love of the last model Jesus and the church. Therefore, I am worried that we are married without positive thoughts and abundant blessings and mysterious secrets or treasures of God but with negative thoughts, fear, worry and anxiety.

There is a challenge to the marriage given to us by Jesus as the last Adam in this era when the marriage is broken and the family is collapsing. It is' to build the model of couples and of families who receive Jesus as the Lord and have the kingdom of God's perspective in this era where the families are collapsing and lack of family and couple model. Therefore, we must build our marriage and family as a community of witnesses who communicate the powerful and effective gospel of God for His glory alone.

The purpose of marriage

The purpose of marriage (1) - Glory to God

The purpose of marriage, of course, is to glorify God. How should we glorify God through our marriage? We can glorify God by living a marriage life of helpful companionship. The first purpose of marriage is the need for helpful companionship (Douglas Wilson).

In the United States, there was a lot noisy due to legal debate about gay marriage. Although we Christians do not understand how some people were trying to legalize same-sex marriage, but I am sure in their perspective, they believed that it was right for them to promote it. It is a pity, but now it seems to me that it is time to say that marriage of "men and women" is to glorifying God. It is also surprising that we face the age in which when a man and a woman are glorifying God by becoming "one flesh" in the Lord. Why is it glorifying God in that we are legally married and make one flesh and one family in the Lord? One of the reasons is because there are many people who have contract marriage nowadays and if there are differences in personality, they can break up the contract. So, it seems to be common that many young people living together and get married because the young women are pregnant. Not only that, since there are many gay and lesbian marriage, it is glorifying God when a man and a woman are married and make one flesh and one family in the Lord.

The Christian young people in this time must have a clear purpose of marriage, why they get married and for what reason or purpose. They should not marry just because they are getting old and people around them are getting married. They should marry with God's given clear purpose of marriage. Of course, no one will have no purpose of marriage. I am sure everybody has purpose of their own marriage. The people marry in order to make a beautiful home, or to pursue happiness. But the important thing is not what our purpose is, the purposes of the people around us are, or the purposes of the people in this world are. The most important thing is the God's purpose for our marriage. We, as children of God, need to struggle with this and cry out to God for understanding and conviction of god's will and purpose of marriage. This struggle and prayers to God will be harder for us after we get married because it's more challenging to live and build the strong God's purpose driven marital relationship. The reason is that it is more difficult to walk the path of purpose when we have a family, especially after having children. The purpose, according to Genesis 2:18-24 and 1 Corinthians 11:9, is that God's purpose of making a woman is for her to be a helper to Adam. The creation order says that the woman is created for the man. As a result, man and woman each have different orientations. The man needs help, while the woman needs to help.

This is what Douglas Wilson says, in his book "Reforming Marriage": "She is called to the work through ministering to him. He is oriented to the task, and she is oriented to him" (Wilson). But I do not know how many Christian women are aware of and preparing for the need to help their future husbands while thinking about God's marriage-purpose of the need for helpful companionship. I am sure there are women who are not married yet or who are already married may have thoughts that may be contrary to God's creation order of marriage. I wonder how many single women think "How can I help my future husband?" and prepare their marriage. Maybe some of them expect their future husbands to help them and fill their needs instead of expecting God to fill their needs. One sad reality is that many women are not "man-oriented" but "work-oriented". Although it is beautiful that the women have their own vision, purpose, dreams and so forth, if they do not meet the vision of their future husbands and go their own way even after they marry, then I do not think they are not fulfilling the God's given purpose or the divine calling. The problem is that men lack a vision. If the men live a life worthy of God's calling, they will lead their

future spouses to the purpose that God has given them with one heart and one will. And as they move toward that purpose, the men will ask their women for help. And the women will help their men. They will try to see each other's differences in God's perspective and they will use their differences wisely to accomplish the God's given goal of their marriage.

We must have the right purpose of marriage. God is not bringing a man and a woman to come together in marriage not just for them to love each and for their happiness. We must have a higher goal. We are the ones who are called by higher God. We must struggle to accomplish God's purpose of our marriage with divine calling consciousness. God wants both man and woman to be one flesh and work together to accomplish God's will and divine calling of marriage. As the couple helps each other, the husband must know that he needs help from his wife and the wife needs to help him.

The purpose of marriage (2) - the need for godly offspring

According to Malachi 2:15, the second purpose of marriage is the blessing of godly offspring: "Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth." Nowadays, the young people say that they do not want to have children. I think there are many reasons. And I think one of the reasons is economic reasons. Although many old people say that when you give birth to a child, you can raise the child. But I don't think that's what the young people think. Another reason is because it is difficult to raise the child. If you have only one or two children, it is too hard for the mothers to give birth to another child. But one of my friends who has two sons doesn't want another child even though his wife wants to have another child. So it's not only the women who do not want any more children but the men as well. Another reason, I heard, is that some young couples do not want to have any children because of their selfishness. I think it is dumbfounded behavior. I heard that there are couples who do not give birth to a baby in order not to suffer the trouble of child rearing while the couple is comfortable in having fun time. I think this is immature thought and behavior. I wonder how those couple who desperately want to have a baby but cannot will respond to those couple who do not want to have baby for their own selfish reasons. I am sure there are more reasons why many couples do not have children. But one thing we should keep in mind is what does God says about it. When we look at Malachi 2:15, the Bible clearly says that God wants us to have a godly offspring. Here, we should consider two things about the needs for godly offspring which is the second purpose of marriage.

First, we have to have children.

Of course, I do not think a number concept is important. I think that it is irresponsible for the couple to give birth to children without any measures because God said to 'multiply' (Gen. 9:7). If they think that it is biblical to have lots of children but the husband cannot afford to raise them financially, then I doubt that whether the couple is obeying the Scripture that says be multiply or not (v. 9). If the couple has one child because of their situation where they can only have one child, I do not think we can say that they disobey God's word. That's why here I want to ask one serious question. Many young couples seem to be unable to give a birth more than one child because of work, study and other situations that they are in. It is true that it is never easy to have more than one child when the couple is studying (My wife and I also had first son when she was a graduate student. And when I was a student, she had two more daughters). At that time, the couple is very worried. I am sure they cannot help but think that there will be obstacles in their studying and future jobs. That's why so many couples seem to have a one child so that they can focus their studies and their future career. At that time, I think that we need to think and pray seriously

about what God's will is and determine to follow His will. Of course, I do not think there is an command in the Bible to give birth to more than one child. Of course, I am sure they are some who think that they should have more than one child by applying the Genesis statement of "be fruitful and increase in number" (Gen. 9:7), but I do not agree. I do not think that the life God has given to us is not depend on the quantity of child, whether one or ten. The important thing is to have a baby. I think that a couple who purposely do not give birth has sinned.

Second, we have to have "godly" children.

The birth of a child is miracle and the grace of God. But the responsibility of nurturing the child according to God's will is more difficult and more responsible than the birth. If marriage is the realization of how difficult it is to love your wife as the Bible says, it is more difficult to be responsible for bringing up the child in the way that the Lord wants. As a husband to my wife and a father to my three children, I cannot help but pray to God because I desperately need His help in fulfilling my duties as husband and father. How hard it is to be a godly father in order to raise my three children to become godly children. But I think this is also an opportunity. This is also good opportunity for me to be more devoted to the example of godliness in order to nurture my children as godly children of God. I personally think that my wife and I are missionaries. And our mission field is our home. We as the missionary couples are responsible for evangelizing and nurturing the three children in the mission field that is our home. As the Lord's stewards, my wife and I have a responsibility to nurture the three children with His Word who are entrusted to us while our couple is here in this world. Of course, it is true that it will help the biological growth of the church, but we have a responsibility to raise our three children as Christ-centered visionary leaders and send them away into this world to expand the kingdom of God. This is our heavy responsibility. However, God has helped us all along and bought us thus far. And I believe that God will continue to do so so that we may be faithful in fulfilling in raising godly children by His grace.

The Bible Malachi 2:15 teaches that we as the children of God should have child and we have responsibility to raise him or her as godly child according to God's will. But we are living in the age of challenging the second purpose of marriage. Our faith is being tested. To pass this test, we must humbly obey God's word of Malachi 2:15.

The purpose of marriage (3) – The avoidance of sexual immorality

In 1 Corinthians 7:2-3, Apostle Paul speaks of the third purpose of marriage: "But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband." The problem of sexual immorality is very serious one and I am sure everybody is aware of that. Of course, the problem of sexual immorality is to say that the physical union outside the marriage and the physical union of a person other than his wife or her husband after marriage. But even before this, I think the main problem starts in our hearts. Here, I am not disregarding the physical union. What I am saying is that the sexual immorality starts within our hearts before sexual immorality in the physical union. That's why Jesus said, "... anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt. 5:28).

I think this evil age we are living in is a time where people pursue their sexual pleasure like the people in Sodom and Gomorrah that is beyond sexual satisfaction that they should enjoy only in the marital relationship that God created beautifully. We are living in an era in which the general flow of society is that people are having sexual

relations before marriage and commit adultery by having affair even after marriage. Even we Christians seem to think, say and act that deny the sins of having premarital sex and of having affairs after marriage. It seems we don't take these sins seriously. More and more, it is hard to see the beauty of Christian marriage where the young single Christians keep their purity and prepare their marriage with the marriage system that God desires. It seems that many Christian singles are already losing their virginity before marriage. They do not see it as very important before God. It's like Abraham who did not trust the word of God's promise completely and could not wait for Isaac so he slept with Hagar, his wife's maidservant, and had Ishmael. Likewise, a lot of young single Christians are not waiting for their future spouses whom God has prepared but fall into sexual temptations and commit sins against God. Although they supposed to keep their purity and give to the ones whom God has prepared for their future spouses, but now we live in a time when the word "virginity" seems to be heard in people's ears somehow funny and naive.

One of the reasons why many Christian couples are divorced is the spouse's affair. How should we respond to married men and married women having affair? How should we react to a Christian husband who does not love his wife as Jesus loves the church, but rather having affair with another woman? I think many married men and married women nowadays are corrupting public morals by having affair. And this kind of climate penetrates even into the church, and even the pastors seem to be in scandal. I do not think that God's holiness is revealed in the marriage system, but rather that we are disgracing God's holy name. What are we going to do?

First, the Christian singles must keep their purity. They must not lose their purity. They must keep their purity for their spouse whom God has prepared. Those who are already married must be faithful in fulfilling our duties (obligations) toward each other. In other words, we need to know each other's sexual needs and be faithful in satisfying each other's sexual needs. The common sense we know is that man's greatest need is sexual satisfaction. But it seems many women do not know this because their first need is not sexual satisfaction. It is also because the knowledge and understanding of the sex of the husband and wife are different and the sexual satisfaction they desire is also different. As a result, it is true that there is always a risk that the couple will not be able to fulfill their sexual responsibilities toward each other. That is why we must open our hearts and try to understand each other. The husband must try to get to know his wife, especially her needs in terms of the priority of her needs. I do not think we can say that the wife's need is physical as the husband is in sexual relation. The husband cannot and should not ignore her emotional and mental needs. It seems that husband and wife feel differently in regard to feeling of being loved by each other. That's why if husband only wants to pursue his physical and sexual satisfaction without trying to satisfy his wife's needs, then she will be vulnerable to get hurt. And the hurt comes when she feels that her husband only wants her body and her body exists only for his sexual satisfaction. On the other hand, the wife has an obligation to acknowledge her husband's sexual needs and to satisfy that needs. It is an obligation that Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians 7:3.

If the couple is having a wise sexual relationship, why would the husband or the wife have affair and be guilty of sexual immorality? It is because both husband and wife are not getting satisfaction that sexual immorality is becoming a big problem in the church. Therefore, for the avoidance of sexual immorality, which is the third purpose of marriage, we Christian married couples must fulfill each other's obligations to each other. I also think it is desirable for Christian singles who are preparing to marry in the future to read the books on marital sex in a wise manner while keeping their purity well.

To those who prepare for marriage

[These articles are written by Mrs. Yoon Sun Lee who used to serve at YouVersion Korea based on the articles on my personal Naver blog]

Preparation for marriage

Because marriage is one of the biggest and most important events in our lives, marriage is a great concern for young people who are about to marry. However, it is our reality that the right preparation for marriage is not done as well as the great concern about marriage. Rather than trying to build a true foundation of marriage, too many young people are immersed in non-essential areas such as "love" and realistic preparation for marriage. But the marriage built on such a non-essential weak foundation cannot help but fall down even if a storm of affliction rages a little bit intense.

The foundation of marriage is to know that Jesus Christ is our Lord. This is to believe and acknowledge that our marriage is in the reign of God the Father and His control and that the Lord, who knows and loves us best, is giving us the best. On that foundation, it means the dedication to love God and love each other as a couple, practicing God's love and neighbor's love, which is the commandment of the Son Jesus. Based on that dedication, we are constantly experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit in our marriage. Only when we know that Christ is our Lord, our marriage will be built on the firm rock, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

4 “P”s to keep in mind about marriage

Purpose: Glory of God

Principle: Love of God the Father

Pattern: The Suffering of the Son Jesus

Power: Fellowship with the Holy Spirit

More important than marriage itself is to know God's sovereign providence and work in bring a man and a woman together for marriage. If they do not experience God's goodness, faithfulness, grace and sovereign work in bring them together, then their marriage will be like a sailboat that floats in the stormy sea. The Bible says that "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:16). Then our marriage life should be a process of applying the love of God to each other. The principle of love means a commitment by the couple to bear the burden of suffering and to walk together on the path of the cross that Jesus walked on. A marriage that pledges to walk in the path of suffering of Jesus, a marriage that pledges to live in manifestation of His love for the glory of God, a marriage in the presence of God the Holy Spirit, and willing to do His will in deep fellowship with God is the marriage which is built on the strong foundation.

The Importance of Being

The first thing men and women who think about marriage is to cultivate their own existence. Only then can we see the other person's presence (e.g. a person) rather than the outward deed. Nurturing one's existence must continue after marriage. Before marriage, where there are not many conflicts, the existence of each other is hidden. However, when we live together, we are exposed to numerous conflicts and each other's appearances are revealed one by one. So you can see each other's existence better. If we are prepared to marry and focus on being like each other and becoming like Jesus, we can see how God's grace can help sinners get married.

Our Christian presence cannot be separated from God, who is love. Only when we practice the commandments of Jesus, the love of God and the love of our neighbors, can our beings feel joy and happiness. But every packed act that comes from a lack of being is nothing more than a rocking foundation. We must take seriously the importance of being. In my marriage, I must act to my partner in the same way he does to me in finding and becoming like Him.

The model for the right marital relationship

We are living in a time when it is difficult to find a model for a healthy couple and family. That is why so many young people have a negative view of marriage. But the fundamental reason for this negative view of marriage is the curse caused by the sin of Adam and Eve, the first couple of mankind in Genesis. Adam and Eve, who supposed to be the couple to be exemplary, caused the destruction of their families by breaking God's word and eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But we Christians should know that we are no longer under that curse anymore. We are the ones who look and follow the model of Jesus, who is the second or last Adam, and the church, who is His bride. This is the blessing we have received who are living in the New Covenant. The Bible Ephesians 5:22-33 describes the beautiful marriage that God intended through Adam and Eve before they sinned. This is the right model of marital relation that we must look to and pursue.

The balanced relationship

The couple was created to rely on each other. But if we rely more on our spouse than God, we can never build a healthy family. In relying on our spouse, we must maintain balance. It is not a healthy couple relationship if we rely too much on each other to be independent of God. There needs to be some free space between husband and wife. The purpose of that free space is to free each other so that they can go to God individually. The husband and wife should rely on each other but they need independence. When we think of the triangle, it is easy for us to understand that the couple gives each other a free space. If the top corner is God, the left corner is the husband, and the right corner is the wife, the husband should give his wife the free space for her to get closer to God by respecting her personal relationship with God and the wife should do the same to her husband by respecting his personal relationship with God. As we abstain from excessive reliance toward each other and give space to each other so that we can depend on God first, we can maintain the balanced and healthy marriage based on true bond and intimacy.

About marriage

After reading 1 Corinthians 7, I thought of four things about marriage:

1. If we cannot control our passion, we should marry.

(1 Cor. 7:9) “But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”

If we are burn with passion and if we cannot control ourselves, we should marry. The reason is because Satan tempts us when we cannot control ourselves and causes us to commit adultery (v. 5). This is what the Bible Proverbs 6:27-29 says: “Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.” We should marry even to avoid sexual immorality (1 Cor. 7:2).

2. The couple must fulfill their obligations to each other.

(1 Cor. 7:3) “The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.”

While there may be several obligations for husbands and wives to each other, I think “duty” that Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 7:3 refers to sexual duty that is duty to satisfy each other sexually. Look at 1 Corinthians 7:4-5a: “The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time,” Why did Paul say not to deprive one another, except by agreement for a time? (v. 5) What does it mean that the husband and the wife do not have authority over each other's body? (v. 4) It means that both of them are obliged to satisfy each other's sexual needs in order to avoid sexual immorality (v. 2). In doing so, the couple will be able to self-control their passion (vv.5, 9).

3. If we married an unbeliever, we must not divorce her.

(1 Cor. 7:12-13) “But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.”

This does not mean that it is okay to marry an unbeliever. The believer should not be yoked together with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14). This is what the Scripture 2 Corinthians 6:14-16a says: “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?” But if someone disobeyed this word of God and married to an unbeliever, the Bible says “he must not divorce her” (1 Cor. 7:12). Why? The reason is because the unbelieving wife may be sanctified through her husband (v. 14). This is what Paul said in verse 16: “For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?” But the unfortunate reality is that the reason for marrying the unbeliever is to witness the unbelieving spouse. But the Bible says that we should not be yoked together

with unbelievers, and if we did, we should not divorce her because we may save our unbeliever spouse. The Bible does not say that we should marry an unbeliever for the purpose of saving our unbeliever spouse.

4. It is better not to marry than to marry.

(1 Cor. 7:38) “So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.”

Apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthian church believers to live alone like himself without getting married (vv. 8, 40). Why did Paul say that it is better not to get married but to live alone? The reason is because when we married, we will have trouble (v. 28), will concern about the things of the world (v. 33), and our interests are divided (v. 34). How is our heart divided? We are concerned about how to please our spouse. That’s why the married people cannot devote themselves to the Lord with all their hearts. But those who are unmarried are free from concern. They concerned about the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord (v. 32) that they may be holy both in body and spirit (v. 34). Also, they can secure undistracted devotion to the Lord (v. 35). Therefore, Paul says that it is better not to get married than to marry.

Those who do not marry are better off

“So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better” (1 Corinthians 7:38).

Why should we marry? Do we really have to get married? In this world, since people say that we will regret if we marry and even if don't marry, can we just live alone? Since many people live alone without getting married, isn't it better for us to live alone too? Then, why should we not get married and live alone?

In 1 Corinthians 7:38, Apostle Paul says, “So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.” Here we can think of two things.

First, those who marry are good.

Why is it good to get married? If we look only at 1 Corinthians 7, which is the context of 1 Corinthians 7:38, the Bible tells us the reason why. The reason is to avoid sexual immorality. Look at 1 Corinthians 7:2 – “But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.” Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian church believers and encouraged them to marry in order to avoid sexual immorality. In particular, he told them to marry if they could not control themselves with their burning passion (v. 9). The reason is because “so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (v.5). So Paul told the Corinthian church believers that after they were married, the husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife and likewise the wife to her husband (v. 3). Here, each other's "duties" between the spouses Paul was talking about is sexual obligation. In fulfilling that sexual obligation, Paul said, “The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife” (v. 4). In other words, when the couple makes a sexual relationship, the wife's body belongs to the husband, and the husband's body to the wife. That means that the wife should not refuse to have sex with her husband, and the husband should not refuse to have sex with his wife. It is important to have mutual agreement and have sexual intercourse in marital relations because both of them have to enjoy sexual satisfaction from each other. That's why Paul said “Do not deprive each other” (v. 5). If the couple does not use one room but use two separate rooms and rejects each other's sexual obligations, then they will not be able to control their burning passion and will be tempted by Satan. That's why Paul says to deprive each other only by mutual consent for a time so that they may devote themselves to prayer but they should come together again (v. 5).

One of the reasons why we should marry is to avoid sexual immorality (vv. 2-3) [Another reasons are the need for helpful companionship (Gen 2:18-24, 1 Cor. 11:9) and to have godly offspring (Mal. 2:15)]. Especially those who cannot control the burning desire of passion must marry quickly. Those who are already married should fulfill their sexual duty to each other in order to prevent Satan from tempting them. Sexual immorality must be avoided as the couple enjoys sexual satisfaction through sexual relations in one room and one bed without being separated from each other.

Second, those who do not marry are better than those who marry.

Why is not being married better than getting married? As I read in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul repeatedly writes to the Corinthian church believers and says: "It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am" (saying to those who

have not married and widows) (v. 8), “But if she does, she must remain unmarried” (saying to those who are married) (v. 11), “I think that it is good for you to remain as you are” (saying to those who are single) (v. 26) and “In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is” (saying to the widows) (v. 40). What Paul says here is that it is better to stay unmarried and remain single. He said to those who are single, widows, those who divorce that it is better to remain alone. But if they do marry, they have not sinned (v. 28). And if the wife is separated from her husband, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband (vv. 10b-11). The Bible says, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery” (Lk. 16:18). Although the Bible says that "a husband must not divorce his wife" (1 Cor. 7:11), what if the husband disobeys the command and divorces his wife and the divorced woman remarries with another man. Is she committing adultery? When we look at from 1 Corinthians 7:10, Paul says that “a wife must not separate from her husband” (v. 10) and “a husband must not divorce his wife” (v. 11). Why is the woman leaving her husband? Why does the husband divorce his wife? Is it not committing adultery when he divorces his wife and remarries another woman? Is it not committing adultery when she leaves her husband and remarries another man according to Luke 16:18? Isn't that why Paul said is she is separated from her husband “she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband”? (1 Cor. 7:11) However, it seems to be different if a spouse dies. This is what Paul says in verse 39: “A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.” In other words, if the husband is dead, the wife is free to remarry anyone she wishes, but “he must belong to the Lord” (v. 39). The important thing here is that “he must belong to the Lord.” She should remarry according to the standards of the Lord's Word. It is not the Bible's teaching that if a man remarries a "divorced woman" is to commit adultery? (Lk. 16:18) and a widow should not remarry a divorced man? Then, if the widow remarries the divorced man, would it be still a violation of the biblical standard? Also, isn't it okay for the widow to remarry the single man? Isn't it okay for the widow to remarry the widower? However, I don't think that the divorced man remarrying with another woman in conflict, strife, and suffering is in the Lord.

The Bible says that "God has called us to live in peace" (v. 15). It is a lesson that the married child of God must live in peace with his or her spouse. Nonetheless, many Christian couples do not live peacefully, but are divided and divorced in conflict and suffering. Wouldn't it be better to just stay alone rather than remarry? Of course, if they cannot control their passion (sexual desire), how can they keep staying alone? Isn't it okay to reconcile with their ex-husband or ex-wife again? Is it because they do not want to try? Why do they always want to find a new man or new woman and remarry? Why don't they think that it is adultery? Is this because we are so accustomed to the flow of the world that there are so many divorces and remarriages? Is it a valid reason for divorce from the viewpoint of the Bible that a woman is separated from her husband and a husband forsakes his wife because of personality or money problems? Since the Word of God is no longer the standard in our lives and because we do not have Jesus as the Lord in our marital relationship anymore, aren't we doing it according to our will instead of the Lord's will? Although God is telling the Christian couples to live in peace, it seems that we are living comfortably instead in peace. So we think whatever is comfortable to us and we do whatever we want for our own comfort. Isn't this world where we marry, divorce and remarry for our own comfort? This is what Paul says: "In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is" (v. 40).

The reason why Paul says that not marrying is better than being married is “to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord (v. 35). If we marry, then our interests will be divided (v. 34) and we have to be concerned (v. 32). In other words, “a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world – how he can please his wife” (v. 33) and “a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world – how she can please her husband” (v. 34). But an unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs – how he can please the Lord (v. 32) and an unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: “Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in body and spirit” (v. 34). That is why the Bible says that "he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better" (v. 38).

Is it lawful to divorce?

“Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" (Mark 10:2).

It is not easy to marry, of course, but it is more difficult to keep the marriage. One of the reasons is that Satan wants to break the vow we made in front of God and the wedding guests during the wedding service. Of course, there are many ways Satan is trying to break that covenant such as personality differences and money issues. But I think even more lethal is the affair of the spouse. How many married men and women are having affair these days? I was very surprised when a single sister in Christ told me that she expected her future husband to have an affair when she would get married. As a result, we cannot deny the fact that divorce is increasing. How should we think about divorce? Is it right to divorce? No matter how we legally divorce according to the law of this world, does the Bible say that the legal divorce is lawful?

In Mark 10:2, some Pharisees came and tested Jesus by asking Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" At that time, there was a debate about the problem of divorce between the two schools, the Hillel school and the Shamai school. The Hillel school had a tough view on the issue of divorce, which denied divorcing beyond adultery. But the Shamai school had a view that allows divorce for almost all reasons. The Pharisees who knew this asked Jesus "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" so that Jesus had to take either side (Park Yun-sun). So the result that the Pharisees wanted was that when Jesus chose one side, then the people on the other side would stop supporting Jesus (MacArthur). At that time Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What did Moses command you?" (v. 3) They replied, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away" (v. 4). But the Pharisees misunderstood the Scripture Deuteronomy 24:1. What Moses said in Deuteronomy 24:1 was that a man could write his wife a certificate of divorce when he had found "some indecency" in her and not without reason (Park). To these Pharisees who misunderstood the Moses' Law, Jesus said, "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law" (v. 5). In other words, the reason why the Moses' Law allowed the man to divorce his wife when she was found with "some indecency", that is, the shameful act of fornication, was because their hearts were insensitive to the Word of God and lacking altruistic spirit (Park).

But "it was not this way from the beginning" (Mt.19:8). Jesus told the Pharisees that when God created Adam and Eve (Mk. 10:6, Gen. 1:27, 5:2) and had joined them together (Mk. 10:9) and the two would become one flesh (v. 8; cf. Gen. 2:24) "let man not separate" (v. 9). God has set a marriage between a man and a woman but a divorce. In fact, in Malachi 2:16, God says, "I hate divorce ... and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment." If God hates divorce in this way, we, the children of God, must also hate divorce. And we must hate marital unfaithfulness, or fornication. When we think about what Jesus said in Matthew 19:9 "anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery" with what God said to Hosea "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness" (Hos. 1:2), I think God's originally plan was to forgive and reconcile (rather than divorce) even though a woman or a man has committed adultery (MacArthur) and keep their marriage pledge faithfully. Think about it. The New Testament describes the relationship between Christ and the Church as a marriage between a man and a woman (Eph. 5:32). Does Jesus, the Groom, give up His Church (Christians) who are committing spiritual adultery as in the Old Testament times? If we could divorce because of adultery, wouldn't Jesus have divorced us, the Church and His bride, without number? Like God who taught His heart toward the Israelites to Prophet Hosea by commanding him to marry the adulterous woman Gomer, Jesus who loves us with the heart of Heavenly Father toward us, the church. How can He forsake us because we the church committed spiritual adultery against Him? Therefore, divorce is not right. Our Holy Father

God hates our divorce. Our faithful Jesus of covenant not only is not divorced with us, His church, but also He cannot. The Holy Spirit made us one through the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). Therefore, we must endeavor to keep the unity of husband and wife.

Family

Lost the balanced view of the family

The pastors of my father's generation devotedly served the Lord's church. Perhaps they are obedient to the God's word, Matthew 10:37-38: "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." In contrast to them, I think the second generation pastors who were born in the United States seem to devote themselves in serving their families. Perhaps they are obediently to the God's word of 1 Timothy 5:8 – "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." I think these two generations have lost some balance. In other words, each one obeys the Word of God, but I think both of them have tilted to one side. So I personally think that the relationship between the God's family, the church and the physical family is as follow: 'The physical family exists for the spiritual family, the church.'

What is the purpose of the existence of the church? The purpose of the church's existence is to glorify God by obeying the Word of the Lord, who is the Head of the Church. And the purpose of our own physical family exists for the body of the Lord, His church.

The purpose-driven marital relationship

What is the purpose of the marital relationship? Is it happiness? Too many Christian men and women, who prepare for marriage, and even after marriage, do not have a clear purpose of their marriage. That's why we lean on our environments and emotions and we are not able to glorify God through our marital relations. So if we say that glorifying God is the purpose of a marriage relationship, then we must think about how to build a marital relationship that glorifies God. We must not have an ideal purpose of marital relationship blindly and be trapped in hypocrisy because of the inconsistency between our words and deeds. At the same time, we must not forsake the dream of divine calling that God has given us because of the realistic purpose. The important thing is balance.

The purpose of our marital relationship is twofold. The first is to show the image of Jesus in the life of each other, and the second is to love each other with Jesus' love. This has been my wife and my prayers until now and will be until the Lord calls us to heaven. To accomplish the second purpose of our marriage, that is to love each other with the His love, the first thing we are learning is to recognize and acknowledge we cannot love each other with our own love. After many conflicts with my wife, I have been learning to admit that I cannot love my wife with my strength and my love. I actually confessed this to my wife. I remember a memory that in scars, pain and tears I confessed to my wife could not love my wife even though I want to love her because of corruption and incompetence. The same is true today. I do not want to forget that I can never love my wife with my own strength and my love. That's why I cannot but seek the love of God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is nobler, powerful, and perfect than our human love. I believe in Romans 5:5 that says when we believed in Jesus, the love of God had already been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. So with this faith, I am praying and seeking God to gradually fill my heart with His love as I recognize my weakness and imperfection of my love. I believe in the Bible, 1 Peter 1:22 – “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.” I myself first want to obey the Lord's truth and want to be purified myself so that I may be able to love my wife deeply, from my heart. The Lord's truth makes me realize the weakness, incompetence, and inadequacy of my own human love and makes me to humbly acknowledge it before God and before my wife. Furthermore, it is my driving force for me to pursue God's divine love. So I am experiencing the indwelling Spirit enabling me to love my wife and the Spirit continually working in my and transforming me as I listen and obey His Word. As we do so, our marital relationship will become more and more the Lord's love-centered relationship.

Sometime my desire for the Lord to fulfill the first purpose of our marital relationship, which is to showing the image of Jesus to each other in each other's life, causes me to drop tears of prayer. One day I confessed to my wife: 'The gift I earnestly want to give you is the little image of Jesus Christ before my death.' Actually, I have nothing to give my wife. Even though I have something to give to my wife, I do not think there is any more precious gift than my little resemblance of Jesus. I am sure there is no other precious gift than my little resemblance of Jesus to my wife who knows the very preciousness of that gift. Despite these prayers of desperation, every day God makes me realize how I am far away from the Lord Jesus. I am surprised to see who I am when God reveals it through the spiritual mirror, the Word of God. This is the sinfulness in me, as Apostle Paul said in Romans 7. Although my heart wants to reveal the image of Jesus, but my frail body is sinful and has a rotten smell. Where is the Christians who will not suffer in this conflict?

What I feel a lot in our married life is that our image that we are very familiar with each of us displays more than the image of Jesus. Also, when God reveals how far I am from the Jesus' image, I get discouraged by myself. Whenever that happens, God causes me to revive my soul with His Word, so that I can run again toward the purpose of our marriage. The Word of Truth which is alive and powerful enables me to turn my eyes from my own

sinfulness to look at the light of Jesus who loves such sinner like me and thus was crucified on the cross to save me so that I may enjoy the freedom in the Truth. Also, the Spirit works in me not only to believe in Him but also to live a life of obedience so that the Word of God can be personalized in my life. The Lord who is molding me more and more gives me hope and encouragement by enabling me to focus on the Lord in our marital relationship. Because the Spirit enables my wife and I to keep the marriage vow by His goodness, faithfulness, grace and love, the work of the new creation that resembles Jesus continues from inside to outside. So we cannot think of marital relationship with our relationship with the Lord. If we separate our marital relationship with our relationship with the Lord, it is not true marital relationship in God's sight. The true couple is the couple who loves each other according to the will of the Lord and who pursues the glory of God together. As we become more and more like Jesus, the pursuit of glory will be fulfilled. I hope and pray that my wife and I will become a couple who imitate Jesus more and more and love each other with His love so that our family will become more like heaven and glorify God.

Honeymoon stage

I remember the words of an elderly man who said that setting the first button is very important. At that time, I remember him saying this having the marital relationship in mind. And the meaning is that the beginning is important in the marital relationship. Just as if the first button is misplaced, all the buttons below it will be misplaced, so in the case of marital relationship, if the beginning does not start well, then the rest of the marital relationship will suffer. That's how much the honeymoon stage of the marital relationship is crucial.

How should we start our honeymoon stage? I learned the Bible Deuteronomy 24:5 first time through my college roommate when I was in college. At that time, he told me that at the honeymoon stage, it's better for a couple to live by themselves at least one year and build a marital relationship in the Lord. His said that at the honeymoon stage, the couple should live by themselves without even living with both parents. I was a little wonder when I heard that from him. Of course, the reason was because it was first time I heard that word based on Deuteronomy 24:5. But I thought it was interesting. God specifically told the Israelites, "If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married" (Dt. 24:5). When I think about this verse, I think the honeymoon stage is important to God and he wanted the Israelites to focus on the family and the marital relationship in their honeymoon stage more than their country. I think if the marital relationship is getting stronger and firmly establishes then the family will be firmly established. And when the family is firmly established, the church will be firmly established and the country will be firmly established.

I personally recommend to those who to premarital counseling with me to live by themselves for a year or so when they get marry. Of course, if their situation is uncertain and they need to live with their parents, then I cannot advise them to do so. But if they can live by themselves, I encourage them to live do so at least for a year and dedicate themselves to build their marital relationship in the Lord. Also, one of the things I encourage them to do is try wisely not to let any other third parties such as, parents, children, or siblings to intervene their marital relationship. It is because, I believe, of course, that the most important relationship is between God and us, but the next important relationship is between the husband and the wife and not between parents and children. Here, the important responsibility is the husband rather than the wife. If the husband is unable to focus on marital relationships but let other relationships such as the relationship with their parents or children to intervene and to have negative or bad influences on his marital relationship, then their marital relationship cannot be established firmly in the Lord. Furthermore, if the husband does not love his wife faithfully with the Lord's love (because he didn't learn how to love his wife with His love), then the wife will not be happy. Then their marriage will be built on sand.

Therefore, the responsibility of the husbands is very heavy. Although it is heavy, it is our duty to bear. In the early days of marriage, the husbands should stay home and spend a lot of time with their wives and bring happiness to their wives. The husbands should try to make their wives feel happy. How is this possible? I think the way to do so is just one. The husbands must love their wives as Jesus loves the church. When the wives feel the Lord's love, they will be happy.

Family story:

Crisis in early marriage: death of the first baby

Seven months after marriage, in November 1997, in Thanksgiving season, I went to Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles with my pregnant wife. A nurse inspected my wife and said that something was strange. So the nurse wanted to take an ultrasound.

After seeing the result, the doctor told us that something was wrong with our baby.

The doctor told us that the baby didn't have diaphragm on the left side so that the intestine went up and there was no left lung. And the heart was pushed toward the right side. And her spinal cord was in "S" shaped.

My wife and I were very surprised.

However, my wife gave birth to our first baby who was a gift from God on March 3, 1998.

[My father gave the baby the Korean name "JooYoung" which means "the glory of the Lord".

And I gave her the English name "Charis" (meaning "grace" in Greek).

As soon as the doctor received the baby, he let my wife to hold her few seconds.

And then he took Charis from my wife and then put her in the incubator that the medical team had prepared.

And they took the baby to an ambulance in order to take her to the larger Los Angeles Children Hospital intensive care unit. And she was there for 55 days.

Every time I visit my baby for 55 days, I sang the hymn "Jesus Loves Me" to my beloved baby Charis.

I have never heard any sound coming out from Charis' mouth because she had tube in her mouth all along.

So I couldn't even hear her crying in tears.

And there were so many needle marks everywhere (even on her head).

We couldn't imagine how much Charis was suffering all along.

We just wanted her to live so we cried out to God for a miracle.

Charis had about two major surgeries and the doctor told us each time that the surgery went well.

So I thought that God was going to save her.

But on the 54th days, on Sunday (the date of our wedding anniversary)

my sister went to the hospital and came back to the church and said that Charis was in critical condition.

She said that the Charis' whole body looked a like black maybe because there was no blood circulation.

At that time, when we heard the news from my younger sister, my wife immediately went to the Children Hospital intensive care unit room.

But I went after I finished my ministry because I remembered my friend's testimony even though my heart was really wanted to be there with Charis.

When I arrived at the hospital, the doctor called me apart and gave me two options:

(1) Will you let your baby die slowly or (2) Will you let her die quickly?

At that time, I answered her to let Charis die slowly because I did not release the cord of hope.

Then I came home later and talked to my wife.

We did not want the child to suffer anymore, so we decided to send the baby quickly.

The next day, on Monday morning, I read the Bible, and the words of Psalm 63:3 came to my heart and shared it with my wife: "Thy lovingkindness is better than my life, and my lips shall praise Thee."

As we believed the eternal love of God is better than the 55 days life of Charis, we went to the hospital.

After informing our doctor about our decision, I contacted my parents, my older brother and my younger sister and they all came to the ICU and worshiped God first.

And then everyone went to the next room, and I held Christ in my arms first time and walked toward the next room.

At that moment, I thought I was going to die by not able to breathe because of my cry out.
When I went to the next room with baby Charis, everyone was crying except my father.
My father asked me to give Christ to him so I did.
And then he held Christ in his arms and put his one hand on her head and memorized the Bible John 3:16.
Then another doctor came and checked Charis' heart and told us that she passed away.

After few days later, my wife and I cremated deceased Charis and went to the water with the baby's ashes.
We borrowed a small boat and drove the boat into the water.
My wife who sat in front of the boat with a small box containing the baby's ashes spread the ashes into the water.
Then, as we were returning to the ground, my wife suddenly turned her head to me who was steering the boat and said "Titanic",
At that time, tears flowed from her both eyes.
When I saw her, I looked up the sky and praised God "My Savior's Love" (or "I Stand Amazed")
(<http://youtu.be/nkFOtaO8B9c>):

- (v. 1) I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how he could love me, A sinner, condemned, unclean.
(v. 2) For me it was in the garden He prayed: "Not My Will, but Thine."
He had no tears for his own griefs, but sweat drops of blood for mine.
(v. 3) In pity angels beheld Him, And came from the world of light
To comfort Him in the sorrows He bore for my soul that night.
(v. 4) He took my sins and my sorrows, He made them his very own;
He bore the burden to Calvary, And suffered and died alone.
(v. 5) When with the ransomed in glory His face I shall last see,
'Twill be my joy through the ages.
(Chorus) O how marvelous! She is so wonderful! And my song shall ever be:
O how marvelous! She is so wonderful! Is my Savior's love for me!

Consider your home as wilderness

As I was reading John Bevier's book "Growing Strong in Dry Times", I came to think that I should consider my church, and especially my home as wilderness. There are two reasons for this.

The first reason why we should consider our home as wilderness is because our sins are exposed very vividly in our home.

Especially when I think about marital relations, I think that there is no place where all the sins of the couple can be exposed as much as the home. Of course, it is true that when our sins are exposed, we are hurt and it is painful. Of course, there is pain and sadness. We can hurt each other deeply. However, the married couples who use their home as wilderness can see through such painful processes how sinners live by the grace of God. So they are thankful for God to expose their sins and they regard them as God's grace. And the couples who know the grace of God not only acknowledge their sins but also confront them as the holy God keep on exposing their ugly sins in their home. Moreover, they confess that they are who they are because of God's grace. In the midst of that, they treat each other with the grace of God who loves such sinners like them. They forgive each other's sins, and embrace and love each other with the heart of Heavenly Father. But even this, they know they cannot do with their own strength, so they kneel down before the Lord and cry out to God. As they cry out to God, they experience God's grace and love so that they are able to treat each other with God's grace and love. Therefore, we must consider our home as wilderness. It is because there is no place where all our sins can be exposed as much as our home.

The second reason why we should consider our home as wilderness is because we should fill each other's needs rather than ask for what we want from each other.

A home is not a place where the couples ask what they want from each other. But we are constantly asking our spouse to satisfy our own needs. But the problem is that when this desire is not satisfied from the other, the couple can complain and grumble and fight. As the Israelites had been in the wilderness for forty years and felt that their desires would not be satisfied, they continued to complain and grumble to Moses and God. These phenomena of the wilderness can be seen in our homes, especially in our marriage relationship. What is the problem? It is because the couples misunderstand that their home is the place where they ask for what they want from each other instead of fulfilling each other's needs. If our home is the place where the wife is keep on asking her husband what she wants and he keeps on asking her what he wants, then out of frustration, conflicts and disputes will not end in our home. However, if we consider our home as wilderness, then we will devote ourselves to fulfill each other's needs rather than asking what we want from each other. If the husband learns more about his wife's needs, and tries to fill her needs with Christ's love, then the wife will feel God's love through her husband. In addition, as the wife learns more about her husband's needs and acknowledge his authority and submissive to him as the church does so to Jesus, then he will be encouraged and strengthened by her. In doing so, the couple will experience the filling of their needs through each other and will be satisfied. And they will give thanks to God and praise Him together. Therefore, we must consider our home as wilderness. It is because there is no other better place our home for the couple to satisfy each other's needs with the love of the Lord.

As I was reading John Bevier's book "Growing Strong in Dry Times", I was convinced to consider my home as wilderness. It is my prayers that the Lord keeps on exposing my and my wife's sins in our home. Although there is pains, hurts and tears, it is my prayers that the Lord who is the Potter, continues to mold both of us so that

we may devote ourselves to fulfill each other's needs instead of keep on asking what we want from each other. And I want to both of us to enjoy fulfilling each other's needs. May the Lord continue to build our home more toward perfection so that our home can be used by Him as a home witness community.

Love and respect

Love and Respect (1)

I would like to recommend Emerson Eggerichs' book, "The Love She Most Desires & The Respect He Desperately Needs" to all couples. At the heart of the book is that the wife desires unconditional love of her husband and the husband needs unconditional respect from his wife. I have read this book two weeks before my 10th wedding anniversary and have experienced the God's work of reconciliation between my wife and I in our conflict so that we were able to rededicated to each other. The Lord challenged me to love my wife just as Jesus loved the church unconditionally. And the Lord challenged my wife to rededicate herself to respect me. One week after our tenth wedding anniversary, on the Thursday morning prayer meeting, God blessed me the Word of God, Esther chapter one as I mediated on King Xerxes, the husband who wasn't respected by his wife and Queen Vashti, the wife who was unloved by her husband.

This is what the Bible Esther 1:20 says, "Then when the king's edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest." When King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa (v. 2), and in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials (v. 3). This banquet lasted 180 days because King Xerxes wanted to display the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty (v. 4). Maybe he was not satisfied with it so he had another banquet that lasted 7 days in the enclosed garden of the king's palace for all the people from the least to the greatest, who were in the citadel of Susa (v. 5). On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded (v. 10) to bring his wife Queen Vashti to the banquet so that he could display her beauty to the people and nobles (v. 11). But she refused to come (v. 12). So the king Xerxes became furious and burned with anger (v. 12). So he consulted with experts in matters of law and justice and issued a royal decree that Queen Vashti should never again enter the presence of King Xerxes (v. 19). Then the experts suggested to King Xerxes to let him give Queen Vashti's royal position to someone else who was better than she (v. 19). What was the intention? Not only to prevent all the women from despising their husbands because of the disobedience of Queen Vashti (v. 17), but also to make all the women to respect their husbands (v. 20) and to let every man to rule over his own household (v. 22).

As I was meditating on this, I asked myself, 'Why did Queen Vashti disobey her husband King Xerxes and made him very angry?' I am sure King Xerxes wanted her obedience and respect but why did she despised him by being disobedient to him? I think it was because she didn't receive love from her husband. As Dr. Emerson Eggerichs said, I think both King Xerxes and Queen Vashti had a crazy cycle. In other words, she did not respect her husband and he did not love his wife. The wife, who had not felt love, refused to respect her husband, and her husband, who had not been respected, refused to love her. How can we know that King Xerxes did not love Queen Vashti? In one word, King Xerxes did not regard his wife as the most important person in his life. How can we know this? King Xerxes had two banquets to display the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty (v. 4) but did not have a banquet for his wife. I think that was why Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes (v. 10). It seems that Queen Vashti and the women in the royal palace were neglected by their husbands. Eventually, at the second banquet for all the people in the citadel of Susa (v. 5), King Xerxes invited his wife Queen Vashti (v. 11) when he was in high spirits from wine (v. 10). However, his invitation does not seem to be the act that makes his wife to feel loved by him. I thought about this like this: 'Let's say there is a man who has a pretty wife. When he was in a bar drinking with his friends. And suddenly he wants to boast his wife's beauty. So he calls his wife and tells her to come to the bar. Would she obey her husband and go to the bar? Would she be able to feel loved by her husband?' Eventually, Queen Vashti disobeyed her

husband King Xerxes and refused to go the banquet because she didn't feel loved by him. Although she had to respect her husband unconditionally, Queen Vashti refused to do so. As a result, the marriage between King Xerxes and Queen Vashti was eventually divorced in modern language.

As I thought about King Xerxes's marital relationship with his wife Queen Vashti in Dr. Emerson Eggerich's 'love and respect' perspective, I also thought about the relationship between Jesus and the church. Unlike King Xerxes the Groom Jesus loves His bride, the church, unconditionally. Now the question is whether His bride, the church, is obedient to Jesus out of respect. Although Jesus considers the church precious and honors us, aren't we despising Him in front of the unbelievers by being disobedient to Him? Although Jesus regards us as the most precious, we seem to consider others or other things more precious than Him. Are we honoring and glorifying Him by faithfully obeying His twofold commandment of loving God and loving our neighbors? The church, the family of God, must obey the Word of the Groom Jesus and glorify Him. Each of our Christian families must love God and love each other with the love of the Lord and glorify God. We must no longer sin against the Lord by despising Him. We should no longer be the bride who honors Jesus with only our lips. I hope and pray that the Lord continues to build His church to be His obedient bride who respects the Lord with all our hearts and devotion.

Love and Respect (2)

One day as I was reading Esther chapters 2 through 4, I was surprised at Esther 2:17-18. The reason was because the words that I couldn't find are written in chapter 1. In other words, in Esther 1, King Ahasuerus did not say that he had "loved" the Queen Vashti and that he had given a "feast" for her. But Esther 2 said that King Ahasuerus "loved Esther more than all women" (2:17; cf. 5:2) and he gave "a great banquet" for Esther (v. 18). As I was reading these words, I was surprised at the contrast between Esther chapters 1 and 2 and asked myself, 'Why did Esther be loved by King Ahasuerus?' I wondered what was difference between Queen Vashti and Esther.

Surprisingly, the Bible clearly records the difference between the two women. The difference was that Queen Vashti was "was lovely to look at" (1:11) while Esther was "lovely in form and features (2:7). This was the difference between the two women. I think Queen Vashti's appearance was good to look at. What kind of woman is good to look at? According to Barbara and Allan Pease, in their book "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry", women's appearances affect their ability to attract men, and 90 percent of those who first meet their opponents decide their appearance within four minutes of meeting. Also, their physical attractiveness is evaluated within 10 seconds. And men like women who are beautiful than those who have brains, because most men are better at looking than thinking. Since in King Ahasuerus' saw that Queen Vashti was beautiful, he wanted to display her beauty to the people and the princes (1:11). But when the Bible speaks of Esther, it does not say that Esther was lovely to look at. The Bible says that Esther "was beautiful of form and face" (2:7). Here the word beautiful of "form" means 'bright', and beautiful "face" means 'good' (Park Yun-sun). In other words, Esther's beauty is not merely a physical appearance but also she had virtuous beauty (Park). This was the difference between Queen Vashti and Esther.

This is what a pastor wrote in his blog under the title 'Sister's Appearance': 'Appearance is a gift and a mission. The gift that is not used for a mission is a curse, not a blessing.' He explains this conclusion like this: 'The beauty of the appearance that we have given to us is the gift of God and the mission God has entrusted to us. We have to know why I have given this appearance, and we must find a way to glorify God through our appearance. If we use the gifts (appearance, talents, character ...) that God has given us for our selfish glorious purposes, not for the glory of God, then the gift is not a blessing but a curse. So many people are ruining their lives not because of their

own weaknesses, but because of their strengths they believe and trust. If we use our appearance only to satisfy our proud and physical desires, then we will be ruined by our gifts and strengths.’ I think this makes sense. Perhaps Queen Vashti can be said that she didn’t use her beautiful appearance for the glory of God. She used her beauty to contempt her husband (1:17) rather than use it to please her husband, King Ahasuerus. How did she use his pretty appearance to despise her husband, King Ahasuerus? She did it by refusing to come at the King Ahasuerus’ command (v. 12). As a result, when the rumor of her conduct of disobedience was spread to all the women, then it would become a bad example of causing all them to look at their husbands with contempt (v. 17). This kind of bad examples can be found in our homes as well. Will the children who see their mothers disobeying their fathers accept the authority of their fathers and obey their words? What would the people do when their first lady refused to obey her husband, their president? The family discord of a public figure can have bad influence on many people and their families. Although Queen Vashti had a good looking appearance, she was never a woman with virtuous beauty like Esther. But Esther was a woman who had a different look than Queen Vashti. She did not have mere physical beauty but she had virtuous beauty. Where can we find her virtuous beauty?

First, Esther was a woman who pleased others.

Look at Esther 2:9 “Now the young lady pleased him and found favor with him.” Here, “him” refers to Hegai who was in charge of the women who were gathered to the citadel of Susa (v. 8). Esther pleased Hegai and she was found favor with him (v. 9). Although the Bible doesn’t say how she pleased Hegai, I think Esther was a woman who pleased others. Maybe that’s why the Bible says that Esther was “beautiful of form”, that is she was bright (v. 7). The heart of a woman who pleases others brightens her face as well. I think Esther was a woman who brightens the others. What a good woman she was. After she became a queen, she prepared a banquet for her husband King Ahasuerus (5:4). How contrasting is this with Queen Vashti? (1:9) In order to be a woman who pleases others, she must first have joy in her heart. How can we please other people without having joy in our hearts? There must be joy in us to that we may please others. Also, in order to please others, we must dedicate ourselves in knowing them. If we do not know them, we cannot consider them. And if we cannot consider them, even if we have joy in our hearts, there is no guarantee that we will please them. Therefore, the couple should try to get to know each other. As they do so, they must try to please each other. One more thing to think about is that in order to please others, it should be our joy to please them.

Second, Esther was a woman who found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

Look at Esther 2:15b – “... And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.” Since Esther had pleased others who saw her besides Hegai (2: 9), they all loved Esther and were kind to her. What should we do to be found favor in the eyes of all who see us? Not only should we please them, but also we should treat them kindly. When we do so, we will be found favor in their eyes. When we give good to others, we will also receive the good from them. A graceful people can also receive grace with humility and joy.

Third, Esther was a woman of obedience.

Esther faithfully obeyed the commandment of Mordecai, her cousin. She had faithfully fulfilled his commandment since Mordecai had brought her up as his own daughter after her parents died (2:7). The Mordecai's commandment was not to tell of her people and her nationality (2:10, 20). So Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do (v. 20). What a good and faithful woman she was. A woman who is obedient is truly beautiful. A woman who despises her husband rather than respects him by disobeying him is never a virtuous woman, even though her appearance may be attractive to others. A virtuous woman obeys her husband. She humbly listens to her husband. And she is faithful, both before and now, in obeying her husband.

Lastly, Esther was a woman who loved her nation.

When we think about Esther, the Bible verse we think of is "And if I perish, I perish" (4:16). She went to King Ahasuerus after fasting with the determination even to die in order to save her people, the Jews, from persecution and destruction by Haman. She loved her people and was ready to sacrifice her life. What a contrast with Queen Vashti? Queen Vashti was not the queen who loved her people like Esther. Rather, she was a queen who disobeyed her husband, King Ahasuerus, and gave all the women the opportunity to despise their husbands. How could she who had despised her husband have loved her nation? But Esther, who loved her people, also offered a feast for King Ahasuerus and asked him, "let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request" (7: 3). Esther, who thought her life and nation in one connection, was indeed a virtuous woman who obtained favor in King Ahasuerus' sight (5:2).

As I was meditating on Esther chapter 2, I thought of Esther, in contrast to Queen Vashti, was not merely a woman who was beautiful of form and face, but a virtuous woman. In King Ahasuerus' perspective, Esther was very lovable (5:2). How could he not love his wife who pleases him, who gives grace to him, who obeys him, and who loves her nation? In order to become a husband's loving wife, a woman should not be a only good-looking wife in her husband's view (and also in others) as Queen Vashti. She must be beautiful of form and face like Esther. In other words, she must be a bright and good wife. She must be a woman with virtuous beauty. The words of Proverbs 31: 10 and 29-30 come to my mind: "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. ... Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all. Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised."

The Holy Spirit-filled husband (Ephesians 5:25-33)

The Holy Spirit-filled husband (1)

A couple got up in the middle of the night and argued. This argument began when the wife awoke her husband who was sleeping:

Man: What is it?

Woman: Look at how much you are occupying the bed.

Man: I'm sorry

Woman: You are always like that.

Man: What?

Woman: You always bother me.

Man: Hey, it happened when I was sleeping. What am I supposed to do?

Woman: But I don't know how many times you did this to me (Internet).

Do you see here a different point of view of the husband and wife? While a man has given importance to the words of his wife that he takes up too much of a bed, she can see how her husband's dominance has been monopolized by his sleeping habit. Like this, the couples are different.

There is a legend in ancient Greek mythology. Half a man and half a woman were living on the earth. They considered each one to be perfect and self-sufficient. They were arrogant and rebelled against the gods. So angry Zeus cut all of them in half and scattered them on earth. According to the myth, since then each half was looking for the other half (Internet). The lesson we can get here is that there are no perfect men or perfect women. When men or women consider themselves perfect, then in arrogance they are denying the basic fact that they need each other. But we know that God, who made Adam in Genesis, said that "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18). So He made a woman Eve for Adam. When Adam and Eve, who need each other, married and became one body, there is "intrinsic perfection". It is a mysterious marital relation that the couple understands and accepts each other's differences and fulfills each other's shortcomings and become one body.

The couple is complementary and not a competition. The husband and the wife relationship that fulfills the needs of each other can be established as a Lord-centered couple when they faithfully fulfill their biblical responsibilities in the Lord.

I want to meditate on the husband's biblical responsibilities based on Ephesians 5:25-33. I would like to think about two responsibilities of the Holy Spirit-filled husband under the heading of "The Holy Spirit-filled husband". Hopefully we will take this lesson and apply it to our marriage relationship, and pray that there will be a blessing to be made more of a Lord-centered marital relationship that is worthy of the Lord's sight.

First, the Holy Spirit-filled husband loves his wife.

Look at Ephesians 5:25 and Colossians 3:19a – "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25), "Husbands, love your wives ..." (Col. 3:19a). In Ephesians 5:24, the

Bible says that the responsibility of the wives toward her husband is "to submit to their husbands." Then it seems that there is tendency for the husbands to think that their first responsibility towards their submissive wives is to 'rule over them.' But the Bible commands the husbands to love their submissive wives and do not rule over them. How should the husbands love their wives? The Bible teaches us four ways:

(1) The husbands must treat their wives with respect.

Look at 1 Peter 3:7a – “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life” The research of social science reveals that wives have three basic needs. The first need is to be respected. So the husbands should respect their wives. How can the husbands despise their wives whom the Lord loves and considers precious? Look at 1 John 4:20 – “If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.” If the husbands say they love and respect God whom they don't see but don't love and respect their own wives, then this is hypocrisy.

(2) The husbands must love and care their wives as their own bodies.

Look at Ephesians 5:28 and 33a: “In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ... However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself,” Just as the husbands cares for the needs of their own bodies, they must care for their wives' need by encouraging their wives' growth and development. Also, the husbands should love their wives with purpose. The purpose is twofold. It is to make their wives holy (Eph. 5:26a) and to present their wives to the Lord as the radiant wives (v. 27a). And the way to accomplish that purpose is recorded in Ephesians 5:26: "... cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.” Look at 1 Peter 1:22 – “... you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth” The husbands should instruct their wives with the truth of God and encourage them to obey that truth so that they may be separated from this world and imitate the God's holy life. Therefore, the husbands must nurture their wives in the presence of the Lord as a "glorious wife" (Eph. 5:27).

(3) The husbands should be able to sacrifice themselves for their wives.

Look at Ephesians 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” The husbands should practice the Lord's sacrificial love and its goal is only for their wives, to take care of them and not to expect any reward from them. The husbands must know how to sacrifice their little things. For example, they should listen to their wives, spend time together, throw away the trashes, wash the dishes in the kitchen and etc..

(4) The husbands must be actively responsible for raising their children.

Look at Ephesians 6:4 – “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” As the head of the family, the husbands should not only nurture their wives but also they should nurture their children with the word of God. The fathers must bring their children up in the training and instruction of the Lord. They must not leave it to their wives unconditionally and passively. Rather, they must be actively responsible for nurturing their children.

So why should the husbands love their wives like this? The reason is because they are one flesh. Look at Ephesians 5:31 – “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will

become one flesh.” Since the husbands became one flesh with their wives after leaving their parents they must love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (v. 25).

There are 10 proposals to become a respected husband at the Christian Home Ministry (Internet):

- (1) Feed the happy vitamins: The best vitamin is "vitamin H". Unexpressed love is not love. Say that you love her once a day. Love is like herb medicine.
- (2) Have knowledge of women: Study your wife. Living with a wife is much difficult than commanding an army. You cannot live with your wife without knowing her. Build up your knowledge about her.
- (3) Minimum leadership begins with prayer: Pray instead of nagging and scolding. There is no nagging that overcome prayer. Prayer is the key to open the day and the lock to close the day. Pray for your wife and children.
- (4) The deepest love is waiting: Do not hasten. The heart of love is in waiting. A jet needs time to fly. Love that cannot wait is not love.
- (5) Talk under the pillow: The deepest conversation is a conversation in the bedroom. What the wife wants is not your snoring sound. Do not turn over in bed. If you lie face-to-face, you are very close to your wife. But if you turn over, then the distance between you and your wife is more than 100,000 miles. You can you meet your wife by going around the Earth (40,350Km).
- (6) Leave the money. Money is a measure of affection: Your wife most dislikes to hear you saying ‘Let me see your financial account. Do not think about trying to see her financial account until she shows you. If you really want to see it, you say to her ‘Is not it short? Isn’t it hard?’
- (7) Treat as a woman, not as a wife: A wife is a concept of possession, but a woman is a concept of protection. Remember that your wife is a woman before she became your wife. Do not try to manage her. Your wife is not a fortune but a partner.
- (8) Take insurance for your family. The biggest insurance is time insurance: You cannot use more than what you saved. Investing time for your family is increasing the profit like a snowball. Try to spend time for your family for a while. Family is like building a castle through time.
- (9) To lose is to win: The most foolish man is to fight his wife and win. If you want to win, win over yourself. There is always a loser by the victor. But by the side of the lover, it is filled with loved ones.
- (10) Raise a wife: And share the goal of your life with your wife. Do not treat your wife as a housekeeper. Your wife should also grow. Help her to make positive growth, not minus growth. Sometimes, you should also pay your wife a maintenance fee for her dignity.

We, the husbands must remember. The reason we love our wives is not to get their respect. The reason why we love our wives is because the Lord has commanded us. And since the Lord loves our wives, we must also love our wives with Christ’s love. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit and must love our wives as Christ loves the church. As we do so, may the Lord build us His glorious and holy couple.

The Holy Spirit-filled husband (2)

The husband who is devoted to the Lord-centered marital relationship first comes close to the Lord and has intimate fellowship with the Lord. And he naturally loves his wife, whom he loves, with the great love and grace of God which he enjoys abundantly in such intimate fellowship with the Lord (Eph. 5:25). The loving husband who is filled with the Holy Spirit not only treats his wife with respect (1 Pet. 3:7) but also loves her sacrificially with clear purpose (Eph. 5:25). And the twofold purpose is to sanctify his wife (Eph. 5:26) and to present her to the Lord as a radiant wife (v. 27). So he teaches his wife to keep the word of God (Mt. 28:20). In other word, the Holy Spirit-filled husband makes his wife Jesus' disciple so that she can manifest His glory. Not only that, he also nourishes his children with the Word of God and makes them Jesus' disciples (Eph. 6:4). The reason why the Holy Spirit-filled husband loves his wife is because they are one flesh (5:31).

Second, the Holy Spirit-filled husband does not harass with his wife.

Look at Colossians 3:19b – "...do not be harsh with them." When does the wife suffer because of her husband? In the book "You Just Don't Understand", Deborah Tannen talks about eight things:

- (1) When my husband does not respond to my pain
- (2) When my husband suggests a solution when I complain to him about my pain or tries to comfort me by saying it's not a big deal what I am going through
- (3) When my husband makes his own decision without consulting with me
- (4) When my husband does not talk to me at all even though he has so many stories to tell other people (my husband's silence)
- (5) When my husband complains to me when I talk to my friend(s) inquisitively
- (6) When my husband lectures me
- (7) When my husband does other things without hearing my word, and
- (8) When I think that my husband uses me

When the following actions of the husband continue, the wife begins to feel that her husband is someone else (Internet):

- (1) When he works hard for his own parents but is indifferent of my own parents' work
- (2) When he decides important matter without discussing with me
- (3) When he only sleep at home
- (4) When he says 'Why don't you just to a pharmacy and buy a medicine?' when I am sick
- (5) When he is indifferent to our children
- (6) When he is irresponsible to my change
- (7) When he goes out alone on a holiday
- (8) When he doesn't remember our wedding anniversary or my birthday, and
- (9) When he turns his body and says 'I'm too tired now'

Dr. John Gottman, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington, has been researching what marriages have improved and which marriages have deteriorated over the past two decades, and proposed four in order of dangerous things that afflict each other in marital conflict (Les Parrot 3 "Marriage"):

- (1) First, criticism: When a husband complains about his wife's behavior and eventually criticizes his wife, this is harassing her. In other words, it is harassing that the husband attacks his wife's character, blames his wife and criticizes her.
- (2) Second, contempt: According to Dr. Gottman, the difference between criticism and contempt is that contempt is intended to insult the spouse and to abuse the spouse psychologically. Contempt is touching the core of personality in order to shake the relationship from the bottom and cause suffering on the spouse. After all, it is to get rid of all the positive emotions toward each other. The most common form when the husband despises his wife is defamation of character, jokes that have hostility, and ridicule and so on.
- (3) Third, defensive attitudes: When the husband takes a defensive attitude toward his wife, she can be distressed. In the end, the husband responds defensively to his wife in the belief that he is a victim and he thinks there is nothing wrong with that. This can make his wife feel worse. This kind of self-defensive attitudes has wrong victim mentality and can make himself to feel that he is righteous. So he can blame on his wife and can deny his own responsibility. This can make his wife to be in distressed.
- (4) Last fourth, building a stone wall: The husband can build the stone wall and make his wife to be in distressed when he is tired and worn out in a conflict with his wife. In other words, he can torment his wife's heart by building the stone wall with his wife and by starting to step back from his wife with his overwhelming feeling. Although he claims that he is trying not to make a problem worse with his wife with his words and by not making his facial expression hardened, avoiding eye contact, straightening his neck and so on, he doesn't realize that building the stone wall makes her to be in distress.

Douglas Wilson describes six biblical duties of the husband in his book, "Reformed Marriage:

- (1) The first duty is that a husband must always remember that as a husband he is a living picture of the Lord Jesus. He must speak truthfully. Depending on how he treats his wife, we can see whether he speak truthfully about Christ or not.
- (2) The second duty is that the husband should nurture and protect his wife in the same way he cares for his own body (Eph. 5:29). If he does not take care of his wife especially and softly but expects her to bear fruit and to be lovely, he is not a true husband.
- (3) The third duty is that the husband must be jealous and protective (Exod. 34:14b). He must have godly jealousy. But his jealousy should not be mixed with sin.
- (4) The fourth duty is that the husband must supply his wife with what she needs (Ex 21:10-11). He is responsible for providing the money she needs to go to market. If he cannot fulfill her need, then it is like denying Christ (1 Tim. 5:8). He also must fulfill his wife's sexual needs (1 Cor. 7:3-4).
- (5) The fifth duty is that the husband must be satisfied with his wife (Prov. 5:15-19). He must avoid comparing his wife with other women in every way.
- (6) The sixth duty is that the husband's continued responsibility is to reassess and acknowledge his wife's dedication (Num. 30:13-15). The Holy Spirit-filled husband is faithful to his biblical duties and glorifies God.

Let your wife be blessed!

[Proverbs 5: 15-23]

What is a most valuable thing to you? Who is the most valuable person in your life? The Bible says in Proverbs 5:18, "Let our fountain be blessed" Here the word "fountain" refers to a wife. In other words, the Bible commands us to let our wives to be blessed. How can we, the husbands, let our wives to be blessed?

First, we must regard our wives as the blessing God has given us.

Look at Proverbs 18:22 – "He who finds a wife finds a good thing And obtains favor from the LORD." Of course, the wise King Solomon is not talking about any wives. How can you know it? We can know this by looking at what he said in Proverb: "It is better to live in a corner of a roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman" (Prov. 21:9), "It is better to live in a desert land Than with a contentious and vexing woman" (v. 19), "It is better to live in a corner of the roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman" (25:24). In Proverbs 18:22, King Solomon is not talking about "a contentious woman" or "a vexing woman". Rather, he is talking about "an excellent wife" (12:4), "prudent wife" (19:14) or "A wife of noble character (31:10). Look at Proverbs 12:4 – "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones." Look at Proverbs 19:14 – "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD." Look at Proverbs 31:10 – "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies." The Bible says that those who acquire such a wise, excellent and virtuous wife are blessed and have received favor from God. In other words, a husband who has this wife as spouses is blessed. The reason is that such a wise, excellent and virtuous wife is blessing to him.

Do you consider your wife a blessing? Or do you consider her a curse? The reason I ask this question is that the word "be blessed" in Proverbs 5:18 in Hebrew has not only the meaning "bless" or "be blessed" but also "curse" (Vine). We, the husbands, should consider our wives as a blessing. The reason is because the wives of our youth are from God. And the wives whom God has given us is blessing for us (Mal 2:14) (Park Yun-sun). Therefore, we must not only think that our wives are the blessed ones but also express in words to them "You are my blessed one". But if we do not regard our wives as our blessing, it is the same as denying that our wives are from God. This is the sin of unbelief and the sin of pride. Maybe some of men want to make excuse like this: 'How can I regard my wife as blessing to me when God didn't give an excellent wife but a contentious or vexing woman?' Isn't this sound a good excuse? If I hear such a statement, I would like to say to that man like this: 'God has not given you the contentious or vexing woman but you have chosen such a woman. So you have responsibility to nurture her as a virtuous woman.' In many cases, it seems like the men are rejecting the wise, excellent and noble women God gives to them and choose to marry the women whom they think they are pretty and charming in their own eyes, but who are aggressive and contentious later. If we have made such a choice, shouldn't we commit ourselves to nurture our wives to be the excellent wives with a sense of responsibility? Too many men are now saying and doing irresponsible things to the women who we have chosen to marry. They are not afraid to speak cursed words to their wives, nor are they acting to make their wives feel cursed. So many wives now live without being loved by their husbands. What a miserable woman's life? We must consider our wives as blessing from God. And we must faithfully endure the responsibility to our wives whom we have chosen.

Second, we must rejoice with our wives in order to bless them.

Look at Proverbs 5:18 – “May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.” How should we, the husbands, rejoice our wives? We should let our wives’ breasts satisfy always. Look at verse 19: “A loving doe, a graceful deer-- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.” Here, the word “may her breasts satisfy you always” means that we must be captivated by our wives’ love. In particular, we must be captivated by their virtue rather than their beauty. This is the meaning of the word “A loving doe, a graceful deer” (Park Yun-sun). In doing so, we will only rejoice the love of our “cistern” and “well” (v. 15) and we will not let ourselves to be captivated by an adulteress (v. 20). In other words, when we get satisfying refreshment sexually and affectionately from our wives (MacArthur), we will never be captivated by an adulteress or another man’s wife (v. 20). This is what King Solomon says in Proverbs 5:16-17: “Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers.” But now how many husbands are letting their spring overflow in the streets and are sharing with strangers? How many men are leaving their wives and going to other women? Now so many husbands are not always satisfied with their wives, nor are they rejoice in their wives. They are not letting themselves to be captivated by their wives’ love (v. 19). Rather, they are letting the adulteresses or another man’s wife to captivate them (v. 20).

Marital counselor M. Gary Newman conducted a research and analysis on 200 men why men are cheating, and the results are (Internet): 48% of men said that the reason for their affair is that they cannot feel emotional/mental love from their wives /lovers. We think the main reason for the men’s affair is that there is no physical affinity from wives, but only about 8% of men say “yes.” Men also want emotional/mental intimacy from their wives. They want to hear from their wives “Thank you” and “I love you” more than physical affinity. However, the difference between men and women is that while women express their emotions, the men are not express emotions in them. 77% of men say they have a friend or acquaintance around them who had affair. 40 % of the men say they meet their object of affair at work. Most men have affair with a woman whom they met at the work place because they receive praise and respect from her. That is, men are interested in the woman who acknowledges (and respect) them.

If men leave their wives and have affair with other women, they will experience the consequences of their sinful choices (Prov. 5:7-14). The consequences are giving their vigor to others (v. 9), time lost (v. 9), loss of their hard-earned goods (v. 10), loss of their body (v. 11) and suffering in their conscience (vv. 12-14). Therefore, we must know the consequences of this adultery and do not give in to a harlot. But the Bible verses 21-23 talks about the higher motives. There are three motives (Walvoord):

(1) The first is that God is watching all our paths.

Look at Proverbs 5:21 - “For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths.” What does this mean? It means that God is alive and He watches all the acts of the wicked (Park Yun-sun). God is watching over all the things we do in secret. If our hearts are not captivated by our wives’ love but are captivated by another man’s wife, God will know our hearts and He will discipline us.

(2) Second, since sin causes us to be caught in a snare (1:17-18) and make us to be bounded by the cords of sin, we must not be captivated by an adulteress.

Look at Proverbs 5:22 – “The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast.” Though we like to talk about enjoying freedom from sin, sinning in fact makes us slaves and makes us not enjoy true freedom.

- (3) Third, we should let the consequence of living however we want without any rule in our moral life, which is death, to make us not to be captivated by the adulteress or another man's wife.

Look at Proverbs 5:23 – “He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.” We must not be captivated by foolishness, and thus not receiving the instruction of God. We should never let our hearts to be captivated by the adulteress or another man's wife. The reason is that the result is death.

The wise children of God who pay attention to the Word of God and who have the wisdom of God bless their wives or their spouse. The wise husbands bless their wives whom God has given them. And they rejoice in their wives. They are satisfied with their wives always. This refers to the relationship of the Groom Jesus, who is the Giver and the Source of blessings and His Bride, the Church. In other words, we the church should regard Jesus as our blessing. And we must rejoice in the Lord. We must always be satisfied with the Lord. May we be able to love Jesus with all our heart, with all our souls and with all our mind.

What a Woman Wants

What a woman wants (1)

The first thing a woman wants from her husband is "Closeness."

In Genesis 2:24, the Bible says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh " Here, the word 'unite' is "union" in Hebrew concept that means 'stick to, hold onto, or maintain intimacy' [Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, "Love & Respect"]. The fact that the couple is united means intimacy, both spiritually and emotionally. This intimacy is especially important in the first year after marriage. In other words, when a man and a woman are married in the Lord and become one flesh, the first year should be dedicated to the intimacy of the couple. In order to do so, we cannot ignore the environmental factors. In other words, if the couple lives with their parents or if the couple is working late, they will not have enough time for each other and thus they will have hard time for intimacy. So in Deuteronomy 24: 5, the Bible says: "If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married." It is a very interesting word. This is the word to a newlywed couple, saying that a recently married man should not be sent to war or have any other duty, but rather stay home for a year and bring happiness to his wife. Like this word says, the newlywed couple must spend their time together as much as they can during the first year of their marriage, seeking the intimacy of the couple. The year of marriage is the year of fundamental (Eggerichs).

My wife and I spent the first year of marriage with just two of us almost once every week near Santa Monica Beach. Before we got married, my wife saw movie only once a year. But after we got married, we went to see a movie almost twice a month in our first year of marriage. Of course, it is important for the couple to spend a lot of time together in the first year of their marriage. But it is more important for them to spend the qualitative time together. In my memory, I spent a lot of time with my wife for a year after we got married, and I believe it was quality time as well for both of us. The reason I think this way is because God used me to wrap up my wife's wounds from the church she went before we got married. When my wife opened her heart and shared her story of that church, I tried to listen to her actively in order to understand her wounds. And I am still thankful that we were able to have heart to heart conversation. Looking back now, I wonder what we would have been if my wife had been married without any hurt. At that time, I thought that a single man and a single woman must have healthy self for healthy marriage. That was why I thought that if there is any wound in their hearts, it is better to be healed in the Lord before marriage. But looking back now, I cannot help but acknowledge the sovereignty of God because God used my wife's wound as a good opportunity for us to open each other's hearts and to be connected with each other. Our God is a good God who works for the good in all things (Rom. 8:28).

It may be a luxury to the modern dual-income couple to spend the first year of marriage like us in some ways. It's because when they work until late and come home, they cannot have much time together. However, I believe that the couple can spend qualitative time together even if they have little time together. Although it may not be easy, I believe that it is possible especially if a man devotes himself to pursuing intimacy with his wife. How can it be done?

(1) First, each couple should sincerely pursue intimate fellowship with God.

The reason is because if the husband and the wife neglect the intimate fellowship with God, they cannot have proper intimate fellowship with God. Especially, the husband should devote more effort to seek God's intimate fellowship than his wife. By doing so, he will nurture his wife well as her spiritual leader and will be a stepping stone between his wife and the Lord in pursuing intimate fellowship with the Lord.

(2) Second, the couple should pursue a "heart to heart conversation" steadily in order to pursue intimacy.

The couple has to approach each other with an open heart. And they must open our heart to each other and communicate with each other with a sincere heart and an honest heart. Also they should seek transparency when they open their hearts and talk to each other even though they are likely to be hurt by each other. Of course, there is a real sense of intimacy that only God and I know, so the couple should maintain a reasonable distance in the marriage. But within that boundary, the couple should try to have an honest and truthful conversation with transparency. I think this is more difficult for a man than a woman can imagine. The reason is because the woman likes such conversation, but the man is not familiar with it at all. So when the wife tries to make this kind of conversation before or after a meal, her husband may be silent or seems to be not listening to her words, or he may seem he does not want to talk to her. This is because it is awkward for him to talk and have that kind of conversation. So, from the woman's point of view, it's like talking on the wall. So even though she tries to have intimate conversation with her husband, she gives up. Of course, the woman should also try to understand such aspects of man. She also has to learn why the man is trying not to have an intimate conversation like her. But considering the woman who wants intimacy, the man has responsibility to give her connection and his involvement (Eggerichs).

(3) Third, the couple need to learn each other's needs through heart to heart conversation and satisfy them in order for the couple to pursue intimacy.

Here I would like to focus on the wife's needs rather than the husband's needs. When I was serving the newly wedded couple group at Seohyun Church in Korea, I gave the homework to the all the couples in the group. I encouraged them to spend time with each other and to talk about their needs in five ways. So I went home and talked to my wife in order to do the homework ourselves too. I shared my five needs to my wife and she shared her five needs to me. What I still remember is that my wife's first need was (and I am sure still is) "appreciation." At that time, I was surprised to hear this from my wife. But I had no excuse. It was a time of genuine conversation that made me to realize that I was stingy in showing appreciation to my wife. The husband has to work hard to find the needs of his wife and devote himself in fulfilling those needs. When he does so, he will be able to give her the intimacy she wants.

In addition, I am sure there are many things the husband should try to give his wife what she needs in order to build intimacy. But I know that the husband will not be able to do all that well for his wife and for intimacy. But what the husband should know is that his wife does not want the perfect husband who knows everything. Her husband's dedication in finding out the intimacy she wants and trying to give her intimacy will be encouraging to her. The reason is that she will feel love through such a dedication of her husband.

What a woman wants (2)

The second thing that the woman wants from her husband is "openness".

I remember visiting a pastor's house when I was in seminary. I still remember what his wife said at that time: 'We never had a fight.' At that time I was a single and I couldn't believe what she said to me. How could the couple live without conflict. But later I was surprised to hear that they really had a big fight in which her jaw bone came down. However, there is one unforgettable lesson that I have learned because of their big fight at that time. It was that the husband had to talk to his wife honestly and make a decision together. In my memory, the pastor loved his wife in his own way, so since he didn't want his wife to worry he bought a used car without talking to his wife. The important thing is not that the couple argues and fights with each other but a woman wants to talk genuinely with her husband rather than him worrying alone. The woman wants her husband to share his mind, thoughts and feelings with her frankly and specifically. But many husbands do not understand this need of the women (Eggerichs).

In his book, "Love & Respect", Dr. Eggerichs describes this difference between a man and a woman: The woman is 'expressive-responsive' and the man is 'compartmentalized'. He says that this difference between man and woman is like two types of electrical circuits. She is like electrical circuits that have 3,000 light bulbs in which if one light bulb breaks then all the rest of the bulbs are turned off. So Dr. Eggerichs says the woman has an "integrated personality". Unlike her, the man is like electrical circuits in which even 2,000 light bulbs break out of 3,000 light bulbs, 1,000 light bulbs are still working. Listen to what Dr. Eggerich says:

'In intimacy level, the wife is like the first circuit. If there is serious conflict in marriage, it affects all of her being. All her light bulbs will be turned off and she will be completely exhausted. This is because she has an integrated personality. Her body, mind and spirit are connected and her whole system will respond to feelings of hurt. If her husband expresses one small thing that makes her feels unloved, then she becomes completely confused until all of them are restored.'

This is a really interesting view. The man divides the problems into two even though 2,000 of the 3,000 light bulbs are broken. So even if there are some marital problems, he can compartmentalize those problems. And he has power to distinguish those problems in his heart, even though he is deeply wounded. On the other hand, the woman receives even one marital problem as integrated as whole like all 3,000 light bulbs are turned off even if one light bulb breaks. As a result, she totally collapses. The man does not understand this difference of the woman. The reason is because with his own theoretical reason, he cannot understand this about the woman. But the man should not try to understand her only theoretically. He has to accept the woman's integrative nature and expressive-responsive aspect as it is and to learn about that aspect of his wife.

I personally laughed at this difference between man and woman as I was talking to my wife. The reason I laughed was because my wife knew a bit about the meaning that the man is 'compartmentalized'. In the past, when we used to have conflicts, my wife expressed her feelings of frustration, anger and hate because she was expressive and responsive. But I used to just look at her expressionlessly many times. That doesn't mean I was not hurt. Even though my heart was wounded in my own way, I compartmentalized it in one corner of my mind and treated my wife with the remaining 1,000 bulbs that worked. At that time, my wife couldn't understand such aspect of me and looked at me strangely. In her perspective, she couldn't understand my response of not expressing my hurt but just looking at her without any expression because she was responding to her whole system which was being hurt by the

conflict with me, like experiencing the phenomenon that all 3,000 light bulbs are turned off. At that time of marital conflicts, it was difficult for both of us because we didn't understand each other's differences. But now when we applied our little understanding of the difference between men and women that we got through Dr. Eggerich's book to our marital relations, we could not help but laughed at our differences. haha. We have been able to laugh because God has given us the ability to recognize, understand, and embrace our differences in our marriage.

Nowadays, I have not been able to talk to my wife about man and woman's differences after reading books about marital relationship. However, as we are more aware of each other's differences than before, we are approaching each other by acknowledging our differences more than before. The point that they are getting closer together is that not only that we are open to each other's differences but we open our hearts to each other and talk about them. My wife usually tells me what she experiences and feels about what has happened at her work when she comes home and I try to listen and to react like to her. When I share about my thoughts, concerns and struggles about my pastoral ministry, my wife listens and tries to encourage me. Before I tried not to share my struggles with her because I didn't want her to go through what I was going through. That was my way of loving her. But after I learned that one of the ways to love my wife is to open my heart and share even my struggles with her, I try to open my heart and share my own struggles genuinely with her. We usually talk to each other about what happened during the day at the end of the day when we come home and have dinner and before we go to sleep. I think one of the things we need to do more is that we need to have more wisdom and heart to heart conversation. In other words, we must communicate truthfully and wisely in order to glorify God. The reason I think this way is because when we have conversation there is danger where we forget to look at ourselves before God when we share our feelings and thoughts truthfully. I think honest conversation is good, but if that honest conversation is not right before God then it is against the truth. So I think that in our conversation, we need to control what we say to each other. And I think this is my responsibility as a husband. I need to lead the conversation with my wife wisely so that our honest conversation may not cross over the boundary. Therefore, the couple's conversation should be truthful and at the same time should glorify God.

What a woman wants (3)

The third thing that the woman wants from her husband is "Understanding".

The woman wants to be understood by her husband. She doesn't want her husband to give her a solution when he listens to her story. She wants him to listen to her story to the end. She doesn't want him to listen to the end with the thoughts of offering the solution to her. She just wants him to be in her position and listen to her. Therefore, she wants to feel that her husband understands her. What she wants is her husband's understanding and not the solution.

But the man hears his wife's story from his own perspective. In other words, when the wife opens her heart and shares her worries and anxieties truthfully, he thinks that she wants him to give some solutions. The reason the man does this is because he is solution-oriented. That's why when the woman speaks and express her feelings to him, the man cannot listen to what she says as she wants. In other words, since he listens to his wife's story with his solution-oriented mind, he ultimately presents a solution to her so that she doesn't feel that she is understood by her husband. In my personal experience, I tend to suggest a solution to my wife when I hear her story. Although I now know that I should listen to my wife's story from her point of view, it's not easy. As a result, I often do not sympathize with my wife's feelings. The Bible Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus is our High Priest who can "sympathize" with us but there are many times when I didn't sympathize with my wife's worries, anxieties, emotions and so on.

How can we, the husbands, sympathize with our wives? To do so, we must first put down our own theoretical thinking and solution-oriented thinking. Of course this will not be easy. But I believe that when we pray to God constantly and keep on trying in our conversations with our wives, we can gradually improve. One of those endeavors is to suppress our instinct to think theoretically and in solution-oriented way when our wives speaks and listen to our wives' story with blank mind. Another thing we have to try is that when we listen to our wife's story, we should first listen at the emotional level rather than at the logical level. Among these efforts, we need to make our feelings richer in order for us to bear fruit. One good way to do this is to actively listen to the emotional story of our beloved wives rather than the words of others. Another thing is to constantly reflect ourselves with the Word of God and repent of our sins before Him. I think when we repent in tears, our hearts can get more melted and our sensitivity can become more sensitive. I also think that it is a great help to shed tears of gratitude while thinking about the grace of God that is given to such sinners like us. We, the men, should try to enrich our feelings. Without it, it is hard for us to hear our wives' story from their perspective. Of course, the women's story may not always be about expressing their feelings and emotions. But the women are trying to express their feelings by words, they will never feel that their husbands understand if we do not try to hear them from their perspective. The women become clear and feels better that we understand them by speaking how they feel to us (Eggerich). Therefore, we, the husbands, must listen to our wives from their position.

One of the things that I have determined and committed to do is to try to understand my wife rather than expecting her to understand me. Sometimes I do want my wife to understand me, but I devoted myself to understanding her with love for my wife by laying down my expectation.

What a woman wants (4)

The fourth thing that the woman wants from her husband is "Peacemaking".

The woman wants her husband to acknowledge his wrongdoings and confess them to her. But the husband usually does not want to easily acknowledge and confess his wrongdoings to her. I think it's because of man's pride. But the man must say to his wife "I am sorry" when he has done wrongs to her.

When a couple is in conflict, it seems that the woman is primarily initiating to solve the problem. Of course, not all couples would be like that, but many couples seem that the wife wants to make peace with her husband so she approaches her husband first in order to solve their marital problem. But when the wife does so, the husband's reaction is often fall back from his wife or from the problem. Especially when the husband thinks that his wife is wrong, he often seems to either step back from his wife who wants to solve the marital problem and delays solving the problem or tries to get it over with it. The reason why the husband responds this way is because his wife becomes "historical" whenever there is a conflict. In other words, when the couple argues with each other, the wife often nags her husband with the past story. That's why the husband often does not want to hear it, and often steps back rather than trying to solve the problem of the marital quarrel. Mostly it seems the husband is avoiding the marital problem because his wife is "hysterical" or is fretful, but the fundamental reason is because of the "historical" aspect of the wife. The husband does not like to hear such bad historical things from his wife that she has collected from the past. He has never liked his wife repeating history. But there are things the man has to realize. The reason why his wife talks about their marital problems again and again is because there are many marital problems that have not been resolved from the past. Also, the husband must know that whenever his wife becomes historical, she is trying to reconcile with him. 'She wants you to be honest and is trying to foster peace and understanding with you. She wants her husband to make her feel that she is loved without being angry with herself' (Eggerich).

The Bible commands both man and woman to do the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18). We have responsible to be peacemakers as children of God (Mt. 5:9). In order to fulfill this responsibility, what must the couple do?

(1) The couple must commit themselves to resolving their marital conflicts.

To do so, the couple must learn and understand the differences between the two. In particular, the husband needs to be honest about his thoughts and feelings with his wife in order to resolve their conflicts. And he must know that his wife wants to share feelings and apologize to each other. According to Eggerich, this is a way for a woman to solve problems to each other and the man needs to understand and tunes in to her approach to marital problem solving because his wife is using this problem-solving approach to him. If he doesn't do it because doesn't like to talk about his feelings with her and have discussions but insists on his own way, then he will not be able to resolve the marital conflict and will make his wife a more historic woman.

(2) The man should lead his wife more aggressively.

Of course, a person who did wrong should try to resolve the conflict first. But even if the husband did not do anything wrong, it is better for him to show his wife his willingness, effort and dedication to approach his wife first and solve the marital problem. In doing so, she will feel her husband's love and apologize to

him with soft heart. If the man did wrong, he should approach his wife more and apologize to her. For the peace of the couple, both the husband and the wife should put their pride down in front of the cross. Of course this is difficult for a man with a strong self-esteem, but it is important to realize that what is important is not my pride but the peace of the couple. Therefore, the man should commit himself to keep the couple's peace by putting down his pride and by asking his wife for forgiveness.

(3) For the peace of the house, the couple should be stepping stone to each other.

Both the husband and the wife should never be a 'stumbling block' to each other. What are the obstacles in resolving the conflicts of the couple? One of them is anger. Speaking more broadly is a lack of emotional control. If the couple cannot control each other's emotion in marital conflict, then a small problem can become a big problem. In order to be the stepping stone to each other, the couple needs to sacrifice like Jesus. The husband must listen to his wife's story from her perspective for her, and think of her and understand her as she is. In particular, he should embrace all her shortcomings with Jesus' love. In doing so, his wife who feels the love of Christ through him will be able to open her heart and treat him with respect.

One of Satan's strategies to break the peace of the family is to stir up the couple (Acts 21:27). Satan constantly lies in the heart of the couple, making the love of the sight toward one another to be blinded and springing up hatred toward each other. Also, the Satan makes them to misunderstand each other and to look at each other with imaginations so that they may rely on assumptions instead of facts. Therefore, after all, Satan breaks the peace of the couple and exceeds the boundary of each other, causing the couple to fall into a swamp of conflict. However, God even uses such conflicts for the relationship of the couple to grow and to mature. God makes the marital conflicts to be an opportunity for the couple to pray, to see each other in God's perspective through the Word of God, to know each other, and so on. Therefore, God allows the couple to enjoy peace, joy, and love that the world cannot give. We must be a couple who enjoys these blessings even in conflict. In order to do that, we, the husbands, should know that what our wives want is "peace," and we should be able to fulfill the ministry of making peace in our marriage and family.

What a woman wants (5)

The fifth thing that the woman wants from her husband is "loyalty". The wife wants to know that her husband is dedicated to her. Not only does she want to know, she also wants to reaffirm it by asking her husband "Do you love me?" But the husband who receives that question from his wife often fails to realize that his wife is trying to reaffirm his loyalty and dedication to her. As a result, the wife keeps on trying to reassure her husband that he is loyal and devoted to him because her husband makes her more insecure than to make her heart secure. So the husband must express his love to his wife naturally in her position so that his wife can have a sense of security. One of those methods is proposed by Dr. Emerson Eggerich in his book "Love & Respect":

‘When a husband makes a covenant with God and tries to imitate Jesus in every area of his life, including their marriage, then she feels more secure. When she is confident about her husband's love and loyalty, she gets energized and motivated. This is the way God made her, and the marriage covenant is based on loyalty until death separates them.’

In order for the husband to make his wife to feel secure, he must strive to resemble Jesus Christ diligently. In other words, when the husband becomes like Jesus by loving Him and be loyal to Him, his wife will enjoy a sense of security. At that time, the wife will get energized and motivated.

The husband must be loyal to the Lord. When he does so, he can be a loyal husband to his wife. And the loyal husband will never make his wife insecure. He will never look at another woman greedily and affair with her. He is devoted to love his wife with the love of Jesus. He places priority on marriage with his wife and also recognizes what is important to his wife. In the midst of that, he shows his dedication to the family as he continues to devote to his wife. In doing so, the wife's heart enjoys a sense of security through her husband's love. Therefore, she also respects her husband more.

What a woman wants (6)

We already know that the woman wants "love" from her husband when she is asked what she wants from her husband. We already know that she wants "Christ's love" from her husband because in Ephesians 5:25 the Bible says "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her." But there is a fact that we do not know. It is the fact that, like Emerson Eggerich's word, 'respect is part of love' to the woman. In other words, when the woman says she wants receive love from her husband, it means that she also wants her husband to 'respect' her. The fact is every woman wants her husband to respect her and value her. Thus, Apostle Peter exhorts the husbands in 1 Peter 3:7: "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." The husbands should treat their wives with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with them. In doing so, nothing will hinder their prayers. After all, the husband is a man who values his wife (Eph. 5:29).

But the problem is that the woman is not being respected and valued by her husband. Why doesn't the husband respect and value his wife? The reason is because he lacks the knowledge of God. In other words, it seems like he knows the word "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:8, 16) but he doesn't know that in God's sight his wife is precious and honored (Isa. 43:4). The Lord is the Lord who loves us, the church, and who considers us precious and we are honored. So when Apostle Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church ..." (Eph. 5:25), the word "love" implies that husbands should consider their wives precious and honor them. Therefore, the husband should love his wife, consider her precious and honor her, knowing and experiencing that the Lord loves him, considers him precious and honor him.

How then should the husband respect and cherish his wife? It is necessary for the husband to let his wife know that she is the most important person to him. The reason is that the woman wants to be the most important person to her husband (Eggerich). However, it seems that there are many times when the husband gives his wife the idea that his work is more important than his wife since he is work-oriented. In addition to work, sometimes the husband gives his wife the feeling that his hobbies such as, watching movies, playing golf, etc., are more important than his wife. Of course, if you ask all the husbands, I am sure no one will say that their hobbies are more important than their wives. But the reason my wife feels that way is because her husband lacks the commitment to 'sacrifice' his work and hobbies for her. I think the wife seem to have a scale in her mind. So she seems to be measuring whether her husband values her more than his work or hobbies or not. Therefore, the husband should let his wife know in many ways that she is the most important person to him.

I tell my wife that she is the most important person to me like this. For example, I often tell my wife "You are the best wife". Then my wife listens to my confession of love with her heart. And then my wife experiences that I love her and respect her. I often think 'What if my wife is not there anymore' and remind myself how she is important to me. I am experiencing the providence and the work of God in my family life and ministry because my wife is with me. That's why I tell my wife about how important her being and her presence is in my life. For example, when my wife is working full time and is raising our three children, I tell her and affirm her that she is doing fine job in raising them, especially when she feels guilty as their mother. Long time ago on May 5th, on Children's day, my wife wrote a letter to our three children. When one of the children was reading that letter, my wife cried because she loves the kid and feels guilty. At that time, I advised the children to say a word of comfort to their mother. At that time, one of the children told my wife, "You are the best mom in the whole world." The children also know that they can confirm their mother's preciousness. haha.

Actually, I sat down with my wife and checked the list in the Dr. Emerson Eggerich's book "Love & Respect" under the subheading 'A wife will feel respected when this is done.' This is what she said that she felt respected when I did these things:

- When I encourage my wife in front of others
- When I kindly and enthusiastically encourage or praise my wife
- When I express my affection to my wife in public
- When I evaluate that my wife's opinion is not wrong but just different,
- When I choose to go out with my family rather than the 'man's work'

My wife also told me what I need to work on because I don't try anything new with my wife. This is the think that I should work on and try more. I don't how to try new things well. The reason is because I don't have spirit of adventure. I have eaten only what I have eaten, I am doing what I have been doing and I have not tried new things well. But my wife is adventurous and she wants to try new things often. Especially I had often encountered 'travel problems' with her. I didn't like traveling, and I didn't know how to do it. So when my wife wanted to go on a family trip, I didn't fulfill her need so that she didn't feel respected by me. If I consider her precious, I should suggest to her that I would travel with her and prepare for the trip that she wants and needs. But I have not been able to do that yet. Since I wanted to get better at it gradually, so I suggested to my wife that we should have a family at least once a year. And I suggested her to plan the trip and we could prepare it together. My wife still understood and agreed with me because she understood me and was considerate.

These days, when I see those who have lost their spouses due to illnesses such as cancer, car accidents, etc., I am telling myself that I really should be thankful that my wife is alive. When I do that, I feel my wife's importance and preciousness more. Therefore, I don't want to forget the value of my wife every day and I am trying to enjoy my daily life with her. Since the Lord loves my wife and she is precious and honored by Him, I also recommit myself to love my wife who is "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23), to honor her and to consider her precious.

A man's behavior that drives a woman crazy

A man's behavior that drives a woman crazy (1)

1. Why does a man constantly offer solutions and give advice?

[Allan & Barbara Pease, "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

The man is solution-oriented. As the man hits a moving target as a hunter in the old days, the part of the man's brain that is called 'visual-space' area has been developed intensively. And because of this brain development, the man has the ability to hit the moving targets and solve problems. That's why the man measures his success by his own accomplishments, problem-solving abilities and so on. So, even in the 21st century, the man is still trying to define his existence and value with his ability to solve problems and achievements. That's why the man likes to be asked for advice from another man, and may even think of it as honor. But when the woman gives the man unilateral advice even though he didn't ask for it, he feels insulted - 'She sees me as an incompetent man who cannot even solve a problem.' The man tends to solve problems with his own strength. And he doesn't usually open up his heart and tell his problem.

But the woman who doesn't know this is frustrated and even gets angry because the man doesn't share his problem with her. And she even thinks that her husband doesn't love her. So she tries to talk to him as much as she can, but she gets the feeling that she is talking to the wall. The woman wants to share her feeling with him. So she demands his sympathy for sharing her feelings with him, but her husband misunderstands that she wants a solution from him. That's why he is always presenting the solution and advising his wife before hearing her story all the way. At that time the woman is frustrated and goes crazy. How should we balance this difference between man and woman? Here, I want to think about only the man's responsibility.

First, the husband must realize that his wife wants to share her feelings. And when she opens her heart and shares her feeling, he has to put down his solution-oriented instinct and actively listen to his wife's words. And he should try to feel what she is feeling. Of course this is not easy. But first he must close his mouth and open his ears to her sayings. Not only feeling is not understood by logic, but also it cannot be. If he tries to listen to his wife in a logical way of thinking, he will be continually urged to present solutions to her. That doesn't mean that she doesn't make a sense at all. She just wants to feel that her husband is sharing her feelings while listening to her words. At that time, the husband must express his respect for her feelings, rather than opening his mouth and tell her a solution. Of course, it must be expressed in nonverbal as well as verbally (ex, hugging her). Then, when she seems to need advice, he can give her a gentle counsel. And it's better to do it when she asks for it. The reason is because the woman needs to be led by her husband. However, he must respect his wife's feelings and advise her in a gentle manner.

A man's behavior that drives a woman crazy (2)

2. 'Why does a man keep on changing television channels with a remote control?'
[Allan & Barbara Pease, "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

For a woman, a remote is a device that turns a television channel from one channel to another. But for a man, the remote control is a tool that scans 55 channels every 2.5 minutes. haha. That's how much the man just wants to sit down on a chair or a sofa and enjoy watching television when comes home after work. But the woman hates the way men swish television channels. So, among the women, this joke is widely circulated: 'If my husband dies, I must bury him with his remote control in his hand' (Pease). Why does the man keep on switching the TV channels? According to Allan & Barbara Pease, the man watches television to meet his two urges: 'First, since he has a problem-oriented and solution-oriented brain, he wants to know get to the point as soon as possible. He flips the channel and analyzes it to find the solution quickly. Second, the man forgets his problem by observing the other people's problem. Because of this, the man watches the evening news six times more than the woman (Pease).

The woman doesn't quite understand what the man doesn't watch commercials by swiping through television channels. The reason is that woman doesn't mind seeing advertisements because she is relaxed watching television shows, especially programs that have lots of human and emotional scenes, after a day's work. Her brain likes to read the language of the actors' dialogue and gestures and predict the outcome of human relationships. However, the man is not interested in the program itself on television, but rather on what is aired on other channels (Eggerich). It is because he wants to get information. So when watching television, the woman wants to talk to her husband and to relax her stress, but the man doesn't like to talk when he watches television. He cannot hear her words. He just listens to his wife's words absentmindedly. It is not because he is ignoring his wife that he listens to his wife absentmindedly. However, from in the woman's point of view, she feels like she is rejected by him who treats her absentmindedly. Because of it, she becomes sullen or even gets mad at him. Especially when the husband doesn't even look at her but just looks at the television without talking, the wife thinks that her husband does not love her. But that does not mean that the husband does not love his wife. It just means that he wants to have quiet time alone.

How should we solve this problem? If the woman says to her husband who sits in front of the television and who keeps on changing the channels with the remote control on his one hand 'I cannot concentrate on the program that I am watching right now because you keep on changing the channels' it will not do any good. Actually, it can create the problem bigger. Because of the remote control the couple can argue and fight. The woman should not nag her husband who is watching TV by sitting alone in order to get rid of the stress. One way to resolve this problem is to have two televisions at home. So when the husband watches his TV, she can watch another TV. But for some reason this method does not seem like a good idea. One of Alan & Barbara Pease's suggestions is that the wife should by her own TV, which I think is not that good idea. They also suggest hiding the remote control, but it can make her husband angry. Of course, there is a way to get rid of the television altogether. But if the couple cannot do that, then my personal suggestion is that the husband and wife have to yield one foot each other. In other words, the wife chooses a program she likes to watch and also her husband lie to watch and sit next to her husband and watch together. And she should try not to say anything when he lifts the remote control and instantly changes the television channel in the moment of the advertisement. Instead, she should try to understand that her husband that he is just trying to get informations by keep on changing the channels. I think it's better for her to leave her husband alone instead of nagging him.

I also watch television by taking the remote control and keep on changing the channel around. So one of my kids said 'Why are you keep on changing the channels?' Haha. Also, once a while my wife used to say to me 'How come you are not watching the advertisements and keep on changing the channels?' So sometimes my wife just turns on another television with my kids and they watch a program they like together. In the meantime, at 9 pm on Monday, my wife and I used to watch the dram after we sent all three kids to their rooms. It's a drama called "24 Hours", and my wife liked this drama too. So when I sit down and watch this drama with my wife, I often see IBF martial arts on Channel 13 when there is advertisement. At that time, my wife didn't tell me why I changed channels. She understood that I liked to watch another program for a short time during the television commercials. I think it was because we were watching the same drama that we liked together once a week. But in most cases, my wife didn't have time to watch television. When she came home from work, she prepared dinner, check our children's homework, and so on. So I thought that I shouldn't sit in front of TV. I should turn off TV that I was watching and go to the kitchen to help my wife and prepare dinner.

Long time ago, one of the pastors told me that when we looked at the structure of the living room, the furniture is centered on the television. That's how great the influence of TV is. Also, there is bad influence that the couple can fight against each other because of TV. When the husband keeps a remote control and continues to turn the channel here and there, his wife who doesn't understand it cannot withstand it. As a result, the couple can argue and fight because of one remote control. Therefore, it is a good idea for the couple to yield to each other so that they can share the programs that the whole family can watch together. And if the husband keep on turning the channels with the remote control, it would be better for his wife to understand his desire to collect the informations and to cope wisely rather than to get his back up and nagging at him. For example, maybe she can be quiet lie my wife, or maybe she can take a moment to do thing that she wants to do. And instead of using a nagging method to let her husband to put the remote control down which seems to be working at that moment, I think it's better to try other methods. One of the methods is asking her husband to help cook meat or something when she is preparing meals (of course, the husband voluntarily has to help his wife preparing meals by turning off the TV and go to the kitchen). Or she can quietly prepare the meal. Then her husband may see her doing it may feel guilty that he may put down the remote control and go to the kitchen and help her. At dinner time, I think it is best for the husband to turn off the TV and prepare the meal with his wife and eat together with the children. I need to try more since I am not doing that good job. Since I still feel a lot of insufficiency, I am writing this article to try harder.

A man's behavior that drives a woman crazy (3)

3. 'Why doesn't man stop walking and ask for directions?' [Allan & Barbara Pease, "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

Imagine you are a woman and now you are sitting in the passenger seat of your husband's car and he is driving. And it seems to you that your husband has got lost while he is driving towards the destination. So you ask him, 'Honey, are you okay?', 'Are we going right direction now?' Then your husband says, 'Yes. Okay' But he doesn't answer your question about whether or not your husband is going to the right direction now. So you wait for your husband thinking and hoping that he is going to the right direction. But even after 5 or 10 minutes you see that your husband cannot find the right direction. So you cannot wait anymore and ask him, 'Honey, are you lost? If so, let's go ask a gas station in front of us.' What do you think your husband's reaction will be? haha

The man doesn't like to go to the gas station and ask for directions even he gets lost. So he tries to find his own way to the destination. Then, if he cannot find it, then he goes to the gas station, puts the gasoline in his car and asks a person who works there. Why does he do that? From a woman's point of view, it doesn't make sense. She may think that if he has lost the way to the destination, he should go to a nearby gas station or something and ask someone who works there but why now after all these troubles. She may not understand why he has passed several gas stations already without stopping by and ask the people who work there. It would be frustrating for her. Maybe it will even make her go crazy. But here is what the woman needs to know about the man. It is that the man hates to admit that he has lost his way. It is same as admitting that his ability and sense of direction is terrible. It is because he is confessing his own incompetence in front of his wife (Pease).

But there seems to be an exception. It is our couple. I am not good at seeing a map. I don't have good sense of direction at all. But my wife looks at the map well and had the sense of direction much better than me. So when I drive and go somewhere together with my wife, I ask her for a direction if I cannot find our way well. If she doesn't know, then I will stop at a near gas station or shop and ask a worker for directions. I think my children know too that my wife knows directions better me. It's because they saw me asking my wife for directions. Haha. Nevertheless, I understand why a man stops driving and doesn't ask others for directions. The reason is because I don't like my wife telling me go this way or that way when I know where I am going and how to get there. Although my wife is better at looking at the map and she may know how to get to a destiny faster, I don't want her to tell me what to do since I know what I am doing and where I am going. I just want my wife to trust me and follow me. And even though I get lost, I want my wife to think that 'I am sure he will take care of it' and give me a sign of trust. Instead of telling me to go this way or that way, I want my wife to give me some time to figure it how to get to the destination. If she is too frustrated because of me, why not buying me a navigation on my birthday or something? Haha (This was before we have smartphone and GPS).

A man's behavior that drives a woman crazy (4)

4. 'Why would a man keep the toilet seat up?' [Allan & Barbara Pease, "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

I still remember when I was in college, an advisor at a Christian club told us the students that a married couple can have conflicts because of a toilet seat. When I heard that, I thought 'How could you fight over the toilet seat?' That's why we have to get married to find out. Haha.

When we look at marital conflict, we see that it starts out as a very trivial thing. For example, a pastor said that he had argument with his wife because of toothpaste. He used toothpaste by squeezing the bottom of the toothpaste, while his wife used toothpaste by squeezing the middle or top of the toothpaste. So in the end the pastor bought two toothpastes and the couple used them separately. I think it is a wise way to avoid the marital conflict. I am sure it sounds a little funny (especially if you are before marriage or honeymoon) but it is true. The marital conflict starts with a very small thing and it gets bigger. And one of those trivial things is the toilet seat. According to Allen & Barbara Pease, when the man put up the toilet seat, the woman goes crazy. I agree. For example, how would you feel when your husband used the toilet and didn't put the toilet seat down and you went to the restroom to pees in early in the morning, didn't turn on the light, you sat down on the toilet seat and your felt something cold? And you came back to the bedroom and saw your husband sleeping comfortably on the bed? Wouldn't you be angry? The problem is this didn't happen just once but very often. How would you feel? What would you do if your husband keeps on putting the toilet seat up even though you told him several times not to do so? Would you like to make two toilets in a bathroom like a kindergarten toilet? Haha.

I think the bathroom is changing these days. Previously, the toilet was divided into man and woman. Nowadays, when we go to restaurants, there is only one bathroom and one toilet. Nowadays, there are more unisex toilets. Of course, it is true that some unisex bathrooms have an urinal installed on the wall for men to urinate. However, there are many small bathrooms where only a toilet seat is installed. According to Allen & Barbara Pease, it is because of cost savings and space maximization (Pease). In this trend, the narrower and financially difficult countries will increasingly prefer unisex toilets. Then, wouldn't more men and women be irritated by the toilet seat? Also, wouldn't more men sit on the toilet seat and pee? What if they forget to put the toilet seat up and misaim the urination and the toilet seat got wet? I am sure the women will be frustrated and even be angry. What if your husband put the toilet seat down for you but he made it wet and forgot to wipe it? What if you sat on it and your hip got wet? What if he does it not only once or twice but keep on doing it?

My wife and I have never been fought because of the toilet seat. But I was concerned that my son often urinated without putting the toilet seat up. Yesterday I noticed that he, who woke up at dawn, pissed without putting the toilet seat up and went to his room to sleep without flushing it. Haha.

A man's behavior that drives a woman crazy (5)

5. 'Why do men hate shopping so much?' [Allan & Barbara Pease, "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

It is very difficult for a man and a woman to shop together. This is because the man and the woman have different shopping mentality. For example, when the woman shops, she moves around in a zigzag fashion, look at a thing and lift it up and let it down (many times she is not even buying it). And she doesn't know how much this stresses her husband. A British psychologist, Dr. David Lewis, says, 'When a man is shopping during Christmas, his stress intensity is almost similar to the stress felt by a police officer who has to suppress the rioters (Pease). Why is the man so stressed out shopping with his wife?

One of the reasons why the man is stressed while shopping with his wife is because he has a "tunnel vision". So he is familiar with moving straight from A to B (Pease). That's why the man is stressed out when his wife is shopping in the zig-zag fashion with him. The woman with a wide angle of view is not so difficult to pass through crowded shopping center. But since the man has the tunnel vision, if he moves in the zigzag fashion in the crowded shopping center, he is stressed out because he has to make more conscious decisions (Pease). Knowing this, the woman must move in a straight line instead of moving in the zig-zag form if she wants to finish her shopping with her husband. By doing so, she will make her husband receive less stress. So I encouraged my church women to move in a rectangle way as much as possible when they go to shopping with their husbands. Walking from point A to point B, walking from point B to point C, and point C to point D, the women can minimize the angle change at least by walking in a zigzag fashion for their husbands. And it is better not to turn around. My wife knows that I don't like to turn around. So when she leaves something at the church, she doesn't call me and ask me to go back to the church and bring her the forgotten thing. Shopping is same. The woman should never go back to a shop that she has already passed for her husband. The reason is because when she goes back, her husband will be stressed out. Also, it is said that it is not good for his health.

Another reason why the man is stressed while shopping with his wife is because he thinks that his wife is just shopping inefficiently without a clear purpose, goal or time limit. The man's inclination has a clear target of what to buy according to his needs before going shopping. For example, when he shops for Christmas, he goes to the shopping center, already thinking about what to buy for his wife and children. And if he goes to the shopping center alone, he gets things he already thought about. However, even if his wife goes shopping with a note of what to buy, when she enters the shopping center, she does eye-shopping because she can see many things besides the targets she was looking for in her wide field of view. However, this behavior of the woman makes her husband feel limited in patience. He doesn't understand at all why she does it. Especially if he is result-oriented, he gets stress when his wife moves around here and there without buying any things. And if his wife eventually goes home with empty hands, he thinks it is ineffective and a waste of time. Of course, from the woman's point of view, she will not think so. One interesting interpretation is that when a man goes out hunting in the old days, he chooses a target, takes a bow and a spear, kills and grabs the target, and returns home. However, a woman had habit of planting the things in the garden of her house, and it is interpreted that when she goes to the shopping center, she goes to this store and that stores and lifts stuffs up and put them down. Haha. This is the interesting interpretation. With this interpretation, I think it is understandable that the woman goes to the shopping center and goes this store and that store, lift these things up and putting them down and so on even though she is not going to buy all of them. The man has clear things to buy when he goes to shopping center, but there are things that the woman can buy or not to buy.

She doesn't have to have a clear target to buy. When we think about these differences between the man and the woman, in order for the couple to enjoy shopping or at least not to be distressed with shopping and come back home safely, the couple should make concessions to understand each other's point of view and yield to each other. For example, the woman should know why her husband hates shopping and try to avoid things that stress her husband out as much as she can. She has to learn from her husband's point of view how to shop more efficiently together. The man also has to learn how to shop with his wife. Sometimes he should try to shop in zigzag fashion with his wife, little by little. Haha. So he needs to train himself in changing the angle. And he should trust his wife and leave her alone when she touches stuffs, lifting them up and putting them down, even though he thinks that she doesn't need to buy them. He should wait for her to finish shopping. I am sure there are many other things to talk about, if the couple make concessions and try to work out together, their shopping will gradually improve.

Longtime ago, I went to Target to shop alone. I went there to buy things for my three children for Children's day (my wife was working). Before going to buy gifts that cost around \$10, I asked the children what they wanted for the Children's day. My first son and first daughter said they didn't know, while the youngest daughter told me that she wanted a Barbie doll. So I went to the shopping center Target, went around the first and the second floor, looking for the gifts for my three children. I intentionally walked a lot in zigzag form. Although I used to not go back to the place I already went, on that day I went back to the same places to look for the gifts for my children. I was not very stressed at the time. I bought the puzzle for my first son and two Tom & Jerry DVDs for \$ 5 each for my first daughter. For my youngest daughter, I eventually went back to the Barbie doll section and bought the doll set at an affordable price. Like this, I go shopping alone sometimes. And I think that if I shop by myself, I am doing pretty good job. Haha. Of course, this is just my opinion. But there are things I cannot do well. And one of them is buying your wife's clothes. Once I went to Target to buy a gift for my wife. As I was walking around in Target, one woman cloth come into my eyes and caught my attention. So I bought it and brought it home and gave to my wife as a gift. But after few days, I saw that cloth in the corner of the closet. When I saw it, I thought that my wife didn't like it that much. From that time on I didn't buy any clothes for my wife. Haha.

If you are a woman, you should plan a way to shop with your husband. If you already gave up and are shopping alone, I think it is not too late. If you know the man's tendency, you will have fun shopping with your husband. For example, in order to make your husband to go to a shopping center, you might first want to find out what your husband wants to buy and go to buy it together. How about making a list, the things to buy for your husband and for yours and show to your husband? (Maybe you don't need to write down all the things that you need to buy). If your husband knows the clear targets, he will to go to the shopping center with you and will buy what he wants to buy. During that time, you should buy what you need to buy. Like this, you can try to make your husband to shop slowly. But it would be better not to shop for too long. According to Allan & Barbara Pease, most men have only about 30 minutes to concentrate on shopping. So, I think it's better for you to go shopping with your husband no more than an hour. And when you see the things your husband bought, why don't you praise them. If you show your uneasy feeling to your husband for what he has bought, whether verbally or nonverbally, because they look expensive and obsolete to you, then your husband will not want to go shopping again with you because you hurt his pride. I think it would be better for you to shop according to the level of your husband's shopping mental capacity and then slowly bringing it up to your shopping mental capacity even though he will never be able to fully reach your shopping mental capacity. Someday your husband may go to a 24 hours shopping place with you and shop until 3 o'clock in the morning. Haha.

A man's behavior that drives a woman crazy (6)

6. 'Why does a man have a disgusting habit?' [Allan & Barbara Pease, "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

'Among the men's habits that women think that are disgusting are picking the nose, burping, the smell from the body, wearing the old underwear, scraping the groin and so on. But the most repulsive habit is farting' (Pease). Probably there are no women who have never heard the man's farting while growing up. I am sure at least they heard their father's farts. And when they got married, I am sure they heard the sound of their husband's farts. Perhaps some of you are still listening to the sound of your husband's farts. What do you think of his farts?

I think I have almost all the disgusting habits that the women think. Of course I fart. My children think that I am a fart machine. Haha. And I often burp even when I eat. It may be due to coke that I am drinking when I eat. So it's difficult for me not to burp in front of my wife and the kids during the meals. Then the children used to say 'Uhh ...' (yukky?). But now, I think they gave up. I think my youngest kid thought that I was okay to burp because I am a father. I also pick my nose. I remember telling my church members the reason why my pinky finger's nail is long during Korean worship. I told them it's not only for picking my ears but also my nose. At that time, I think some of the church members were disgusted. Also, I don't change socks that frequently. My family members seem to put old socks and old clothes in a laundry basket after wearing them for a day or two. So I often asked them whether they could wear their socks and clothes a little longer. Still, they put their clothes and socks in the laundry basket. It isn't that my wife and the children are strange but I am. Haha. Now even my church members know that I wear my socks for few days. Haha. Well, of course I don't make farting sound in the public places. I do it quietly because I don't want to be embarrassed. I think the longest farting record I have is almost 40 seconds to 1 minute even though I didn't exactly time it [A man named Bernard Clemens, who lived in London in 1956, left a record of farting continuously for 2 minutes and 42 seconds (Pease)]. I still remember that I set this record at the Tucson airport in Arizona. I was surprised by myself that I could fart that long. Haha. I didn't know that a woman farts until my third year in college. I got to know that the woman farts too because one of the sisters in Christ in the same Christian club told me that women also fart too. Haha. When my wife heard this from me, she said to our children that my mother and younger sister had not farted in front of me. That was why I didn't know that women fart too. According to Pease, 96.3 percent of men admit to farting, while only 2.1 percent of women admit it (Pease). That's how much farting is disgusting to the women. However, we, the men, are still doing the same thing without hesitation. I think because we think that it's okay to do it. But we think that women should not fart in front of people. We think that it is a taboo for the women to fart in front of people. But men seem to think of farting as just male expression.

Sometimes when I'm having dinner with my family, I cannot but fart. Once when I did it, my first daughter who sat right next to me said 'yuck'. I think she was disgusted. But my wife often said, 'You are digesting.' I think it is because she likes me to eat well and digest well. Once she told the kids that my fart didn't smell. Haha. The funnier thing is that my youngest daughter told her older sister that since I am a dad and a leader of the family, it is okay for me to fart. Haha.

A man's behavior that drives a woman crazy (7)

7. 'Why do men enjoy a ridiculous joke?' [Allan & Barbara Pease, "Why Men Lie & Why Women Cry"]

I personally don't know how to joke well. So, for a while, I continued to use the same joke that I learned from my friend when I was in college. And that joke is 'Do you want to hear short joke or long joke?' If you say "short joke", then I say "jok". If you say "long joke", then I say "joooooke". I even know that this is a childish joke. But what can I say. This is the only joke I know. I don't know how to joke around. But there are people around me who know how to joke well. Although I cannot hear their jokes anymore, when they joked before, everyone giggled and laughed. It seems to me that the American men like jokes. Maybe those who are humorous are popular among the people. I also see that when people are in difficult moments, there are few who joke and make people laugh and their face brighter. I think this kind of humor is okay when it makes people laugh when the people are in difficulties. But I think there are sexual jokes that men make to their female colleagues at work that make the women difficulty and to feel insulted. Among these jokes, Allan & Barbara Pease say that there is a "joke about male genitalia" (women's humor is primarily targeted at people, human relationships, and men) (Pease). This seems to be called "sexual harassment". What is sexual harassment? It is behavior characterized by the making of unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks or physical advances in a workplace or other professional or social situation (Internet). Why are men doing these things without hesitation? Why are they enjoying these sexual jokes?

According to Allan & Barbara Pease, jokes are a very important means of communication for men. In particular, when a man deals with emotional problems, unlike woman who expresses her emotions honestly to others in the event of a catastrophe or tragedy, he indirectly speaks about the tragic events by joking about them as he suppresses his emotions (without revealing emotions because revealing emotions are regarded as signs of his weakness) (Pease). Given the way how the man communicates, the woman will understand a little bit why the man is joking around frequently. Of course, the woman wants the man to share his thoughts and emotions like her. This is especially true in the case of marital relations. But a wise wife would be able to read her husband's mind and laughs with him when he jokes and laughs in front her even though the situation he is going through is tearful situation (of course, a foolish wife would not understand her husband in such circumstance and despise him). Moreover, the wise wife will comfort her husband's heart by laughing at his joke with him.

According to Allan & Barbara Pease, 'Laughter and tears stimulate the brain to secrete endorphins in the blood.' This endorphin has morphine and heroin-like chemical ingredients that stabilizes the body and strengthens the body's immune system (Pease). So when we laugh out loud we often shed tears. We shed tears because we laugh too much. And when we laugh so loudly that we even shed tears helps our health. The reason is that tears accompany the secretion of enkephalin, which acts as a pain reliever to alleviate the pain of the body (Pease). I still remember when I visited my uncle Pastor Andrew Kim who was suffering with cancer, he said 'Endorphin came'. I still remember I had a lot of joke with him and laughed with him in the hospital the next day after he was diagnosed with the colon cancer and it was spread over his body. Of course, we had serious conversation too. For example, my uncle told me about what to do with his view service, funeral service and graveyard service. In particular, he asked me to lead the view service and asked me to comfort those who would participate in the service. He actually gave me even the Bible verse to comfort them. I was able to joke around with him because he was a humorous man who tried to give laughs to others. I learned later that my uncle pastor prepared jokes before he came to our whole family New Worship gathering. He was the "endorphin" to our whole family. Although I don't know how to joke, but at least until my uncle passed away I was able to joke around with him and laughed with him. Like this, the

endorphins release jokes are beneficial. However, jokes that hurt and offend others should be avoided and discontinued.

This is what Apostle Paul said in Colossians 4:6," Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." The Bible tells us to let our conversation to be always full of grace, seasoned with salt. To do so, we must always be in God's grace. The reason is that if we are not in God's grace, the words that come out of our mouths will be ungrateful and ungracious. As a result, we will not be able gracious to the person to whom we are talking. Therefore, we must be always in the abundant grace of God. And we must strive to be gracious to our opponent through our words. Especially in marital relations, we should be gracious to each other especially with our words. So when we joke, our jokes should be beneficial to each other. In order to do that, we should know how to make jokes that releases endorphins to each other. Especially the husband should know such a joke than his wife. To do that, the husbands must learn jokes too. We need to develop a sense of humor. Of course, this is not easy for someone like me who doesn't know how to joke. But if we love our wives, we will try hard to do so.

I want to learn the humor that releases the endorphin. I would like to be a person who can make endorphin to be released so that I can make the other person to laugh and to ease his or her pain. I want to be a person with a sense of humor who knows how to "rejoice with those who rejoice" (Rom. 12:15). I want to make a lot of good memories with my wife so that we can laugh together.

Family story:

I want to consider my wife precious.

September 9, 2011. Friday lunch.

I want to love my wife more even though my love for her lacks very much.

Today, I went to see my wife at her work because we made a lunch appointment at 12:30 pm.

When I opened the door, my wife was working at the front desk.

Since her other colleagues went out for lunch, I waited at my wife's office.

At 12:30, her other co-workers started coming in.

My wife wanted me to say hello to one of them.

So I went into his office and said hello to him.

He remembered that I came to the office before with bouquet of flowers and gave to my wife. Haha.

So I jokingly told him that (it would have been better if I didn't say) 'You remember I brought this bouquet of flowers to my wife, but I don't know why my wife doesn't remember'. Haha

My wife and I came out from her office and went to a nearby cafeteria.

In the cafeteria where there were several restaurants, I asked my wife what she wanted to eat.

She asked me 'How about Quinn Sub?' and asked me what I would like to eat.

So I thought that she wanted to eat Quinn Sub so I went into that restaurant and ate for the first time.

It was similar to Subway.

Before we ate the food together, I asked my wife to pray for the meal.

So after her meal prayer, we had conversation and it was about our church and about our three children.

Since my wife only had 30 minutes lunch time, we couldn't have many conversations.

I wish I had listened to my wife's story more.

After the meal, we parted from each other in front of the restaurant

because she had to stop by another building near the restaurant and then go back to her work.

I walked towards the car, which I parked a bit far away, with the Pepsi cup that my wife refilled for me.

Then I drove to the road in front of my wife's work building, hopping that I might see her on the roadside.

But I couldn't see her.

So I passed the building and drove toward the church.

But when I passed her work building and drove to the next block,

I saw my wife was walking on the other side of the traffic light. Haha.

When I saw her, I rushed the car a little toward the red light and honked my car.

I think my wife was surprised. Haha.

She told me that her heart was stopping. Haha

I unlocked the car door and let her in.

And I made the right turn in order to take her to another building that she had to go.

And I told my wife, 'I wanted to see you one more time and I am happy to see you like this again.'

And I kissed her in the car.

I kissed her when she road in my car and when she was about to get out of the car.

And since my car was caught by the red traffic light anyway, I was able to watch my wife walking toward the building until the traffic light turned to green.

And I drove around the building and came to the church.

The reason I went to my wife's office intentionally while I was working in the church today was to have lunch with her. It was because God made me realize that I didn't consider my wife precious.

My heart was in pain. I thought and believed that I loved her but when I realized that I didn't consider my wife precious, my heart was heavy.

So when I remember her in the Morning Prayer, the Holy Spirit reminded me Isaiah 43:4a –

“Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you,”

And I thought, ‘Since God loves my wife and considers her precious and honored in His sight, who am I’

My prayer until I die is to love my wife with God's love.

But in reality, I didn't love her with His love. I didn't consider her precious.

That was why I went to her work to have lunch with her.

I still remember a pastor once confessed to me that he used his wife as a slave for all her life.

Although I don't want to confess like him, I may have given my wife to feel that way through my words and actions.

So I reflected myself.

In the midst of this, I turned to see if I am considering my church members precious whom God considers them precious.

Although I had only short time to meet my wife today,

I would like to dedicate my life to consider my wife precious since God does so.

I also want to consider my church members precious.

I want to live a life considering each soul precious.

And at the end of my life, I want to rest in the arms of God who considers me precious.

Family story:

The woman who is suited even with a Target cloth

June 14, 2013. Friday evening.

Target is a America's leading retail chain with world-class retailer Wal-Mart and other quality and better services. If there are E-Mart, Lotte Mart, and Home Plus in Korea, there is Target in the United States.

On Friday evening, my wife came to church after work and came into my office.

And I saw her wearing a cloth that I never saw.

So I said to her, 'It's a dress I have never seen before. It looks nice on you.'

She said, 'I bought this dress from Target'. Then she sat next to me.

And I honestly told her that even the Target cloth suits her.

Then I asked her, 'Where is your hand phone?'

The reason I asked her for the phone was to take a picture of my lovely wife dressed in Target cloth.

And I told her honestly: 'I want to take a picture of you and put it on my Facebook.' Haha.

Of course I knew that my wife would not allow it.

It's because my wife a very private person.

I think my wife was little bit shy. Haha.

The woman who gets shy because she has heard her husband's compliment is my wife. Haha.

I have to talk a little bit more about my wife.

After I was introduced to my wife, there was a happening. It is a story about clothes

When I was living in Los Angeles and my wife was living near San Francisco (around 5-6 hour drive)

I asked my wife to wear a pretty red dress and take a picture and send it to me.

At that time, my wife was very busy while working as a lawyer, taking a case and going in and out of the court.

Nonetheless, my wife took the time to dress in red cloth, took the picture and sent it to me.

As I was imagining it, I once drove to San Francisco to meet my wife.

When I met her, she came out wearing red turtle neck cloth.

The reason why I still cannot forget my wife wearing that red turtle neck cloth is because there was a hole in the neck of the cloth. Haha.

In my memory, I think that was the first meeting and she was wearing the red cloth with hole in it. Haha.

I think I laughed because my image of a lawyer and my wife wearing the cloth with hole in it didn't match. Ha.

But in my eyes, she was lovely.

And actually I liked her image of a 'frugal lawyer'.

This is the first story about my wife when I think about a "cloth".

The second story was a little bit uncomfortable (and my wife knows it too).

The story is that I once went to Target and bought my wife's birthday present,

I bought her cloth and gave to her.

For reference, I didn't buy my clothes for a long time.

Actually after I got married, I didn't need to buy clothes more because my mother-in-law buys for me.

But the fact that I went to Target and tried to buy the cloth for my wife's birthday, that's kind of odd. Haha.

I looked around in Target to look for a cloth that I think suit my wife. And I picked one and gave it to her.

But one day, when my wife went to work, I opened the closet door and saw that cloth on the floor.
At that moment I was a little be disappointed.
I thought I tried very hard to look for that cloth and gave to her as a gift.
And when I saw it on the floor, many thoughts came into my mind. Haha.
And I couldn't stand it, so when my came home from work that evening I kind of quibbled over the issue about her cloth on the floor (It would have been better if I just hang the cloth and not talking to my wife about it).
I remember that my wife was sorry for me.
After that incident, I have never bought a cloth for my wife. Haha.
It's not because I didn't love my wife, but I realized how silly it was for me to try to buy clothes for my wife.
LOL

For reference, the cloth that I bought for my wife at that time was the Target cloth.
And today she came into my church office wearing the cloth that she bought directly from Target. Haha.
I think my wife wore that cloth today for the first time because she had an important meeting in her workplace (I think she had to make 10-15 minute speech as a librarian in front of about 70 judges, attorneys, interns, etc.).
So I just told my wife honestly that her Target cloth really suits her.
And I think my wife felt good. Haha.
So as I was looking at my wife, I posted this family story on my Facebook:
'The woman who is suited even with a Target cloth, I love her.'

A wise wife

A wise wife (1)

Is your couple relationship really okay now? Dr. Kim Byung-hoo, who is the Korea's best marriage conflict expert, has 'Twelve questions to check the divorce crises' in the article "Married couple clinic arranged in 10 years"

- (1) I don't feel happiness in my marriage,
- (2) It is more comfortable for me to be alone than to be with my spouse,
- (3) I don't want to talk or interfere,
- (4) There is no feeling of being understood or loved,
- (5) When my spouse blames and attack my personality, it is painful,
- (6) It is difficult to bear when my spouse to things only in his or her own way,
- (7) I cannot tolerate in my mind my spouse's actions towards my parents,
- (8) My spouse doesn't know his/her problem. If he/she knows, he/she will not fix it or cannot fix it.
- (9) There aren't many people who get unjust treatment like me,
- (10) I cannot but live with my spouse because of my kids,
- (11) I don't feel respected or loved when I have sex with my spouse. And I feel that my spouse ignores the value that is related to me compared to my spouse' value.

Do you have anything among these twelve questions that apply to your marital relationship? If so, what should we do to maintain the spark between the couple in this crisis? Pastor Lee Dong-won suggests the five things in his book 'The New Family Acts':

- (1) The couple must have clear goal consciousness regarding their marriage. In other words, they must have a higher goal than marriage. In fact, the couple should have the divine calling of their marriage.
- (2) The couple must fulfill their biblical responsibilities.
- (3) The couple's conversation should be easygoing.
- (4) There must be proper management of money.
- (5) The couple must prevent external factors that threaten their marriage.

I want to think about the second element, the biblical responsibilities, among these five things that is needed to maintain the spark between the couple. Among those responsibilities, I would like to think of only one of the two responsibilities of a wise wife, centered on the Bible today.

First, the biblical responsibility of the wise wife is to obey her husband. In other words, the wise wife submits to her husband.

Look at Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18 and 1 Peter 3:1a and 1:5 – "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22), "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord" (Col. 3:18), "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands ... For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands" (1 Pet. 3:1a, 5). Nowadays, many women seem to be busy nagging at their husbands instead of obeying them. I want to share a story: When a prisoner

who escaped from the prison in the middle of the day was asked by the TV reporters what was the motivation of surrendering himself to the police that same night. The prisoner said, 'When I went home and opened a door slowly to see my wife, she said 'Where have you been for eight hours after you escaped?' and began to nag me. At that moment, I thought it's better to go back to the prison so I came back (Internet). Of course, all the wives are not going to nag their husbands like this. Some wives often don't say what they really mean when they nag their husbands. For example, 'Do as you will' (means 'Now you know what I want'), 'Do what you want!' (means 'Be prepare to die'), 'Let's talk' (means 'I have complaints'), 'Of course, you can do like that' (means 'If you do that ...'), 'I am not angry' (means 'Can't you see I am angry?'), 'The kitchen is too uncomfortable' (means 'We need a new house'), 'Honey, do you love me?' (means 'I really want a very expensive things') (Internet). But the Bible doesn't say, 'Wives, nag your husband.' Rather, the Bible says, 'Wives, submit to your husbands.' I agree with what Douglas Wilson said in his book "Reforming Marriage": 'A wife submits to her husband, not to any men. Therefore, a devout woman draws a clear line of whom to submit' (Wilson). I agree. The claim that a woman should obey all men is wrong. When God made a woman Eve, she was created to be submissive only to her husband Adam and to fill and help his needs and not to be submissive to all other men. Then why should a wife be submissive to her husband? There are three reasons for this:

(1) The first reason is that the husband is the head of the wife.

Look at Ephesians 5:23 – "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior." This passage teaches the position of the husband at home. And that position is that the husband is the head of the wife. This verse also implies that the husband's position at home should be clear so that there is order in the family. When the wife knows her husband's position at home and acknowledges that he is the head, this will keep his pride. This is one of the important responsibilities for the wife. There is a survey in Pastor Lee Dong-won's book "New Family Acts". According to that survey, the first of the five things that the man needs the most from his wife is self-esteem. The wise wife acknowledges her husband's position which is the head and the leader of the family and is submissive to him. By doing so, she build up his self-esteem.

(2) The second reason is that it is fitting in the Lord for the wife to be submissive to her husband.

Look at Colossians 3:18 – "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." Our God is not the God of disorder but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33). Therefore, there is peace and not disorder in the family that the Lord builds. And there is order in the family that has peace. In order to maintain the order, each of the family members must bear their biblical responsibilities faithfully and humbly. And wife's responsibility in the family is to be submissive to her husband. The Bible says this is fitting in the Lord. This is the duty of the wife. In the family system which the Lord has established, it is fitting in the Lord for the wife to be submissive to her husband.

(3) The third reason is to win an unbelieving husband.

Look at 1 Peter 3:1 – "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior." I think many women believers who have the unbelieving husbands are very devoted to the church but are neglecting their home duties. They may be good examples in their churches but not in their homes. They lost the balance in their Christian lives. What should they do? The wise wife is a good example both in her home and in her church. She is submissive to her unbelieving husband as to the Lord and be an good example to her family. This is what Dr. Park Yun-sun said: 'An unbelieving husband can be converted by seeing his wife's divine virtues and

by understanding the truthfulness of the gospel. That is preaching the gospel of God in practice. If our preaching the gospel doesn't go with our good life, than it is powerless' (Park). The wise wife doesn't only talk about the gospel. She doesn't just say to her unbeliever husband, 'Let's go to church.' Rather, she shows the truthfulness of the gospel by being submissive to her husband as to the Lord. She shows Jesus Christ in and through her life. Therefore, the Lord uses her to save her unbeliever husband as well.

How should the wife submit to her husband? The Bible teaches us two things:

(1) The wise wife must obey her husband as to the Lord.

Look at Ephesians 5:22 and 5:24: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ... Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." Why should the wife be submissive to her husband as to the Lord? The reason is because "the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church" (v. 23). Here, the word "husband" means "Baal" or "master" in Hebrew and "lord" or "man above" in Greek. And in English, "husband" is a word with this Hebrew and Greek meaning. In other words, the husband is a gentle lord and he cares for his family. Look at the Peter's teachings. This is what he said in 1 Peter 3:1 – "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives." Here, "in the same way" refers to obedience of the slaves to their masters (2:18). That's why Sarah called her husband "lord" (or "master") (3:6; Gen.18:12). The wise wife acknowledges her husband's authority and is submissive to him, knowing that the Lord has set him up as the head of the household. And when she is submissive to her husband, she listens to him well. Actually the word "submission" is a combination of two words: "~ under" and "to listen well". Therefore, being submissive to the husband means she listens to her husband well as she acknowledges the Lord's given authority to him (Lee Dong-won).

(2) The wise wife must submit to her husband as she fears Christ.

Look at Ephesians 5:21 – "and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." In humility, as Christ emptied Himself and was obedient to the point of death (Phil. 2:3, 7, 8), the wise wife imitates Jesus and obeys her husband as she fears the Lord. What should she obey her husband? Look at Ephesians 5:24 – "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." The wise wife submits to her husband in everything. What is the difference between a good wife and a bad wife? The good wife is the wise wife who satisfies her good husband while the bad wife silences her husband. A perfect wife never expects a perfect husband. The wise wife dominates her husband with obedience (Internet). May you become the wise wife who submits to your husband as you do to your Lord in fears of the Lord.

A wise wife (2)

A family that succeeds in the sight of God is the family that takes away all the iniquity of the family, trusts God completely, and keeps the commandments of God (cf. 2 Kgs. 18:3-7). The family that succeeds in the sight of God is the family in which God is with them and God's will is fulfilled (cf. Gen. 39:45). Is our family a successful in the sight of God? In order for us to join in the work of the Lord who builds a family that succeeds in the sight of God, we must obey the commandment of the Lord. In other words, our family members must faithfully bear the biblical responsibility given to each one of us. Of those responsibilities, we had already meditated on one of the two biblical responsibilities of the wise wife - obedience to her husband. Today, I would like to receive a lesson from meditating on the second responsibility of the wise wife.

Second, the biblical responsibility of the wise wife is to respect her husband.

Look at Ephesians 5:33 – "... and the wife must respect her husband." Among the arranged main contents of 20 years of marital counseling by one of the professors in Sung-shim University in Korea, there are seven things that a husband wants from his wife. One of them is that he wants his wife to respect him and to encourage his self-esteem. One of the most difficult things for the husband to bear is being ignored by his wife. In particular, he doesn't like if his wife compares him with other husbands. The menus that the wife compares her husband with other husbands are salary, gifts, vacations, do good to his wife's parents, helping with housework, etc.. The wife shouldn't try to modify her husband's behavior with these menus. Instead, the wife should complement what her husband is doing good and demands what she wants him to do. When does the husband usually feel that he is ignored by his wife? There is an internet article titled 'Men also want to cry at a time like this: 36 kinds of a wife's words that kill her husband's spirit'. I want to share just few of them:

- (1) 'Where were you? Why did you come home now?' It is not easy for me to go straight home after work. I may want to meet my longtime friends and spend time with them or I may have to do some errands for my boss. But my wife cannot tolerate this. So she says to me, 'Do you think this is a boarding house? Get out! Get out!' When my wife says like this, I am perplexed.
- (2) 'If you meet someone like your dad, it will ruin you.' When my wife keeps on saying this to our kids, and when my kids keep on listening to it, then they may think and feel that this lie is true. My wife keeps on complaining she is unhappy because of me. It means that if she didn't marry me she would be happy with another man. I don't really mind what she says about me. But when she says, 'If you meet someone like your dad, it will ruin you' to my kids who are sensitive, then my pride gets really hurt a lot. I can read at a glance that the children see me as incompetent while sympathizing with their mother.
- (3) 'If my parents didn't help you in our home ... ?' When someone comes home, my wife is busy boasting her parents' home. She says, 'If my parents didn't help us then we would be on a street.' But she went to her parents' her house and got some groceries only. I never heard that people become homeless because they don't have the groceries.
- (4) 'You are just showing off.' My wife looks at me with animosity when I give her advice when she did something wrong even though I wanted to do well with her. 'Why are you provoking my sense? Are you boasting because you studied a lot? Are you showing off?' She thinks that she is always right and she cannot hear my words at all.

- (5) 'You can't even earn money.' When I pressure my wife for breakfast, she criticizes me by saying, 'Do you think you have right to eat? You can't even earn money.' Those who have not heard such word cannot understand how miserable heart that is.
- (6) 'Your friends are just like you.' If she hates me, she hates my friends as well. She says, 'If you want to know him, you have to see his friends. But there is no one who is useful among your friends.'
- (7) 'Does your hobby feed you?' Sometimes I go hiking or fishing with my friends once on weekends because it is fun and relieves stress. However, I cannot find my fishing equipment. Last time, my wife said that she was going to get rid of my climbing gear, this time I think she even got rid of my fishing equipment. Looking at me who was looking for my fishing equipment, my wife seems to be pathetic. 'Does your hobby feed you?'
- (8) A wife who speaks ill of her husband in front of people. When my wife is with me, she is fine. But she is different when she is with her parents, my parents, and friends. She says, 'Him? If I see what he does, I feel something pressing on my chest. It's a miracle that he still has his job.'
- (9) She tells everything to her parents. 'We fight 3 or 4 times a week. My wife's parents' house is just 5 minutes away from our house. So, after fighting, my wife rushes to her parent's house and tell everything to her parents unilaterally. Then my mother-in-law calls me right a away. 'How could you keep on fight with my precious daughter?' 'She first initiated the fight.' 'So you fight with a woman? You should just avoid her at that time.'

In his book "Reforming Marriage," Douglas Wilson talks about the wife's responsibilities. And this is what he says about her respecting her husband: 'Although it's not wrong for a wife to love her husband, but it is wrong if she changes respect with love and doesn't respect her husband as the Lord commands.' I agree. How many wives have exchanged the word "respect" with "love" and say that they love their husbands but don't respect them? Why do you think the wife isn't obeying the God's word and not respecting her husband? I think it's because the woman knows how to love better than her husband. And because she wants the same love from her husband, she may not respect her husband because her heart isn't satisfied with his love. In the end, I think it's is selfish for the woman to love her husband and not respecting him by changing the word "respect" with the word "love". So I personally asked my wife to say "I respect you" to me rather than "I love you".

This is what Douglas Wilson says about the biblical duties of wives:

- (1) The wife must respect her husband (Eph. 5:22, 33). Here, respect involves revere and obedience.
- (2) The wife should have childbirth in God's providence (1 Tim. 2:15). Also, she should nurture her children and care them tenderly (1 Thess. 2:7). She should not complaint about her fertility. Also, she should not boast about her fertility.
- (3) The wife should be diligent in her house (1 Tim. 2:3-5). The young women should do their housework and should be productive.
- (4) The wife must satisfy her husband's sexual needs (1 Cor. 7:2-5). Therefore, he must be protected from the sexual sins.
- (5) The wife should be careful about nagging and quarreling (Prov. 19:13b; 27:15-16). The women should use the power of their tongues that God has given them wisely to help their husbands.

(6) The wife must be the disciple of her husband. The husband must educate and teach his wife (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

(7) The Christian wives must work hard in charity work (1 Tim. 5:9-10).

I hope and pray that you be able to fulfill the biblical duties of a wife as a wise wife who respects and obey your husband so that you may be able to build a successful family in God's sight.

What a man wants

What a man wants (1)

The first thing a man wants is "Conquest": 'Be grateful for his desire to work and accomplish" (Emerson Eggerich, "Love & Respect").

The man has desire to work and accomplish (Eggerich). That's why to the man who wants to satisfy his needs, his job is very important. However, a woman seems to not understand this desire of the man. This is because woman and man have different orientations. In other words, because the man is work-oriented and the woman is her husband-oriented, the woman doesn't understand her husband's desire to work and accomplish. Isn't it strange that the husband-oriented wife doesn't understand her husband's work-oriented aspects? One of the reasons is because of the woman's desire for her husband. In other words, the woman doesn't understand her husband's work-oriented aspect because she is more willing to demand her husband-oriented desire than to understand and help her husband's work-oriented desire. When she feels that her husband likes work more than her, she cannot understand her husband. Furthermore, she even feels that her husband doesn't love her. But it's not that he doesn't love his wife. He loves his wife, but he only has the desire to work and accomplish.

The wise wife who understands this need of her husband encourages him because she respects him. She should express her gratitude to her husband for working hard for her and their children: 'Honey, thank you. Although I don't I can understand you perfectly, I appreciate you going to work every day. I really admire you' (Eggerich). This kind of praise and encouragement from the beloved wife is great strength to her husband. And the man will work harder for his beloved wife and the children. However, the woman who is not wise may say that she respects her husband, but she is dissatisfied with her work-oriented husband because she does not understand him who likes to work. Furthermore, she distrusts her husband rather than acknowledging and praising his enthusiasm and hard work. This unwise wife is a great obstacle to her husband who has passion to conquer. He cannot do his best at his work because his wife doesn't trust him. That's how much the wife's trust is great to her husband.

The wise woman who understands her husband's desire to work and accomplish satisfies his desire and expresses to him her trust in him and encourages him by saying that his efforts for work are invaluable to her. Moreover, the wise woman sees her husband's potential and edifies him. She encourages her husband to dream. And if he already has a vision, then she stands beside him, helps him and encourages him to advance his vision. She listens to her husband well when he talks about his work. As she does so and as she gets to know his heart, she lets her husband know that she understands his heart. And she lets him know that she totally trusts him. Therefore, she helps her husband to work harder.

What a man wants (2)

The second thing a man wants is "Hierarchy": 'Be grateful for his desire to protect and provide' (Emerson Eggerich, "Love & Respect").

Maybe many women would not like it they hear that what the man wants is "hierarchy." The reason for this is because they may think "hierarchy" means male supremacy such as 'A man dominates a woman,' 'It is a men's world,' 'The man is superior and the woman is inferior.' So many women have negative thoughts about this "hierarchy" that the man wants, so she refuses to admit her husband's desire for "hierarchy" and give it to him. But the women must think hierarchy biblically, not as male supremacy. Here, thinking hierarchy biblically means that the woman should recognize the true meaning of the 'biblical hierarchy,' and obey the Lord's command by acknowledging the hierarchy that her husband desires.

What is the meaning of the biblically hierarchy? Look at Ephesians 5:22-24: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." Here the word "submit" in Greek is a compound word that means 'lower rank' and 'lower status' (Eggerich). The Bible says that the husband is the head of his wife. This doesn't mean that the husband is superior to his wife. The man should not misunderstand this word, thinking that he is superior to his wife, and treat her as a slave. This is abusing the divine authority which God gave to the man, the head of the family. Such man would obviously be an authoritarian husband and a father. That's not why God gave the man divine authority. The man should realize that when God gave him the divine authority in the family, that means he has great responsibility. And that great responsibility is for him to love (v. 25), protect and provide his wife and children. And he should do that even as he sacrifices himself for the family. To such husband who faithfully carries this responsibility, the wife must obey and be under his protection. And not only she respects her husband who is faithfully taking care of his responsibility, but also she should show him how much she respect him. One way to do that is to thank her husband, who is devoted to protect and provide her and their children. She should not complain. She should not blame her husband for low income. Rather, she must express her gratitude for his devoted efforts to support the family. And she does so, she should give her husband her trust. In doing so, the husband will be more devoted in protecting and providing for his wife and children.

What a man wants (3)

The third thing a man wants is "Authority": "Be grateful for his desire to serve and lead" (Emerson Eggerich, "Love & Respect").

Nowadays, husband's authority is being ignored at home. Of course there are many reasons for this, but one of them is that the wife ignoring her husband's authority. As a result, the children are also ignoring their father's authority. It is a serious problem indeed. Although God has given divine authority to the man who is the head of the family, his authority is not being established in home because his wife is not submitting to him (Eph. 5:22). Although the Bible says that "the wife must respect her husband" (v. 33), she refuses to respect her husband. As a result, not only the man's authority is being ignored at home but also the order of the family is broken. Of course, the man should not abuse the authority given by God. If he abuses the given authority, then he will become an authoritarian husband. And it will not be easy for the wife to submit to him and respect such an authoritarian husband. This is what Dr. Eggerich says: 'The wife's submission to God takes precedence over her submission to her husband. She does not sin against Christ in order to follow her husband's opinion' [Note: The story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)]. The authoritarian husband is not the Spirit-filled husband. The Holy Spirit-filled husband does not abuse his authority that God gave him. The wife must submit to her Spirit-filled husband and respects him as the church submits to Christ (Eph. 5:24). The wife should obey and respect her husband as the church does so to the Lord. In other words, the wife must acknowledge and respect her husband's authority.

How then should the woman acknowledge and respect her husband's authority? It is to submit her husband and also to respect him (Eph. 5:24, 33). Here, submitting and respecting her husband involves following the husband's leadership. Although Eve refused to follow her husband Adam, (though Adam refused to lead his wife Eve), the women should not follow Eve's footsteps. It is the sin that ignores the husband's authority. The wise wife not only follows her husband's leadership by trusting him but also appreciates his guidance. Also, she melts her husband's heart with her quite gentle soul (1 Pet. 3:1-2). The wise wife gets what she wants from her husband by giving her husband what he wants (Eggerich). The woman who builds up her husband's authority by submitting and respecting him is a wise wife. The woman who respect and praise her husband's decision is the wise wife. Although her husband makes a bad decision, she is a wise wife who is still gentle with him, disagreeing with him in private and valuing his authority even before the children. The woman who is calmly and rationally suggests reasons for disagreeing but never attacks her husband's right to lead is a wise wife. The woman who wisely builds her husband up while acknowledging her husband's authority is truly a wise wife.

What a man wants (4)

The fourth thing a man wants is "Insight": "Be grateful for his desire to analyze and give advice" (Emerson Eggerich, "Love & Respect").

A man's mind is analytical. His analytical mind makes him solve the problem when he comes across any problem. A woman must understand and respect his problem-solving approach. To do so, when a couple is talking to each other with a problem, the wife should not complain when her husband analyzes the problem and presents a solution. Of course, from a woman's point of view, her husband would rather let her voice be heard and heard rather than analyzing and solving the problem, but if she honestly respects her husband, she must learn how to listen to her. To do that, the woman must be able to lay down her intuitive mind and listen to her husband. Of course, it does not mean that a woman's intuition is wrong. The reason is that women's intuition is often right (although it does not make sense in a man's analytical mindset). So in marital relations, both husband's insight and wife's intuition are needed. But here we are talking about what a man wants when a woman puts down her intuitive mind and tries to listen in a respectful way to the solution presented in her husband's analytical mind, . She should praise her husband for recognizing that God is the leader she has established in the home and respecting her efforts to solve the problem in her analytical mind. She should be grateful when her husband analyzes the problem and advises her on the solution, and she should also show her thanks.

But if the woman doesn't lay down her intuitive mind and ignores the man's analytical mind, she cannot build a satisfying marriage relationship. Furthermore, if she ignores her husband's analytical mind, she may sin against God. For example, look at Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis in the Bible. When Eve was tempted by the serpent, she was deceived and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God told Adam not to eat. If she had an insight, she would not have eaten that fruit. But her intuitive mind may have thought that if she ate the fruit, then it would give her wisdom as the serpent said. Ultimately, she concluded that she knew much more about what was best for herself and her husband thus influenced her husband Adam to follow her (Eggerich). She rejected Adam's lead. And the Adam's sin was refusing to lead his wife. Adam, with his insight, should have refused his wife's wrong influence, but he couldn't. And Eve, who relied on her intuitive mind, is guilty of being tempted by the serpent and ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and made her husband Adam to sin together. What if Adam had used his insight and had given a right advice to his wife Eve? And what would have happened if Eve had obeyed the Adam's advice? In the end, both Adam and Eve failed to fulfill their responsibilities. Adam should have reminded Eve of the command of God by exercising his insight and telling his wife Eve not to eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. And Eve should have accepted the Adam's advice and not eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. But as we know, the couple didn't take their own responsibilities. Therefore, sin entered the world and death through sin (Rom. 5:12).

The woman needs the man's insight. She should be grateful for his guidance with insight. She should listen to her husband's advice. If she realizes the necessity of her husband's insight early and live her life together with him by harmonizing her intuition with her husband's insight, then she will be able to keep the unity of the husband and wife.

What a man wants (5)

The fifth thing a man wants is "Relationship": 'Be grateful for his desire for friendship that is shoulder to shoulder' (Emerson Eggerich, "Love & Respect").

The way man and woman build relationship is different. For example, while the women often share their experiences by talking to each other, the men share their experiences by sharing their activities in order to build their relationship (Eggerich). However, since we are selfish, we want to build our relationship in our own way. While the women want to continue to build their relationship by talking to one another, the men want to continue to build their relationship by doing things together. The couple should lay down their methods of building relationship and try to learn each other's methods instead of claiming their own methods of relationship and demanding from each other to follow their own methods.

For women, it is not easy to understand how to work together, that is, shoulder to shoulder relationship. For example, when a man watches a soccer game on TV, he wants his wife to just sit next to him. But she usually sits beside him and tries to talk to him who is watching the soccer game. From that time on, the husband is forced to give up watching the soccer game with his wife. Of course, she doesn't understand why her husband is uncomfortable watching the soccer game with her: 'I just wanted to talk to my husband as we watch television together in order to build our relationship.' Since she doesn't know her husband's need that is just sitting next to him, she cannot understand why he is uncomfortable when she tries to talk to him. But the woman must try to understand her husband. To do so, she should just sit next to her husband's shoulders, he who is watching TV. Unless he speaks, she should just sit beside her husband and watch TV together. The man likes his wife to just sit beside her and quietly watch the soccer game together.

The women should know: 'Men prefer to talk not face to face but shoulder to shoulder' (Eggerich). When the man asks his wife, "Just sit beside me," the wife should just sit beside him, shoulder-to-shoulder as she respects his way of having conversation even though it's not her way of having conversation. Although it isn't her intimate conversation method that she wants, she should keep on trying to learn how to have conversation with her husband. Therefore, she needs to stand in his position and try to build a relationship with her husband by learning his method of building relationship. The wise wife will do so with patience.

What a man wants (6)

The sixth thing a man wants is "Sexuality": 'Be grateful for his desire for sexual intimacy" (Emerson Eggerich, "Love & Respect").

The woman doesn't seem to understand her husband's sexual desire. This is because there is a difference between the man's sexual desire and the woman's sexual desire. In other words, sexual satisfaction is not the first priority for woman's need. However, the first priority for man's need is sexual satisfaction. Whether the man's need of sexual satisfaction or the woman's need of sexual satisfaction is the first or second, the important thing is that there is a clear difference between the man's sexual desire and the woman's sexual desire.

The woman doesn't seem to understand the man's physical sexual satisfaction well. This is because the woman wants more mental and emotional sexual satisfaction than physical sexual satisfaction. Although the woman wants to feel intimacy and affection without sexual contact, her husband wants to show intimacy through sex. That's why the woman seems that she doesn't understand the man's physical sexual satisfaction well. And that's why the woman may refuse to have sex with her husband when he asks for sex for his physical sexual satisfaction. The reason she refuses to have sex with her husband is because she isn't ready to have sex mentally or emotionally but her husband insists to have sex with her for his own sexual satisfaction. She wants to feel intimacy and affection from her husband without having sex, but her husband seems to be asking for sex only. That's why she refuses to have sex with her husband. Is this refusal right in God's sight?

Dr. Eggerich summarizes the differences between men and women about sexual desire: 'Sex for him and affection for her is a two-way street. Just as he has to satisfy her soul to approach her body, she must also satisfy his body if she wants to approach his soul' (Eggerich). The woman must know that satisfying her husband's sexual need is an obedient to God's word of respecting her husband. If she is genuinely respecting her husband, even if she doesn't want to have sex with him, she satisfies his sexual need when he asks for sex. But if she insists her position of wanting to feel affection from her husband without having sex, and thus if she refuses to have sex with her husband, then she isn't truly respecting him. The wise wife who obeys her husband because she respects him will never be the selfish wife who only sticks to her position. Rather, she will feel affection from her husband by satisfying his sexual desire. The woman needs to know that her husband should have his physical expression through sexual intimacy as she needs to have her emotional expression through talking (Eggerich).

The woman sometimes feels like her husband only wants her body when he asks her for sex. I think the reason is because she sees her husband's sexual desire in her desire for intimacy and affection without sexual contact. In other words, she feels that her husband wants only her body because she doesn't understand her husband's sexual desire and she wants to feel intimacy and affection without having sexual contact with her husband. That's why the woman must understand that her husband needs sexual expression just as she needs emotional expression (Eggerich). If she doesn't understand this and refuse to allow her husband's sexual expression, then Satan may tempt him so that he sins against God by having affair (1 Cor. 7:5). Therefore, the woman must satisfy her husband's sexual desire.

Pre-Murder Syndrome (PMS)

In his book "Love & Respect", Dr. Emerson Eggerich talks about "Premenstrual syndrome" as "Pre-Murder syndrome" (Eggerich). What is Premenstrual syndrome? "Premenstrual syndrome, or PMS, refers to the physical and psychological symptoms that females experience in the week or two leading up to their menstrual period. Headaches, bloating, cramps, and mood swings are among the most common PMS symptoms" (Internet). For a man, his wife's premenstrual syndrome is like a "Pre-murder syndrome" as Dr. Eggerich says. The reason is because the woman cannot tolerate her husband's even small mistakes and criticize her husband when she is going through premenstrual syndrome. What the woman doesn't know is that her husband interprets her criticism as though she is despising him as a man (Eggerich). He listens to his wife's criticism for not respecting him (Eggerich). When the woman goes through her premenstrual syndrome and when she has conflict with her husband, her voice can get louder. But as her voice get louder and louder, then her husband will be more silent. Then she will think that he doesn't love her because he is silent. So her criticism toward her husband can get louder and louder and she may spit out unwanted poisonous words. The man can be deeply hurt while listening to his wife's poisonous words. And he takes the wound to the inside. In the midst of that, he feels more and more incapable of himself, avoiding any further clashes with his wife.

Apostle John said in 1 John 3:15, "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him." I think that when the woman pours on criticisms to her husband during the premenstrual syndrome, it is 'murdering' him. Of course, she can say that she doesn't hate him. But in the end she hurts her husband deeply with her words because she cannot control her tongue in her temper. Moreover, she is making her husband to think that she doesn't respect him. Apostle James said in James 3:8, "But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison." Of course, the man also can hurt his wife's heart deeply in anger with his tongue that is full of poison. But the woman is also the same. Both man and woman should control their tongues. They must not murder each other with their tongues. This is what the Bible says, "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing" (Prov. 12:18), "The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit" (15:4).

The couple should not say any reckless words that pierce each other's hearts like a sword. Especially the woman should not pour out reckless words to her husband because she goes through premenstrual syndrome. The deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. The wise wife doesn't criticize her husband recklessly even when she has premenstrual syndrome. She controls her heart and mouth in following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, even in the premenstrual syndrome, the wise wife makes a good memory of love by obeying the God's word of respecting her husband.

Let us seek Pre-Memory syndrome rather than Pre-Murder syndrome.

Family story:

‘Such a show-off’

August 24, 2014, Sunday evening.

I cannot remember clearly what happened in the evening last Thursday (21st) since I couldn't write this family story on the next day Friday or yesterday Saturday and I am writing it today, Sunday evening.

But one thing I can clearly and surely remember is that when I went into the restroom and about to begin brushing my teeth, I shared with my wife what God had thought me through my elderly members ministry in our church.

And my wife heard it, she suddenly smiled at me from outside the restroom and said ‘Such a show off’.

Then as she put her head down little bit, she sprang at me and hugged me. Haha.

When I think about that moment, it still makes me to laugh like this. Haha

The more I think about what my wife said ‘Such a show-off’,

this reminds me a memory when she said ‘Such a show-off’ when we had conflict in the past.

Now when I think about what she said to me in the past,

the thought that keeps on coming into my mind is that I show my “self-righteousness” in front of my wife.

At that time, I think I pointed out what my wife was doing wrong rather than tried to understand her.

Now when I think about it from my wife's point of view, I think I show myself off in front of her.

I think I gave my wife an impression that ‘I am right, and you are wrong.’

Now I think about it, I didn't speak wisely to my wife.

Each of us has many wrong things in God's sight.

And when we looked at each other, we saw each other's wrong things.

But instead of using a method of building each other up and fixing the wrong things one by one,

I think I continued to use the method of destroying my wife.

That was why I think my wife would have said ‘Such a show-off’ to me in anger

because she was going through a lot of hard time because of me.

So until last Thursday, my wife said ‘Such a show-off’ in her anger when we were quarreling.

But last Thursday evening when she said ‘Such a show-off’, it was not that meaning at all.

It was because she loved me, she said to me ‘Such a show-off’ jokingly with her bright smile and she hugged me.

Haha.

I am laughing while I am writing this family story when I think about that moment again. Haha.

It is the night that reminds me of my wife who hugged me and said, ‘Such a show-off’

even though I am not as she thinks I am (now my wife is away from me).

The difference of the couple

A woman wants a man whom she loves to share his heavy burden with her.
The reason is because she loves him and wants to participate in his pain.

A man doesn't want to share his pain that he is going through with a woman whom he loves.
The reason is that he doesn't want to put heavy burden on her because he loves her.

When this man and this woman meet and married and become one body,
they fight because of their differences. Who is right?

It seems that God wants them bear each other's burdens as the woman thinks.
At the same time, it seems that God doesn't want them to bear the burdens each other like the man thinks.
What does the couple suppose to do?

The husband needs to learn the way the woman loves.
In other words, he needs to share his heavy burden with his wife and share his pains with her.
The wife needs to learn the way the man loves.
In other words, when she finds out that her beloved husband has a heavy burden,
it is necessary for her to respect his decision not to share that burden with her,
knowing that it is because he loves her.

Unstable couple relationship

Unstable couple relationship,

The marital relationship is like a bomb, not know when and how it will explode,

Not knowing when and where the marital problem has begun ...

Not been able to solve it even though it has been accumulated all along ...

Fester wounds,

The marital relationship that is distant because of those wounds,

As a result, the husband and/or the wife are looking at another woman/man ...

In the end, he or she is ignorantly pushing for one-sided divorce ...

The couple must devote themselves to build the Lord-centered marital relationship ...

The couple must confess and repent their sins before the Lord ...

The couple must obey, love, and respect the words of the Lord ...

Therefore, the couple must become a good model and presents that good model to others.

Why do you have an affair?

Why do you have an affair? (1)

"Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house" (Proverbs 5:8).

I still remember that when I was leading a premarital counseling class, one sister in Christ said that she expected her future husband would have affair once when they would get married. I was shocked when I heard that. I couldn't understand how she could say that she would not only expect her future husband to have an affair but also she would accept that reality. Maybe she might have thought that such a thing could happen to her future marriage because having affair was so prevalent in those days. On the one hand, I was surprised to hear her word, but on the other hand, when I wondered why she said such thing, I thought that too many people had an affair. Why does a man have an affair with another woman? Why does a woman have an affair with another man?

I found one of the reasons in Proverbs 5:8 – "Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house." The reason is because the man is close to the woman whom he should be far away. In Proverbs 5:8, the Bible tells the man to keep to the path far from "her". Who is "her" here? She is "an adulteress" (v. 3). Why is the Bible telling the man to keep the path far from the adulteress? The reason is because if he gets close to her, "she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword" (v. 4). Of course, it is not like that at first. Who will have an affair from the beginning, thinking of bitterness and pain? However, what he doesn't know is the fact that only bitterness and pain will remain afterwards. If he knows this fact (only with his head) and still starts having affair, he will be awakened later when he taste its bitterness and pain. Another reason to stay away from the adulteress is because if not, then "you will give your vigor to others And your years to the cruel one; And strangers will be filled with your strength And your hard-earned goods will go to the house of an alien" (vv. 9-10). In fact, don't we hear the news that those who had affair lost their honor and riches, and even got killed? The man who sleeps with another man's wife (6:29), that wife's husband will show no mercy when he takes revenge because jealousy arouses his fury (v. 34). "He will not accept any compensation; he will refuse the bribe, however great it is" (v. 35). What would the jealous husband do to the man who had an affair with his own wife? Will he not try to kill him? Isn't this thing actually happening? Another reason why the man should not be close to the adulteress is because when he is close to her, at the end of his life he will groan, when his flesh and body are spent (5:11): "... How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly" (vv. 12-14). Do you think someone who is having an affair will listen to your rebuke and admonition? Look at Proverbs 6:27-28 – "Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?" The man who is having affair with another man's wife is like a man who scoop fire into his lap. He may say that the fire is his love for another man's wife. But he doesn't know that he is destroying himself, blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away (vv. 32-33). Nevertheless, the foolish man with no wisdom gets close to another man's wife, whom he should be far away (cf. 7:7-8). He keeps going to her house (v. 8). It is also in deep dark night (v. 9). But the wise man doesn't go close to another man's wife. He doesn't go to her house. Rather, he is far from her.

I have found in Proverbs 5:15-19 the reason why the foolish man has an affair with another man's wife. To summarize the reason in one word, it is that he doesn't love only his wife (v. 15). To be more specific, it's because he isn't making his wife happy, nor does he rejoice with her (v. 18). If he considers his wife loving and beautiful

and is satisfied her breasts always and is captivated by her love (v. 19), he will never give another woman his affection, embrace her and have kids with her (vv. 16, 20).

We must become wise men. We must love only our wives. We should make our wives happy and should rejoice with her. We should keep her loving and beautiful and be always satisfied with her. And we must be always captivated by her love. Then we will not have an affair.

Why do you have an affair? (2)

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Exodus 20:17).

I heard this from someone today. The 99% nurses in a country want to go to work abroad and about 98% of them who are married have affairs when they go abroad. When I heard that, I was shock. How could it be that many? No matter how many people are having affairs these days, I didn't know it was that many. It is a serious problem indeed. Why are there so many affairs? I have found out why people are having affairs based on Proverbs 5:8. The reason is because they aren't far away with people whom they suppose to and they aren't close to people whom they suppose to. In other words, those who have affairs do so because they are close to other women whom they need to stay away and they aren't close to their wives whom they must be closed to. The man who has an affair doesn't love his wife faithfully (v. 15) and rejoice in the wife of his youth (v. 18). And he isn't always satisfying with her breasts and isn't captivated by her love (v. 19). That's why he is giving his affection to another woman, embracing the bosom of another man's wife and giving birth to a child (vv. 16, 20).

I would like to think of another reason why the man is having an affair from Exodus 20:17 – "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Obviously, God has commanded that "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." But why is the man coveting his neighbor's wife? The cause is his covetous heart. Since he has covetous heart, he isn't always satisfied with the breasts of his wife (Prov. 5:19). Not only that, but if he has covetous heart, he begins to think beyond his means. He begins to lust for another woman. So he is led by the lust of eyes and looks at another woman and not his own wife. And his ears start to hear about her. But his eyes and ears never have enough of seeing and hearing about her (Eccl. 1:8). So Satan entices him with the lustful desires of sinful human nature and causes us to sin (2 Pet. 2:18). Satan makes him to covet another woman.

The cause of affair is covetousness. Covetousness never has enough (Isa. 56:11). So covetousness makes the man not to be satisfied with his wife (Prov. 5:19) and makes him to covet his neighbor's wife (Exod. 29:17). Therefore, he shouldn't let his heart turn to covetousness (Ps. 119:36). The Bible says that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). That's why he must be on guard against all kinds of greed (Lk. 12:15). He must consider the members of his earthly body as dead to greed (Col. 3:5). He must put "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed" to death (v. 5). It is because he has crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires (Gal. 5:24). I hope and pray that all the Christian men don't covet their neighbor's wives (Exod. 20:17) but are always be satisfied their own wives' breasts (Prov. 5:19).

Why do you have an affair? (3)

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

Why is my husband taking off his eyes off to another woman? Why is my wife giving affection to another man?

It seems that there have not been many dramas depicting affair relations like these days. A woman comes to a married couple and tempts the couple's husband. Another man comes up and tempts the couple's wife. This is the parts of the Korean drama 'Temptation.' On the one hand, I wondered why a writer wrote this kind of story. Is it for popularity so that many views can watch it? On the other, I think this drama seems to show the reality of Korean society. So, I read and meditated on the Bible and wrote two meditations on the subject under the heading "Why do you have an affair?" The first Word of God was based on Proverbs 5:8, in which the reason for having the affair is because the man is close to the woman whom he should be far away. We have learned the lesson that the husband should be close to his one and only wife and the wife should be close to her one and only husband instead of the husband being close to another man's wife or single woman and the wife being close to another woman's husband or single man. On the contrary, we have learned that the husband should love only his wife whom God has joined him faithfully and make her happy and rejoice with her. We learned that he should consider his wife loving and beautiful and should always be satisfied with her breasts. And we were taught that he should be always captivated by her love. If not, then he will have affair. The second Word of God was based on Exodus 20:17, in which the reason for having the affair is because of covetousness. If the man has covetous heart he cannot satisfy with his wife's breasts (Prov. 5:19) and begin to covet another woman. So he looks at another woman who is not his wife, led by the lust of eyes. And his ears start to hear about her. And Satan entices him with the lustful desires of sinful human nature and causes him to sin (2 Pet. 2:18). Satan makes him to covet another woman. But the Bible says that covetousness never has enough (Isa. 56:11). In the end, covetousness doesn't allow him to be satisfied with his wife (Prov. 5:19), making him to covet his neighbor's wife (Exod. 29:17).

I want to think about "Why are you having an affair? (3)" based on the Word of God Colossians 3:13 with Paul David Tripp's book "What did you Expect?" The reason is that the couple doesn't forgive each other. Certainly, the Bible says in Colossians 3:13 to forgive each other "as the Lord forgave you". But the couple refuses to obey this Word and has affair. To explain this more specifically, the greatest reason why the couple doesn't forgive each other is because they don't really know that the Lord has forgiven them. And the couple doesn't forgive each other because they cannot understand the Lord's forgiveness with their hearts. Not only that, the couple are dissatisfied with each other and their complaints are increasing. As a result, the couple doesn't tolerate each other. Actually, they aren't able to do so. The couple who doesn't forgive each other not only will not tolerate each other truly, but they cannot. And the couple who doesn't tolerate each other has already refused to forgive each other in their hearts. So why does the couple come to this point? I would like to think of the process based on the seven paths that many of the couples are walking as Dr. Paul Tripp said.

The first path is Immaturity and Failure.

Marriage means that in this sinful world a sinner man marries a sinner woman. Therefore, in our marital relationship, we cannot but sin against God. In addition to that, many marriages mean that one immature man and one immature woman are married, so they make numerous mistakes and experience many failures. Especially the

young immature couples make many mistakes and experience failures in their marriage. After the mistakes and failures, they aren't ready for marriage because of their naive thoughts about marriage. As a result, they experience conflicts, strife and hurt in the early part of their marriage. One of those naive thoughts is the unrealistic expectation of marriage. Although they think that they will never fight, will not have any conflicts what so ever, and dream that they will live happily as they love each other with God's love but there is a lot of chance that their dream will break down at the beginning of their marriage. As a result, the fantasies and dreams that they had before marriage are broken, and suffer in disappointment and wound. At that time, the couple will be awakened from their fantasies and dreams and will pray and ponder in front of the Lord in terms of how to achieve their ideal dream in reality. It is fortunate to have such struggles and prayers. But if they don't have those struggles and prayers, then the miserable couple will be getting more and more swamped by the reality of broken dreams. Their marital relationship is bound to be deteriorated.

The second path is Falling into Comfortable Patterns.

When the couple experiences failure in their marital relationship due to their immaturity, they can choose the difficult path of learning through failure in order to build their marital relationship and pursue the maturity of the couple. But they choose the comfortable path of neglecting their marital relationship to get worse. The couple's sinful nature is to choose the comfortable path rather than the difficult path. Then what is the comfortable path that the couple tends to choose according to their nature? For example, when the couple argues, fights, and hurts each other's heart due to not acknowledging and respecting each other's differences, their choice of the comfortable path is not saying "I am sorry" and not forgiving each other. And according to their sinful nature, they hate each other, remembering the hurts they have from each other. Moreover, they pile up the hates in their hearts instead of trying to solve in the Lord. They do this according to their sinful nature, choosing the comfortable path. In this comfortable path that the couple chooses, there is lack of commitment and effort in trying not to make the same mistakes and failures in their immaturity. As a result, the marriage becomes even worse because the piled up wounds, pains, and tears that are tangled in the couple's hearts from the same repeating failures and further new failures.

The third path is Establishing Defenses.

What is really important in marriage is to ask for forgiveness to each other and forgive each other sincerely from heart. But this is not only difficult but impossible without God's grace. To that extent, the couple's sinful nature is to build a wall between their marital relationships rather than to forgive each other and tolerate each other. And they are keep on building their heart wall higher and higher. So the couple no longer confesses their wrongs and sins to each other honestly and asks for forgiveness. Rather, they point out and criticize each other's faults and sins and even condemn each other in their hearts. They do this to reveal their self-righteousness. They criticize each other because they think that "I am right and you are wrong." When they criticize each other, the immature and full of self-righteousness couple put up their protective film in order to protect themselves from getting hurt from each other. The protective film is to establish a defense between oneself and one's spouse. So when the mature spouse is reproving his or her spouse with the love of God, the immature spouse who receives the reproof establishes a defense wall and protects himself or herself from getting hurt. In addition, the immature person will be offensive to his or her mature spouse. Then the spouse who is being attacked gets hurt in his or her heart and is in pain. And if the other spouse is immature, s/he will also attack and eventually will have a marital war cycle in which the couple defends each other and attacks each other. Then their marital relations will get worse and worse.

The fourth path is Nurturing Dislike.

The couple who is immature cannot tolerate each other differences. So they are accustomed to argue and fight rather than tolerate and forgive each other. And in their conflict, they are just trying to protect themselves and not their marital relationship. In the meantime, the couple constantly attacks each other, so that their marital relationship gets worse and worse. They look at each other more negatively than before as time goes by. And they are increasingly critical of each other, looking at each other's negative aspects only. As a result, the marital relationship grows worse and worse because the couple grows a sense of hatred toward each other.

The fifth path is Becoming Overwhelmed.

When the marital relationship becomes worse and worse, the marriage becomes a great burden to each other. It is the overwhelming burden that is too heavy for them to bear by themselves. At that time, if the couple becomes one in the Lord, they can bear each other's burdens and humbly leave all the burdens to the Lord by faith. But since the couple's relationship got worse and the lost faith and ability, they are unable to bear each other's burden and to leave the burdens to the Lord. As a result, how heavy would it be for the couple to bear their burdens separately? In the end, the marriage will become even worse because of their heavy burdens.

The sixth path is Envy of Other Couples.

The couple whose relationship is getting worse and worse may eventually start looking at other couples around. Especially when they see other couples who seem to have good marital relations, they may compare themselves with those other couples. Then they will envy those couples whose marital relationships look good in their eyes. With a sense of frustration and of shame, they think about break up with their spouses and encounter new meetings. Although they know that they shouldn't do that, they think it's better for them to have new start again by making a relationship with a new encounter rather than give themselves up.

The seventh path is Fantasies of Escape.

When the couple's relationship becomes heavy burden, the couple tends to compare with other couples who seem to have better marital relationships than them. And as they become jealous of the other couples, they may think they won't be able to sustain their marital relationship any longer. As a result, they tend to fantasize about not only escaping their bad marital relationship but also encountering a new relationship. Especially when a husband who has not been respected by his own wife gets attention from another woman, he is likely to have an affair with her. It is also highly likely that a woman will have an affair with another man who cares for her warmly than her husband if her husband does not only love her but also hurts her again and again. And if they have an affair, they will demand divorce from their spouse unilaterally in order to break up with the spouse.

I don't think that an affair just happens with a day or so. There is a high probability that married couples will have an affair if their marriage relationship is not good but the relationship has been bad for a long time. There is high probability that the married couple will become interested in the other opposite sex other than their own spouse because their marital relationship has gotten worse in which they refuse to forgive and tolerate each other and have many complaints toward each other. These are the couples who have potential to have affair: the couples who have experienced many failures because of their immaturity, the couples who choose the convenient way to let their marital problems and conflicts to be continued to exist because they don't put any effort to resolve the, the couples who put up their defense system, saying that they are right and criticizing that their spouse is wrong instead of putting efforts to keep the unity of the couples in the Lord, the couples who view each other very critically and they are very pessimistic, the couples whose life together are now so burdensome, so the couples who compare their relationship with other couples and are jealous of them. What must the couples do?

The couples must seek maturity in the Lord because the maturity in the Lord is directly related to the maturity of the marital relationship. In other words, the couples who gradually grow together in the Lord cannot but mature gradually in relation to each other. As a result, their relationship grows progressively toward perfection in the Lord, so that not only can the mistakes and failures be reduced, but they can use the mistakes and failures wisely to be beneficial to their marital relations. These mature and wise married couples who are committed to the Lord's building marital relations choose a harder path than a comfortable path. And the harder path is, for example, self-sacrifice. The mature couples who choose this harder path have a life pattern that devotes themselves to sacrifice and puts it into practice to build each other up in the Lord. Their marital relations in the Lord get mature toward perfection as they accept, forgive and love each other. As they mature, they don't fall into the couples' war cycle, attacking each other and defending each other. Also, they do not raise resentment against each other. Rather, they develop feelings for each other. And they bear each other's heavy burdens. That's why not only their burden is light but also their hearts. Not only the mature couples don't compare with other couples, but they also don't see any need to do so because their relationships are healthy. And because they are happy with their marital relationship, they do not have the fantasy to escape from the relationship. Rather, they obey the Lord's command in prayer as they wrestle with the Word of God in order to build the Lord-centered marriages. Therefore, as a Lord-centered witness community, those couples are used by the Lord as a couple presenting a godly model that reveals Christ in this world filled with adultery and divorce. I hope and pray that the Lord continue to build our marital relationships to be more the Lord-centered.

We should not lust in our hearts after the beauty of the prostitute.

(Proverbs 6: 20-35)

When I post my meditation centered on Proverbs 6:16-19 under the title 'Seven sins that God hates' on my personal Facebook, a pastor replied, 'This reminded me the seven reasons a husband can kick out his wife in the Joseon Dynasty era. So I tried to browse the Internet to find out those seven reasons and I found out that this was prevalent in China, Korea and other countries with the Confucian culture. The seven reasons are: (1) Because she is not obedient to her mother-in-law, (2) Because she has no son, (3) Because she is lustful, (4) Because she is jealous, (5) Because she has bad disease, (6) Because she talks too much, (7) Because she steals (Internet). Although I don't completely agree with these seven reasons why the husbands can cast their wives out of, that is, divorce, I thought about the third reason "Because she is lustful" because the Bible also speaks about divorce when a husband or a wife has committed adultery (Mt. 5:32). I read an article saying that Korea was voted for the world's most sexual sins (Internet). According to the BBC Worldwide Sex Evil Survey Report by the seven felonies, Australia is the most sinful country in the world. Here, the seven felonies are seven kinds of traditional criminal offenses: pride, jealousy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust. Australia has been voted the most sinful country in the world with scores of three major crimes: lust, greed, and pride. The United States was ranked number one crime sector in gluttony, Iceland for pride and sloth, Mexico for greed and Korea for lust.

According to Proverbs 6:25, King Solomon says: "Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes." He is exhorting us to do this: 'Do not lust the beauty of the prostitute. Don't let her obscene eyes to captivate your heart.' Based on this exhortation, I want to think about Proverbs 6:20-35 and receive lessons from God.

First, what is the beauty of the prostitute?

It is "outward adornment". Look at 1 Peter 3:3 – "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes." The beauty of the prostitute is that she looks beautiful with her braided hair, wearing gold jewelry and fine clothes and her appearance is beautiful, so men feel attraction to her. Since she decorates her outward adornment flashily, her outward appearance is enough to attract those men who are driven by the lust of eyes. I saw Internet news before that talked about some mothers in Cameroon, the westernmost country of the continent of Africa, who solder their daughters' breasts in order not to be raped and be pregnant. And the reason why the mothers do that their own daughters is because when the men see the girls' breasts their sexual desire is being stimulated and they tend to have sexual imagination (Internet). According to the data from the International Association of Cosmetic Surgery (ISAPS), the "breast augmentation" comes after "liposuction" in the frequency of many kinds of plastic surgery (Internet). This is what King Solomon said in Proverbs 5:20 – "Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?" The men must rejoice in the wife of their youth, be satisfied her breasts always and always be captivated by her love (vv. 18-19). However, the prostitute seduces the men, especially those who are not satisfied with their wives, with her own appearance and make them to embrace the bosom of the adulteress (v. 20). In addition to her appearance, the lips of an adulteress drip honey (v. 3) in which her smooth tongue (6:24) and her seductive words (2:16) is very tempting. Her tongue is very successful in attracting and seducing men. In particular, her tongue is very successful in seducing the simple who lacks judgment (7:7) and the married men who are not considering their wives as loving does, graceful deer and satisfied with their wives' breasts (5:19). In addition to her appearance and tongue, the adulteress woman attracts many men's hearts and fall into temptation with her eyes (6:25). How do her

eyes tempt the men's hearts? She does so with her flirting eyes (Walvoord). How many men are being tempted by the voluptuous eyes of the prostitute?

This is what King Solomon said in Proverbs 31:30 – “Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.” He said that the beauty of a woman who does not fear God is vanity. In other words, the beauty of the woman who does not fear God vanishes like smoke (Ps. 37:20). Thus, this is what Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 3:4 – “Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.” In the sight of God, the beauty of a woman is her “inner self” and never her outer appearance. The beauty of the outer person will be for a moment and will be perishable, but the beauty of the inner person is not perishable. Peter is exhorting the women to pursue this unfading beauty of the gentle and quiet spirit. Why is Peter encouraging this? It is because it is great worth in God’s sight (v.4).

The woman who is great worth in God’s sight and who is praised by God is the woman who fears God and the daughters of God who seek inner beauty that will not perish. Therefore, the daughters of God, whose appearance seems to be good by others [Ex. Queen Vashti (Esth. 1:11)], should not trust their own beauty and use their fame to become a prostitute (Ezek. 16:15) and commit sins against God. Of course, the sons of God should not fall into the temptation of such woman who believes in her own beauty and commit adultery. We must keep in mind that the beauty of such woman is vanity (Prov. 31:30).

Second, why shouldn’t we lust in our heart after the beauty of the prostitute?

Look at Proverbs 6:26 – “for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life.” What does it mean? It means that when we fall into a temptation of the immoral woman (v. 24) and let the beauty of the prostitute to captivate us with her eyes (v. 26) we are finally going to bankrupt and lose our lives (Park Yoon-sun). How many men are searching for the beauty of the prostitute and dating her so that they are squandering their wealth? Look at Proverbs 29:3 – “A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.” I remember talking to the tow truck driver who came to tow my broken car. He told me that when he met many pretty women after divorce, they usually kept on asking to buy stuffs for them. He said that those women dated him because of money. So I kind of suggested him to remarry and have his own family instead of keep on meeting many women and keep on buying stuffs for them. When we look at Proverbs 6:29-31, King Solomon said that the sin of him sleeping with another man’s wife is greater sin than the sin of stealing and “if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house.” What does it mean? It means that in order to pay for the sins of adultery, all the wealth of his house will be given. That’s how great the price of paying the sin of sexual unfaithfulness is. What should we do?

Now many men (and women) are playing with love. In other words, many men and women are scooping fire into their lap and walking on hot coals (vv. 27-28). As King Solomon said, no man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned and walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched (vv. 27-28). In a word, many men and women are committing adultery outside of their marriage. This is what King Solomon said about those who are committing adultery outside of their marriage: “But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away.” When we commit the sin of adultery, we will not only find wounds, disgrace and our reproach will not be blotted out but also we will be ruined. And when a man commits adultery to another man's wife, jealousy will arouse her husband’s fury and her husband will not spare in the day of vengeance and will not accept any ransom though the man gives him many gifts (vv. 34-35). What should we do?

Lastly, what should we do in order not to lust in our heart after the beauty of the prostitute?

Look at Proverbs 6:20-24: “My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life, keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.” In order for us not to lust in our hearts after the beauty of the prostitute, we must desire the word of God in our hearts. That’s why King Solomon exhorts us to always keep the commands and the laws of God and write them on the tablet of our hearts (3:1-3; 7:1-3). The reason is because the Word of God will not only guide us and watch over us, but will also speak to us (6:22). In other words, God's commands are a lamp that guides us, and it protects us from the forces of darkness. They are “the corrections of discipline” which are the way to life (v. 23). Therefore, we must not leave the God’s commands and laws but keep them in our hearts and obey them. Then, that Word of God will keep us from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife (v. 24). What should we do? We should not desire worldly beauty in our hearts. According to Isaiah 53:2, the Bible says that the Messiah “had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.” But it seems that we Christians, like the worldly people, are pursuing the beauty that appeals to the people in this world. Although Apostle Peter said “Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight,” we are not pursuing the inner beauty that is of great worth in God’s sight (1 Pet. 3:3-4). What is beauty in the sight of God? And we must seek and pursue the beauty of God in order not to seek the beauty of the prostitute in our hearts.

When I think of the beauty of God, I remember Psalm 27:4 – “One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.” As I live in the desert-like world, one thing I ask of the Lord is that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life so that I may gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and seek him in his temple. With this desperate hope, while living on this earth, not only that I seek the beauty of God, but I want to manifest His beauty. Now the question is what is God’s beauty? I want to humbly receive the Word Isiah 35:1-2: “The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.” The life of seeking the beauty of God is the life that desires and pursues the glory of God. When we live for the glory of God in this desert-like world, we can manifest God’s beauty. I hope and pray that we humble ourselves and do the will of God and obey His Word until we die, so that we can live for His glory and manifest the beauty of God in this world.

Duties of the couple

(1 Corinthians 7:1-7)

What do you think about marriage? Should single men and women get marry or not? Job portal Korea surveyed 633 male and female office workers and found that 50.2% of unmarried workers said it didn't matter whether they get married or not (Internet). When I think about the fact that the single female answered like this more than the single male tells me that the single women don't want to be restrained by marriage since they have jobs and they are financially independent. I want to share with you an article that talks about four groups of young generations nowadays how they look at marriage (Internet):

- (1) The first group is 'Marriage fantasy group.' The young people in this group are naïve, thinking and dreaming a marriage like a sweet romance of a handsome man and a pretty woman in a Hollywood movie or a TV drama.
- (2) The second group is 'Marriage ignorance group.' In contrast to the marriage fantasy young people, the young people in the marriage ignorance group seem to enjoy their single life, focusing on self-fulfillment and career pursuits, as if they are not interested in marriage. But that doesn't mean that they completely gave up getting married.
- (3) The third group is 'Marriage escape group.' The young people in this group are people who are caught up in the negative conception of marriage and family because of wounds in their childhood during their growth in a family that lacks love.
- (4) The fourth group is 'Marriage overtaking group.' The young people in this group are the most problematic young people among all the groups, who deny the sacred of marriage and family, pursuing pleasure and temporary desires and ignore all the responsibilities involved in sexual relations.

Each has a variety of shapes, but their common feature is that they are looking at marriage based on personal experience and wrong prejudices in the world, without the correct understanding of marriage. One of those misguided prejudices is "Marriage is a grave." Do you think marriage is a grave? My answer is "Yes" because when a man and a woman are married, they have many points to die. If I think another way, if I hear the question "Do you think marriage is a grave?" I would say "Yes" because "I believe in the resurrection." The reason is because I think that in marriage the couple should not only die to many things but also to be more alive of things that supposed to be.

If you think you should marry, why should you? Rev. John MacArthur talks about five reasons that you should get married (MacArthur):

- (1) The first reason is "procreation." After God made Adam and Eve, He commanded them to be fruitful and increase in number (Gen. 1:28). God wants us to multiply.
- (2) The second reason is "pleasure." Marriage is for pleasure. This is what Proverbs 5:18-19 says: "May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer-- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love." And we see in the Song of Songs that married couples are physically attracted to each other and enjoy the love for each other.

- (3) The third reason is "partnership". Marriage is that the couple is in company with each other. The woman was created to be a helper suitable for the man (Gen. 2:18). And a very important component of good marriage is that husband and wife are friends.
- (4) The fourth reason is "picture". In other words, marriage is a picture of the church. As Jesus has authority over the Church and loves the Church, the husband must have authority over his wife and love his wife (Eph. 5:23-32).
- (5) The final and fifth reason is "purity". In other words, marriage is for purity. That is, marriage protects couples from sexual immorality.

In 1 Corinthians 7:2, this is what Apostle Paul said to the saints in the Corinthian church: "But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband." What does this mean? Paul encouraged the Corinthian church believers to marry, in order for them not to commit sexual immorality to God. Of course, the purpose of marriage is not only to prevent for the couple from committing sexual immorality. But the reality is that for young single Christians, there are so many sexual temptations, that the man should have his wife and the woman should have her husband in order not to sin against God. So, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:1, "Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman." Perhaps the Corinthian saints had many questions about marriage, so they wrote to Paul and asked questions. So Paul said, "Now concerning the things about which you wrote" (v. 1). And Paul responds to their questions by saying, "it is good for a man not to touch a woman" (v. 1). Here "it is good for a man not to touch a woman" is a Jewish euphemism and what Paul is saying is those who are not married should not have sexual relations before marriage. And in 1 Corinthians 7:3, Paul tells the saints in the Corinthian church: "The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband." Based on this Word of God, I would like to meditated on 1 Corinthians 7:1-7, under the heading "Duties of the couple" and humbly receive the lessons that God is giving us.

What are the duties of the married couple that the Bible teaches us? One of the books I have ever read about marital duties is the book "Reformed Marriage," written by a pastor named Douglas Wilson. In this book, the author lists the six husband's duties and the seven wife's duties. Here are six biblical duties of the husband (Wilson):

- (1) The first duty is that a husband must always remember that as a husband he is a living picture of the Lord Jesus. He must speak truthfully. Depending on how he treats his wife, we can see whether he speak truthfully about Christ or not.
- (2) The second duty is that the husband should nurture and protect his wife in the same way he cares for his own body (Eph. 5:29). If he does not take care of his wife especially and softly but expects her to bear fruit and to be lovely, he is not a true husband.
- (3) The third duty is that the husband must be jealous and protective (Exod. 34:14b). He must have godly jealousy. But his jealousy should not be mixed with sin.
- (4) The fourth duty is that the husband must supply his wife with what she needs (Ex 21:10-11). He is responsible for providing the money she needs to go to market. If he cannot fulfill her need, then it is like denying Christ (1 Tim. 5:8). He also must fulfill his wife's sexual needs (1 Cor. 7:3-4).
- (5) The fifth duty is that the husband must be satisfied with his wife (Prov. 5:15-19). He must avoid comparing his wife with other women in every way.

- (6) The sixth duty is that the husband's continued responsibility is to reassess and acknowledge his wife's dedication (Num. 30:13-15). The Holy Spirit-filled husband is faithful to his biblical duties and glorifies God.

One of the six husbands' duties is that the husband must supply his wife with what she needs. He is responsible for providing the money she needs to go to market. And yet another important duty of the husband in relation to 1 Corinthians 7:1-7 is that he must fulfill the sexual needs of his beloved wife (1 Cor. 7:3-4). Some of the men might be wondering about this duty. This is mainly because they may think that only the men have sexual needs. But what the husbands need to know is that their wives also have the sexual needs, and they have duty to fill that needs for their wives. Then what are the duties of the wife? Pastor Douglas Wilson speaks in seven ways (Wilson):

- (1) The first duty is that the wife must respect her husband (Eph. 5:22, 33). Here, respect is accompanied by "honor" and "obedience."
- (2) The second duty is that the wife must give birth in the providence of God (1 Tim. 2:15). And she should raise her children and take care of them gently (1 Thess. 2:7).
- (3) The third duty is that the wife must be diligent in the house (1 Tim. 2:3-5). The young women not only do the house work, but also they must be productive at home. If the woman is competent, her industry will take her out of the house in time (Prov. 31:10-31). But the house must be her first priority.
- (4) The fourth duty is that the wife must satisfy her husband's sexual needs (1 Cor. 7:2-5).
- (5) The fifth duty is that the wife must be careful not to nag and to argue with her husband (Prov. 19: 13b; 27:15-16). The women must help their husbands by using the power of their tongues.
- (6) The sixth duty is that the wife must become a disciple of her husband. The husband must educate and teach his wife (1 Cor. 14:34-35).
- (7) The seventh duty is that the Christian wife must work hard on charity (1 Tim. 5:9-10).

What do you think of the six duties of the husband and the seven duties of the wife listed by Pastor Douglas Wilson? When I think about these duties in connection with 1 Corinthians 7:1-7, I think we should not ignore the importance of the wife's fourth duty to her husband. In other words, we should not take it lightly or ignore both the husband and wife's obligation to meet each other's sexual needs. The reason for this is that in 1 Corinthians 7:1-7, what Paul said about the couple's obligation is to fulfill each other's sexual needs.

Look at 1 Corinthians 7:3 – “The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.” Paul didn't say to the Corinthian husbands “duties” to their wives, but “duty.” The reason why Paul used the word “duty” in singular was because he had a specific duty in his mind. And that specific duty is for both the husband and the wife is to fulfill each other's sexual needs. This is not only the couple's privilege and joy but also their responsibility (MacArthur). In order to fulfill that responsibility, there is one thing that the husband and the wife should know. That one thing is that in fulfilling their responsibility to meet each other's sexual needs, their bodies are not their own only but their spouses' as well. Look at verse 4: “The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.” What does it mean? It means that when the couple marries, they cannot do whatever they want with their own bodies. Rather, if they are married, their bodies belong to each other. Why did Paul say like this to the Corinthian church saints? The reason was because some of them had false belief in pursuing the physical purity.

And that false belief was that they are spiritually superior if they were being ascetic, not marrying and not having sex. So with this false belief some of the Corinthian church saints were avoiding marital sex in their marriage (MacArthur). What a sad reality? Even now, many couples with this wrong belief claim their bodies as they own in their sexual relations and avoid marital sex. Especially, they don't yield their bodies to their spouse in the dedication and effort to satisfy their spouse's sexual desire. But even more serious problem is that many couples are depriving one another now. Although the Bible says "Stop depriving one another" (v. 5), many Christians are disobeying this Word of God. They are using separate bedrooms. Why is that?

One of the consulting experts of the couple talked about why the husband and the wife are using the separate bedroom according to their age (Internet):

- (1) The reason why the couple in their 20's uses the separate bedroom is because 'the husband's nasty sleeping habit.' So the wife is so sick of the night that she uses a different room. I think this applies not only to the couples in their twenties, but it also applies to those who are sensitive in any ages. If they are sensitive and if their spouse snore at night, or keep on moving around on their beds or even accidentally hit your spouse with your arms or something, then I am sure they want to use the separate bedrooms.
- (2) The reason why the couple in their 30's uses the separate bedroom is because 'when a child is born, the wife is a child room, and the husband is a main room.' I personally think that it is not desirable for the husband and the wife use the separate room because of a baby or the husband to sleep alone in the main room and his wife sleep with their children in the children's room because the husband has to go to work next day. Of course, it is true that in the early days of child-rearing, when a baby sleeps in the main room with the couple, the couple cannot sleep well. That's why the husband usually sleeps in a separate room so that he can have enough sleep and go to work next day. But I don't think that's good reason for the couple to sleep in the separate rooms.
- (3) The reason why the couple in their 40's uses the separate room is because 'the wife has to help her son for college exams and the husband is behind.'

When a baby is born in her 30's and she focuses on her baby, then it is easy for her to become the child-oriented instead of her husband-oriented. As a result, the couple's relation will be distanced. Although the marital relationship is a priority, the children have become a priority for the wife. As a result, the couple uses the separate rooms for sleeping. I don't think this is desirable. I am not sure what are some reasons why the couple in their 50's and above use the separate rooms since the internet article doesn't mention about it. But I think the reasons are probably similar. What is important here is what the Bible says. In other words, what is important is what does the Bible say about using the separate rooms. In 1 Corinthians 7:5, the Bible says that there is only one reason for the couple to use the separate rooms that is "so that you may devote yourselves to prayer." In other words, the reason why the couple can use separate rooms by mutual consent is to pray to God. However, the Bible doesn't say how long the couple can use the separate rooms. I am not sure if the husband says that he wants to fast for 40 days, then it is okay for him and his wife to use the separate rooms. The important thing is that couple must agree on each other. If the husband says that he wants to pray for 40 days and thus he wants use the separate room, he should not use the room separately if his wife has not agreed. If the husband says, "I will go to prayer mountain and pray there," I think it's not desirable if his wife disagree with him. The couple shouldn't decide the period of using separate room without mutual consent. The Bible says that the couple should have mutual consent to use the separate room "for a while" and then "come together again" (v. 5). What is the reason? Look at 1 Corinthians 7:5 - "Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." The reason why the couple can use the separate

room by mutual consent for a while and then should come together again is “so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” This is why the couple should sleep together in the same room.

I personally don't think that it's only the man's or the woman's fault who has sexual relations with other woman or man outside of their marriage by being tempted by Satan. For example, I think that there is a problem not only with the man or the woman who has affair but also his or her spouse as well. Of course, the problem is obvious that it's his or her fault who has affair. But I think that it may also has to do with his wife or her husband who has not fulfill her or his duty in fulfilling her husband's or his wife's sexual needs. For example, if the husband often wants to have sexual relations with his wife at night, but what if his wife keeps avoiding him and doesn't fulfill his sexual needs? I am sure from the woman's point of view, she may say 'I am not his sex toy.' The point is that when the couple doesn't faithfully fulfill their sexual obligations toward each other, the consequences can be having affair outside of their marriage. That's why Apostle Paul encouraged the married couples to fulfill their marital duty in fulfilling each other's sexual needs.

According to an internet article that I read before, there is serious sexual conflict among the elderly couple in Korea (Internet). The population health welfare association analyzed 2421 cases of sex consultation that were received in 13 counseling centers in Seoul, Incheon, and Chungbuk in 2010, and the number of inquiries related to 'couples sexual conflict' was 473 which was 19.5%. The causes of sexual conflicts were various, including lack of understanding about the physical and psychological changes of the other party, complaints accumulated from the past, economic problems, male patriarchal attitudes. There were various differences in opinion regarding the marital sexual conflicts according to the sex and age. In the case of a male elderly man, his wife's refusal when he ask for sex, and the elderly women were concerned about her husband's excessive sexual needs. In short, the husband has a strong desire to have sex, but his wife does not. That's why so many couples, whether old or young couples, are in are in a crisis called "sexless" (Internet). Here, the "sexless" refers to having a sex less than once or not at all within past two months. The problem is that in these days the sexless phenomenon is spreading to the newly married couple in their 20's. And the divorce rate due to sexless marital relations is increasing day by day. According to some divorce lawyers and family court coordinators say that 70-80% of the divorce crisis is sexless. In 2010, the main reason for the divorce (50,780 cases) was personality differences and the third reason was spousal unfaithfulness's sexless (10,351 cases). Personality difference is interpreted as 'sexual difference'. It means that the couples end up with divorce after going through disagreement and conflict due to sexless, having affair and separation. In this reality, we Christians should be faithful to the couples' duty in fulfilling our duties by receiving a lesson from 1 Corinthians 7:1-7. Of course, it is God's gift not to be married like Apostle Paul, but since we are not all given the same gift from God (v. 7), we the married couples must faithfully and wisely fulfill our duty in fulfilling each other's sexual needs. Therefore, we should not let Satan to tempt us (v. 5).

Uncomfortable grace

"No, what we are getting is something we desperately need, the uncomfortable grace of personal growth and change" [Paul David Tripp, "What did you Expect?"]

In this sinful world, when a sinner man marries a sinner woman, how can they not sin against God in their marriage relationship? But since the grace of God is abundant and overflowing in the midst of great sins (Rom. 5:20) the couple lives in God's grace. One of that graces is for the couple to forgive each other. They forgive each other from their heart, just as their heavenly Father has forgiven them (Mt. 18:35). Another grace of God is that the couple with many differences lives together as one flesh (Mk. 10:8). Without God's grace, the couple cannot live together with two different man and woman different in all aspects, such as different personality, different backgrounds, and different thinking and etc. But this grace of God is 'uncomfortable grace' to us. The reason why that grace is uncomfortable to us is because the couple who are married will be broken and be shaved a lot in making their family.

Usually we think that if two man and woman are similar in character, thinking, values, etc. (since they cannot be same) will live well together if they marry. And we think that if two people are so different, they will fight a lot if they get married, so it is better to meet with similar people and make a family. But why there are many conflicts and controversies between married couples even though they think that they are similar people in many ways? Why some of them even say that they are divorced because of their personality difference? How should the couple overcome each other's differences?

First, the couple must acknowledge the sovereignty of God in order to overcome each other's differences.

Here, the couple acknowledging God's sovereignty means that they acknowledge and accept that God the Creator made man and woman different, made him and his spouse different. The couple who acknowledges the sovereignty of God acknowledges and accepts each other's differences. Moreover, the couple who acknowledges the sovereignty of God not only humbly accepts God's will in bringing one man and one woman to be one flesh, but also commits themselves in fulfilling the will of the God. Then what is God's will? One of the wills of God is that there is no division and conflict between the two man and woman and that they have equal concern for each other (1 Cor. 12:25). So if one of them suffers, another suffers with him/her; if one of them is honored, another rejoices with him/her (v. 26). Therefore, the couple who acknowledges the sovereignty of God takes care of each other by filling and helping each other's shortages and weaknesses regarding their differences instead of keep on fighting.

Second, the couple should refuse to view each other's differences as right and wrong in order to overcome each other's differences.

Here, the couple refusing to view each other's differences as right and wrong means that they are not ignoring the moral right and wrong, but are refusing to think and to say that their difference is right and wrong. The reason is that God the Creator made each of the couple in sovereignty. And because God is the God who unifies in the diversity, the couple must acknowledge each other's differences. To acknowledge each other's differences doesn't mean that the couple is sitting down on the judgment seat and say, 'I am right and you are wrong'. It is arrogance. And it is only to show each other's self-righteousness. Rather, the couple who acknowledges their

differences believe that God made them in his image (Gen 1:27; Jam. 3:9) and that they are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14). And they humbly accept that the Creator God not only made man and woman different in his sovereignty, but also made no one exactly same in this world. Therefore, they don't see each other as right and wrong, but acknowledges each other's difference as they look at each other from God's perspective. And they are committed to keep the unity of one flesh in the midst of the diversity.

Third, the couple must appreciate and respect each other's differences in order to overcome each other's differences.

Here, the reason why the couple s appreciates each other's differences is because God has made one flesh through their differences. The couple who believes and experiences this also experiences God making them complementary to each other through their differences. In the process of this experience, the role of the couple is to objectively grasp the things that make them to fight and be in conflict through their differences. In the meantime, they should ask God why God has made two different people to come together in the Lord as one flesh and struggle with it. In order to do that, they should look their differences in God's perspective rather than in their own perspective. When they do that, they will realize why God has made them as one flesh even though they are (very) different. Surely there is God's will. The Holy Spirit will make them realize His will. The couple's duty is to humbly join in the work of God in keeping the unity of the couple by complementing each other and by looking after each other without disputes. They must try their best to keep the unity of the husband and the wife. They also must try their best to respect each other's differences. The reason is because the Creator God loves them and considers them precious and they are honored in God's sight (Isa. 43:4). The couple should love each other with the love of God, consider each other precious and honor each other. Also, they should respect each other's differences and even honor them. Therefore, they should complement each other through mutual differences and build each other up and grow together.

I remember the words, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17). In order for the iron to sharpen another iron, the irons must hit each other well. So the couple must fight well in the Lord in order to sharpen each other. The couple who fights well in the Lord acknowledges God's sovereignty and accept each other differences. And rather than say to each other "I am right and you are wrong," they say "We are just different" and make the difference as an opportunity for their mutual change and growth. They make each other's differences to complement each other so that their relationship grows more toward perfection in the Lord. Therefore, they appreciate and respect each other's differences. This is an uncomfortable grace of the individual's growth and transformation that the couple desperately needs.

Marital relation is bound to be improved.

Every year, marital relation is bound to be improved.

The reason is that the Lord, who is the center of the marital relationship, answers the couple's prayers and faithfully builds them up.

The Lord transforms the husband and the wife into more like Jesus, and makes the fruit of the Holy Spirit more enriching, so the marital relation is bound to be improved as the year goes by.

The 80/20 principle

I remember reading a book on Leadership and have come to know about Vilfredo Pareto's principle or "Pareto principle." This principle is also called the "80/20 principle." The key point to this principle is that you can achieve 80% of your results with 20% effort.

I have applied this principle to married life. In other words, I have applied the 80/20 principle to the married couple who has intention to fill each other's deficiencies. For example, I think the married life is that the husband to fill the 20% of his wife's deficiencies and the wife does the same to her husband. If the couple see each other's deficiencies only in negative way and complains about them, then the couple will eventually be forced to clash and have conflicts. But the wise couple will be able to grow into a perfect couple in the Lord as long as they live a life in complementing and filling each other's deficiencies with endurance and patience by taking their deficiencies as an opportunity of love each other.

When I apply this 80/20 principle to the marital life, I think that the wise couple is devoted not only seeing each other's 20% strengthens instead of 80% weaknesses but also build that 20% up to reach 80%. Therefore, the couple not only sees the 80% strengthens of his/her spouse but also encourage each other as they accept each other's 20% weaknesses and even love his/her spouse's 20% weaknesses. Of course, I think the marriage life is pursuing 100% strengthens. But I think that the couple also needs 20% weaknesses for their married life in this world. The reason is because the marriage life is for the couple to live by filling and complementing each other's shortcomings.

When I apply this principle to our married life over 10 years, two thoughts come to my mind.

First of all, I thought about how devoted I (and my wife) have been in raising my spouse's 20% strengthens to reach 80% and how much have I been bearing fruits. I ask myself whether I and my wife are pulling the best points out of each other, cultivating them, developing them, and building them up.

Second, I thought about how much am I (and my wife) putting efforts in covering up my spouse's 80% weaknesses with her 20% strengthens and how much have I tried to fulfill her 80% weaknesses. Instead of looking at her 80% weaknesses with complaining attitude, I ask myself how much I try to understand her weaknesses, cover them up in love and fill them up.

There is no perfect couple. There is just the couple who pursue a perfect marital relationship in the Lord. That perfection is possible only in the Lord. I think the marriage life is to accept and fill each other's shortcomings with God's love as them themselves are filled with His love and grace that fills their shortcomings. I want to pursue such marital life by the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Selfishness of heart

"Our fundamental problem is not ignorance of what is right. Our problem is selfishness of heart that causes us to care more about what we want than about what is right" [Paul David Tripp, "What did you Expect?"]

In this sinful world, when a sinner man marries a sinner woman, how can they not sin against God in their marriage life? The bitter root of the sins committed by the couple is pride. In other words, the sin that the two proud sinners commit against God is disobeying God's commandments. They are arrogant and don't keep the twofold commandment of Jesus. They don't love God and their neighbors. Because they don't love God, not only they don't love their neighbors but they cannot love them as well. Their neighbor's love is sinful human love and its bitter root is selfishness.

The problem is that we, who have been forgiven and saved in Jesus Christ through the full grace of God and by faith in Jesus, still have selfishness, the bitter root of our sinful human love. Although we became new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), God's love has poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), and we love God and our neighbors (Lk. 10:27), our old nature refuses to be led by the Holy Spirit. Seek the work of the flesh and love our neighbors with selfishness. Since this selfish mind makes us to give attention to what we want instead of what is right, we build relationships with our neighbors according to what we want rather than what is right in the sight of God. Among such relationships, I think the relation that manifest most selfishness outwardly is the marriage relation. The reason I think so is that God, who is the potter, purposed a man and a woman to live together in His sovereignty, so that two different man and woman can come together in the Lord. So the Spirit of God is bearing the fruit of love in those two man and woman in their marriage (Gal. 5:22). Thus, the Spirit of God gradually sanctifies the couple and makes them to love each other more and more with the love of God. In such a process of sanctification, the Holy Spirit is gradually getting rid of the selfishness of our old man that makes us to do what we want to do instead of what the Lord wants us to do (and/or what my spouse wants me to do). He does so as the Spirit first exposes our selfishness outwardly. And one of our selfishness is that the husband and the wife pursue what they want to do instead of what the Lord wants them to do and/or what our spouse wants us to do. As a result, the two selfish kingdoms, the husband's kingdom and the wife's kingdom, collide with each other, creating the bitter fruits of conflict, strife, hurt and pain. But what is amazing is that our God, who is the potter, through our sinful bitter fruit, mold us, the clay-like married couples even through our sinful bitter fruits. He enables us to confess and repent our selfish hearts, so that we can love God and love each other with selfless hearts. What is this if not the grace of God?

God is pouring His grace increasingly upon the couples who sins increasingly (Rom. 5:20). God pairs two selfish sinners, a man and a woman, and sanctifies them. God even uses conflicts, wounds, and sorrows, to mold the couples and make them to love each other with the love of God upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In particular, God has taught the couples His sacrificial love on the cross, making us to abandon our selfish hearts and love one another with Christ's selfless heart. God's purpose is to build the Kingdom of God in our families. The Lord gave us the Kingdom command, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself" (Lk. 10:27). We must obey this commandment. All the Christian couples should build the Lord-centered family by obeying the Lord's commandment. Therefore, I hope and pray that the Lord's church and the Kingdom of God will be firmly established on the Rock Jesus by our Lord-centered families.

Self-centeredness

“Self-centeredness by its very character makes you blind to your own being while being hypersensitive, offended, and angered by that of others” [Timothy Keller, “The Meaning of Marriage”].

I remember some people said ‘Marriage is the grave of life.’ I am not sure why they said so, but it seemed obvious that they viewed the marriage negatively. But I think that saying positively. So when someone said to me ‘Marriage is the grave of life,’ I used to joke and told him to have resurrection faith. There are two reasons why I said so. The first reason is that since a man and a woman are married and formed one flesh in the Lord, I think they must dig their grave deeply. And I think the couple must throw all things that are obstacles and hindrances into that grave one by one in order to the unity of their marriage. Here, one of the good ways for the couple to realize what are the obstacles and hindrances in keeping the marriage unity is marital conflicts. In other words, the couple should learn each other more deeply through marital conflicts, so that they can know what to throw away into the grave in order to love each other. Among the things to be thrown away, what we want to thinking about is "self-centeredness". The more the couple throws their self-centered things one by one into the grave, the more they will be able to keep their unity in the Lord. The second reason is that as the couple discards their self-centered (selfish) things into the grave, the selfless love of the Lord is "resurrected" (?) and thus they can love each other with the sacrificial love of the Lord. When they do that, I think that the couple can keep their unity in the Lord.

So what is "self-centeredness"? I would like to consider the above quotation by Rev. Timothy Keller in two ways:

First, self-centeredness blinds us to see ourselves.

I met my wife by the grace of God and we got married in the Lord. And when we went to the honeymoon, we fought on the second day. The reason we fought was because I wanted to watch an action movie called "Speed" so I went down to the hotel and rented the video in the hotel room (there was a free lending room on the first floor of the hotel) while my wife wanted to go to around the island with the rented car since we flew all the way to Maui Island, Hawaii. It is the first time that we fought because each of us wanted to do different (not wrong) things. At that time, I didn't know how to fight well, so I went out to the window veranda and lie down on the couch. And my wife chased me out, and she was angry and said something to me (I don't remember). Then I raised my book in order cover my face and not to see my wife looking at me with her angry face. Haha. But I remember my wife got angrier. So we fought during our honeymoon. The result was that I lost so we drove around in the island. I only remembered only one place that we went and that was the black sand beach where my wife wanted to go. The reason why I still remember the black sand beach is because when my wife mentioned it to me I thought the black sand beach is huge. But when we went there, I never saw such a small sandy beach in my life. Haha. I was expecting a lot (since I didn't know how to travel) but when I arrived, I saw the small black sand beach for the first time in my life. Hahaha. This was the first time that we fought since we met six months and got married. And when I reflect back, I see how obvious self-centered person I am.

When I think of my self-centeredness, as pastor Timothy Keller said, my own self-centeredness has made me blind not to see myself and still does. Especially, my own self-centeredness has blinded me not to see how selfish I am and how I love my wife selfishly. I don't know how much everything I say to my wife, what I expect

from her, what I ask, etc., is more for my own self than for my wife. Rather, my self-centered tendency makes me to look at my wife with my own selfish standard. And that tendency makes me to judge her with my own subjective and selfish standard, and eventually make me to complain in my heart and through my lips. What is really dangerous is that the self-centeredness makes me to think that I am right and she is wrong even though we are just different. So, even in my mind, I criticized and even condemned my wife that she was 'wrong' even in my mind. Nevertheless, the self-centeredness doesn't allow me to realize that I am sinning against God and my wife in this way. And my self-centeredness only reveals my self-righteousness to my wife. This self-centeredness has made me not see myself and still does.

In the midst of this, the indwelling Holy Spirit is transforming me to be more the Lord-centered person and not self-centered, wife-centered, etc., because the Spirit enables me to fight with my own self-centered tendencies and to win little by little. And the Holy Spirit makes me think of my wife as a priority rather than giving priority to myself because the Spirit changes me little by little from selfish tendency to selfless tendency. Although it is still far away to go, the Holy Spirit makes me to think more in my wife's perspective than my own perspective. In a word, the indwelling Holy Spirit is making me to deny myself, taking my own cross and love my wife. The Holy Spirit makes me to love my wife with the love of God by bearing the fruit of the Spirit that is, love in me. And the Spirit not only makes me to look at my wife with the eyes of love, but also makes me to want to love my wife more and more with the love of God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit makes me to taste the joy of loving my wife with His love. So how can we say that marriage is the grave of life? Haha. It is more appropriate to say that marriage is a well-watered garden of love (Jer 31:12).

Second, self-centeredness makes us to be sensitive, be offended and making us to be angry because of the other person.

I still remember that when I was in college my Christian club advisor said that a married couple could fight over because of the lid of the toilet. When I heard that, I couldn't understand it. How could the couple fight over the toilet lid? However, when I actually got married, I became more and more aware of how many small elements the couple can fight over. There were times when I thought that how the couple can be so different. So I even bought the books that the women wrote for the women to read because I wanted to know more about my wife. But those books were not exactly explaining my wife. Of course any book cannot explain my wife perfectly. The reason is because I married to one and only wife among the many women, and there is no one like her in this world. Haha. That was how much I wanted to know my wife, the unique woman. And I still feel the same. Actually, I want to know my wife now more than before. Now, my wife and I live together, accepting many differences from each other. Here, accepting each other's differences can mean that we understand each other's differences more than before, but also it means that we gave up trying to fix each other according to our own standards. Haha. So it seems that we have not fought since the end of last year or so (I don't remember clearly). Rather, we are happy in the Lord right now.

But in the beginning of the marriage, we fought a lot. Especially when we used to live in Korea (year 2001-2003), we have a lot of marital conflict. I still remember that one Saturday afternoon when I came home after finishing the church ministry, my wife said many things in anger (I don't remember what she said). As I was listening to her, I remember I prayed to God like this: 'God, I cannot love that woman with my love. Please help me to love her with Your love.' Haha. At that time, I didn't know why my wife was so angry at me that she poured out some words to me. I didn't even try to understand her heart and circumstance. I only thought in my position: 'I was doing church ministry all day from the Morning Prayer and I just came back home. What did I do wrong to her that she is angry at me.' I couldn't understand why and I just thought about it in my perspective. I couldn't even think about my wife's circumstance that she came to Korea that is like a foreign country to her and was raising our three children alone. I couldn't think about her heart that she was waiting for me to return home all day. I should

understand her heart, feeling and circumstance at least little bit so that I could speak to her gently and wisely with warm heart. But I just thought about myself. I was selfish. I didn't know what she was going through (She later told me when we came back to US that she was depressed when she lived in Korea). That was how much I didn't care for my wife. I didn't think much about my wife in her position. That was how much I lived self-centered life. So when we had conflicts, I reacted very sensitively to what she said to me, whether verbal or nonverbal. I was overreacting. I couldn't figure it out why my wife said what she said to me. In the meantime, I was overburdened and was hurt by my wife's words. One day, after returning to the US, we had marital conflict. I remember I told my wife, 'What you said to me was like my heart was stabbed with dagger and my heart really hurts.' Guess what she said to me? She said 'Thank you for telling me.' Haha. I was surprised by what she said because I thought that meant that she didn't know what she said was hurting my heart. But later when I thought about it, I think she said 'Thank you' to me because she knew how to love me more. My wife had been concerned about managing anger from the beginning of our marriage (when she finds out that I share this story with a lot of people like this, I am not sure how she will respond ...). Of course, she has righteous anger too. When we had conflicts, my wife sometimes got angry and let the words out to me at the beginning. But she didn't hold grudges. But I held grudges. During those times of conflicts, my wife and I were both over sensitive to each other, were angry at each other (as my wife said, she was angry at the outside but I was angry at the inside) and hurt each other's heart. The reason was because each of us was so self-centered.

I believe that now both my wife and I got lot improved due to the sanctifying work of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Of course, both of us must fulfill our responsibilities as husband and wife until we die). Now, we aren't that overreacting to each other, hurting each other and angry with each other. Rather, now, by the grace of God and the work of the Spirit, we are sensitive to one another, comforting each other's heart and making each other happy. Above all, my wife and I are experiencing the better horizontal relationship with each other because our vertical relationship with the Lord is getting better than before by God's grace. Especially since the year my wife has started Calligraphy, I am more aware that God is working in my wife's heart and life. I see that God loves my wife more than anybody else in this earth and that God touches her heart and guides and works in her life. As a result, my wife has a lot of bright smile on the outside that is from the inside. And I feel that she loves me more than before with the love of God. In particular, I see her understanding me, accepting me, loving me, obeying me and sacrificing herself for me. So how can I say that marriage is the grave of life? Marriage is a well-gardened of love and happiness.

Habitual criticism

In the words of ‘never’ or ‘everyday’ that many couples use during conversation, the blade of attack that hurts the other's feelings is hidden.

One evening a wife said to her husband, ‘Since you are always sitting in front of the TV, I am sure your life is comfortable.’ The husband lifted his head and said, ‘Aren’t you more comfortable than me since you are just staying home and doing nothing?’

From this time on, there was a fierce battle between the couple.

But if the husband said, ‘Is it unpleasant to your eyes that I am sitting in front of the TV?’,

then the conversation between the couple would have had a good result.

This is the way to obey the Scriptures

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (Jam. 1:19).

It is a good idea to repeatedly ask what the other person said in order to develop a habit of listening to the other person's words.

In fact, it is not easy for anyone to listen quickly and to speak slowly.

But if we respond instantly without thinking, we will lose our objectivity and will try to defend ourselves that will cause conflict.

The goal of the conversation between the couple is to maintain the relationship of love, not to win the controversy.

For example, when the husband comes home and takes off his socks and throws them into the living room, his wife can say ‘Honey, I’m getting worried about throwing your socks off’ instead of criticizing him and complaining.

Then the husband will look at his wife instead of responding immediately and think for a moment (Internet).

I thought this internet article was talking about me and my wife.

Wife: ‘You are always sitting down in front of the TV. You must be comfortable.’

I: ‘Don’t you feel more relaxed all day at home?’

Of course I don’t say like that to my wife. One of the reasons is because my wife works.

Since my wife is working full time, she cannot stay at home all day.

Nonetheless, I often commit my own habitual sins of criticizing my wife in my mind even though she works at her workplace, at our home, and at our church.

If I look at the criticisms, I see myself not loving my wife deeply but conditionally.

I can’t understand why my wife complains about me sitting down in front of the TV

and have free time and she can’t have free time when I help her housework.

I don’t feel very happy about my wife, who gives me the impression that

‘I am doing something terribly wrong’ by watching TV.

So I get angry, not outwardly but inwardly.

I can hear so many criticisms in my head that seem like they will not stop.

Although I know that this is sinning against God, it is often not easy to stop it.

This is a painful thought fight.

In the midst of these inner struggles, the grace that God gives me is that He enables me to look at Him rather than my wife and reminds His Words.

This meditation exercise is to overcome the thoughts of sinful criticism by God's thoughts, the Word, in the inner struggle. Of course, there are many time I lose the battle.

When I think about why I lose the battle, I think it is because I respond to my wife’s complaints with my emotions instead of meditating the Word of God and looking at God in my thought (inner) battle.

That's why in my thought and even in my words, the sounds of criticism and of anger come out.
That's why I cannot but confess that the Word of God is true: "slow to become angry" (Jam. 1:19).
As the indwelling Holy Spirit enables me to control my anger,
I can overcome my habitual criticism when I am led by the "Fact" (His Word) instead of my angry "Feeling".
I hope and pray that I can express my habitual praise and love to my wife rather than habitual criticism.

Conflicts

Conflicts (1)

One of the traditional ways in which the couples deal with conflicts was to suppress them. They tried to forget the conflict as if it were sweeping under the carpet and ignored it. We thought and called this method a 'good' and that's how Christians supposed to do. But burying the conflicts in our hearts makes us more resentful, depleting our energy and blurring our daily life perspective. Burying the conflicts from each other's differences will be resurrected again because we are burying them alive. The conflicts are very common in our human relationships and we consider them very negative. That's why we often lose the opportunity to receive the blessing of conflict. And the result is resentment in our hearts and complaints in our lips.

I remember making such determination before I got married: 'I will never complain about past things when I get married.' The reason was because I had heard my mother complaining within the context of marital conflicts when I was growing up (I apologize to my beloved mother for sharing this). So, I used to say many times as half joke and half serious that when there is marital conflicts the past histories come out fluently. Since I really hated it to hear them when I was growing up, I firmly decided in my heart that when I would get married I would never do that. Until that time, I had quite full of negative thoughts about 'conflict'. But now it is different. I now see more positive things than negative things about conflict. I think now that conflict is a good opportunity. It is the good opportunity for the couples to get to know each other. I think the conflict is the good opportunity for the couples to get to know each other and also to learn how to love each other.

Let me give an example. When we used to live in Korea, my wife and I had a bit of conflict due to our first child. Through that conflict I became more aware of my wife and myself. That means I got to know a little bit that our different backgrounds affected each of us and that was why we had that conflict. The reason we had the conflict was because I wanted my son to yield to others but not my wife. In other words, we argued because I wanted my son to be a person who yields to others but my wife wanted him to do things that he wanted to do. Through that conflict, I realized that my wife, as the first daughter, grew up yielding to her parents, what they wanted her to do, instead of doing what she wanted to do. So my wife didn't want our first son to grow like that, not able to do what he wanted to do but yield to parents and others. She wanted him to do what he wanted to do. But I wanted to nurture my son to be able to yield to others because that was how I got influenced by my father who is a pastor. In the end, we had this conflict of opinion because of the influence we got from our father and/or mother when we were growing up. This opportunity not only made me more aware of my wife, but also made me to understand her more and love her as she is.

The first thing I want to share about conflict is that we make conflict an opportunity to get to know each other and love each other as we are. Let's not see the conflict only negatively because we get hurt and is painful. Conflict is an opportunity! That is why we shouldn't plant greater resentment in our hearts by constantly dealing the conflicts in the traditional way. If we keep on pretending that there isn't any conflict between each other even though there is, then not only our energy will be depleted but also we are putting our hearts into jail little by little. Obviously there is a conflict, but pretending not to do is to deplete our energy as well as to put our hearts into jail. In order for us to enjoy freedom in the Lord, we must learn the lessons and wisdom that God wants to give to us through conflicts, not sweeping them under the carpet and ignoring them. In doing so, we will be able to pursue the beautiful loving relationship that God desires in all our marital relationships.

Conflicts (2)

How shall we resolve the inescapable conflicts in marital relations? The traditional way is to suppress them. It is simply avoiding the problem by thinking that time will solve by swallowing it without telling anything about conflict (Eskimo resolve method). Another way to resolve conflict is to solve problems by expressing their emotions, such as throwing a bullet-kind of word, throwing objects, breaking stuffs, etc., with a fighting posture when there is misunderstanding between the couple, but the problem still remains and they are just hurting each other (Cowboy resolve method). The escapism resolve method is dealing with conflict by avoiding the conflict altogether. It is the way of concealing problems by drinking, shopping, doing drugs, running away or getting into work, through the escape of reality. The worst conflict resolve method is violent resolve method. It is an unfortunate way of resolving conflicts by dealing another person roughly and violently. It causes violence and causes more pain and distance than the original caused problem.

The couples who overcome both big and small conflicts in their marriage know almost all the practical means of resolving conflicts and know the most important antidote to prevent marriage breakdown, which is the 'reconciliation spirit'. This effect creates a state of mind that is fundamentally changing the way people make reconciliation and deal with conflict. As we look for ways to resolve conflicts with a real spirit of reconciliation, I think we can make some suggestions.

The first step in resolving the conflict is to pray about the problem.

We sometimes think that everyone else is not right and that we are always right. But when we pray to God, our spiritual eyes are being opened and we begin to see ourselves differently. That is, we begin to realize our faults. If the couples pray daily for their marriage, then the marital conflicts will be cut in half. When we pray, God does miracles. When we pray, the direction we point to each other will change. Sometimes, when we pray the conflicts disappear. In order to resolve conflicts, we must go to God first, not to our spouse. We need to see what wisdom and insight God will give us.

The next step is to plan a formal peace talks in a quiet, secluded atmosphere where we can deal with our spouses face to face.

When both husband and wife are moderately energetic, it is necessary to plan for peace talks in a neutral atmosphere. It is also important to set a time for peace talks as soon as possible. And in the meantime, the couple should make a vow not to sin against each other and against God. Both of them must be banned from a series of nasty acts (involuntarily damned, spiteful, impudent) that complicate matters inevitably. What should they do with peace talks?

- (1) They should start with a positive. To jump right into the problem is to start with a negative attitude. First, 'Honey, I love you. And I decided to make this marriage a success. So I think our marriage can be better than now. Here's what I think', then the peace talks can get more cheerful.
- (2) Be willing to receive criticism. It is necessary for the couple to apply their insights and attitudes, which grew up when they prayed alone, to peace talks. That is, they must admit specifically what they have done wrong until the conflict has occurred, not to accept any blame that is without responsibility, but to accept the criticism that they are responsible completely. The power of apology is amazing. The

short words "I am sorry" can rescue their relationship with their colleagues, their relationship with their children, and their marriage from divorce. And that phrase can open a line of communication.

- (3) Look at the wound instead of hostility. Most problems start because of the wound. The wound is a legitimate response to disappointment and distress, and they should never deny it or hide it. It should always be expressed and discussed. It is important to plan a peace talks before the wounds turn into anger because the wounds become a problem when you let the wounds accumulate and turn into anger. What is important here is that people can set a temporary bridge of understanding and compassion by showing their hurts because they are moved by the pain of others. But when they complain, the temporary bridge will be blown up. Another mistake that turns the wound into anger is to build up the complaints. Although one wound can be dealt with, if it becomes two wounds then it will be more difficult to deal with them. And it is impossible to prevent it from turning into anger if they accumulate more wounds than that. So they should treat it as soon as they have a complaint.
- (4) Speak directly. Implication or improvised words are of little use. The couple should speak exactly what they want to say, whether they're in an official peace talk or in a routine conversation. They should use the phrase that starts with "I feel like ~." The plan of peace talks can be disrupted by the criticism that begins with "You" because not only it makes their spouses feel hostile but also it can end the process of peace talks even before it begins. The phrase that begins with "I feel like ~" opens the door for much less hostility, for continual discussion, and for practical problem solving. They should avoid the words "never" and "always". If they want their complaints to be taken seriously by their spouses, then they should use the accurate, truthful and realistic expressions. The words "always" and "never" always moves the focus away from the real problem. The unfairly blamed spouses will probably put the original problem aside and blame the conflicts of their relationships due to their spouses' poor communication skills.
- (5) I have a good idea! When they come to peace talks with a spirit of reconciliation and as they use the previous approaches, another important thing is that they have to make a decision to focus on finding a solution. Instead of trying to accomplish their own thoughts, they need make some guidelines that both couple can agree upon in order to be freed from ongoing conflict of opinion and disappointment.
- (6) The true moment. Problems that have given great hurt in the past and those that require complex solutions have the potential to show the worst of each other even during peace talks. In this case, they must make a lot of effort to prevent the process of peace talks from being hindered. In other words, rather than understanding each other in conversation, the more they share in the conversation, the more self-esteem manifests, the more they want to escape from the reality in a negative way about the problem, or even if they want to quit the conversation, they shouldn't flee. Instead, they should say 'We made one inch progress today. Maybe tomorrow it will be an inch further. But before we resolve this problem, we'll never give up.'
- (7) Please, help us! But what if the peace talks don't help? The next step is to seek advice from the trusted friends or the couples. Here, "the trusted friends" doesn't mean that their fiends come together just to gossip about their spouses. It refers to those whom they really can trust and respect. And they can have constructive conversation by asking them an advice about their behavior and not their spouses' behavior.
- (8) Go and meet the experts. What if they don't have reliable relationship with their friends yet? What if they don't have friends whom they can share their things comfortably? And what if their advice didn't help? If so, please go and see a counselor.

The crazy cycle

If there is no love from him, she will react without respect. If there is no respect from her, he will react without love. This continues to cycle. I call this ‘Crazy cycle’ (Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, “Love & Respect”).

The Bible clearly commands the couples. It is the commandment of Ephesians 5:33 – “However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” Clearly, the word of God commands that the husband must love his wife as he loves himself and the wife must respect her husband. Why? The reason is because the wife desperately needs her husband's love and her husband sincerely wants his wife's respect. However, all couples experience too many times that their needs such as love for the wives and respect for the husbands aren't fulfilled in their marital lives. And they blame on each other. The husband says that he doesn't want to love his wife because she doesn't respect him. The wife says that she doesn't want to respect her husband because he doesn't love her. The couple who isn't being satisfied by each other because their needs aren't fulfilled by each other blames each other. In the end, the husband who isn't being respected by his wife doesn't want to love his wife, and the wife who isn't being loved by her husband refuses to honor her husband. As a result, a 'crazy cycle' is born between the couple.

What is the husband's problem? I am sure if the husband is a believer, then he knows from the Bible Ephesians 5:25-31 that a husband should love his wife just as Jesus loves the church. Nevertheless, he sometimes doesn't want to love his wife. Actually, he hates to love his wife because he isn't getting respect from his wife. But this reason is just an excuse. This is because Jesus' love toward church is unconditional. That is, the husband's love toward his wife shouldn't be conditional. Whether his wife respects him or not, the husband's responsibility is to love his wife unconditionally. Of course, even this responsibility is known to many believing husbands. However, they often refuse to obey His command when they have experienced conflict with their wives because they aren't led by His Word. Why is that? It seems that when the wives spits out a disrespectful comment in the midst of anger, their husbands don't want to love their wives. In that kind of circumstance, the husbands usually go into a ‘cave’. They tend to back off and be silent.

What is the wife's problem? When her husband is silent, she feels ignored. She feels that her husband is trivial about her value. For the wife who wants to be loved by her husband but who is ignored by him, the approach she mainly chooses to be loved by him is to criticize and complain for the purpose of stimulating her husband. And these criticisms and complaints are interpreted by the husband as not respecting him, and furthermore as contempt (Eggerich). But in fact, his wife's criticism and complaints are expressions that ask him to love her. But how many husbands know this? The silence and complaints that persist between the silent husband and the complaining wife, and finally the husband who is not being respected and the wife who is not being loved, the couple will experience the crazy cycle. What is important is to be conscious of this crazy cycle and the couple to devote themselves to break that cycle. They shouldn't neglect this crazy cycle to keep on circulating as the husband keeps on not loving his wife and the wife keep on not respecting her husband. We should no longer satisfy with maintaining our marital relationships just like the crazy couples. We must rededicate ourselves to love our wives and to respect our husbands. In order to do so, the husband must love his wife unconditionally. Where is the husband who does not love his wife? But the problem is that the husband's love is not being delivered to his wife properly. The reason is because the husband does not know his wife well. Therefore, the husband should learn to love his wife in the wife's position as he gets to know her more in depth. How about the wife? What should she do? She must respect her

husband unconditionally. She must not think that she will respect her husband only if he loves her. The Bible says that the wife should respect her husband unconditionally as well (Eph. 5:33). She needs to know how to respect her husband. How can she respect her husband if she doesn't know how to respect him? The wife needs to know her husband.

Both husband and wife need to put down their strengths and develop their weaknesses. In other words, as the husband lays down what he is good at it, that is respecting other, he must learn to love which he is not good at it. The same is true to the wife. She needs to put down what she is good at it which is loving others. Where in the world is the husband who can satisfy his wife when she expects the same love from her husband in her viewpoint of love? She needs to lay down her love and she needs to learn how to respect her husband. When God has created the marriage system and mated the man and the woman as the couple under the system, I think He wants the couple to praise each other's strengths and to learn their weaknesses from each other's strengths and thus they can experience unity in the Lord. The husband should learn to love from his wife and the wife should learn to respect from her husband. Therefore, the couple must grow and mature in love and respect as husbands and wives and glorify God.

Decode in order to have conversation

"What I'm talking about is not what you are listening to, and what you think you hear is not what I mean" [Dr. Emerson Eggerich, "The Love that She Most Desires, The Respect He Desperately Needs"].

One of the reasons that keep the couple from getting out of the crazy cycle in marital relationship is the problem of conversation. And the problem of conversation is that the husband doesn't feel what his wife is saying, and the wife doesn't understand what the husband is saying. Although the wife wants her husband to sympathize with what she feels, her husband listens to her and hears that she wants a solution from him rather than sympathize with her feelings. So the husband counsels her in love regarding the solution, but the wife complains to her husband in dissatisfaction because he doesn't feel her feelings and she thinks that he doesn't love her with the level of love she wants from him. It's same that the wife doesn't listen to her husband well. When the husband usually struggles by himself (although his wife doesn't want him to do that because she wants him to share his struggles with her) and then speaks out to his wife, he wants her to understand him and respect him. But when she cannot understand him and doesn't encourage and build him up, then he will be more quiet and struggle by himself. No matter how many times she tries to understand her husband by opening her imaginary wings, she cannot because she listens and tries to understand what he says with her self-centered mind. In the end, both the husband and the wife are listening to each other with their own self-centered minds, they cannot share their thoughts and emotions. As a result, they cannot escape from the crazy cycle.

In order for the married couple to get out of the crazy cycle, they must learn each other's conversation method. In other words, the husband must learn his wife's conversation method, and the wife must learn her husband's conversation method. In order to do that, they need to put down their own conversation methods and open their hearts and ears first and listen to the each other's words quickly (Jam. 1:19). In other words, they must listen to each other. The husband has to put down his logical way of thinking and try to feel what his wife feels. In other words, the husband should be sensitive to his wife. He must put more emphasis on sensitivity development than intellectual development. Much effort is required. In doing so, he must say the words to his wife that make her feel that she is loved. And he should be able to lead the conversation with her. The wife also needs to lay down her emotional conversation method and learn her husband's logical thinking. In order to do that, she must focus on intellectual development rather than emotion development. And she should try to listen to him logically rather than emotionally. In the midst of it, she needs to be able to hear and speak to him so that her husband can think that his wife is respecting him. Therefore, the couple must no longer remain in the crazy cycle by being in disagreement in conversation. Instead, the couple should fill each other's needs by husband loving his wife and wife respecting her husband and satisfy each other. As a result, the couple should grow and be mature in their marital relations.

Conversation with wife

‘When we rush to fix the spouse's view, we give the impression that there is more to right and wrong than to agree with the suffering of the spouse.’

When I talk to my wife, I need to relax and listen (instead of being quick to suggest a solution to her).
I should sympathize with your wife's feelings first (I need to listen to her in her position and agree with her pain).
Then, I should share the Word of God that the Holy Spirit reminds me (I should try to show her God's perspective)

Conversation with husband

‘When a husband is silent, his wife's desire to share and confirm with him will increase. And the more the wife demands, the more husbands will not talk.’

The wife should respect the silence of her husband.
If she keeps on trying to satisfy her selfish desire to share and confirm with him, then it will make her husband to be more silent.
Silence is also his way of communicating.
Therefore, the wife shouldn't think and doubt that his silence means 'He doesn't love me'.
The wife should learn her husband silent conversation method.

Family story:

The best dinner in the world

June 3, 2008

Do you know a restaurant called Tony Roma's?

It was about 11 years ago that I first got to know that restaurant.

I married and went on a honeymoon to Maui, Hawaii.

And my wife wanted to go to Tony Roma's restaurant so I went there the first time in my life.

Of course, it was so good to be with my wife at that time, I didn't care about Tony Roma's or any of the restaurants.

And actually I don't remember what I ate at that restaurant.

It was about two years later when my wife was attending UCLA graduate school.

When we were living in the UCLA graduate apartment, one day my pregnant wife took a nap and woke up and came to the living room where I was sitting and told me about her dream.

She said she dreamed about eating Ribs in Tony Roma's.

I knew then that Tony Roma's restaurant was only in Maui, Hawaii.

So I thought, 'This woman is pregnant and what she said doesn't make sense.'

At that time, when I didn't say anything, my wife went to the kitchen and asked me, 'Do you want to eat ribs?'

At that time, my wife and I often went back to the apartment after church on Sunday evenings and ate the ribs that

my mother-in-law sent from Arizona with the Korean spicy noodle. It's because I really like the noodle. Haha.

Since I thought my wife asked me whether I wanted to eat the ribs or not, I answered her "It's okay" because I didn't want her to work hard to cook for me.

Then suddenly my wife cried and went into the room.

I was a bit shock when I saw it.

I just said "It's okay" to her because I didn't want her to work hard to cook ribs for me.

But when she cried and went into the room, I didn't know what was going on. I didn't understand.

So I went into the room where my wife was and tried to talk to her in order to comfort her who was crying.

When I talked to her, I found out what she meant. Although I thought she said 'Do you want to eat ribs?', what she meant was she wanted to eat something from Tony Roma's (this make more sense in Korean because we were speaking Korean at that time).

In other words, as she was going to the kitchen, she wanted to eat the ribs from Tony Roma's, the one that she dreamed of eating Ribs in Tony Roma's. That was why my wife said, 'Do you want to eat ribs?'

After dreaming of it, she wanted to eat Ribs at Tony Roma's restaurant, which was 5-10 minutes' drive from our UCLA graduate apartment where we were living.

At that time, that was my first time that I realized that Tony Roma's was not only in Maui, Hawaii, but also in 5-10 minutes' driving distance from our UCLA graduate school apartment.

Later, I found that the Tony Roma's restaurant was in Korea as well. Haha.

So after we resolved our misunderstanding, we went to Tony Roma's restaurant near our apartment and ordered Ribs, which my wife wanted to eat in her dream. And we laughed together and ate the ribs deliciously.

Although the food was not a banquet dinner, when I saw my pregnant wife eating that Tony Roma's Ribs that she really wanted to eat even in her dream with cheerful smile on her face, I could say that it was the best dinner in the world.

Forgiveness

"The cost of forgiveness is great, but the harvest of forgiveness is a beautiful thing ..." [Paul David Tripp, "What did you Expect?"]

Take courage to forgive and accept

When a beloved person has done wrong to me,
we must first see a lot of our sins and greatness of my sins before God
instead of seeing the amount and size of his/her wrongs.

As I do so, I must forgive him/her not only from my heart
But take courage to forgive him/her, accept him/her
and determine to love him/her more than before
as God forgave me in Jesus Christ.

You must not miss the time.

You must not miss the time
to say "I love you" to the one who you love.

You must not miss the time
to say "I forgive you" to the one who needs your forgiveness.

Forgiving your spouse

[These short essays (1) ~ (3) are written by Mrs. Yoon Sun Lee, who is serving in YouVersion Korea, based on the articles on my personal Naver blog]

Forgiving your spouse (1)

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

'I cannot forgive her. Although I know in my head that I have to forgive my spouse for wrongdoing, but I cannot forgive her in my heart. And frankly, I don't want to forgive her. Especially when I think about what she did to me, I get so angry that I sometimes even want to pay her back. But I suppress. Since the Bible says "Love is patient" (1 Cor. 13:4), I am trying to be patient again and again. But she is hurting me again and again. And yet she isn't asking me for forgiveness. I think she doesn't even feel that she needs to ask me for forgiveness. Maybe she doesn't even know that she wronged me and hurt my heart. Maybe that's why she just acts as if nothing happened. I hate her when she does it and I cannot bear it. So I don't want to forgive.'

When we, the couple, live together, they wrong each other so many times. Actually, we are bound to wrong each other. The reason is because we are two different people with different personality, different background, different influence from the parents and so on. So the conflicts, wronging and hurting each other are inevitable. But the fundamental cause is that two sinners met and got married into one family. Think about it. How can't two sinners who formed the family and commit wrongs to each other? Not only they wrong each other, we commit sins against God and against each other. The problem, however, is that we don't forgive each other after we have committed so many wrongs and sins to each other. Even if we forgive each other, we don't do as much as we wrong and sin against each other. We are slow to forgive and refuse to forgive each other. Because we don't live a life of forgiving each other, our hearts have scars and bitterness. And these wounds and bitterness make us unable to love our spouse completely.

Forgiving your spouse (2)

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6: 14-15).

The wounds and bitterness in our hearts keep us from seeing what we are doing good to each other and seeing only what we are doing wrong to each other. The more we see such wrongs, the more we judge each other and even criticize and condemn each other. There is something here that we don't understand well. To judge, criticize, and condemn each other is that we are putting "self-righteousness" on one another. For example, when we don't forgive our spouse who has been wronged and hurt us, but rather treat our spouse with hurt and bitterness in our own heart, so that we judge (criticize) our spouse by saying that 'S/he is wrong and I am right'. By saying so, we want to be acknowledged that we are right before God. As a result, we don't feel the need to ask God for forgiveness because we are proud and don't understand the sin we are committing against God. Then what is the sin that we are committing against God? It is a sin that we aren't forgiving our spouses. Yet, in our wounds and bitterness, we are judging, criticizing, and even condemning our spouses by looking at their wrongs and sins. How would God see that? And what about our spouses' hearts who receive such judgment, criticism and condemnation from us? Our spouses will be hurt by feeling that they are not being loved by us. And, because of the hurt, they won't only forgive us but won't be able to do so. What will happen to us who refuse to forgive each other? The wounds and bitterness in our hearts will continue to be accumulated. Then one day they will blow up against each other and our marital relationship will be broken.

Forgiving your spouse (3)

“Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34); “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation” (Luke 11:4).

This is what the Bible says, “But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Mt. 6:15). The couple should forgive each other when they wrong each other. If the husband did wrong, then he should be able to tell his spouse not only by saying "I am sorry" but also "I am wrong". He must say specifically what he did wrong and how. And he has to show his commitment that he will try not to wrong her again. But this isn't easy to do so. The reason is that his old sinful nature is selfish and that he believes his spouse's fault is bigger and greater than his own. Not only that, his nature expects his wife to ask for forgiveness rather than him forgiving her. How difficult this is for him to fight his own sinful selfish nature in order to forgive his wife? For him to forgive her, he has to pay such a high price. He has to deny himself and take up his cross (Mk. 8:34). And when he forgives his wife for such a high price, the harvest of that forgiveness is beautiful. When he asks for forgiveness by pay such high price, she must forgive him. She must forgive him just as in Christ God forgave her (Eph. 4:32). She must forgive him just as God already, is and will forgive her innumerable sins she has committed and will commit against the holy God in Christ Jesus. Moreover, she must accept him and love him as he is with the love of God. When she does so, she will be able to pray to the Lord, “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us ...” (Lk. 11:4).

Forgiving your spouse (4)

"Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little" (Luke 7:47).

I used to say this to my wife honestly before: 'You are the greatest encourager to me, but at the same time you are the greatest discourager to me.' The reason I said to her was because not only that I was encouraged by her the most but also I was hurt by my wife. One time, I told my wife honestly 'Jane, my heart is hurting. What you said really pierced my heart like a dagger.' And then my wife said to me: 'Thank you for letting me know.' I was surprised to hear that. And I thought in my mind like this: 'How could she say like that? Didn't she really know that I was hurt by what she said? From now on, I should tell her when I get hurt by what she says.' After that conversation, my wife and I continued to have conflicts. But there was something different than before. We began to be more careful in thinking about what not to say and what not to do in order not to hurt each other's hearts.

My wife and I began to have a habit of talking carefully and honestly at a time when we have been hurt by each other more than before. When we are hurt, our human nature is that we want to be comforted and to be healed. However, many times we hide our deepest hurt from our spouses without any comfort and healing, as if those hurts have been ignored. Then, those hurts that we hide deep in our hearts will keep on piling up with the new hurts due to the conflicts. Eventually, those hurts will express outwardly and burst like a bomb, bringing a crisis to the marital relationship. Before that, we need to find bombs hidden deeply in our hearts and remove them one by one, just as if we were removing bombs hidden in minefields. In order to do so, we must commit ourselves to the removal of the bomb in our hearts with our spouses. And we must use the bomb extractor wisely. Here, the bomb extractor is forgiving. In order to remove the bombs in our hearts, we must commit ourselves to forgive each other with the heart of Christ Jesus. We must forgive our spouse first, rather than expecting our spouse to come to us first and ask for forgiveness. How is this possible? How can we forgive our spouses first?

First, we must know the sin we committed against God and our spouse.

Look at Luke 7:39 – “When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner.” This is what the Pharisee who had invited Jesus to his house to eat with him said to himself (v. 36). The reason he said like this to himself was because he saw a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town brought an alabaster jar of perfume, stood behind Jesus at his feet weeping, began to wet Jesus' feet with her tears and then wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them (vv. 37-38). But Jesus didn't distance himself from her, the "sinner", but instead he let her wipe his feet with her tears and then with her hair, let her kiss her feet, and even let her pour perfume on his feet. In the Pharisee's point of view, I am sure he couldn't understand. I am sure he was wondering why Jesus let her do all those things to him if he was the prophet whom the Jews were waiting for (Deut. 18:18), then he would have known that the woman who touched him was a sinner. What we can speculate here is that this Pharisee knew that the woman who sinned was a sinner, but he didn't know that he himself was a sinner. To be more precise, this Pharisee thought that he was righteous. That was why he said to himself that the woman who wiped Jesus' feet with her tears and her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them was a sinner (v. 39). And I am sure the Pharisee considered her unclean and thus distanced himself from her. But Jesus allowed her to come close to her and let her to do what she was doing on his feet. So wouldn't what Jesus did to her surprised the Pharisee?

When a man and a woman live together in marriage, there are so many things that surprise the couple. The couple didn't know the things that surprise them when they were dating. But when they get marry, they can get shocked by what they see with their own eyes the surprised things that are being exposed. The problem is not that they are surprised when they see those things that they didn't know, but that they are disappointed with each other because of the things we have learned, and they also cause conflicts in their marital relationship. Of course, at first, they will be patient with each other, and in many cases they will not make a marital issue. But when time goes by the couple will began to have conflicts due to the obvious marital problems. Eventually, they will argue and fight each other. And when they argue and fight, they can hurt each other's heart because they talk to each other in an angry state (the one who is angry may not know that s/he hurt her/his spouse). Of course, it is not only because of what they say that hurts each other. They can hurt each other even with their nonverbal behaviors. The problem is that when they are hurt, they don't say that they are hurt and they refuse to forgive each other. Then they will start to see each other with distorted view because of the hurts that are in their hearts. As a result, they may criticize each other (Mt 7:1). And they may look down on each other in their minds (Rom. 14:3). They may slander each other (Jam. 4:11). They even condemn each other (Lk. 6:37). Now they no longer keep the law but sit in judgment on it (Jam. 4:11). When they come to this point, they cannot realize not the sin they have committed to each other, but also against God. The reason is because they have lost ability to regard their sins as sin because they are looking at themselves before their spouse rather than looking at themselves before God. How then can they acknowledge and confess their sins to God and seek for forgiveness? If they cannot confess their sins to God and ask for forgiveness, of course, they can neither acknowledge and confess their sins against their spouse nor seek forgiveness. They must know and understand the sin that they committed against God and their spouse. And when they sin against their spouse, before seeing the greatness and size of their spouse' sins they must see their sins and the size of their sins before God. In order to do so, they must meditate on Jesus' suffering and His death of the cross. When they think about Jesus who suffered for our sins and died on the cross, they can realize their sinfulness and how great and many their sins are. And as they realize the greatness of their sins, the more they know, the more time they will look at their sins before God rather than focus on their spouse's sins.

Second, we must forgive the sins of our spouses as God has forgiven our sins.

Look at Luke 7:42 – “Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” This is what Jesus said to “one of the Pharisees” (v. 36), named "Simon" (v. 40), asking him “Two men owed money to a certain moneylender” (one owed him 500 denarii, and the other 50) (v. 41) and “Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” (v. 42) Simon's answer was “the one who had the bigger debt canceled” (v. 43). What was Jesus' intention in saying this to Simon? Why did Jesus tell Simon, a Pharisee who dealt with the woman who poured perfume on Jesus' feet as “a sinner” (v. 39), the parable of write off debts? (vv. 40-43) I looked up the answer in verse 47: “Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.” Jesus wanted to tell Simon that many of the sins of the woman whom Simon regarded as a sinner were forgiven (vv. 47-48). And Jesus told Simon that many of her sins were forgiven because she loved Jesus so much (v. 47).

A truly serious problem in marital relations is that we are not aware of the sin we have committed against God and our spouse. But a more serious problem is that we know the sin committed against God and our spouse but are not seeking forgiveness from God and our spouse. We may often ask God for forgiveness, but we don't ask our spouse for forgiveness. Although we say that we love our spouse, but we are hesitant to ask our souse for forgiveness. Thus, we miss our opportunity and ask our spouse for forgiveness. Why? Maybe it is because we are trying to justify us in front of our spouse (Lk. 10:29). In other words, we may miss the opportunity to ask our spouse for forgiveness by trying to justify ourselves in front of our spouse. Perhaps we are refusing to ask our spouse for forgiveness because we don't see the greatness and innumerable sins of our own before God but see the

greatness and innumerable sins of our spouse. If we truly know the sins we have committed against our spouse before God, we will go to our spouse, not only to God, humbly and genuinely seek for forgiveness. And if our spouse truly knows that God forgave her/his sins in Christ Jesus, then s/he will forgive us in her/his heart just as God forgave her/him in Jesus Christ. In addition, s/he will be courageous and will accept us in her/his hearts and will love us more than ever.

The husband must know not only what he has done wrong against God and to his wife, but also the sin that he has committed against God and his wife. And he must acknowledge, confess, and repent of his sins not only to his God but also to his wife. And he must demonstrate to his wife that he truly repented of his sins with the conviction of God's forgiveness. Therefore, his wife must be able to recognize that her husband has truly changed. And then she must forgive her husband whom she loves. She must forgive him with gratitude and grace for the fact that God forgave a sinner like her in Jesus Christ. In particular, she must forgive her husband in love because of the abundant grace and great love that God has shown to her because of the fact that she has been forgiven many sins that she committed against God. The same is true to the husband. He must forgive his beloved wife because of God's great love and abundant grace that has been shown to him in forgiving his great and innumerable sins. He must forgive her and embrace her with affection of Jesus Christ. I hope and pray that as the couple not only get to know their great and innumerable sins in their relationship with God, but also get to know God's overflowing love and abundant grace in forgiving their great and innumerable sins, they may be able to forgive each other with the heart of Jesus Christ.

Family story:

“Forgiving is powerful”

August 9, 2009, Sunday.

In this Sunday morning, I heard a little child crying out loud in the church when I was in my church office.

When I listen to the child’s crying carefully, it was the sound of my first daughter.

I never heard her crying that sad.

I didn’t know what happened and why she cried that sad in the church restroom after she locked the door when she came to church 5 minutes ago.

As I was listening to my beloved daughter’s crying I wanted to go to her.

But I waited because her church teacher was in front of the bathroom and was calling my daughter.

A little later, I heard the voice of my wife.

I think my wife was asking our daughter to open the door.

But my daughter was kept on crying for a while and maybe after 2 or 3 minutes she opened the door.

Then, without knowing what happened, I had to go into the main sanctuary to have an intercessory prayer time with the church members.

After intercessory prayer time, Korean worship, lunch, English worship, teacher Bible study, and pastor meetings, when the congregation members were almost gone, I called my daughter and went into my office with her.

And I asked her what happened why she cried.

She told me what happened to her without telling me the name by using the words 'this person' and 'another person'.

So when I heard everything, I asked her, "Are you okay now?"

And she said "I am okay".

Then she said she asked that person for forgiveness, but that person didn’t her for forgiveness.

So I sincerely praised my daughter and told her that she did a good job.

I told her that she did the good job in asking that person for forgiveness (even though I think she didn’t do anything wrong).

When we were finishing talking, she told me to talk to my wife because she told everything to her.

So later, I talked to my wife and heard everything what happened.

And I could guess roughly what happened.

Then, after a few hours, I came into my house and saw that my wife and our youngest daughter were in the kitchen and our son was brushing his teeth in the bathroom.

But I didn’t see my first daughter.

So I thought she probably was somewhere in the house and I went into my room to change clothes.

And my first daughter was hiding there and she surprised me. Haha.

So I asked her to sit next to me on the bed and I briefly shared my thoughts about what happened today.

In a word, I told her "Forgiving is powerful" and "I am proud of you".

Then, after a while, when my wife and three children were in the kitchen, I told them to sit down because I had something important to say.

When everyone sat down quietly, I told my wife and the kids again that "Forgiving is powerful" and 'I am proud of my first daughter.

And I gave my kids an example.

I told them if I fight with mommy and if I hate her in my heart, then Satan will like it.

But if daddy and mommy forgive each other, then God will like it.

Then I told my wife that if she had anything to say to the kids go ahead and say.
My wife was also thankful to God and rejoiced because she how God was raising our first daughter.
And my wife was looking at the things that happened in the church this morning from a spiritual point of view, so she would be proud to see her win by God's help in that spiritual battle.
I told my children that if we forgive someone unconditionally even though we may feel unfair to do so, the forgiveness is powerful.
When I said that to my kids, I rededicate my life once again to live such a life.
Looking at my daughter who is better than me, tonight I think I can sleep with gratitude and joy.

To build trust with the loved one?

"Trust not only needs to be build, but it needs to be protected" [Paul David Tripp, "What did you Expect?"]

I think we are living in a world where we cannot trust anybody. There are many people who believe in other people and are disappointed and are hurt. So many people don't want to believe anyone anymore. Even married couples do not entirely trust each other. Rather, many couples seem to suspect each other. There seem to be a lot of couple who doubt whether their husbands or their wives are having an affair with other women or other men. Especially, it is a great risk to trust in their spouses who already once broke the trust of the couple by having an affair. Like this, we are living in the world that we cannot trust even our loved ones. What should we Christians do in this world of distrust? We must build trust with our loved ones. In particular, we must build up trust with our spouses whom God has paired. In order to do that, what should we do? Let us consider four things:

First, we must trust God in order to build trust with our loved one.

The ultimate reason why beloved people don't trust each other is because they don't trust God. For example, the couple who cannot trust God cannot trust each other. The reason is because trust can only be made in the relationship with the horizontal loving spouse when there is trust in the vertical relationship with God. Therefore, the first thing we need to do to build trust with our loved one is to trust in God. This is what the Bible Proverbs 3:5 says: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." As the Bible says, we must trust in God with all our heart. But there is an element that prevents us from trusting in God with all our heart. That element is to rely on our understanding. This is our instinct. Our instinct isn't to trust God with all our heart, but to rely on our own understanding. It is very unstable for us to trust our loved one while relying on our own understanding. The reason is because the source of trust is not God, but ourselves. If we are trusting in ourselves rather than God, not only we don't but also we cannot trust others but ourselves. Since we trust in only ourselves, we cannot trust our loved one. Even we trust our loved one, that trust is very unstable. We don't know when and how that trust will break. So Jesus didn't entrust Himself to people because He knew all men and what was in man (Jn. 2:24-25). Therefore, in order to build trust with our loved one, we must trust God before we can trust our loved one. Only by trusting God we can trust our spouse whom we love.

Second, we must give our trust to our beloved one in order to build trust with our loved one.

We must trust each other by trusting God. The more we trust God, the more we can trust each other. As we trust each other, we must first give our trust to our loved one instead him/her to give us the same trust. We should give our trust to our loved one not only when we see something that we can trust in him or her but even when we don't see anything that we can trust in him or her. In other words, giving trust to our loved one shouldn't be conditional but unconditional. Just as God's love is unconditional, we must love our loved one unconditionally. And if we love our loved one unconditionally, we should trust our loved one unconditionally. Even if our loved one breaks the trust with us and betrays us in the future, we must trust our loved one by trusting in God. Then what should we do if our loved one actually breaks our trust and betrays us? I am sure we can throw this question to

ourselves. And I think the reason we ask this question is because we may not trust God completely, but rather trust our own understanding. So if we trust ourselves more than God, we cannot help but wonder in distrust, 'What if we trust our loved one and get betrayed?' So when we rely on our understanding, we cannot trust our loved one completely. Therefore, we must give our trust to our beloved spouse by trusting in God. But many times since we trust ourselves rather than God, we expect our spouse to trust us instead of giving our trust to our spouse. And when we don't get that trust from our spouse, we feel bad and even get angry. This is a person-centered marital relationship. If we have the person-centered marital relationship, we will expect to receive rather than give (we will be selfish). But if our marital relationship is God-centered, then we will love to give to our spouse rather than expecting to receive (we will be selfless). The couple who has such God-centered marital relationship first gives unconditional love and trust to their spouse. And even if we are betrayed by our beloved spouse, God-centered couple overcomes their own fight against their own sinful nature by looking at Jesus, who has been betrayed by His own people. And in the meantime, the God-centered couple forgives their spouse who betrayed them with the love of God. Although this is impossible when we think and rely on our own understanding, but it is possible if we trust God. God can make it possible. By trusting in God, we must give our loved ones trust.

Third, we must be true even before our loved one as we are true before God in order to trust the loved one.

We must be truthful Christians. And we should be honest. We must not lie to each other. We should not deceive each other. We must not only be truthful before God but also before each other. To what extent we must be truthful before each other? We must be truthful enough to say to each other, 'God is my witness' (Phil. 1:8). God is watching us all. Also, God knows all our thoughts. Therefore, as we are truthful to God, we must be truthful even before our loved one. In order to do that, we must have a straightforward, clear and transparent conversation with our loved one. And when we have conversation, we should have 'other person-centered' conversation instead of 'me-centered' conversation. That means we need to talk to our loved one because we want to do something for him/her rather than we want him/her to do something for us. That is, we must talk in order to build our loved one up. But the conversation that breaks down our loved one is to manipulate him/her and say something to him/her in order to get something from him/her. We must refrain from saying those kinds of words. Also, we should not speak to deceive our loved one. Just as we don't speak deceitfully to God and manipulate Him in order to be truthful before Him, we must do the same to our loved one. Just as we pray to God in a straightforward, clear, and transparent prayer, we must also have open, clear and transparent conversation with our loved one. We must speak the truth from our hearts (Ps. 15:2). Truthful lips endure forever (Prov. 12:19). Just as God is faithful in all He does (Ps. 33:4), we must also be faithful in all we do. We must devote ourselves in keeping our promise faithfully to our loved one. Whether that promise is large or small, we must keep the promise that we made to our loved one faithfully. In doing so, we can build trust in relationships with our loved one. We must love each other with actions and in truth (1 Jn. 3:18). We must be truthful and faithful to each other so that we may trust each other (Prov. 25:19).

Fourth, we must acknowledge our wrongs and seek forgiveness when we wrong to our loved one in order to trust the loved one. And we have to devote ourselves to change.

We can do wrongs to our loved one. We may not trust our loved one completely and doubt about him/her if we don't trust God completely and rely on our own understanding. And when our doubt toward our loved one increase and has developed, we may distrust our loved one. These distrusts create dissatisfaction in our hearts and eventually make us to complain to our loved one with our lips and to disobey him/her. Even this dissatisfaction in our hearts makes us not be honest with our loved one and to lie to him/her. And while we lie to our loved one, we make excuses and justify our lies to our loved one (ex. It was good lie. I lie because it was for your sake, etc.). But a lie is a lie. Lying is worthless (Jer. 7:8). We shouldn't deceive or lie to each other (Lev. 19:11; Col. 3:9). But if we deceive or lie to our loved one, we must ask him/her for forgiveness. We must confess to him/her honestly and

sincerely our wrongful sin. And we must not only commit ourselves to him/her that we will never commit the same wrongful sin again, but also show our commitment to him/her with our words and actions. Not only that, we must forgive our loved one when s/he asks us to forgive her/his sins. And when we forgive our loved one, we shouldn't keep any record of his /her wrongs (1 Cor. 13:5). As God blot out our transgressions according to His unfailing love and His great compassion (Ps. 51:1), we must erase all the wrongs our loved one did to us in our hearts. And we must devote ourselves to love our loved one with God's unchanging love. We must also rededicate ourselves to trust him/her. We should make the relationship with our loved an opportunity for change in the Lord. Therefore, we must grow with our loved one in the Lord. We must be built as mature couples.

The wise parents

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

According to a survey, many young people hate their parents. The type is divided into four (Internet):

- (1) First type: Since my parent beat me and hate me, let me see - Many children have been abused.
- (2) Second type: What did my parents do for me – The parents didn't fulfill the children's needs, or since the parents have snobbery, they have over-influenced the children.
- (3) Third type: Why did my parents give birth to me like this – This type applies to the children who have excessive physical, mental and social inferiority.
- (4) Fourth type: My parents raised me wrong – There are lots of children who are overly protected by their parents and who have problem with receiving lack of parents' affection. They are usually introspective and were left alone so they are quiet when they are outside. But when they come home, they are rebellious, vandalize stuffs, assault, hate, and outburst and become tyrants. Usually the lonely children often blame on their parents for their problems. The phenomenon is caused by the overprotection of parents and the result of loving too much. It can be said that this is the retributive justice that the adults made.

As we know, there are always the problem parents behind the problem students. Why are our children not being properly cared for and nurtured? The figure of the right function family is love, peace of the family, the image of the harmonious relationship between husband and wife. However, in the figure of dysfunctional family, there are a lot of conflict and problem than peace of the family and the harmonious relationship between husband and wife. We can compare such dysfunctional family to the path, rocky places and thorns. Then I would like to think of five characteristics that the dysfunctional family has that make the family not to raise and nurture the children properly (Internet):

- (1) The dysfunctional family focuses their attention on a child who has emotional problems.

In the dysfunctional family, the adults who need to care for the children have problems. It is the case that the children need to fill the desire of the parents. However, the right function family is the opposite. In the right function family everyone has peaceful mind. And in that family, the children are not caring for their parents, but the parents are taking care of their children.

- (2) The dysfunctional family limits the expression of emotions a lot.

The family members have to keep their feelings intact. The dysfunctional family is also manifested by distorted beliefs. When a person with mental problem encounters faith, he or she accepts it as distorted. When the adult child has faith, he or she keeps on appearing in distorted faith. He or she has strict restrictions on himself or herself. He or she cannot understand the gospel as it is, the gospel.

(3) The dysfunctional family stops speaking openly about any obvious problem.

There are people who cause problems, but they don't want to improve. Rather, they want to suppress, indifferent, cover them up. They say never to speak out. And they have no will to improve.

(4) The dysfunctional family forces their children to survive.

Instead of encouraging each family member to be themselves, the dysfunctional family emphasizes the role of survival. Because the parents have a lot of complex, they keep on setting their children as agents. The children are being oppressed by the desire of their parents. Such family forces a sacrificial victim. The parents shift their responsibility to their children. They put burden on their children.

(5) The dysfunctional family doesn't provide adequate nurturing for the growing children.

It is because the parents have not received the supply themselves.

What kind of parents should we be? We must be wise parents. Then, who are the wise parents? I want to think of "The wise parents" as two things.

First, the wise parents are parents who don't provoke their children to anger.

Look at Ephesians 6:4a – "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger" The Bible is telling us, the parents, not to upset our children, not to stir them and not to provoke them to anger. How can we parents provoke our children to anger? I am sure there are multiple answers. For example, we can provoke our children to anger (1) by yelling at them, by being angry at them, by speaking words that stirs them, (2) by disciplining them wrongfully, (3) by pointing out our children's faults even though we personally live terribly, (4) by treating our children like our own properties, by expressing unconditional authority, by abusing our children and by ignoring our children (Pee). The Bible Exposition Commentary tells us six reasons why fathers can upset and discourage their children: (1) different words and behaviors, (2) always blaming on children but never praising them, (3) inconsistency and unfair in discipline, (4) favoritism within home; (5) not keeping the promise, (6) treating the things lightly that are very important to the children. In my opinion, one of the things parents can provoke their children to anger is that when the parents don't love each other. Particularly, the children can get angry when their father doesn't love their mother. In other words, if the children don't see their father not loving their mother just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her in their home (Eph. 5:25), then the children can get angry. The father can provoke his children to anger by not being a good example as their spiritual leader at home.

Then why did Apostle Paul say "'Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger" (Eph. 6:4a)? In the days of Paul, the father had the highest authority at home. For example, in a Roman home, when a baby was born, someone took the baby to the father. If the father picked up the baby, it meant that he would accept the baby in his house. If the father didn't pick up the baby, it meant that the baby was rejected. Then the rejected baby could be sold, given to other people, or could be killed in the sun. That was why Paul told the parents not to abuse their authority to abuse their children, but use the authority to comfort and build the children up. Look at Colossians 3:21 – "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart." Therefore, we, the parents, should not exasperate our children. Instead, we should encourage them.

How can we encourage our children?

(1) The best way is to show them how we love each other as their father and mother.

We can encourage our children by being obedient to Ephesians 5:22-32. In other words, I think the best way to encourage our children is for the wife (mother) to be submissive to her husband and the husband (father) to love his wife.

(2) It will be great encouragement to our children when we set an example of living a holy life.

We can encourage our children by being obedient to Ephesians 5:26-27. In other words, as the husband (father) lives a life of obedience to the word of God by pursuing God's holiness and lead his wife (mother) also to pursue God's holiness and thus both live holy life, we can encourage our children. We should never show a life that only talks like holy couple and pretend to be holy but the word and the life don't match.

(3) It will be great encouragement to deliver a message that lifts our children up.

In other words, we should complement a strong point of our children. The encouraging message that lifts our children up opens the door for them to learn, to grow, to mature and to gain independence by enhancing their value. In his book "Rebuilding Your Father Relationship," James L. Schaheller said that the father must give his children "value and self-esteem." I cannot help but agree with what he said. He also said, 'The people who didn't get supported by self-justice from their father in their childhood are often shaken when they feel anxiety. But those who have been encouraged and supported can stand firmly even if the storms of life are aggravated.'

Second, the wise parents are parents who bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Look at Ephesians 6:4b – "... but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Apostle Paul exhorts us, the parents, to educate and strengthen our children and nurture them until they are mature. Here the word 'bring up' (or 'nurture') appears in Ephesians 5:29, where the husband should "feeds" ('nurture') his wife. That is, as a spiritual leader in the home, the father has a responsibility to nurture not only his wife but also his children as well.

How should we raise our children?

(1) We should nurture our children in the training of the Lord.

Just as we are first disciplined by the Lord, be healed and walk the way of the Lord, we must nurture our children in the same way. Look at Proverbs 22:6 – "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." We must teach our children the way they should go, the way of wisdom, or the way of godly life. In teaching my children, I am especially trying to teach them three things: (1) Right Value, (2) Clear Purpose, and (3) Eternal View of Life.

(2) We should nurture our children in the instruction of the Lord.

We must give our children advice, warning, and exhortation with love. I think we are spoiling our children too much these days. How should we instruct our children? Tedd Tripp speaks two things in his book "Shepherding a Child's Heart": Rich, full communication and the rod. Nurturing our children with the Lord's instruction is speaking more of conversation than the rod. Then how should we talk with our

children? There are three principles: (1) Don't talk to your children; rather, talk with them, (2) (Don't just express your thoughts only; rather, learn how to draw out their thoughts (Prov. 18:13), (3) Focus on understanding your children. It is important to understand the nature of our children's anxieties that they are experiencing. We have to give our strength and effort to understand why they explode their feelings. Then what is the purpose of this instruction? Look at Colossians 1:28 – "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ." The purpose of instruction is to raise our children to be perfect in Christ.

The Western proverb says: 'Children don't learn in front of their parents. They learn from their parents' back.' The parents can say good words to their children. But the most important principle in raising children is that the parents should be an example to their children. In order to do that, we Christian parents have to learn. We must learn how to encourage our children instead of provoking them to anger. Also, we must learn how to teach our children in the training and instruction of the Lord. The wise parents ultimately learn how to raise our children to be perfect in Christ. So we have to let them see our life from our back and encourage them follow us. I hope and pray that God gives us wisdom so that we may raise our children to be perfect in Christ, not provoking them to anger, but nurturing them in the training and instruction of the Lord.

A father's true leadership

‘Even if you can get the results you want right away from people with your authoritarian charisma, but if you cannot really earn their trust by moving their hearts, it is not a true leadership.’ [Jin Jae Hyuk, ‘Parent’s Leadership Determines their Children's Future’]

What is the father's true leadership toward his children?

God gave authority to the father (the husband) of the family. And the father is responsible for leading the family with this divine authority that God has given him. But the problem is that many fathers have heard their children saying that they are an authoritarian father. Why? Maybe the reason is because we lack patience. In other words, it may be because we want fast results from our children. Although this kind of authoritarian charisma can bring quick action or result from our children, it cannot really move our children’s hearts. What should we do? How can we, the fathers of the family, lead our family well?

First, we, the fathers of the family, should not abuse the authority God has given us.

The reason why we shouldn’t abuse God’s given authority is because when we abuse our authority we will never be able to earn the hearts of our children. Rather, we must keep the peace and order of our family by wisely using God-given authority. Nowadays, the father’s authority has fallen in many families. Since our wives are ignoring our authority, our children are following their mothers’ example and also are ignoring our authority. I think this is serious problem. Not only the abusing the father’s authority is serious problem, but also the neglecting his authority is serious problem as well.

Second, we, the fathers of the family, must trust our children.

Of course, this won’t be easy. Especially when we think that our children are lying to us, it will be very difficult for us to trust them. But if we fully trust God and commit our children to God, we can trust our children. Because we trust God, we must devote ourselves to trust our children. When we do so, we will be able to earn our children’s hearts. Although the quick results we want and expect will not seem obvious, our children’s hearts will progressively believe and follow us as we commit ourselves to trust them.

Third, we, the father of the family, must have conversation that connects our hearts with our children’s hearts.

In particular, we should open our hearts first to our sons and have one-on- one conversation. Of course this will not be easy either, especially to the fathers who don’t speak much. They may not be familiar in talking with their children. But we have to keep on trying to talk to our children. We must deliberately try to communicate with our children. We need to open each other's hearts and communicate truthfully rather than having a formal dialogue. When we have the heart to heart conversation with our children, then we will be able to lead our children well.

What is it that we, the fathers, lead our children well? It is that we have good influence on our children. And that good influence means that our children feel the love of Jesus Christ and see little Jesus Christ through us

and then imitate the image of Jesus Christ. I hope and pray that we, the fathers, can have such good influence on our children.

Parental happiness equation

‘The Korean parents usually think that the successful life is the best life and they want their children to be successful. Therefore, the happiness equation of the Korean parents is success. They think that their children must succeed in order to be happy.’ [Jin Jae Hyuk, ‘Parent’s Leadership Determines their Children's Future’]

The purpose of the Korean parents' enthusiasm for their children's education is the success of their children. So the Korean parents want their children to go to a prestigious university by studying hard and doing well. And then they want their children to get a good job after graduating from the university. They hope their children to be stable and live well. Why is that? The reason is because that it is the happiness that many parents think. I think that's why there is a saying that "happiness doesn't come in grades". So, from the time of their childhood, the children seem to grow up to listen to "study", "study" and "study" from their parents. Is study everything? When the children comes home around 10 o'clock evening after school and after private educational institute, is that the best that their parents can do for them?

I think there is a problem with the view of success that the parents have for their children. In other words, I think the parents' view of success is nonbiblical. Although the parents want to give their best to their children for their success, I think that the success of the children that their parents pursue misses the point from the Bible. Does success in the Bible really say that the children should go to the prestigious university by studying well and get the good job after they graduate from the university? Is it biblical success that after having the good job, they get marry and have children meet and live comfortably? The success that the Bible talks about is not fulfilling our purpose. The success that the Bible talks about is fulfilling God's purpose. The biblical success is the fulfilling the will of God. The success is God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. But now so many parents are seeking to fulfill their will through their children rather than seeking God's will for their children. How unfortunate is this? This is not giving happiness to our children at all. Rather, this is making our children unhappy. The parents who depend on themselves rather than depend on God and who their own will instead of God's will for their children will eventually make their children unhappy and they will also become unhappy as well.

We, the parents, must have the biblical view of success. In other words, we must seek God's will for our children instead of our will. And we must not forget that it is God who accomplishes His will and not us. Let's remember that those who succeed in God's sight are those who fulfill God's will. A good example of this is Joseph in the book of Genesis. The Bible says that Joseph became “a successful man” (Gen. 39:2). How did Joseph become the successful man? Joseph was hated by his older brothers, was sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, and served him. And because he refused to sleep with the Potiphar's wife, he was in a prison for two years. How can we say that Joseph was the successful man? From the standpoint of the world, Joseph was troubled and unhappy. In worldly perspective, he wasn't a happy and successful man. However, the Bible says that he “became a successful man” (v. 2). Why is that? The reason is because Joseph did the will of God. Then what was God's will that God accomplished through Joseph? It was saving lives (45:5). Whose lives were saved by God's will? It was the life of Jacob, Israel, and his children, and the life of their descendants (v. 7). In short, the will of God that God accomplished through Joseph was "salvation" (vv. 5, 7). Therefore, the Bible says that Joseph was prosperous, successful man.

What do you think of this biblical view of success? Are you, as parents, seeking God's will for your children whom God has given you? Or are you trying to fulfill your will through your children under the name of parental love? Happiness doesn't come in grades. Happiness is never getting a good job after we graduate from the prestigious university. The true happiness is not a worldly success. Happiness is the success in the sight of God. Happiness is fulfilling the will of God. Happiness is being used by God as His instrument of God's salvation. And the secret of that happiness and success is that God is with us (Gen. 39:2, 3, 23; Josh 1:5, 9). I hope and pray that God is with our children and that He fulfills His will in and through them so that our children may be prosperous and successful in the sight of God and enjoy the happiness that God gives.

I am afraid when I think about my children.

“At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, 'How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.’” (Proverbs 5:11-14)

I am a father of three children and I have fear. The fear is that when my three children whom God gave to my wife and I as the gifts grow up and become teenagers, they may go astray. The reason I have this fear is probably because I went astray when I was a teenager. But a greater fear that I have than this fear is that my three children betray Jesus, leave faith and the church. Although I cannot imagine this fear being actualized, I only look at the Lord since I don't know the future and only God knows.

When we look at Proverbs 5:11-14, we see the author of the Proverbs had fear. His fear was that when he died, his son (v. 1) aged and at the end of his life his flesh and boy are spent (v. 11), he might regret his life as he looks back at his life. What was the image of the regretful life of the son that the author of the Proverbs feared? I can summarize in two ways: (1) 'Why did I hate my parents' instruction and my heart spurn reproof?' (v. 12) and (2) 'Why didn't I listen to the voice of my teachers?' (v. 13). If we have really an important meeting in our life's journey, it is the meeting our parents and our teachers. These two meetings are important because our parents and our teachers have the greatest impact on our lives. Especially, the influence of our parents on us is bigger than the influence of our teachers. Of course, our teacher's teaching affects us, but our parents' instruction and reproof has much bigger impact on us. The problem, however, is that our children reject the influence of their parents and teachers. They hate their parents' instruction and reproof at home, and they don't listen to their teachers at school. As a result, our children go astray and fall into evil unlike the wish of their parents who have raised them with instruction and reproof and the expectation of their teachers who have taught them. Which parents and which teachers would like to see their children and their disciples walking in the way of sin? The author of Proverbs was afraid of this. After he died, when his son aged he might regret his life at the end of his life by the fact that he hated his parents' instruction and reproof and that he didn't listen to the voice of his teachers and was in utter ruin (vv. 12-14). As a father, the author of Proverbs was afraid that his beloved son would come to an unwanted conclusion because he hated his parents' instruction and his reproof and his teacher's teaching. Aren't you afraid too? Don't you have fear like the author of Proverbs when you think of your beloved children? Or are you already experiencing the reality that you were afraid of?

What must I do as a father of three children? What I can do is to teach my three children "my wisdom" and "my understanding" (v. 1) like the author of Proverbs. How should I impart my wisdom and understanding to my three children? Of course I must teach the Word of God with my lips and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. But before that, I myself must obey the Word of God and live a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ in front of God and of three children. My heart eagerly prays and hopes in God that my fear of the three children will not be actualized.

Three prayer topics for our children

"The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned" (Genesis 39:2-4).

There is still a scene in my mind that I cannot forget. The scene is when we had a scholarship service last year July for those high school graduate students who were about to go to college, their parents were praying for them. Later, when I was looking at the pictures taken at that time, I saw one of the mothers knelt down on the floor and laid her hands on her beloved son's body and prayed to God. When I saw it, I was happy and thankful. When I saw the mother who wasn't even going to church (wasn't a believer) and was praying for her son like that, I thought that the parents' hearts toward their children is the same, whether they believe in Jesus or not. Their hearts are that they want their children to be well and doing well. What is it that children are well and doing well? Is it all goes well? Is it true that what the parents really want for their children is to do well without any problems? If so, then by whose will that they should do everything well? Is it the parents' will or Father God's will?

Every year around this time, I read the Joseph's story in the Bible, Genesis chapter 39. And I often remind myself that the secret of success in God's perspective is God being with us. In other words, as I remind myself who is truly successful person in God's perspective through the Bible, the Joseph's story, I distinguish those who have succeeded in the worldly perspective. As I do so, I pray to God for our church children "Lord, do not let our children successful in the eyes of this world, but let them be successful like Joseph in the sight of God." As I encounter the Joseph's story through the Bible again in this New Year 2012, God began to teach me three more specific prayer topics in addition to my previous prayer topics.

The first prayer topic is, 'God, please be with our children'.

If we read Genesis 39:2, 3, 21, and 23, we can see the same word. And that same word is 'The Lord was with Joseph.' Joseph was separated from his father Jacob and sold as a slave to Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard (v. 1). There were no family members around him. But the omnipresent God was with his beloved Joseph (v. 2). And God gave him success in everything he did (v. 3). God made Joseph a successful man (v. 2). Don't we want our children to be blessed with success from God like Joseph? We, the parents, cannot be able to with our children for a lifetime. Sometimes we cannot be with them even a day. That's why we must pray to our heavenly Father for our children. We should pray to God, 'God, please be with our children.' Especially for children who are far away, we must ask God for Him to be with our children. I still remember when our first baby Charis was in the Los Angeles Children Hospital Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Since my wife and I cannot stay with Charis 24 hours a day, we had to go home at night. So almost every night when we left the hospital and drove to our apartment, we heard the gospel song "Under the Shadow of Your Wings" (or "Hide Me in the Shelter") in the car and made that song as our earnest prayers to God. Whenever we listened to that song, we earnestly pray to God in our hearts for God to hide Charis under the shadow of His wings and protect her. Dear parents, let us pray to God for our children. Let us ask our Immanuel God to be with our children all the days of their lives. When God is with our children, they will able to enjoy the blessings of prosperity (success) like Joseph.

The second prayer topic is, 'God, let our children find favor.'

If we read Genesis 39:4, 21, the Bible says that God let Joseph to be found favor. In other words, God let Joseph to be found favor in the sight of his master Potiphar (v. 4) and in the sight of the chief jailer (v. 21) when he was put in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined (v. 20) by being wrongly accused by the Potiphar's wife's slander (vv. 14-18). God has already given favor to Jacob, the father of Joseph, when Jacob was in his uncle Leban's house for 20 years. God gave him wives and children and made him exceedingly prosperous (30:43). When Jacob was going back to the land of his fathers and to his relatives with all his livestock, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram (31:3, 18) his older brother Esau was coming to him with his four hundred men (33:1). How terrifying is it that Esau, who tried to kill Jacob about 20 years ago, came with 400 men? But God caused Jacob to be found in the sight of his older brother Esau (vv. 8, 10, 15). God made Esau, who tried to kill Jacob, to be gracious to Jacob. How gracious and faithful is God? This faithful God who fulfilled the covenant with Jacob did not only give Jacob grace, but also made Jacob to find favor in Esau's sight. Also, the same God who also gave grace to Joseph, the son of Jacob, made him to find favor in Potiphar's sight and the chief jailer's sight. I pray that our children, like Joseph, also find favor in the sight of the unbelievers. I hope and pray that our children find favor in the sight of their teachers/professors at their school, their bosses at their work. Therefore, I pray that God will bless our children's unbelieving teachers/professors, and bosses (39:5). May God use our children who live in this world as the channels of blessing to others.

The third prayer topic is, 'God, raise our children and use them to fulfill God's will'.

If we look at Genesis 39:4, Joseph found favor in Potiphar's sight and became his personal servant. And Potiphar made Joseph overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. Potiphar made the Hebrew slave (v. 17) Joseph overseer in his house and over all that he owned (v. 5). So he didn't concern himself with anything except his wife (v. 9). But the wife of Potiphar looked at Joseph, who was handsome in form and appearance (v. 6), with desire at him (v. 7) and spoke to Joseph day after day (v. 10) "Come to bed with me!" (v. 7). But he refused (v. 8). So one day when Joseph went into the house to attend to his duties (v. 11), it was just him and the Potiphar's wife. She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" (v. 12) But Joseph left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house (v. 12). At that time, she called her household servants and lied to them by saying "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house" (vv. 14-15). Then, when her husband Potiphar came home, she again lied to him and gave him the false evidence that eventually led Potiphar to put Joseph in prison (v. 20). But the Lord was with Joseph and He showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the chief jailer (v. 21). So the chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail (v. 22). Isn't this interesting that God was with Joseph and he was raised as Potiphar's personal servant, overseer over his house and then in the jail he was raised as a person who was in charge of all the prisoners so that whatever was done in the jail, he was responsible for it. Then didn't God raise Joseph as the ruler over the land of Egypt? Didn't God, who raised Joseph to be in charge of the Pharaoh's house and of the jail, eventually raise Joseph to be the ruler over the land of Egypt? As I meditated on this in the New Year 2012 and when God gave me some understanding, I began to pray to God for our children like this: 'God, please raise our children.' When I was a little kid, I heard a lot of prayers saying, 'God, do not let our children become tail but head.' Now when I am grown up and praying for my children, God had taught me to pray for my children: 'God, please raise them and use them to fulfill God's will.' The purpose of God in exalting Joseph as the ruler of Egypt was so that God would preserve the life of Jacob, his children, and his descendants, a remnant in the earth (45:5, 7). To fulfill this will of God, God was with Joseph, ruled over all things, and gave grace to Joseph so that Joseph became the Potiphar's personal servant, overseer over his house, a person who was in charge of all the prisoners and then the ruler of Egypt. I hope and pray that these blessings of God's prosperity be with our children.

A father's prayer for his son

(1 Chronicles 22:5-16)

These days, I am deliberately reading books about the family. Among those books, yesterday I read the book "Letters to Philip" by Charlie W. Shedd. This book is made up of letters written Charlie W. Shedd when his son Philip asked him, 'Father, can you write a letter to me, how I can be a great husband?, few weeks before his marriage. As I read this book, I was challenged to work harder to write emails to my son and my two daughters. Especially nowadays my son comes to the Morning Prayer meeting with his mother, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays my wife has to go to work straight from the church. So as I take him home I have 20 minutes to talk to my son so I wanted to try. And sooner or later I want to complement my son for coming to Morning Prayer meeting steadily even though he is only in sixth grade. I want to praise him for wanting to come to Morning Prayer meeting at that young age because when I used to serve our church as a pastoral intern, I didn't even go to Morning Prayer meeting that was held on the third floor even though I was sleeping on the second floor. Moreover, I would like to share with my son my prayer topic that I am praying for him. Now, when I think about my son, Dillon, I keep praying for him with almost the same prayer topic. That prayer topic is 'God, may You make Dillon to be truthful and faithful.'" The reason I pray like this for my son is because his name "Dillon" means "truthful and faithful". However, as I meditate on the 1 Chronicles 22:5-16, there are three more prayer topics that I should pray for my son. And I want to share those prayer topics with you.

First, the father's prayer for the son is 'God, please be with my son.'

Look at 1 Chronicles 22:11 – "Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the LORD your God, as he said you would." Father David called his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the Lord (v. 6). He told Solomon that even though he had heart to build the house (v.7) he couldn't because he has shed much blood and have fought many wars (v. 8). So David told his son Solomon that God told him "He is the one who will build a house for my Name" (v. 10). And David told Solomon "Now, my son, the Lord be with you" (v. 11). The purpose is that Solomon could prosper when God is with him (v. 11). What is success in God's sight? It is to fulfill the will of God (see Genesis 39, 45). Then what was the will of God for Solomon? It was to build the temple of God. Father David, who knew this, prayed that God would be with his son Solomon (v.11).

Dear fathers, let us pray to God for our children: 'God, please with our children.' When our Father God is with our children, our children can enjoy the blessings of God's prosperity. When our Father God is with our children, our children can succeed in God's sight and fulfill God's will. Let us pray to God that not only us but our children as well can be used by the Lord to build His church so that His Kingdom can be built as well. If God is with our children, our children will prosper and will be successful in God's sight.

Second, the father's prayer for the son is 'God, please give my son discretion and understanding.'

Look at 1 Chronicles 22:12 – "May the LORD give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God." Father David prayed and blessed his son Solomon for God to give him discretion and understanding. What was the purpose? The purpose was David wanted Solomon to rule over the Israel well with God's given discretion and understanding (v. 12). So when God appeared to Solomon and asked him "Ask for whatever you want me to give you" (2 Chron. 1:7), Solomon asked

God “Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people” (v. 10). In other words, Solomon's purpose in seeking wisdom and knowledge from God was to lead the people of Israel, the people of God. In the end, the father David’s prayer topic toward his son Solomon became the Solomon’s prayer topic. Then what does it mean to lead the Israelites well? It is to keep the law of Lord (1 Chron. 22:12). That was why David prayed for his son Solomon and asked God to give Solomon wisdom and understanding so that he might keep the law of the Lord his God. This was one of the responsibilities of the king. And that responsibility is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of the law of the Lord and it should be with him, should read it all the days of his life, that he might learn to fear the Lord his God (Dt. 17:18-19). The reason is that his heart might not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he might not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left (v. 20). Also, the reason why David prayed for his son Solomon and asked God for discretion and understanding was so that when he keeps the law of the Lord, he would prosper (vv. 12-13). As a result, God gave King Solomon wisdom and understanding, and with that wisdom and understanding, Solomon led the Israelites well because he kept the law of the Lord his God. All the people of Israel have obeyed the God's law. Therefore, just as the promise God gave to David, God gave peace and rest to the kingdom of Israel through “a man of rest” King Solomon (v. 9).

We, the fathers, should pray to God for ourselves as follows: ‘God, please give us wisdom and understanding.’ When God answers our prayer and give us wisdom and understanding, we will be able to lead our families well by obeying the commandments of the Lord. And let us pray for our children like this: ‘God, please give wisdom and understanding to our children.’ When Father God gives wisdom and understanding to our children, they will obey the commandments of God. And when our children keep the commandments of God well, then they will be able to enjoy peace and rest that God gives them.

Third, the father's prayer for the son is, 'God, please make my son to be strong and courageous.'

Look at 1 Chronicles 22:13 – “Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.” Father David knew that his son Solomon was "young and inexperienced" (v.5). But the house to be built for the Lord should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations (v. 5). So David made extensive preparations before his death (v. 5). In great pains (v. 14), he prepared more cedar logs than could be counted (v. 4) and “a hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver, quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone” (v. 14). He also prepared many workmen: “stonecutters, masons and carpenters, as well as men skilled in every kind of work” (v. 15). In a word, father David prepared many things for his son Solomon before he died (v. 5). Then David called Solomon and challenged him, saying, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged” (v. 13). He challenged Solomon "Now begin the work." And David prayed that the Lord would be with him (v.16).

Let’s pray for our children like this: ‘God, please make our children strong and courageous.’ I hope and pray that God may answer our prayer and make our children to be strong and courageous so that they may arise and work to build the Lord’s church and the kingdom of God that should be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all the nations.

Am I raising my children properly?

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Am I teaching my children my son Dillon and two daughters Yeri and Karis whom God has given me and my wife as gracious gifts rightly so that even after I die, they will not depart from the way that should go? Am I training them in the way they should go?

Until now whenever I meditated on Proverbs 22:6, I encouraged myself and our church parents to teach our children three things: Right Value, Clear Purpose, and Eternal View of Life.

But today when I was meditating on Proverbs 22:6 again, I was taught that I should teach my children five things.

The first thing is I should teach my children that a good name is to be more desired than great wealth.

Look at Proverbs 22:1 – “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor is better than silver and gold.” The Bible tells us to choose good name and favor more than silver or gold or great wealth. This reminds me Noah. The Bible says “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time and he walked with God (v. 9). I want my three children Dillon , Yeri and Karis find favor in the eyes of the Lord like Noah. Therefore, I hope and pray that they have the good names that God knows and approves.

The second thing is I should teach my children that the Lord made the rich and the poor.

Look at Proverbs 22:2 – “The rich and the poor have a common bond, The LORD is the maker of them all.” Naked the poor and the rich came to this world, naked they will leave this world. We came to this world with empty hands and we will leave this world with empty hands. Our lives can be abundant, but it can also be in need. The important thing is not to be rich or to be poor, but to learn the secret of contentment (Phil. 4:11). Therefore, as Dillon, Yeri and Kari live in this world where the rich and the poor live together, I hope and pray that they are satisfied with the Lord.

The third thing is I should teach my children that the prudent sees the evil and hides him/herself.

Look at Proverbs 22:3 – “The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive go on, and are punished for it.” The foolish ones who cannot discern sins are the naïve ones who go on even when they see the evil. How foolish is this? I want to nurture my children so that they can hide when they need to hide. Like David who

ran away from King Saul and hid in the cave. I don't want to raise my children like the fools who recklessly harm themselves and drive their lives into a crisis.

The fourth thing is I should teach my children that the reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life.

Look at Proverbs 22:4 – “The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD Are riches, honor and life.” How important is humility in Christian virtues? I want myself to be humble before God and before people. And I hope that my three children can see Jesus' humility in my life. I also seek God's wisdom. One reason is that those who have the wisdom of God fear God. Also, those who fear God hate evil. Therefore, I hope and pray that God gives Dillon, Yeri and Karis wisdom so that they can fear God and hate evil.

The last fifth thing is I should teach my children that those who guard themselves will be far from thorns and snares.

Look at Proverbs 22:5 – “Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them.” The righteous God punishes the rebellious. And that punishment is thorns and snares. I don't want Dillon, Yeri and Karis to walk in the way of thorns and snares. In order for them not to walk in the way of the perverse is to teach them how to guard their hearts. I want them to be humble and fear God so that they can be far from the way of the rebellious and walk in the way they should go. I hope and pray that God gives my children humility and wisdom.

As I was meditating on Proverbs 22:1-6, my shortcomings were exposed in that I didn't faithfully teach my three children in the way they should go in a holistic and balanced way so that even when they are old they will not depart from it. When my children are old I won't be in this world anymore. So before I die, I must diligently teach Dillon, Yeri and Karis in the way they should go. I hope and pray that they learn throughout their lives that the good name is to be more desired than great wealth, the Lord than rich or poor, wisdom than foolishness, humility and fear of God than arrogant and evil, those who guard their hearts than being rebellious so that even when they are old they won't depart from them.

How should we raise our children?

"A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully, And will share in the inheritance among brothers" (Proverbs 17:2).

How should we raise our children? I read an article from Christian Today under the heading 'The principle is more important than the method of child raising'. The content of the article was from the book 'The Family Principles that Decide My Child's Future' (Internet). In this book, the author says that the parents must learn how to raise their children so that they may become experts and that the important thing is they must learn the principles of raising children well and apply them before they learn the child raising methods or skills. Also the author says that the parents should also set the principles of child discipline and training with consistent attitude and discipline and put them into practice. It seems that there are eight principles, one of which suggests two ways to pass on a healthy faith to their children. And two ways are education through an example and fun family time. When we set up these principles in raising our children, we can nurture our children emotionally and spiritually healthy.

In Proverbs 17:2, this is what King Solomon says: "A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully, And will share in the inheritance among brothers." Based on this Word, I want to think about three things that teach us how we should raise our children.

First, in raising our children, we must raise them as wise children of God.

Look at Proverbs 17:2: "A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully, And will share in the inheritance among brothers." As I continue to meditate on the Book of Proverbs, I gradually realize how important "wisdom" that the Bible talks about. In other words, God teaches me more about the value of wisdom through the words of Proverbs. Therefore, I pray to God for more wisdom. Moreover, I pray and think about how to nurture my wife and my three children with God's wisdom. So as I meditate on the Word of Proverbs, I think about James 1:5 more than before, and I hold onto that word of God and pray: "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him." In Proverbs 17:2, King Solomon says that the wise servant will rule over the son who acts shamefully and will share in the inheritance among brothers. Here, King Solomon contrasts the son of the master who acts shamefully with the wise servant. One has the status of "son" and the other has the status of "servant". Nevertheless, King Solomon says that the person with the status of "servant" will share in the inheritance of his master like the person with the status of "son". How is this possible? How can the person with slave status be able to share his master's inheritance like his master's son? That is because that the servant had the wisdom. When I think of this wise servant, I remember Proverbs 16:20. The reason is because this verse explains "wisdom": "He who gives attention to the word will find good, And blessed is he who trusts in the LORD." What does this mean? It means that to be wise is to pay attention to the word of God. This is what the Bible Proverbs 19:20 says: "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days." We can be wise when we pay attention to the word of God and receive the counsel and accept discipline of God. And the Bible says that a wise man will find good (16:20). And that good is that the wise servant will also share in the inheritance like his master's son (17:2). But the foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him (v. 25). And in Proverbs 17:21, the Bible says "He who sires a fool does so to his sorrow, And the father of a fool has no joy." Here the word "a fool" appears twice. The first "a fool" means "dull," "thickhead" and the second "a fool" means "one who lack spiritual perception and sensitivity" (Walvoord). In other words, a foolish child is not only dull and thickhead, but s/he is also lacks spiritual perception

and sensitivity. So s/he acts shamefully because s/he cannot discern God's will but lives on his own accord. Therefore, s/he is sorrow and pain to her/his parents.

If we have this kind of foolish child who is sorrow and pain to us, will there be any joy in our lives? That's why we must nurture and raise our children well as God's wise children. In order to do that, I think we, the parents, first have to deal with at least these three things faithfully. And then hopefully we can apply the same principles to our children as well:

(1) We must pay attention to the word of God (16:20).

In other words, we must focus on the Word of God. And we must obey the voice of God as we meditate on the Word day and night. We must receive the commands of God which is the wise of heart (10:8). We must receive instruction and teaching through the Word of God. Then we will be wiser (9:9).

(2) We must walk with wise people.

Look at Proverbs 13:20 – “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.” We must not associate with fools. The Bible Proverbs 14:7 says that we must leave the presence of a fool. Why is that? The reason is because we will not find knowledge on the lips of the fool (v. 7). If we make friends without leaving the fool we will suffer the pain. Rather, we must walk with the wise. Why is that? The reason is because we get wisdom when we walk with the wise (13:20).

(3) We must seek wisdom from God.

Look at James 1:5 – “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” When we realize that we lack wisdom through meditation of the Word of God, we must seek wisdom from God even more.

Second, in raising our children, we must instruct our children to live righteously by God's grace.

Look at Proverbs 17:6 – “Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.” Here, if we interpret the phrase “Children's children are a crown to the aged” narrowly, it means that the grandchildren are the grandparents' joy and dignity (Walvoord). However, if we interpret this statement somewhat broadly, it means that the descendants are a crown to their ancestors. And this suggests that the heritage of faith continues to be handed down from the ancestors to their descendants as the crown. Therefore, the ancestor's faith and godly influence manifest in love and respect for one another in the home, which also affects their offspring (MacArthur). In short, it means that when a child lives rightly by God's grace, that child becomes a glory to his/her father (Park Yun-sun). Furthermore, it means that when the children and the descendants live rightly by God's grace, their ancestors will be honored. If we walk in the right way by God's grace and become gray hair old men and women (16:31) and if we see our children and their children also walk the same right way by God's grace, won't that be our joy and glory? Of course, I know that raising children always doesn't go as we think and expect. I know that no matter how hard and how well we teach and nurture the Word of God to our children by showing them the godly example of faith, the results may be that our children may disobey God and us. But if we think of this as the opposite, isn't it totally God's grace that our children live rightly even though we have not been able to nurture our children with the word of God and to show godly example of faith to them? So Dr. Park Yun-sun said: ‘We should keep in mind that even though the parents can teach their children well, the reason their children are obedient to God is only by God's grace.’ If our children follow our example and walk the right path by God's grace, how

much joy and glory is to us? If there are such parents who have been walking in the right path by God's grace, then they are pride to us (17:6). In other words, we, the children, should be proud of such parents. Isn't it interesting to see that three generations appears in Proverbs 17:6 and the grandchildren are their grandparent's joy and glory ("crown") and the father is the pride of his children? The relationship of grandfather, father and grandson of family that can be joy and glory and proudness to each other like this is beautiful and very valuable. Don't you want to build this kind of family in which all three generations love God and live righteously by God's grace, and therefore can be joy and glory and proud to each other? In order to do that, we, the parents, should teach our children well. We must nurture them with the Lord's discipline and instruction (Eph. 6:4).

Third, in raising our children, we must teach them the love of friends and the love of their brothers and sisters.

Look at Proverbs 17:17 – “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” When we pray for our children I think one of the prayer topics is 'God, let our children to meet godly good friends.' In particular, we who have children in school cannot help but pray that God may lead our children to meet not only good teachers but especially good school friends. When I pray for my church college students, I pray that God to allow them to meet not only good professors but also good roommates and good friends. The reason is because I want them to meet good friends of faith who can influence them so that their faith may grow. In Proverbs 17: 17, King Solomon says “A friend loves at all times.” What does it mean? It means that when we encounter crisis rather than when we are comfortable, our friend's love toward us shines more and more. A good bible example is David and Jonathan. In the midst of the crisis that King Saul was trying to kill David, Jonathan loved David as himself. Look at Proverbs 18:24 – “A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

What a precious friend s/he is who sticks closer than a brother? What a blessing this is if our children have this kind of friends? Then shouldn't we teach our children first to be that kind of friends to others by teaching them the love of Jesus Christ? In order to do so, we must love our children with the love of Christ. By doing so, we must nurture our children who can give Christ's love to their friends since they receive from us. In addition to this friendly love, we must teach our children brotherly love. If we look at Proverbs 17:17b, the Bible says “a brother is born for adversity.” What does it mean? This means that the brothers voluntarily help each other in times of trouble' (Park). It teaches us that we should raise our children in a way that they can share the brotherly love and able to help each other voluntarily when their brothers and/or sisters are in difficulties. It is precious brotherly love when our children help each other when everything goes fine. But this is especially true when they are going through very difficult time in their lives. How can we teach this love to our children? I think we can do so by helping and loving each other as a husband and a wife when we are going through difficult times in our lives. And we must pray to God that our children can understand God's love more deeply, widely, and highly (Eph. 3:18).

We are taught three lessons about how to raise our children in the context of Proverbs 17:2: (1) We must raise them as wise children of God, (2) We must instruct our children to live righteously by God's grace, and (3) We must teach them the love of friends and the love of their brothers and sisters. I hope and pray that we may teach and nurture our children well by obeying these words and with these three biblical principles so that we may glorify God.

How should we love our children?

“David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD shall be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all lands. Therefore now I will make preparation for it." So David made ample preparations before his death” (1 Chronicles 22:5).

Is it wrong for the parents to expect their children to fulfill their dream that they couldn't fulfill? Can we just say that it is only the parents' greed? If it is wrong then how should we understand that father David expected his son Solomon to build the temple of the Lord, the dream he couldn't achieve? I don't think we can say this is the father David's greed. The reason is because it was God's will for Solomon to build the temple and not David. If Solomon' to build the temple wasn't God's will but David's will, then it was wrong for David to expect his son Solomon to build the temple that he couldn't and it was just David's greed. But since expecting Solomon to build the temple that David couldn't do wasn't his will but God's will, it wasn't wrong and it wasn't David's greed. But this was the Lord's will and He intended to build the temple through Solomon, David only obeyed His will. And David's obedience was his expression of love toward God and toward his son Solomon. Through the expression of love, I want to meditate on how we, the parents, should love our children in three ways.

First, we must prepare a lot for our children before we die.

The things that King David prepared for his son Solomon before his death was the materials and the people for the temple to be built for God. For example, David prepared for the house of the Lord 100,000 talents of gold, 1,000,000 talents of silver, bronze and iron (v. 14), and many workmen such as stonecutters, masons of stone, carpenters, and all men who were skillful in every kind of work (v. 15). Especially, bronze and iron that David prepared were beyond weight because they were in great quantity (v. 14). Why did David prepare that so much? The reason was because his son Solomon was young and inexperienced, and the house that was to be built for the Lord should be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all the lands (v. 5). David prepared many things for the house of the LORD “with great pains” (v. 14). With great pains, he prepared so much for the house of the Lord before he died (v. 5).

What should we prepare for our children before we die? And when we prepare before we die, is it for God, or is it for ourselves and our children only? Before we die, we must prepare a lot for our children for the Lord's church and the kingdom of God. And when we prepare, we must know what God's will is for our children. We must never force our will on our children. Rather, we must realize the Lord's will toward our children, and earnestly desire that the will of the Lord to be fulfilled through them. And for that reason, we must prepare a lot for our children before we die. Therefore, we should be helpful to our children for them to fulfill the Lord's will.

Second, we must pray for our children until we die.

What were the father David's prayers for his son Solomon until he died? Look at 1 Chronicles 22:12 – “Only the LORD give you discretion and understanding, and give you charge over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God.” Here, we can see David's prayers for Solomon were two: (1) ‘Lord, give my son Solomon discretion and understanding so that he could lead the Israelites’ and (2) ‘Lord, help my son Solomon to

keep the law of the Lord.' In this first prayer of David, we can see why Solomon asked God for wisdom when God asked him what he wanted (2 Chron. 1:7-10). The reason was because David asked God to give wisdom to his son Solomon until he died (1 Chron. 22:12). Why did David pray for Solomon and ask God for wisdom and understanding? The reason for this was that David wanted Solomon to reign over Israel, the people of God, well (v. 12). We can see this heart of David also in his son Solomon's heart. King Solomon also asked God for wisdom and understanding, like his father David, to govern the Lord's great people (1 Chron. 1:10) and to distinguish between right and wrong (1 Kgs. 3:9). In short, the reason Solomon asked God for wisdom and understanding was to govern the Israelites, the people of God well. When we look at David's second prayer for his son Solomon, we can get a glimpse of David's heart toward Solomon. The father David's heart toward Solomon was for his Solomon to be successful (1 Chron. 22:11). So David prayed to God for Solomon until he died was "God, please help Solomon to keep the law of the Lord' (v. 12). Since David knew that keeping the law of Lord was the way of success, he earnestly prayed to God for his son Solomon to walk that path of success (v. 13)

We should earnestly pray to God for our children to be successful. In order to do so, we must pray to God for our children to be obedient to God's commandments. Although there are sufferings and difficulties in this world when our children obey God's commandments, we must pray for our children to obey God's commandments, knowing and believing that that's the path of success and prosperity. We must also ask God to give our children wisdom and understanding. It is because without wisdom and understanding our children cannot obey the Word of God. Children who obey God's Word are wise and the wise children obey God's Word. We must ask God to raise such children who are wise and who obey God's commandments.

Third and last, we must make a will to our children when our death is near.

What was the David's will for his son King Solomon before his death? Look at 1 Kings 2:2-4: "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go." Father David's will to his son Solomon was two: one was for him to be strong man, showing himself to a man, and another one was for him to keep the command of God. Why did David make the will of his son Solomon to be strong and be a man? The reason is probably because Solomon was young and inexperienced (1 Chron. 22:5). And because the house that was to be built for the Lord was to be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all lands (v. 5). The David's second will which was for Solomon to keep the command of God was David's prayers all along until he died. Since he earnestly wanted Solomon to be successful, he made the will for Solomon to obey the law of the Lord. David was able to say his will like that was because he himself did what was right in the sight of the LORD and had not turn aside from anything that God commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite (1 Kgs. 15:5).

Like David, if we are showing godly example to our children until we die, we will have no hesitation in making a will to our beloved children when our death is imminent. But if we are unable to show our children godly example, then we will be reluctant to make the will to our children even as our death is near. It's never easy for us, the parents, to make the will to our children. Of course, it doesn't mean that the parents should be qualified to make a will for their children. I think the parents have a right to make the will to their children no matter what because they are parents. But in order for the will to be an effective and powerful testament, we must first live faithfully according to our will to our children. In other words, we must live our lives according to the will that we will make to our children when our death is near. How can we tell our children to walk the path of success while we have not walked that path of success? Shouldn't we tell our children to obey the Lord's commands before we tell them to do so as our will to them? We must first live a life of obedience to God and His commands so that we can make the will to our children, saying that they should also be obedient to God's commands. We, the fathers, must first be

strong and be a man so that we can tell our sons to be strong and be a man also. In order for us, the parents, to make the will that is worthy of God's sight, we must first live a life that is in consistent with our will to our children. In doing so, our will will be written on the tablets of our children and our children will live according to our will.

When do you think it is a good time for us to express our love to our children? I think it is before we die. The reason is because it is the moment when we leave this earth and the last time to talk to our children. I believe that it is a great opportunity for us to express God's love to our children before we die. As we express our love to our children, we must think about the hearts of our children who have to let go of us, and we should try to plant our love in their hearts that will last until their death. How is this possible? I think one way is for us to prepare a lot for our children before we die. Although it's not the materials that we have to prepare for our children like David in order to build the house of the Lord, we can prepare as much as we can for our children to use them to build the Lord's church and the Kingdom of God. By doing so, we can plant the seed of God's love in our children's hearts. Furthermore, if we pray to God until we die for our children, we will be able to plant God's love in the hearts of our children. The parents who pray are the parents who plant the love of God in their children's hearts. In particular, as we, the parents, live a life of prayer and pray for our children until we die, I am sure God will plant His love in the hearts of our children. As we do so, if we are able to make the will for our children to obey God's commandments before we die, then all may go well with our children and they may be prosperous.

What should we prepare for our children?

“With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him. Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time” (Daniel 11: 32-35).

We must prepare the things we must prepare in advance (Prov. 24:27). For example, a single man and a woman who are about to marry must be prepared for their financial needs. And if they want to build a house, they have to first sit down and figure out how much it will cost to build the house (Lk. 14:28-30). If they start construction in a situation where they are not economically prepared, they definitely will not be able to finish building the house even if they lay the foundation because they lack money. What would people say when they see the house that were not able to complete the construction but only lay its' foundation? (Lk. 14:28-30) It is important not only to believe that God will supply our financial needs, but also to make financial preparation which is our human responsibility. In particular, the single man and woman must prepare to consider how much it will cost them to follow Jesus as His disciples. In other words, they must be prepared to sacrifice their lives in the pursuit of the Lord [Note: Luke 14 - Preparation of the cost budget in building the Jesus' tower (vv. 28-30) and Preparation of strengthening the king's army (vv. 31-32)]. Moreover, they must prepare their devotions toward each other in the Lord. We, as parents, should have financial preparation for our children's marriage (although it would be better if they could get married without our financial help), but we should teach them how to manage their finances. We also need to teach our children discipleship of Jesus by word and life. In particular, we must demonstrate a life of denying ourselves and a life of bearing our own cross and following Jesus.

The background of Daniel 11:32-35 prophesies the future tribulation to the people of God. Based on this passage, I would like to receive three lessons on what to prepare our children for the future tribulation as their parents, who are preparing for the Lord's return.

First, we must help our children to grow up in the knowledge of God.

Look at Daniel 11:32 – “By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.” When I meditated on this word, I remembered the book called “Knowing God” written by James Packer. Until I read that book, I, as a believer born in the Presbyterian Church in Korea, focused on the Bible commands of ‘Do’ and ‘Don’t’. As I was doing so, I disobeyed the commandments by doing what I wasn’t supposed to and by not doing what I was supposed to do. So I lived with guilty feeling in my conscience. Then, the more I committed sin, that guilty conscience was slowly gone, and I lived a life of sinning against God without considering sin as sin. Then, after reading the book “Knowing God”, I began to live a life of faith by focusing on who God is rather than on ‘Do’ and ‘Don’t’ commandments in the Bible and reluctant to live church life. As I was living my life of faith like that, my first baby was very sick. When I found out my baby was very sick, the indwelling Holy Spirit enabled me to ask the question “Who is my God?” rather than focusing on ‘Why this happened to my wife and I?’, ‘How did our baby get very sick?’ and ‘What is God’s will?’ And in the midst of that crisis, the Holy Spirit enables us to deeply, widely and greatly experience

God's wonderful and marvelous love of salvation. As a result, whenever I face any difficulties in my life, especially when I see our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ going through very difficult time in their lives, the Spirit enables me to confess who my God is and to pray, to expect and to wait upon the God's sovereign to be fulfilled and manifest His glorious in their lives. In this way God has worked in my life and has built up my faith up by giving me the knowledge of God, and I believe that He will continue to do so not only now but also in the future as well. My responsibility is to know who God is that is revealed in the Scripture by meditating on the Word of God day and night for a lifetime. As I grow up in the knowledge of God, the Lord will surely build me up on the Rock Jesus Christ and make me strong, bold and courageous. In doing so, the Lord will cause me not to fear and not be overwhelmed and be shaken by any great enemies. The more I realize this fact and the more I experience this in my life, the more I want to tell my God to my three children. In particular, I want to devote myself in instructing and training my children to see God with the eyes of faith rather than by looking at the situation with the eyes of the flesh. The reason I want to do that is because I want my children to stand firm in their faith and not be shaken in any future difficulties, tribulation and persecution. For sure, "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgement of God in the land" in the future (Hos. 4:1). More and more, we, God's people, will reject knowledge of God (v. 6). The more we increase, the more we will sin against God (v. 7). In this last days, we should instill knowledge of God in our children so that they won't leave the faith and the Church, defiling themselves and the church, and not setting up "the abomination of desolation" (Dan. 11:31). In order to do so, we, as parents, must let our children to know more and acknowledge God (Hos. 6:3).

Second, we must nurture our children as those who have insight.

Look at Daniel 11:33 – "Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days." As I was meditating this word, I thought my Korean name again "Jee Woun Kim". The name "Jee Woun" means 'be the first in wisdom'. When I was born, I think my father gave this name to me with this word of God Daniel 12:3 in his mind: "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." When I think of this Word and my name, I pray that by God's grace I will be able to live my life as a wise man until I meet the Lord. Especially in this evil last generation where there are countless fools who say in their hearts 'There is no God', I want to live wisely as God gives me the wisdom from above. I want to live wisely and be wise like snakes (Mt. 10:16). I want to discern and judge all the logic of things with careful discernment, and cautiously deal with the troubles that will come to me in the future. Especially, there will be more false pastors who come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves (Mt. 7:15, 10:16), I want to be wise as snakes so that I may be able to discern the false gospel and reject it and I may be able to preach and teach only the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only that, I want to teach my children the Word of God so that they may be able to judge everything on the basis of the Scripture. That's why I am still praying that the Lord gives wisdom to my three children. I pray that God will give them wisdom so that they will not only live with spiritual discernment, but will also act wisely like snakes so that they may overcome any crisis and tribulation they may face in the future.

Third and last, we must ask God to refine and purify our children.

Look at Daniel 11:35 – "Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time." When I think about the word 'refined', it reminds me Job 23:10 – "But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold." God is the God who tests our hearts (Prov. 17:3). He tests us in the furnace of affliction (Isa. 48:10). God tests us and refines us through the sufferings that we go through. Through sufferings, God refines us to be like pure gold. In particular, God thoroughly purge away our dross and remove all our impurities (Isa. 1:25) through the furnace of affliction in order to make our faith like pure gold. God refines and purifies us through suffering (Dan. 11:35). God is the God who purifies us, the covenant people of God. God is the God who removes all the abominations of our

church. Thus, God keeps the purity of the church. Therefore, we must not be afraid of suffering. Rather, we must expect and experience the work of God, who refines and purifies us through suffering. In doing so, we must yield to our God who refines and purifies our children through suffering. By believing that our Heavenly Father knows our children the best and loves them the most, we must yield to God when He refines and purifies our children through affliction and suffering.

In Matthew 24:44, Jesus says to us, “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” We must all be ready for Jesus' return. The reason is because Jesus will surely come back. We must also prepare for the great tribulation before Jesus' return (v. 21). Not only ourselves, we must also prepare our children as well. In order to do so, we must nurture our children to grow in the knowledge of God. And we must nurture them as wise children of God. We must let our children to be tested, refined and purified even through affliction and suffering. Therefore, we pray that our children will not be shaken in the coming tribulations (1 Thess. 3:3) but rather cry out to God (Ps. 50:15, 120:1) and be purified more and more through tribulations.

Train up a child in the way he should go!

**“Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it”
(Proverbs 22:6)**

I heard about the news that there was an explosion at a train station in North Korea. As a result, it is known that there are many casualties. I heard that a lot of people are in danger of blindness because of the tremendous post-busting and glass debris, causing serious eye injuries. Especially, I heard the unfortunate news that most of the children injured at a near elementary hurt their eyes. The poet Kim Yong-taek, who had heard the unfortunate news of the children, said in his poem "Yongchun Elementary School": ‘... the children of Ryongchon! You children who are like new grass leaf from the ground ! You who lost your school, your friends, your homes and your parents and siblings, you whose faces were burned by fire. Ah! Ah! Sudden death, suffering, sorrow, cold, hunger, what must we do with these fears. What must I do now ...’

I was challenged by his saying ‘What must I do now.’ There are so many times in our lives that we don’t know what to do when we look at the sad reality. Especially, when we look at our children whose spiritual eyes are injured and they are in a crisis of spiritual blindness, we as parents cannot but help to ask ourselves ‘What must I do?’ The sadder reality is that we are spiritually blinded as well as our children so that now the blind parents are leading the blind children (Mt. 15:14). So based on Proverbs 22:6, I want to meditate on three things that we should teach our children.

First, we should teach our children the Right Value.

We should look back our lives to see whether we are showing our children what is truly valuable or not. Is it faith? Do we think that our children are seeing in our family lives that faith is very precious? Or aren’t we busy living with the values of the world that God hates (Lk. 16:15)? The Bible says “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Mt. 6:21). What is that "treasure" that we value? We must listen carefully the word of Matthew that where our treasure is, there is our heart. The person who had the right values was Moses. Moses regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasure of Egypt (Heb. 11:26). Who likes to suffer? Isn’t it our instinct to love treasure? But Moses, by faith, regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as greater value than treasure of Egypt because he was looking ahead to his reward (v. 26). We should teach this value to our children.

Second, we should teach Clear Purpose to our children.

Too many of our children are wondering and wasting their lives for no apparent purpose of their lives. They run about in confusion, not knowing what to do. With the wrong purposes of their lives, they are wasting God’s time. Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 1 says “What is the chief end of man?” The answer is “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever” (Internet). But how many of us are trying to live for the glory of God and are enjoying him? Aren’t we rather burdened by God? Don’t we feel burdened even serving the Lord’s church? We must learn the Daniel’s clear purpose and show to our children. Look at Daniel 1:8 – “But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king’s choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.” Although it

was a good opportunity in the worldly perspective, he chose not to eat the king's choice food and drink his wine because he was pursuing the clear objective purpose, God's holiness. He was able to overcome his circumstance because he lived his life that was driven by his determination not to defile himself. Won't God be delighted to see our children resolved not to defile themselves with the worldly things but pursue God's holiness?

Third and last, we should teach our children the Eternal View of Life.

Too many of our children are committing suicide without considering God's precious gift of life. What a sad reality? Why do they take their own precious life? It is because they don't have eternal view of life. It is because they have lost the will of life. The reason is because there is no hope in eternal kingdom, heaven. This world cannot give us hope. This world cannot give us hope to live a day. In this vain and futile world, we have no hope. But the eternal comfort that is given to us in Jesus Christ is the eternal life. This is what Apostle James said in James 4:14 – "... What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." Although our life is like the mist, why are we living now as if we will live on this land forever? Those without deep meditation and prayer for death cannot say that they have an eternal view of life. The reason is because only those who think about the gate of death look at the gate of eternal kingdom. While living in this land, Apostle Paul looked upon the eternal kingdom and preached the gospel to all souls who were his joy and crown. He said to the Philippian church saints that they were his joy and crown (Phil. 4:1). Those who have many joy and crown, the fruit of their beautiful life at the end of their life, is a beautiful people who have eternal view of life and devote their whole life to eternal souls. We have to show and teach this to our children.

Like a poet, who thought about the children of Ryongchon Elementary School in North Korea who lost their sights, and said 'What must I do now?', we must look at our children whose are spiritually blinded and ask ourselves 'What must I do now?' And as we pray in our struggles, we must find the answer in the Word of God. We must instill right value, clear purpose, and eternal view of life to our children.

We should not let our children marry.

“Now Jehoshaphat had great wealth and honor, and he allied himself with Ahab by marriage. ... He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. ... He too walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for after his father's death they became his advisers, to his undoing” (2 Chronicles 18:1, 21:6, 22:3-4).

If your beloved son comes to you a day before he marries and says ‘I don’t want to marry my fiancée’, what would you say as his parent? Especially if your son says that the reason he doesn’t want to marry his fiancée is because she doesn’t only believe in Jesus but also she hates Him and does evil in the sight of God, what will you say to him as Christian parent? Will you really tell your son to break up with his fiancée? Will you tell your son to stop the marriage, even though he as a bridegroom already did the formal bows with his bride and sent out the wedding invitation to everyone around him?

It may not be easy for us to marry our children, but it is never easy to stop their marriage. But when we think about our children who are about to marry which is truly important, we must commit ourselves not only to marrying them, but also to stop their marriage. The reason is because if our children have wrong marriage, then not only do our children will suffer but also our children’s children can suffer as well.

When we look at 2 Chronicles 18:1, 21:6 and 22:3-4, three kings from Judah appear. Their names are “Jehoshaphat”, “Jehoram” and “Ahaziah”. Jehoshaphat is the grandfather of Ahaziah, and Jehoram is the father of Ahaziah. The problem began when Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah's grandfather, married his son Jehoram to the daughter of Ahab, king of Israel. Because Jehoshaphat allied himself with Ahab by marriage (18:1), his son Jehoram did evil in the eyes of the Lord (21:6). In other words, because Jehoshaphat married his son Jehoram to Athaliah (22:2), Ahab's daughter (21:6), Jehoram did evil in the eyes of the Lord (v. 6). This was the result of what Jehu the seer said to Jehoshaphat: “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD ? Because of this, the wrath of the LORD is upon you” (19:2). Nevertheless, Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an alliance with Ahaziah king of Israel, who was guilty of wickedness (20:35). “Then Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. And Jehoram his son succeeded him as king” (21:1).

“When Jehoram established himself firmly over his father's kingdom, he put all his brothers to the sword along with some of the princes of Israel” (v. 4). Moreover, he had also built high places on the hills of Judah and had caused the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves and had led Judah astray (v. 11). In other words, he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and had led Judah and the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves, just as the house of Ahab did (v. 13). As a result, the Lord aroused against Jehoram the hostility of the Philistines and of the Arabs who lived near the Cushites (v. 16). “After all this, the LORD afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease of the bowels” (v. 18) and he died in great pain at the end of the second year (v. 19). He passed away, to no one’s regret (v. 20).

After his death, his youngest son, Ahaziah, succeeded his throne (22:1). He too walked in the ways of the house of Ahab (v. 3). The reason was because Athaliah his mother was his counselor to do wickedly (v. 3). “He did

evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab, for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction” (v.4). As a result, he went to Ramoth-gilead with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel, to wage war against Hazael king of Aram (v. 5). But when the Arameans wounded Jehoram (v. 5) Ahaziah went down to see Jehoram (v. 6) he was put to death by Jehu who was executing judgment on the house of Ahab (vv. 8-9).

When I think about Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah, I think the source of trouble began when Jehoshaphat made his son Jehoram to marry to someone he shouldn't have married. I also think that Jehoram shouldn't marry Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, even though his father Jehoshaphat tried to make him to marry her. In other words, as a father, Jehoshaphat shouldn't have allied himself with Ahab, who did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and shouldn't have married his son Jehoram to the Ahab's daughter Athaliah. And as a son Jehoram shouldn't have married Athaliah. In the end, because of Jehoshaphat's wrong choice of marriage for his son Jehoram, not only Jehoram but also his grandson Ahaziah had to face the wrong outcomes. When I think about these facts, I think we as parents should marry our children well. Indeed, as we pray for our children's marriage, we should carefully and seriously consider our children's marriage. And if our children are going to marry wrongly, we should not let them get married. The reason is that such wrong marriage not only makes our children's life unhappy, but it can also make the life of our grandchildren unhappy. We must nurture our children to be able to make a right choice for their own marriage before God. The reason is because even if we love our children, it is because we can make mistake in their marriage choices. When we think not only of our children but also of our grandchildren, we realize that our responsibilities are very important. We should learn that our marriage should be an example to our children as well as to our grandchildren. I hope and pray that as we first married to a person whom the Lord has prepared for us and commit ourselves in building the Lord-centered marriage and family, we must earnestly pray that our children will also marry to the person whom God has prepared for them so that they may be able to build the Lord-centered marriage and family that is like a heavenly households in the sight of God.

Family story:

A foolish father, a foolish pastor

April 16, 2014, Wednesday afternoon.

Today is the 11th birthday of my youngest daughter Karis.

Although we had her birthday dinner with my wife and celebrated her birthday together before she went on business trip, I took Karis and her two siblings to the Pho restaurant we always go before Wednesday night prayer meeting.

I did it because it seemed to be good to have a birthday meal on the day Karis was born.

After I asked Karis' older sister Yeri to pray for the meal, we ate the noodles together.

I asked a waitress for a lot of onions in a bowl so we could mix with three Vietnamese sauces and four of us, including Karis' oldest brother Dillon, ate all the onions together.

I was little bit surprised that even Yeri ate the onions very well. Haha.

After the meal I took the children to the nearby Korean Market.

I gave Dillon and Yeri \$5 and told them to get the fish-shaped buns.

I knew that with \$5, they can only get 6 fish-shaped buns. But I challenged them to try to get 7 of them. Haha.

After I told them, I took Karis and we went to get some crackers.

But Karis got only one cracker that she liked. So I told her to get one more if she wanted.

After she and I got some crackers, we went to the cashier and paid for the crackers and were waiting in front of the exit.

After a while Dillon and Yeri came out and inside the bag, they got one more fish-shaped bun.

So total numbers of the fish-shaped buns were 7. So I told them "Good job!" Hahaha.

I drove my car and came to church. And a person name Mr. Jung called me on my cell phone (I don't know how he got my cell number). And he told me that he wanted to attend the Wednesday night prayer meeting at 8pm.

He said he wanted to come to church little bit early and wanted to receive prayer from me.

So I gave him our church direction.

When he came to church I took him to my office and he began to talk a lot of thing from his high school life in Korea. He said he went to church at that time. And then he said this and that.

At the end, he asked me whether I could help him with his bus fee (\$85) to northern California to see his wife.

At that time, I got up from my seat and walked toward him. And I laid my hand on his back and prayed for him since the Prayer Meeting time was approaching.

After I lead him to the main sanctuary, I came back to my office and put some cash in the envelope.

And when I went into the main sanctuary, I gave the envelope to one of the church deacons and asked him to give the envelope to Mr. Jung after Prayer Meeting when he would give Mr. Jung ride back to his apartment.

The conclusion is Mr. Jung deceived me. He lied to me to get some money from me.

I didn't know until I talked to my church elder. He told me that Mr. Jung lied to me.

I didn't know how Elder Yoon knew that Mr. Jung lied to me when he just heard from me about Mr. Jung.

How the elder heard me and knew exactly who he was

After we finished the Prayer Meeting, I drove back home with my children

In the car, I told them that I was deceived by Mr. Jung.

Then Dillon, who was sitting next to me, said that Mr. Jung would cheat on other church pastors too as he did to me and that if Mr. Jung gets caught by a strong pastor, he would get a scolding. Haha.

And Karis, who was sitting in the back seat, thickened her voice and said, 'What does he (Mr. Jung) think about our Victory Presbyterian Church? Victory Presbyterian Church has a law'

When I saw Dillon who was sitting next to me, he was smiling big. Haha.

When I think about Yeri, she already told me to be careful when I told her about Mr. Jung who already called me last Friday. Since I didn't listen to Yeri's advice, I had nothing to say to Yeri.

The words of Proverbs 12:15 came to my mind: "The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice."

Family story:

Child education

February 19, 2015, evening.

On Wednesday morning, a call came from Pastor Gomez, who is serving our church's Hispanic ministry. He called me because my father hit a side mirror of a car that was parked in front of our church parking lot. And Pastor Gomez was there in the church, so he figured out the situation and helped my father. Pastor Gomez told me that the owner of the car had asked him to find out how much the side mirror cost at the car dealer because the car owner wanted to change the broken side mirror with the original one. So I contacted my mechanic friend whom I trust and told him about the situation I heard from Pastor Gomez. And I asked him to find out the original side mirror price and let Pastor Gomez know. In the meantime I called my father because I thought he might be surprised by breaking the side mirror. And I found out that my father was waiting by the car for the car's owner to come. (He could just write a note with his phone number and put it on the car.) I told my father about the situation and said, 'I'll take care of it' so he didn't have to worry about it. After a while, Pastor Gomez called me on the way to the car dealer with the owner of the car. According to him, my father was waiting for the car owner honestly and my father seemed to be a little nervous. It seems that Pastor Gomez tried to talk the car owner in order to save some money in buying the new side mirror. When I asked my friend mechanic, he said that the original side-mirror value of the car would be about \$ 290 at the dealer price, and if I took the car to the dealer, the labor cost would be \$ 150. So he advised me to buy the original side mirror and to ask Pastor Gomez to fix it in order to save the labor charge. I told that to Pastor Gomez, and Pastor Gomez already told it to the car owner. But the car owner wanted to fix it in the car dealer. So there was nothing we could do so I hung off the phone.

Then in the afternoon I went to the Yeri's school, picked her up and dropped her to the dentist office. The reason was because it was the day to finally remove the braces that had been plugged into the Yeri's teeth on her birthday. Yeri really liked it. Haha. So I told Yeri that after the dentist took out her braces, I would buy her In-n-out burger. Yeri was so happy because she really likes In-n-out burger. After 1 hour 30 minutes, Yeri called me so I went to pick her up. On the way to In-n-out, Yeri took a picture of herself with her braces removed and sent it to her mom (because my wife wanted to see it). And when Yeri took the second picture, she made my arm to come out. So I gave little strength in my arm. Haha. She said that she felt free after the brace got removed. When I heard that, I thought of freedom in "bondage of sin". So I shared that thought with Yeri: 'Yeri, I am sure you were very uncomfortable for about two years because of the brace. But now since it got removed, like what you said I am sure you feel free. Let's think about it in this way. I and you were under the bondage of sin and we supposed to be destroyed eternally. But now we are free from the bondage of sins because Jesus bore our sins and died on the cross.' Even now, when I think about this conversation with Yeri, I am thankful to God. I was grateful and glad that the indwelling Spirit helped me to think and said what I said to Yeri at the right time. After getting a hamburger and arriving at home, Yeri went to the kitchen table and ate the hamburger. But I went to my room, changed clothes, and came back to the kitchen [because I had to go to church and have dinner with my wife and then to have Prayer Meeting)].

At that time I wanted to hug Yeri. So I approached her and hugged her and told her "I am happy for you". Today, Thursday morning, I thanked Pastor Gomez through the text message and told him that I put the money on my church office desk for the side mirror (because I had to go to school with Karis). After I picked Karis from her school and came home, I continued to do the works that I had been doing with passion and joy. I continued to put three books manuscripts on my Naver blog. Then my wife came home and I went into my car with Dillon to take him to his academy and then I could go work out at YMCA. And I told Dillon in the car that my father showed me an honest example and told him about my father accidentally hit the side mirror of another person's car and how he waited until the car owner came to the car. Then I confessed to Dillon that last time when I was driving toward the church and accidentally hit someone's car's side mirror in the narrow street and just left. I was a bit embarrassed (should be more embarrassed?) but I just wanted to confess to my son Dillon even though I didn't plan to do so. Maybe I wanted Dillon to know how much I am lacking ...

After I dropped off Dillon at the academy, I went to YMCA to exercise. When I was exercising, I thought about Pastor Gomez's saying about my father was nervous little bit yesterday after he hit the side mirror of another person's car. Then I came up with some thought so I posted this on my personal web sites: 'If I am a true disciple of Jesus, I should be nervous after I did wrong to my neighbor ...' Although I accidentally hit the side mirror of someone's car on the way to church, I wasn't honest like my father but just drove away to the church. But I still didn't feel any nervous like my father. Rather, I just passed the car boldly even though Yeri who was with me inside the car saw everything. Although my father showed me an example of honesty, I didn't do that to my daughter Yeri.

I came home after the exercise and I prepared dinner with my two daughters because I thought they were hungry. (Because my wife was exercising. I am glad that my wife is exercising hard these days.) As we were preparing dinner, I confessed to both Yeri and Karis what I confessed to Dillon (Honestly, at first I was hesitated to confess to them. Haha) I confessed especially thinking about Yeri because she actually saw what happened. Then suddenly, Yeri said 'Daddy', if she knew what happened at that time well, 'There was no scratch to that side mirror. It was just folded so I unfolded it.' Hahaha. All along I thought that I scratched that side mirror. I still don't know whose memory is right, whether 14 years old Yeri or me. Haha. When I heard that word from Yeri, I thought to myself that it was good for me to confess to Yeri. Hahaha. The reason is because I was comforted by what Yeri said. Haha. I think my memory is little bit uneasy. Haha.

I had no regret about spending money for the cost of repairing the damaged side mirror of another person's car that my father accidentally hit. Although the cost was never small money to me, my heart was light. Perhaps it was because the value of learning my father's example of honesty and confessing my dishonesty to my children worth more than the money that I paid for fixing that side mirror. However, I was thankful for what Yeri told me about the side mirror I thought I hit it. Yeri was convinced that the side mirror wasn't scratch but was just folded and she unfolded it. The important thing is that as my father showed me an example of honesty, I also should be a dad with such an example to my three children, Dillon, Yeri and Karis.

Family story:

Earrings

February 26, 2011, Saturday morning.

My wife who was going home from work last night called me when I was in the church. In our conversation, we talked about the earrings of our beloved first daughter, Yeri. My wife told Yeri that she would take her to the department store on Saturday and help her to get earrings. So I told my wife to tell Yeri about a slave story in the Bible. And that story is about when the slave didn't want leave his master but wanted to commit his life to the master because he loved his master, then the master took him to the doorpost and pierced his ear. Then the slave would be the master's servant for life (Exod. 21:1-6) I asked my wife to convey this father's heart to Yeri. And if it is possible, I told my wife to tell Yeri that she would write a letter of devotion to the Lord. The reason was when Yeri is grown up we can give her letter back so that she may rededicate her life to the Lord by remembering that she did earrings when she was ten years old with that mind of devotion to the Lord.

Today, on this Saturday morning, my dear daughter Yeri spoke to me through internet gmail chatting. In our conversation, Yeri said that before she went to to her earring yesterday she was told by her mom about the letter I suggested her to write but she didn't know how to write it. So once again I conveyed my heart to her. I still remember vividly. Last week, Yeri asked me why Christian women didn't go to church anymore after they had earrings. I think Yeri thought that all Christian women did earrings like the slave in the Bible because they loved the Lord and wanted to devote their lives to Him. So when I was talking to my wife yesterday, I asked her to tell Yeri that doing earrings and devoting her life to the Lord is unique to God, Yeri and me. And I told this to Yeri again. And I told her that if she wants want to write the letter she can, but if she doesn't want to, that's fine too. Then she told me that she would like it so I said go ahead. And we ended the chatting.

A little while ago I received this e-mail from Yeri. The content is like this:
'Dad, I will not forget the dedication that I made to God last week at my 10-year-old birthday. I hope you understand. The reason I am doing my earrings today is not because everyone else is doing it, nor because I'm trying to look pretty. I am really doing earring because I am devoting my life to the Lord. And I will always do my earrings for that reason.'
After I received this email from Yeri, I replied to her, saying 'Thanks' and I will continue to pray that the Lord uses her and make her to be twice fruitful. (Note: When I gave her name "Yeri", I thought about Joseph's second son, "Ephraim" in the Bible. The name "Ephraim" means 'twice fruitful'. So whenever I pray for Yeri, I pray that the Lord to make Yeri twice fruitful.).

I am looking forward to see my daughter Yeri with her new earrings this afternoon. The reason is because I will meet a lovely ten-year-old daughter who is dedicated to the Lord.

Family story:

'This daddy also shed tears.'

August 17, 2011. Wednesday evening.

Today, after the Wednesday night Prayer Meeting, my son Dillon came up to me and told me that he should start going to academy as he starts his seventh grade.

The reason is because if he doesn't go to the academy and stay home, then he will buy iPod and play games so that he cannot study properly.

So I took him to my church office and talked to him.

I explained to him why I think he should stay home and study rather than going to the academy.

I told him, 'It is important that you discipline yourself.'

I told Dillon why I kept saying to him and his two younger sisters to study and practice music instruments when they come home from their schools and then have free time.

I told him it was for his and his younger sisters' sake and for their discipline.

I reminded Dillon once again to study, the lesson that he learned from pre-Algebra course that he took at the summer school.

And I told him, 'I believe that you can study well by yourself if you try.'

I reminded him how his summer school homework was very difficult and took him so much time so he even cried doing his homework. And I told him, 'If you go to the academy and start to get help from a teacher there, you may continue to rely the teacher more.'

So I suggested to him to study by himself. But if he couldn't do it any longer, I told him to tell me.

Then I could talk to my wife and get help from the academy. Until that time, I asked Dillon to try to study by himself for one semester. Dillon said he would.

But when I was having the conversation with him, Dillon seemed to have tears in his eyes.

So I asked Dillon if I said something that hurts him. And Dillon said 'No.'

But when I was keep talking to him, he was keep on crying in tears.

This wasn't the first time. Whenever I talked to Dillon and had serious conversation, he shed tears like today.

As I was looking at my beloved son Dillon shedding tears, I told him that 'This dad shed tears last Saturday.'

I opened my heart to him and shared why I shed my tears of thanksgiving in the church main sanctuary.

'Dillon, after your old sister Charis died, dad and mom had very hard time.

So we waited more and more prayerfully for the next baby and God gave you Dillon to us as a gift.

So this dad prayed to God last Saturday and cried because I was so grateful that God gave you as the gift.'

After I said this to Dillon, I confessed to him, 'This dad is thankful to you, Dillon.'

I confessed to him, 'I am thankful that you are my son.'

I was happy to confess this heart of mine to Dillon today even though I wanted to thank him last Saturday after I offered the prayer of thanksgiving to God because of Dillon but I couldn't.

I told Dillon who was shedding tears to come to me and then put him on my right knee.

Then I embraced him in my arms and gave thanks to God in prayer.

And I prayed to God for Dillon, 'God, please help Dillon to be truthful and faithful' which is my prayer for him as his name "Dillon" means, that is 'truthful and faithful', until I die.

A foolish son

[Proverbs 19:10, 13-14, 18, 26-27]

Have you ever read the Korean traditional fairy tale ‘A foolish salt merchant’s son’? The story goes like this: ‘Long time ago, there was a salt merchant who live in a town. He had a son. He was always worried about his son because he is foolish and dull. Although his son was grown up, he couldn’t do calculation and couldn’t distinguish between rice and barley. Worrying about his son was a matter of course. He was always worried about his son. When his son said that he wanted to be salt merchant too, he let his son to carry an Korean A-frame on his back and told him to go and sell the salt. The foolish son went to the place where the miners gathered and shout to them to buy the salt. But he wasn’t able to sell any salt to the miners who were busy working. Rather, he was reviled by them. Then the father, who heard what happened, told his son to go and help them to dig the earth and then sell the salt while they are resting. The next day, the son went to a wedding party this time and went to the bride and bridegroom and started digging the earth very hard because he thought about what his father said to him. The people were surprised and tried to get rid of him with the sticks. So the son ran to the house because he was shock. When the father heard this, he told his son to say ‘Happy, happy occasion’ and to dance and sell the salt. The next day, his son went out to sell salt and ran to the place where people gathered. And as his father told him, he said ‘Happy, happy occasion’ and danced. And the son told the people to buy the salt. But the place was the yard of burned house. So the son got beat up and returned his home. The father told his son that if that kind of situation, he had to throw water and turn off the first and then sell the salt. But the next day, the foolish son rushed to the people who were fighting and he threw water on them and told them to buy the salt. So the people rushed to the son and got angry. After all, the son said that he wouldn’t sell the salt anymore and blamed on his father because even though he obeyed his father he wasn’t’ able to sell the salt but got beat up (Internet). What do you think of this fairytale story? Don’t you think that a foolish son is a cause of his parent’s worry? Although the foolish son acted upon what he heard from his father, he didn’t have wisdom to apply what his father told him in the appropriate situations.

In Proverbs 19:13, King Solomon said, “A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.” Here, the foolish son refers to the son who doesn’t fear God, disobey his parents and always does evil (Park Yun-sun). Based on this passage, I would like to meditate on two things under the title of "A foolish son": (1) What kind of person is the foolish son, and (2) What should his parents do to their foolish son.

First, what kind of person is the foolish son?

There are three things we can think of:

(1) The foolish son is an extravagant.

Look at Proverbs 19:10 – “It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury-- how much worse for a slave to rule over princes!” I remember reading the news article about Korea (formal) president Park Geun Hae, what kind of bag she was carrying. People were saying that her bag was a brand-name bag that was made by an ostrich skin and it might cost around \$1,000. But it was actually hand made by a small domestic company. The idea that I went through while I was reading that news at that time was ‘Many people may buy that bag.’ The reason was that since the president was carrying such bag, I thought that many people would like

to buy it and carry it too. My personal thought is that a lot of people seem to want to buy luxury stuffs. Actually, in Korea, the lineup of expensive luxury goods is becoming widespread, and some popular items are not available because so many people are buying them (Internet). What do you think about "luxury"? One of the websites I read talked about 'Who is a luxurious woman?' Let me ask a question. What are the criteria of "luxury"? Which of the five lists do you think is the right answer? (1) There are two Louis Vuitton bags that cost \$2,000 each. (2) Louis Vuitton is not luxury but Chanel is. (3) Eating lunch lightly and drink coffee in Starbucks is a luxury. (4) It is good to use money that you earned but it is luxury when you use your parent money. (5) If you travel overseas once a year, it is a luxury. The answer is not in the above five. The man who wrote the article says that the criterion for a woman who is extravagant is the question of whether or not she can afford her consumption pattern at the income level he is currently earning or he will be able to afford. I think this is an interesting answer. Although this is a man's standard of the extravagant woman, but I think it is a reasonable view. When I look at another website, there was an article titled 'Emotionally luxurious age ... So solitude and despair got deeper.' So I read that article. It was an interview with a literary critic, who commented, 'The frustration of the younger generation is a big problem.' And this is what he said that I sympathize with: 'This is a generation which is luxury emotionally and sentimentally. Although this generation is richer and more convenient economically and free than the past, but young people feel loneliness, despair and frustration more than before' (Internet). What do you think of these words?

What do you think is the standard of luxury in the Bible? Look at Isaiah 47:8 – "Now, then, hear this, you sensual one, Who dwells securely, Who says in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me I will not sit as a widow, Nor know loss of children.'" This word tells us what the minds of the luxurious ones are. In other words, even though there are neighbors who are suffering, they just live however they want to without concerning about their neighbors because they are not suffering. It's like we are boasting about our husband in front of a widow without considering the widow's heart. It's like we are boasting about our children to the parents who lost their child. It is luxury to live however you want to without mindful of other people's situations and their difficulties. It is not to say how much money you spend that is luxury but not being mindful about other people's matters and situation at all, it is the act of covering the love of God. In that sense, the Bible doesn't want us to be extravagant. If we don't care about our neighbors, then we won't be willing to share with them, and we will live a life that will miss all opportunities to show God's love to our neighbors. God's reproach for luxury is to reproach a life that doesn't show God's love (Internet). In other words, luxury in the Bible refers to unmindful of the poor and ignoring them and using our possession however we want to, thinking that the possession is ours (Internet). In Proverbs 19:10, King Solomon says, "It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury." In other words, it is unworthy for the fool to enjoy and rejoice in this world (Park). But the fool not only finds pleasure in evil conduct (10:23) but enjoys the pleasures of this world (19:10). Especially in the home, the foolish son inherits his parent's house and their wealth (v. 14), and enjoys the pleasures of this world while living a prodigal life. A good example is the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. The second son asked the father for his share of estate (Lk. 15:12), set off for a distant country and there he squandered his wealth in wild living (v. 13). Likewise, the foolish son inherits his parent's wealth and lives a luxuries life. The Bible Proverbs 19:10 says it is not fitting for the fool to live in luxury. Then what is fitting in God's sight? When I think of this question, I recall Hebrews 2:10 – "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings." What is fitting in God's sight is to perfect Jesus, the author of our salvation, through sufferings for the glory of our salvation. If we apply this word to us, we can say that it is fitting for God to perfect us through sufferings. Why? The reason is because Jesus learned obedience from the things which He suffered even though He was a Son (5:8). Therefore, we as the children of God also must learn obedience through suffering as Jesus did. This is fitting in God's sight.

(2) The foolish son is destruction to his father.

Look at Proverbs 19:13 – “A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.” Translation of this Word in Hebrew is as follows: ‘A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping’ (Park). The Bible says that the foolish son is a grief to his parent (10:1, 17:21, 25). There is no joy for the father of the fool (17:21). Then, in today's passage Proverbs 19:13, the Bible says that the foolish son is destruction to his father. Why is foolish son destruction to his father?

- (a) The foolish son is destruction to his father because the parent is suffering because of his son and the father cannot do anything about it. Don't you agree? Have you not already experienced that you suffer because of your child and you can't do anything about it? How many parents are suffering because of their children? The foolish children are pain and destruction to their parents.
- (b) The reason why the foolish son is destruction to his father is because the father suffers damage of his honor or his property. We actually see some parents around us who lose their wealth and honor because of their children. So many foolish children bring reproach to their parents. And how many prodigal children are there who squandered their parents' wealth with their wild living? The foolish children are loss and destruction.
- (c) The reason why the foolish son is destruction to his father is because such troublesome things also come to the good people. In other words, we know that even though the parents are good and have strong faith, that doesn't mean their children will grow well. This is a phenomenon that we cannot understand. What would you think if you planted the apple seeds, gave water and fertilizer, but the fruit is not apple but it is different fruit? How many parents are doing their best in nurturing their children, but their children are foolish? It is a painful thing.

In Proverbs 19:13, the Bible says that the foolish son is destruction of his father, and we can see this in the Bible. For example, in Genesis, we know that Adam's first son Cain killed his younger brother Abel in the home of Adam, the first human being. And as we know, the Bible tells the story of ten sons of Jacob trying to kill their own younger brother Joseph. Is that it? In the house of David, David's son Amnon raped Tamar, his half-sister, and her older brother Absalom killed Amnon. In all of these stories, we cannot deny that the foolish sons have brought sorrow and misery to their fathers. Such people like us, we became Heavenly Father God's children through the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. Can we understand this? This is what Zephaniah 3:17 says, “The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.” The Bible says that God takes great delight in us. Do you understand? How did we become such great joy to our Heavenly Father? This is because the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, was crucified. It was because Jesus died on the cross for all our sins, receiving all God's wrath and calamity. That's why we became God's children. And God takes great delight in us.

(3) The foolish son is a shameful and disgraceful son.

Look at Proverbs 19:26 – “He who assaults his father and drives his mother away Is a shameful and disgraceful son.” The Bible says that the foolish son assaults his father, it means that the foolish son steals from his father (Swanson). How do you think the foolish son steals his father's goods? When I think of this question, of course, I think about the prodigal son in Luke 15 who squandered the wealth that he got from his father (v. 13) but also Malachi 3:8 came to my mind: “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing

Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings." And I thought that if the sons and daughters don't honor their parents and don't give money for them to use, then that can be robbing their parents. What do you think? This is what Proverbs 28:24 says: "He who robs his father or his mother And says, "It is not a transgression," Is the companion of a man who destroys." It is sin to steal the things of the parents. The foolish son is committing this sin to God and his parents. The foolish son also drives his mother away from home. Rather than taking care of his mother, the foolish son makes his mother's heart very uncomfortable in order to drive her out of home and live elsewhere. In short, the foolish son does not fulfill his filial duty. He doesn't honor his parents and doesn't care for them. Rather, the foolish son causes his parents to be shameful and insults them by abusing them and drives them out. The Bible says that the foolish son who is shameful, insulted and dishonor his parents is 'the maker of idols'. Look at Isaiah 45:16-17: "All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace together. But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting." But the Bible says that Israel will never be put to shame or disgraced forever. The reason is because God will save them with everlasting salvation (v. 17). We who believe in Jesus are saved by God's eternal salvation. Therefore, we will never be put to shame or disgraced forever. This is because we are children of God, not foolish sons and daughters. Since the children of God loved God, they honor their parents (Lk. 18:20) and fulfill their filial duty (1 Tim. 5:4).

Second and last, what should the parents do to their foolish son?

There are at least three things:

(1) The parents must have hope for their foolish son.

Look at Proverbs 19:18a – "Discipline your son while there is hope" Why should we, the parents, have hope for our foolish son? Why is the reason? The reason is because we believe in God. In other words, we have hope for our foolish son because we believe in God. Look at Jeremiah 29:11 – "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

(2) The parents must discipline their foolish son.

Look at Proverbs 19:18 – "Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death." Not only must we have hope for our foolish son by faith in God, but we also must discipline him because we love him. Look at Proverbs 13:24 – "He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently." Why should we discipline our foolish son? Look at Proverbs 22:15 – "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him." The reason we should discipline our foolish son is because the rod of discipline will remove his foolishness far from him.

(3) The parents should not let their foolish son to stray from the words of knowledge.

Look at Proverbs 19:27 – "Cease listening, my son, to discipline, And you will stray from the words of knowledge." We, the parents, must not only hope for our foolish son by faith in God, but also to discipline them out of love for him. But we must not end in discipline. We must not only discipline our foolish son, but also must not let him listening to discipline that will stray him from the words of knowledge. I think the best way to do that is to continue training our son in the way he should go. Look at Proverbs 22:6 – "Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it." When we train

our son the way he should go, he will not go astray or depart from it when he is old. I think this is the best way to keep our son from listening to discipline that will stray him from the words of knowledge.

No parents want their children go astray and do wrong. All of us, the parents, want our children to be well, so we will try our best to do our parental responsibility and nurture them and pray for them. Nonetheless, when we look at some children who go astray even though their parents are doing their best, we cannot but acknowledge that child-rearing is not accord to our plan. That's why we should leave our child-rearing to our Heavenly Father God. At the same time, we must strive to fulfill our responsibilities faithfully as a parent. One of those efforts is to seek wisdom from God when we pray for our children. As we do so, we must show our children God's given wisdom to us rather than our foolishness. And that wisdom is to fear God and obeying God's commandments. And the lesson God gives us in Proverbs 19:10, 13, 14, 26 is to live a thrifty life and not a luxurious life. Also, the lesson God gives us is that if we have foolish children who bring shame and disgrace to us, we must discipline them while there is hope and let them not listen to discipline that will stray them from the words of knowledge even though they are destruction to us. I hope and pray that we may humbly receive these lessons and obey.

The Spirit-filled children

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Sometimes ago, I have heard on CNN Internet News that three women who had been missing for ten years have been rescued. A man named Charles Ramsey, who was waiting for food ordered at a fast food restaurant in Cleveland, Ohio, said he heard a woman's screams and the sound of hitting the door. He rushed to the front porch of the house and broke the door and rescued one of the three kidnapped women named Amanda Berry. Then she ran out to go to the neighborhood and report to the police. As a result, the police rescued two other women and one child. And the man in his 50s who kidnapped them was arrested by the police and imprisoned in jail. The mother of another woman named Gina DeJesus who had been missing for 10 years said to reporters as follow when she went to the hospital to see her daughter: 'In my gut feeling, I knew that my daughter was alive', 'I never gave up'. And the parents who have been looking for their daughter for 10 years have been delighted that they received the best gift for Mother's Day (Internet).

What is the best gift we, the parents, have received? Of course, the best gift we receive from God is Jesus Christ and the eternal life, the gift of God's grace in Jesus Christ. Besides this gift, I think that the best gift we have received from God on this earth is our children. In particular, as we are told in Ephesians 6:1-3, when our children practice the biblical 'Hyo'(filial duties) in their homes, making us happy and making our home heaven, then we cannot but regard our children as the best gift. Then what is the biblical 'Hyo'(filial duties)? The Biblical 'Hyo' is being saved by believing in Jesus Christ, and living according to the Word of God as God's children who are filled with the Holy Spirit. 'The Hyo is not Hyo that is without serving God, and the faith that is without parental honor is a dead faith' (Internet).

In this era, when the families are collapsing, we must keep our homes with the sense of divine calling and the sense of duty. In order to do so, we must learn Biblical Hyo (filial duties). The reason is because it is the key in keeping the family. I want to meditate on Ephesians 6:1-3 and think about the biblical Hyo (filial duties). I hope and pray that our children will be filled with the Holy Spirit and will obey the Word of God. In Ephesian 6:1-3, the Bible teaches our children two lessons of God.

First, the children must obey their parents in the Lord.

Look at Ephesians 6:1 – "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Let me ask the parents. How do you feel when your children don't listen to you at all? Aren't you upset? The children who are obedient to their parents are "good children," but disobedient children are "bad children." The parents bless the good children, stroke their head and give anything they want, but advise, reproach the bad children and pray for their change. That prayer is offered with sad heart. The parent's prayer, 'Lord, please change my child,' is done with aching heart. Thus, the children who disobey their parents are the children who make their parents sad. The children's disobedience brings deep dark shadows to the parent's hearts (Internet). Let me ask the children. Are you obeying your parents?

The command that God is giving to the children in Ephesians 6:1 is to "obey your parents in the Lord." Here the word 'obey' in Greek means 'to listen under'. In other words, in relationship to their parents, the children must know their position and be quick to listen humbly (cf. Jam. 1:19). This is what Pastor Yong Soo Hyun said in his book, 'IQ is the father's share and EQ is the mother's share': 'It is of utmost importance that children receive training in the home to acknowledge the authority of the father and to obey his authority. These trained children readily acknowledge and obey the authority of God.' In order for the children to obey their parents, the biblical authority of the father must be restored in the family. Here, the role of mother is very important. In other words, the mother should show her children that she is acknowledging her husband's authority by obeying him in the Lord. In doing so, her children will learn to acknowledge and obey their father's authority.

The children should obey their parents "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1). What does it mean? In general, we understand this as the opposite of 'outside the Lord'. Therefore, we think that the children can choose to obey like there are things that the children must obey their parents and things that they don't need to. For example, when the parent commands something that is not biblical, we tend to think that we don't have to obey our parents because it is not right in the Lord. However, Pastor Dong Won Lee interpreted this phrase "in the Lord" as 'if you are in the Lord', 'if you have become a new creature in Christ', or 'if your life has changed after you have believed in Jesus'. So he said, 'If we have become new creation in Christ (if our lives have changed after we believed in Jesus) we must be more obedient to our parents. In fact, this is what the Bible Colossians 3:20 says: "Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord." Why should the children obey their parents in the Lord? It is because this is the right (Eph. 6:1). This is because it pleases the Lord (Col. 3:20). This means that obeying parents is not conditional and depend on how the children feel. The children should obey their parents because the Bible says that that is right thing to do.

Second and last, the children should honor their parents.

Look at Ephesians 6:2-3: "HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH." Let me ask the parents. If you ask your children, 'Who is your most respected person?', how would you feel if they say 'I respect my parents the most than anyone in the world'? If we look at Matthew 15:1-9, we see Jesus talking to the Pharisees and teachers of the law who were religious leaders at the time of Jesus. Then the Pharisees and teachers of the law treated their parents with this thought: "... if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to 'honor his father' with it. ..." (vv. 5-6). In other words, they said that they didn't need to honor their parents by giving a gift to them if they honor God by offering a gift to God. This was the tradition of the elders at that time. To these Pharisees and teachers of the law who put emphasis on the tradition of the elders, Jesus said, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"

How can we say we honor the Father in heaven, whom we cannot see, without honoring our physical parents whom we can see? Look at 1 John 4:20 – "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." To us Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 5:8, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Then why does Paul say to honor our parents? The reason is because it is the first commandment with promise (Eph. 6:2). There are two views to this "the first commandment with promise": (1) The first view is Protestant's position in which the Ten Commandments are written in two stones: First to fourth commandments are written in the first stone and Fifth to tenth commandments are written in the second stone. First to fourth commandment is the commandment in the relationship between God and man, and fifth to tenth commandment is

the commandment in the relationship between man and man. The first emphasis in the commandment in the relationship between man and man is to honor your parents. So this is the first commandment. (2) The second view is that this is the only commandment with the promise of blessing added among the Ten Commandments, so it is the first commandment with promise. Then what is the "promise" that Paul was talking about here? Look at Ephesians 6:3 – “SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.” Here, “it may be well with you” meant mostly material blessings in the Old Testament. But as we come to the New Testament, the concept of this blessing changes, emphasizing spiritual blessings. And the phrase “and that you may live long on the earth” is a promise that God will give us the blessings of long life when we obey and honor our parents.

One day in the Korean Chosun Newspaper, there was a sad story about a mother. The title of the article was ‘[Today is Mother's Day] Ah! Mother ... When a truck was about to hit the back of her disabled daughter, she pushed her daughter and she got hit instead and died’ (Internet). The mother (37 years old) was taking her 9 years old daughter with severe mental retardation to the place where the school bus comes. When both the mother and her daughter almost crossed the crosswalk a 25-ton dump truck was coming toward them and didn't stop even though it was the red light. One of the people who witnessed the scene said that the dump truck suddenly appeared and the mother pushed her daughter who was with her and she got hit directly by the truck. The daughter is being treated at a nearby hospital because the truck wheel rushing on her left leg. The police said her injury is serious enough to require the he leg to be cut off. Mother Bae has never missed a day in taking her daughter, who is in the fourth grade of special schools for disabled students, to the bus riding place from when her daughter was in first grade. A school official said, ‘The mother was very thoughtful that she always took care of her daughter at the school bus riding place.’ The Korean hymn “Precious Love, the Love of Mother”, the first verse: “.Precious love, the love of mother, Broad and deep be-yond all praise! Precious love, it stirs my spirit Gives me glad-ness all my days. Mother prayed when I was weeping, Made my sorrows all her own; And when I was glad and smiling Sang her praises at the Throne” (Internet).

Family story:

“What is the lesson you learned from God?”

March 15, 2013, Friday afternoon.

After I dropped my son Dillon and my daughter Yeri at the church (because there was a pre-teen class), I went to my wife's workplace with my youngest daughter Karis. It was because I promised to pick up my wife from her workplace and have dinner with her in Japanese town. I don't know how the conversation started between Karis and I when we were waiting for my wife to come out to the car. But Karis talked a mother who had three children and said to me 'She has a lot of children.' So I said to her, 'Your mother had four children.' Haha Then I told Karis about the first baby, Charis, who died. After a while, she asked me: "What is the lesson you learned from God?" When she asked me that question, I answered right away 'It was God's love.' I actually experienced God's love in depth through my first baby Charis' death, I told Karis that I learned God's love. So Karis asked me how God could kill the baby and how could you learn God's love through Charis' death? In Karis' perspective, she can surely ask this question. When I heard that question, I hesitated to answer little bit because I wasn't sure how to explain to Karis the deep love of God that I learned from God. At that time, I heard Karis saying to herself 'God killed the baby as God killed His Son Jesus' Perhaps Karis seemed to try to understand what I said. At that moment I saw my wife coming out of her workplace. So I told Karis 'There she comes.' So she looked outside through the back window and we waited for her to come to the car. Haha When my wife rode in the car, I told her about Karis and my conversation so that my wife could answer Karis' question. But Karis told me not to say any more about what we talked about. So I told my wife in Korean that she asked about what I learned from God through the death of our first baby, Charis. And then I told her that I couldn't answer Karis. I told her that Karis seems like she doesn't want me to share it with her. Then my wife told me that 'Maybe Karis just wanted to talk to you.' As we were heading toward the restaurant for dinner, we no longer talked about the first baby, Charis. But I wanted to tell Karis in my mind: 'Although God took Charis away from mom and daddy, God gave you Karis as a gift.'

Family story:

‘What are you doing?’

January 12, 2014. Sunday evening.

After I finished Korean and English worship service on Sunday,
I went to the nursing home with my beloved wife where my father-in-law was staying.
Although he wanted to come to church and worship God, he couldn't.
So at the nursing, we worshiped God together with my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law.
I was little bit surprised because when we were singing the hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”,
my father-in-law also sang with little bit loud voice.
I wondered how he could make that loud sound, where the power came from.
Although his pronunciation was not correct, I was grateful.
After visiting my father-in-law, my wife and I quickly came back to our church in order to participate in the monthly family meeting.
During the prayer meeting, I shared little bit about my father-in-law and asked the family members to pray for him.

After the family prayer meeting, we came home and I went to the kitchen right away where my wife was.
I asked my wife to make pasta for dinner. And she was already making it.
So I got the trash bag and threw into the outside big trash can and put it on the street (because the trash truck is coming tomorrow Monday).
Then, as I went upstairs into my room, I saw a lot of dirty cloth in the washtub.
So I thought about asking my youngest daughter Karis to put the laundry in the washing machine.
So I asked her "What are you doing?" in Korean (“뭐하니?”)
Then, Karis, who was in her room and heard my question that I spoke in Korean, said “money?” Hahaha
(Since “What are you doing?” in Korean “뭐하니?” sounds like “money” ...)
I didn't know what to say. So I just went into my room in order to change into comfortable clothes.
At that time I heard Karis call her mom “mommy!” and going down to the first floor.
So after I changed my clothes, I took the empty basket and put the dirty clothes and socks that I had to put in the washing machine.
At that time, however, Karis was coming back up and saw me putting the dirty clothes and sock in the laundry basket. And she said “모하니?” in Korean, which means “What are you doing?” Hahahahaha.
(She repeated what I said earlier to her in Korean but with little bit incorrect Korean)
I just laughed because I was speechless. Hahaha
Then I told her in Korea “뭐하니까 뭐냐?” which means ‘How you could said 'What are you doing?' to your dad.
(The reason I told her like this was because what she said in Korean wasn't' respectable way of speaking to an adult.)
And she said that she couldn't understand why I told her “money” even though I said in Korea “뭐하니?” which means “What are you doing?” Hahaha (Even though she misunderstood my Korean).
So I lost my word and it was so funny that I couldn't say anything to Karis.
So I took the laundry basket down and put it in the washing machine, and I sat down and am writing this family story. Haha.
Next time, I think I should just do the laundry by myself without thinking about asking my children to do it. Haha.

Family story:

“God did it!”

February 4, 2013, Monday evening.

Today is the day that the Glendale Unified School District is having a Spelling Bee Contest. Twenty elementary school students representing 20 elementary schools in Glendale (known as approximately 10,000 students) will come out and will do the spelling contest. In this competition, my daughter Yeri went out as her school representative last year after winning the first place in her school spelling competition and is coming this year as well. Last year I wasn't able to attend and to see Yeri did the spelling bee contest due to my presbytery duty. But this year I was glad because I was able to attend her spelling bee contest.

My wife also came home from work a little early. So we got ready to go to the spell bee contest together with Dillon and Karis. When we got into the car, I suggested to them, 'Let's pray God before we go.' And I prayed to God and gave thanks to Him. And I prayed for Yeri. I sincerely prayed that Yeri could remember the words that she memorized hard. And I prayed especially for Yeri to enjoy this contest. Then I drove and we went to the place where the spelling bee contest held.

When we arrived there, there weren't that many people. We arrived early. When we entered the front door, we saw a Korean mother holding papers with the words (I think the kids have to memorize 1,500 words) and helping her son for final preparation. As we were watching that, we entered the room where the spelling bee contest was held, and Yeri went to Room 103, where all the students were gathered for the contest. As the competition started around 7 o'clock in the evening, there were not many seats left over because lot of people came. There were people watching TV on the outside. Since we arrived early, we were able to sit down in the front seats. Finally, Yeri walked in with other students. And when one of the judges pronounced a word to each of 20 students, each of the students began to spell the words given to them. In the first round, all 20 students spelled the word right. However, as the contest progressed, the number of students gradually dropped. What I really appreciated was that the chief judge told all of the audiences not to clap hands when the students spelled the words right but to clap hands when they spelled the words wrong and had to go to their family and sit down with them. When only six students left, I thought to myself, 'Yeri did better than last year' (because Yeri was 7th place last year and she told me that she could do better this year). Eventually, all the students were eliminated except Yeri and the girl who was sitting next to Yeri. After the chief judge came out and explained that the rules for the final two spelling bee contest were different. And then the final contest started. In conclusion, the chief judge came out and said that it seemed like the two students studied together. Since both students were equal, the chief judge proclaimed that both students are co-winners. Haha.

In the end, Yeri and another girl became co-winners for the 37th Glendale Unified School District Spelling Bee contest.

When the contest was finished, there was a time taking pictures.

When I saw my beloved wife went out in front and took picture with Yeri and co-winner student and the school board members, I told her later 'You did a good job!'

The reason I praised my wife was because she worked very hard in training Yeri to memorize the words even until 11 pm so Yeri could be ready for her spelling bee contest.

Then when my wife told me to take a picture with Yeri, I hugged Yeri and took the picture together.

And when I told my wife, 'Let's go home', she said 'Why don't you take picture of me with Yeri?'

So I said, 'Why didn't you tell me earlier? Haha (I am still like this to my wife ... haha).

So I took a picture of my beloved wife and daughter Yeri with my wife's cellphone

(Afterwards, I saw the picture that I took and it came out well. But the picture my wife took, me and Yeri, didn't come out well. Hahaha)

As soon as I entered the car, I called my mother and informed her about Yeri that she is co-winners.

My mother talked to Yeri and congratulated her after she talked to my wife.

Then 12 minutes later, my younger sister called and talked to Yeri.

I guess my sister promised Yeri that she would buy her dinner before Wednesday night prayer meeting.

Yeri told me that her grandfather (my father) told her that it is 'honor to our family'.

When I heard that I told the kids that there was a Korean movie called 'Honor of the Family' and it was a 'gangster family'. Haha. At that time everyone laughed out loud. Hahahaha.

My wife, who was sitting next to me, also called her mother and told her on the speaker phone about Yeri's win.

When my mother-in-law heard that, she was surprised and cried in tears.

And I saw my wife sitting next to me wiping her tears.

I could see little bit the love between my mother-in-law and my wife.

After the phone calls, we went to the In-n-Out hamburger even though it was after 9 o'clock at night.

It was because the children wanted to eat the In-n-Out hamburgers.

I found out that Yeri received \$ 50 as prize money for the spelling bee contest, so I told her 'Let's use it to buy hamburgers. When my heard it, she hit me lightly. Haha. I was kind of joking and I think she hit me to laugh as well. Haha. I encouraged Yeri to offer \$5 out of \$50 in prize money to God as tithing.

Then she said that she had already tithed the money that she got on January 1st whole family worship and gathering when she bowed down to all the adults in the family. I was very happy inside. I thanked God for Yeri because she gave tithing to God even though I didn't say anything that time.

After we got some hamburgers and fries we made it to go.

So we brought the food at home and had a delicious meal in the late hours.

After the meal, they all went upstairs and only Yeri and I were left in the kitchen.

While I was doing dish wash, Yeri approached me and gave me a hug as she said "Thank you".

I also said "Thank you" to her and hug her. I sincerely thanked Yeri.

I was grateful to see both my parents and my wife's parents were happy because of Yeri.

Yeri and I also went upstairs to get ready to sleep. And I talked to my wife about Yeri.

My wife said that Yeri was more confident this year than last year and I agreed.

And this year, Yeri asked the church teacher and the pre-teen friends to pray for her for the spelling bee contest.

She also asked us, the family members, to pray for her during the family worship.

I was happy and thankful to see Yeri relying on God.

And my wife said about the Yeri's spelling bee contest, "God did it!"

Therefore, we cannot help but give thanks to God.

Children who make their parents really happy

(Proverbs 23:15-23)

Among 304 who died due to the sinking of the Korean passenger ship (Seowol), there was a student named Cha-woong Jung (17 years old). He was a third-grade kendo holder who developed the dream of athleticism. He sacrificed his life by giving his life jacket to his friend and trying to save others at that time of the accident, a day before his birthday. At the time of his funeral, however, the highest price for shroud was more than \$4,000. But his family got him the lowest one that costs only around \$400. The reason was because the family thought that they couldn't use the people's tax money on the expensive shroud. According to a funerals official, because Jung's family ordered the cheap funeral supplies, other two families who lost their kids also ordered the same kind of funeral supplies and joined the Jung's family's wishes' (Internet). When I first got to this article, I was wondering what the Jung's parents' hearts were. I think the parents were proud of their dead children.

The Bible tells us to discipline a child (Prov. 23:13-14). We should discipline our children because we love them. "He who spares the rod hates his son" (13:24). Another reasons why we must discipline our children are to drive out the foolishness from our children's life (22:15), to give wisdom to our children (29:15), to save our children from death (23:14) and to lead them to the way of life (10:17). In doing so, they will give us joy and peace to our hearts (29:17). Therefore, we must discipline our children.

This is what Proverbs 23:15-16 says, "My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right." If we apply this word to the relationship between the parents and their children, if the children's hearts are wise and their lips are honest (speaking the right things), their parents' hearts will be glad and will be delighted and joyful. Here, we can see who the children who really make their parents happy. And those children whose hearts are wise and who speak right. In other words, the children who really make their parents happy are children who listen to their wise parents, received the lessons of truth from them, and obey them. Apostle John had such joy. Look at 2 John 1:4 – "It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us." Look at 3 John 1:4 – "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." Dr. Park Yoon-sun said: 'The only joy of the one who communicates the truth is that the people live by that truth' (Park). Do we have this joy?

I would like to think about five truths that the children who really please the hearts of their parents based on Proverbs 23:15-23 and want to accept those truths and to live by them. I hope and pray that all of us will first receive these truths and live according to those truths, so that our children will be filled with grace and the Spirit to live according to those truths as well.

The first truth is, do not let your heart envy sinner, but always live in the fear of the Lord.

Look at Proverbs 23:17 – "Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the fear of the LORD always." There are two Korean words that I don't like to hear personally when I talk to other people. I often see people chatting on the internet and writing those two words when people reply. Those two Korean words are "덕분에" (by your favor) and "부럽습니다" (I envy you). Of course, it would be better to say 'by your favor' than 'because of you'. But somehow, when people say 'by your favor', I feel like they are just saying for 'hello'. That's why I don't like it very much. And when people tell me, 'I envy you' I don't know why they envy me. I don't think we need to envy each other. I think that we can just accept our own situation that the Lord has given to each of us, and be

thankful and satisfied. One day, when I was chatting with group of people, one member said to another member: 'If you envy, you lose.'

In Proverbs 23:17, the Bible says, "Do not let your heart envy sinner." But it is very difficult for us not to envy the sinner's prosperity with our hearts, as the Bible says. Especially when we are in need and financially suffering, I think it is impossible to live by this truth without God's grace. Think about it. If you are trying to believe in Jesus and want to live according to the Word, but there is only painful things. And you see non-believers around you live in in prosperity. Wouldn't you envy that people? If the righteous are suffering but the sinner continues to prosper, won't you envy the sinners and their prosperity? I personally remember Psalm 73, when I think that the righteous who are suffering and is jealous of the sinners who are prosperous. The psalmist Asaph saw the prosperity of the wicked and envied the arrogant (v. 3). Here, the prosperity of the wicked is "They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills" (vv. 4-5). They are "always carefree, they increase in wealth" (v. 12). That's why they are arrogant and their greed knows no limits (vv.6-7). "They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression" (v. 8). They even oppose God with their mouths (v. 9). But there are many people who are getting their evil influences (v. 10). Asaph, the righteous man who saw this, was suffering all day long and had been punished every morning unlike the wicked (v. 14). That was why when Asaph saw the prosperity of the wicked, he envied them. To the extent in which he said, "Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence" (v. 13).

In Proverbs 23:17, the Bible says "Do not let your heart envy sinners." What is the reason? I found the answer in verse 18: "Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off." Although this verse explains why we should always fear God, I thought in opposite way. In other words, the reason why shouldn't envy sinners in our hearts is because the sinners have no future and hope. The psalmist Asaph understood the future of the sinners, "their final destiny", when he entered the sanctuary of God (Ps. 73:17). What is their final destination? Look at Psalm 73:18-20: "Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies." This is what David said in Psalm 37:1-2: "Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers. For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb." This is the end of the wicked. They will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. Their end is destruction. That's why the Bible commands us not to envy the sinners with our hearts. Rather, the Bible tells us, "But live in the fear of the Lord always" (Prov. 23:17). Why is that? It is because "Surely there is future" for those who always fear God (v. 18). Here, the "future" means the "end." And the end of the believer refers to the afterlife (Park). In other words, the wise Christians who always fear God have hope of the afterlife that is eternal life. What is our hope of the future here? This is what Psalm 73:24 says: "... And afterward receive me to glory." This is the hope that the Lord will receive us to glory. So the Bible says, "... the righteous has a refuge when he dies" (Prov. 14:32). I hope and pray that with this hope of the future life in the Lord, we always live in fear of God and not envy the sinners in our heart because they have no future or hope.

The second truth is that you must listen and be wise and direct your heart in the right way.

Look at Proverbs 23:19 – "Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way." What does it mean by directing our hearts in the right way? For example, in verse 17, the Bible says, "Do not let your heart envy sinners." Directing our hearts in the right way means we make sure that our heart does not envy the sinners and their prosperity. Then how can we direct our hearts in the right way? The Bible teaches us that we must listen and be wise (v. 19) in order to direct our hearts in the right way. If we meditate on verse 19 with verse 17, the conclusions that we can get is that in order to direct our hearts in the right way we must always fear God and be wise.

But if we are foolish, then we will despise wisdom and instruction (1:7). Here, if we despise wisdom and instruction, that means we don't fear God. And if we don't fear God, we do evil (8:13). Then we can never direct our hearts in the right way. And if we don't direct our hearts in the right way, then we will leave our hearts to envy sinners (23:17). Not only that. If we don't direct our hearts in the right way, then we will live in sin according to our sinful nature. .

What is the sinful instinct of our hearts? Although we can find many passages in the Bible, let me just mention three verses: (1) "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders" (Mt. 15:19), (2) "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, ..." (Gal. 5:19-21), (3) "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy" (2 Tim. 3:2). Here, one of our sinful natures is love of money. And this is what the Bible 1 Timothy 6:10 says: "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." Do you know who loved money at the time of Jesus? It was the Pharisees (Lk. 16:14). When Jesus said, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other You cannot serve God and wealth" (v. 13), the Pharisees scoffed at Jesus (v. 14). The lesson we can learn from here is that even if we are a very religious person in the church and people think that we serve the church very passionately, we can become lovers of money like Pharisees and commit sins against God with our covetous hearts if don't direct our hearts in the right way by fearing God and be wise.

We all need to listen to the words of our Father God and be wise so that we can direct our hearts in the right way. In order to do that, we must listen to the Father God's words first diligently. Look at Proverbs 4:10-11: "Hear, my son, and accept my sayings And the years of your life will be many. I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths." Through the Word of God, God teaches us the way of wisdom and of the right way. We must listen to His Word and receive His teachings humbly. In doing so, we can get wisdom. And when we get wisdom, we can fear God and can keep ourselves us from evil way. Also, we must keep the Word of God in our hearts and keep it. Look at Proverbs 4:4 – "Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live." Not only we should hear and receive the Word of God, we also should keep it. When we put His Word in our hearts, we can direct our hearts in the right way. And in such right hearts, we will fear God and keep His Word and we can walk in the right way without leaning toward left or right.

The third truth is that you shouldn't be with heavy drinkers of wine or with gluttonous eaters of meat.

Look at Proverbs 23:20 – "Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat." We must not associate with immoral people of this world or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, or a reviler, or a drunkard (1 Cor. 5:9-13). Here, the Greek literal meaning of the word "do not associate" (v. 9) is 'do not mix.' In other words, the Bible teaches us not to mix with immoral people of this world or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, or a reviler, or a drunkard. Here, Apostle Paul wasn't talking about unbelievers but believers. What Paul was talking about is that the Corinthian church saints shouldn't associate with those believers who were continued to commit sins (v. 11) without any repentance. Paul wanted the saints to judge those believers who were having sinful influences to the Corinthian church saints and not associate with them. Actually, Paul told the saints to break the relationship with them. He even told them to remove them from among themselves (v. 13). In other words, Paul told the Corinthian church saints not only to break the spiritual fellowship with those believers but also the table fellowship with them (v. 13). Why is that? The reason is to continue to keep the purity of the Lord's church.

In Proverbs 23:20, the Bible says, “Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat.” Here, who are those heavy drinkers of wine and gluttonous eaters of meat? They are people who enjoy the life of pleasure (Park). In other words, these are those who live a life of prodigal. Why does the Bible tell us not to associate with those kinds of people? One of the reasons is recorded in Proverbs 20:1 – “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.” Why shouldn’t we associate with those heavy drinkers of wine? The reason is because wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler. We must not associate with those who are heavy drinkers of wine because they have no wisdom. Another reason is written in Proverbs 23:29-30: “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine.” The reason why we shouldn’t be with heavy drinkers of wine is because there are woe, sorrow, contentions, complaining and wounds to the heavy drinkers of wine. Not only that, the reason why we shouldn’t be with heavy drinkers is because our mind will utter perverse things (v. 33) and we will be without sensation (v. 35) and won’t be able to quick drinking. This is what Proverbs 23:21 says about the reason: “For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe one with rags.” The reason why we shouldn’t be with heavy drinkers is because the drunkards will become poor. Why do drunkards become poor? The reason is because the drunkards will live a life of debauchery (Eph 5:18), will waste their own possessions (Lk. 15:13), and will be lazy and love to sleep (Prov. 23:21). That’s why the Bible keeps on saying ‘Do not get drunk’ (Eph. 5:18; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:10).

Then who are those gluttonous eaters of meat? (Prov. 23:20) They are those who eat greedily. What is gluttony? Gluttony is called one of the seven deadly sins. It is characterized by a limitless appetite for food and drink and overindulgence to the point where one is no longer eating just to live, but rather living to eat (Internet). Gluttony is a disorderly way of taking in the food that makes our thinking dull, weakens our control of reason, and declines the man’s dignity. Ultimately, drunkenness and gluttony are over-consumed that make us drowsiness and eventually make us poor (Walvoord). Therefore, the Bible tells us not to associate with those heavy drinkers and gluttonous eaters of meat. We must listen and be wise so that we can direct our hearts in the right way. We must walk on the right way, not the way of debauchery.

The fourth truth is that you should listen to your father and don’t despise your mother.

Look at Proverbs 23:22 – “Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.” Are you, the parents, happy when you think about your children? When are you happy because of your children? Aren’t you happy when your children obey you? How would you feel if your children disobeyed your words? What would your heart be like if your children even despise you? Especially mothers, when your children ignore your words and even despise you, how would you feel? The Bible Proverbs 23:15-16 says that children who makes their parents’ glad and rejoice are wise children in heart and speak what is right). These wise children hear the words of their parents (vv. 19, 22). Even if the words of his parents are reproof, they humbly listen to their parents (25:12). And they get more wisdom and direct their hearts to the right way (23:19). They never let themselves go to the way of debauchery (v. 20). And the wise children don’t despise their parents because they are old (v. 22). But the children who despise their parents when they are old are without wisdom (11:12). They are fools. The reason they despise their parents is because they despise the word of God (13:13). Think about it. Although the Bible Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right”, the foolish children despise that word of God so they don’t obey their parents. The foolish children who are without wisdom not only don’t despise the word of God, but they also despise the wisdom of their parents’ words (v23:9) and don’t listen to their words. This is not right in God's sight. This is committing sin against God (14:21).

This is what Proverbs 17:25 says: “A foolish son is a grief to his father And bitterness to her who bore him.” The foolish children who despise their parents by despising the word of God are the grief to their fathers and

bitterness to their mothers. They mock their fathers and hate to obey their parents (30:17). So they depart from the discipline and instruction of their parents (cf.: 1:8, 6:20) and are shameful and disgraceful children (19:26). But wise children make their parents glad (10:1, 15:20). They listen to their parents. The reason is because they respects and honor their parents. God has commanded us to obey and honor our parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1-2). If we obey this word of God, God will bless us (Deut. 28:2). And we will make our parents glad and happy.

The fifth truth is that you should buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding and don't sell it.

Look at Proverbs 23:23 – “Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding.” Usually the mind of a business person is to buy things cheaply and sell them more expensive. The reason for doing so is to make profit for the business. However, I think there are at least two kinds of psychology in terms of people buying things. One is to buy something cheaply and the other is to get something that is really worth by making investment. In Proverbs 23:23, the Bible says to buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding. Why does the Bible say so? The reason is because the value of truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding is worth it. Look at Proverbs 4:7 – “The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding.” What does it mean? It means that since wisdom is the best obtain wisdom at any cost. If we apply this word of Prover s 4:7 to Proverbs 23:23, the Bible say that we should buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding, and don't sell it because truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding are the best. But as we already know, we cannot buy and sell the truth. Truth is to gain. But the truth was given by God in Jesus Christ to us as a gift. Look at Isaiah 55:1 – “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” The Bible says ‘Come, who have no money. Come without money and without cost.’ What does it mean? It means that we make the truth our own even without paying anything. The reason is because Jesus already paid the price on our behalf. That's why we have received the truth for free (Park). We must value this truth that we have received for free. And as the Proverb says, we must consider wisdom the best. So we have to do our best to get that truth and wisdom. We must pray to God in faith to understand the truth and gain more wisdom (cf. Jam. 1:5). And we must meditate the Word of God day and night. I hope and pray that we listen the truth and obey the truth so that we can gain wisdom.

We must become children of God who truly please our Father God. In order to do so, we must become God's wise children (Prov. 23:15-16). And the wise children of God hear the five truths and obey them. Those five truths are: (1) The first truth is, do not let your heart envy sinner, but always live in the fear of the Lord (v. 17). (2) The second truth is that you must listen and be wise and direct your heart in the right way (v. 19). (3) The third truth is that you shouldn't be with heavy drinkers of wine or with gluttonous eaters of meat (v. 20). (4) The fourth truth is that you should listen to your father and don't despise your mother (v. 22). (5) The fifth truth is that you should buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding and don't sell it (v 23). I hope and pray that we may obey these five truths so that we can truly please God.

An exemplary relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law

“Boaz replied to her, ‘All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know’” (Ruth 2:11).

What is conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law? When I look at an internet article, it says that the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is the state of conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law that is deepened in subtle emotions that they cannot openly talk to each other (Internet). Then why is this conflict occurring? The mother-in-law's thoughts and the daughter-in-law's thoughts about the reason seem to be different. For example, the mother-in-law might think that (1) her daughter-in-law ignores her words, (2) interferes with everything about her works, and (3) her daughter-in-law is very selfish. How about the daughter-in-law? What's is her position about the conflict between her and her mother-in-law: (1) conflicts in having her father-in-law and mother-in-law with her, (2) conflicts because of relatives and children, and (3) conflicts due to lack of dialogue with her mother-in-law (Internet). The problem is that they have different perspectives, don't respect each other's ideas, and they want to pursue their own thoughts rather than trying to understand each other. In short, it is conflicts that come from the immature faith in the Lord and personality. And the lack of wisdom and ability to cope with such conflicts to benefit each other's relationship is also a problem. Because of the lack of generosity and love that can make conflict a good opportunity to get to know each other, the end of conflict is the fruit of sin.

I want to try to apply some Biblical principles by meditating on the relationship between Naomi, mother-in-law and Ruth, daughter-in-law which is an exemplary model, and hope to learn these principles well so that we can apply them not only in the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law but also all other human relationship as well.

First, what are the biblical principles to be learned from the exemplary mother-in-law Naomi?

(1) Blessing the daughter-in-law

After her two sons Mahlon and Chilion (1:2) died in Moab (v. 5) and heard in the land of Moab that the Lord had visited His people in giving them food (1:6) Naomi, the mother-in-law, arose with her two daughters-in-law in order to return to the land of Judah, her hometown Bethlehem (v. 7). And on the way to Bethlehem, she told her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth (v. 4), to return to their mothers' house (v. 8). And then she blessed them, “May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me” (v. 8).

Therefore, mother-in-law should bless her daughter-in-law. The mother-in-law should never say bitter words [“Mara” (v.20) which means “bitterness”] to her daughter-in-law. Instead, she should bless her daughter-in-law [“... that it may be well with you?” (3:1)].

(2) Seeking the benefits of the daughter-in-law

In Ruth 2:22, the mother-in-law Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth like this: “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, so that others do not fall upon you in another field.” The background of this verse is that Naomi said this verse 22 to Ruth who was working in the field of Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi’s husband (2:1), when she told her mother-in-law Naomi about the grace she received from Boaz and what Boaz said to her, that is “You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest” (v. 21). Here from what Naomi said, “It is good”, to Ruth “My daughter” (3:1), we can feel Naomi’s love toward Ruth by seeking Ruth’s benefits. We can see in Ruth 3:1 that Naomi has sought the benefit of her daughter-in-law Ruth: “Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?” In other words, Naomi pursued Ruth’s remarriage. So she taught Ruth specifically how to approach Boaz (vv. 2-4).

The mother-in-law should love her daughter-in-law like her own daughter. And she should seek the benefits of her daughter-in-law, always thinking about what is good for her daughter-in-law, rather than seeking her own benefits.

(3) Talking with the daughter-in-law

From Ruth 2:19 through 3:5, we see Naomi talking to her daughter-in-law Ruth. When we think of the conversation between Naomi and Ruth, in Naomi’s position, she wanted to know where and for who Ruth was working (2:19) and wanted to bless Boaz who was gracious to Ruth (v. 20). She also wanted to tell Ruth who Boaz was (v. 20).

One of the causes of the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is lack of conversation. However, when I think of Naomi and Ruth, who showed the exemplary relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, I think they really talked to each other in a specific and had genuine conversation. The mother-in-law should have this kind of conversation with her daughter-in-law. I think it is good idea for the mother-in-law to call her daughter-in-law and talk to her. There is no need for her to wait for the phone call from her daughter-in-law.

(4) Leading the daughter-in-law

In Ruth 3:18, the mother-in-law Naomi counsels her daughter-in-law Ruth as follow: “... Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today.” Since Naomi loved Ruth, not only she blessed her but also she sought her benefits by specifically directing her for her remarriage. In Ruth 3:18, Naomi exhorted Ruth to wait and see whether Boaz would redeem the land that belonged to Elimelech or not. Naomi knew that Boaz would not rest until he had settled it. And eventually, as we know, Boaz became the kinsman redeemer of all that belonged to Elimelech. And with the guidance of Naomi, Ruth married Boaz (4:13) and enjoys the blessing of giving birth to Obed, the grandfather of David (v. 17).

Second and last, what are the biblical principles to be learned from the exemplary daughter-in-law Ruth?

(1) Dealing kindly with her mother-in-law

In Ruth 1: 8, we can see that Ruth dealt kindly with Naomi. The exemplary daughter-in-law never ignores her mother-in-law. Although her mother-in-law doesn't deal kindly with her, she deals kindly with her mother-in-law. Of course, it would be easier for the daughter-in-law whose mother-in-law deals kindly with her. However, even though her mother-in-law doesn't deal kindly with her, she deals kindly with her mother-in-law.

(2) Following her mother-in-law.

In Ruth 1: 14 and 18, when Naomi left Moab to return to her home Bethlehem, she said to her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, "Go return each of you to her mother's house" (1:8). Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and went back to her people and her gods (vv. 14-15) but Ruth clung to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Although Naomi told Ruth to go back her people and her gods (v. 15), but Ruth replied like this: "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me" (vv. 16-17). When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said no more to her (v. 18).

When I think of Ruth who was determined to follow her mother-in-law Naomi, I think that the exemplary daughter-in-law should follow her mother-in-law like following the Lord. Although Ruth could go back to her family, she followed a widow Naomi, her mother-in-law. Not only she left her family, but she also left her people, Moabites, and followed her mother-in-law to Bethlehem. The Bible teaches us that this kind of daughter-in-law who was determined and dedicated to follow her mother-in-law is the exemplary daughter-in-law.

(3) Giving to her mother-in-law

Ruth worked diligently in the field of Boaz, and she had gleaned about an ephah of barley (2:17). She took it up and went into the city, and gave her mother-in-law Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied (v. 18). Ruth, a widow, supported her mother-in-law Naomi who was also widow. When I thought about how Naomi could have been able to eat and live at that time, it would have been much better for her young daughter-in-law, Ruth, to go out and work hard to live and eat. That's why Ruth did. She worked hard and provided food for her mother-in-law Naomi.

The exemplary daughter-in-law serves her mother-in-law. She gives to her mother-in-law. She not only gives foods to her mother-in-law, but also the pocket money and gifts as well and serves her. The reason for doing so is because she loves her mother-in-law.

(4) Talking with her mother-in-law

When we look at Ruth 2:19 to 3:5 and 3:16-18, we can see Ruth telling her mother-in-law Naomi what happened to her [(3:16) "... And she told her all that the man had done for her"]. Ruth told Naomi without omission. So Ruth solved all of her mother's curiosity. When I think of Ruth, she seems to understand her mother-in-law's heart and had conversation with her. Ruth, who understood her mother-in-law's heart, continued to tell Naomi, who blessed her and wanted her to remarry, what had happened with Boaz.

The exemplary daughter-in-law has good conversation with her mother-in-law. The good conversation is to stand in her mother-in-law's position and think about her situation and solve her curiosity. Therefore,

the daughter-in-law who is like Ruth often calls her mother-in-law and tells her story of her son and her grandchildren in full. We should be this kind of daughter-in-law.

(5) Obeying her mother-in-law

In Ruth 3:5-6, we can see Ruth obeying her mother-in-law Naomi. She did all that Naomi told her to do (v. 5). Ruth, who truly loved her mother-in-law, obeyed Naomi in full because she loved her. The daughter-in-law who is so thoroughly obedient to her mother-in-law is an exemplary daughter-in-law. And such daughter-in-law is the daughter-in-law who glorifies God.

As I meditated on the exemplary mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship between Naomi and Ruth, conclusively I thought about what kind of being Ruth was to Naomi by listening to the women saying to Naomi: “May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him” (4:15). That's right. Her daughter-in-law Ruth was better to Naomi than seven sons. Naomi, who had this daughter-in-law Ruth, was a happy woman as her name means. Although her husband and two sons passed away and her first daughter-in-law Orpah left her, she received the God's gracious gift of grandson Obed, “the father of Jesse, the father of David” (v. 17) through her second daughter-in-law Ruth who followed her all the way to Bethlehem and remarried to Boaz. In the end, God dealt kindly with Ruth as her mother-in-law Naomi blessed Ruth. I hope and pray that such blessing will be with you and your family as well.

A broken family

“Now there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah. He said to his mother, ‘The eleven hundred pieces of silver which were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse in my hearing, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.’ And his mother said, “Blessed be my son by the LORD.’ ... They said to him, ‘Be silent, put your hand over your mouth and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be a priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?’” (Judges 17:1-2, 18:19).

In a broken family, there is no bond or unity in the family. Especially in the broken, there is no order, and each family member lives in their own way. The broken family is a complicated family. There is fragmentation and disruption in the broken family and each family behaves freely, and there is no morality of order or courtesy.

The age of Judges was a broken age. The reason was because in the days of Judges there was no king in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes (Jdgs. 17:6, 21:25). In these days of Judges, the broken family, the family of Micah of Judges 17, comes out and in Judges 18, the broken tribe, the tribe of Dan, comes out (and from Judges 19 and on, the broken country Israel comes out). When I think about the broken family of Micah and the broken tribe of Dan, I remembered the broken family, who believes in Jesus, and the broken church in our days. I would like to consider some similarities between them. In doing so, I want to be taught how the Christian family who believe in Jesus and the Lord-centered church should be.

First, I would like to think about the similarities between the broken family, Micah’s family, and the broken Christian family of our days. In short, in the broken family of Micah, Micah’s mother did what was right in her own eyes, that is, she wanted her son Micah to be blessed by the Lord (17:2) and her son Micah wanted to be blessed by the Lord (v. 13). It is dumbfounded that when Micah, the son of the broken family, who stole his mother’s 1,100 pieces of silver and then returned to her because out of fear of being cursed by his mother, his mother said to Micah as follow: ““Blessed be my son by the LORD” (v. 2). How could the mother bless her son who stole her money? Shouldn’t she rebuke him? I can’t understand Micah’s mother. What is more difficult to understand is that the Micah's mother, who dedicated the silver that she received her son to the Lord for Micah, took 200 pieces of silver, gave them to the silversmith who made them into a graven image and a molten image, and then gave them to her son Micah (vv. 3-4). Does it make sense to you? How could the Micah’s mother do that? How could she, who blessed her son Micah, make an idol and give that to him?

I think there is not much difference between the Micah's mother and some Christian mothers in our days. Although those Christian mothers say they love God with their lips and are praying for God’s blessing upon their children, they are making an idol for their children. What is that idol? The idol is money they love in their hearts even though with their lips they say they love God. That’s why their children are confused. The reason is because their parents believe in Jesus and go to church every Sunday to worship and serve God but their lives in the house seek and demand worldly success and earn a lot of money from them for their own sake. Whenever they hear their parents say ‘Go to a good university and get a good job and earn a lot of money, meet a good woman/man and live a stable life’, the children are confused because they have thought that their parents will definitely teach them to commit their lives for the Lord and sacrificed for the Lord. The children are confused because their parents put

emphasis on the blessings and successes of the material of this world even though they seem to be devoted Christian in the church. So what would happen to those children who grow up under that kind of parents? Don't you think the children will be like Micah?

Micah placed the graven and molten image that he received from her mother in his house (v. 4). The surprise is that Micah, who was blessed by her mother, "Blessed be my son by the Lord" (v. 2) even had a shrine or house of gods (v. 5). He even made an ephod and household idols (v. 5). He also consecrated one of his sons, that he might become his priest (v. 5). He did what was right in his own eyes (v. 6). When a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, who was a Levite, came to Micah's house (vv. 7-8), Micah said to him, "Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, a suit of clothes, and your maintenance" (v. 10). Then since the Levite became his priest he said, "Now I know that the LORD will prosper me" (v.13). What do you think of this Micah who believed that God would prosper him for what he did that was right in his own eyes? It seems that Micah is like his mother. As his mother wanted her son to be blessed by God and gave him the idol, Micah, who had the shrine, also made the ephod and household idols and consecrated one of his sons to be his priest and expected the Lord to make him prosper. Isn't his the broken family?

Nevertheless, it is not surprising that our children, who grow up in the Christian family, are no different from Micah. Our children, who grew up looking at us, saw that we are serving God and money together, so our children are also serving money with God. Although Jesus clearly said that we cannot two masters, God and Money (Mt. 6:24), we are disobeying His command and are serving God and Money together. As a result, our children are doing the same thing. What will happen to our children who see us asking God to bless us but actually seeking money through church and Christian life? Can we pray and expect our children to be like Joseph, Moses, Samuel and David? Don't you think that our children will become like Micah? It is the broken family.

I think today's church is where these broken families gathered. That's why even the church is broken. Although we say 'Lord, Lord' with our lips, we don't receive Jesus as the Lord of the church in our hearts. That's why we say and do whatever it seems right to us. So how can the church keep the unity in the Spirit? What is a church with quarrels, fights, envy, jealousy and division? What is the church without morals and ethics, a church without order and peace, a pastor, an elder, or an ordained deacon and others who are robbing offerings to God? Isn't this broken church? Why did the church of God come to this point? What is the problem? I think the biggest problem is the hired hand pastors (cf. Jn. 10:12-13). Instead of loving the sheep that God has entrusted to us, we love ourselves and money. That's why church is like this now. Instead of being led by the Lord's calling and mission, we are led by salary. So if we are delighted to go to the bigger church that pays more money. That's why the church became broken now. Look at the young Levite priest whom Micah set as his priest. He was hired by Micah (18:4). When Micah said "I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, a suit of clothes, and your maintenance" (17:10), the Levite agreed to live with Micah (v. 11). Then when the Danites sent five men who came to Laish, saw how people were living in the land (18:7) and returned to Zorah and Eshtaol (v. 8), went back and came to Micah's house (vv. 13, 15) with 600 Danites who were armed for battle (v. 16). The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idols (v. 17) and asked the young Levite priest, "Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?" (v. 19) "Then the priest was glad. He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people" (v. 20). He is the hired hand priest. When I think of this Levite priest who was hired by Micah and then hired by the Danites, I cannot help but think about us, the pastors, in our days. Where are the tears of thanksgiving and emotion of God's grace and love when God called us? What happened to the tears of the hot devotion that we had shed when we experienced God's first love? Where is our heart that was burning toward God's given calling and mission to us? Does it make sense that we, the pastors, are praying and looking for the place to minister that is like Laish, where the church is secure, lacks nothing whatever and prosperous (vv. 7, 10) because it's hard to live as a pastor? But why do we keep on saying to our church members 'It's is God's will for me to move'? Why don't we frankly say, 'I want to go to a bigger church

and do bigger ministry because I am greedy'? Why don't we reveal our arrogance by honestly saying, 'I have the ability to minister to such a big church, so I move my ministry to a big church'? Why are we keep on giving excuses instead of confessing 'I want to move to the bigger church because I need more money to live with my family'? Because of us, the hired pastors, who are not drawn by God's calling and mission, the church became the broken church. What truth can the congregation members expect from such pastors? How can their sermons that are proclaimed in the Lord's Day be grace to the believers when we are living our lives that are not consistent with the proclaimed truth? When the five spies of the tribe of Dan came to Micah's house and said to Levite, the priest of Micah, "Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful" (v. 5), this is what the Levite priest said: "Go in peace; your way in which you are going has the Lord's approval" (v. 6). How could they expect the word of God's truth to the hired priest? But the fearful and frightening thing was, as the Levite the priest of Micah said to the five spies of the Dan (v. 6), the Dan tribe occupied the land of Laish and the Danites rebuilt the city and settle there just as it seemed like the Lord approved the Dan tribe who were worshiping idols (vv. 27-29). What is truly astonishing and frightening is that when the hired pastors preach the message of blessing, the church members receive grace (?) and see that blessing in their lives. Thus, they say "Hallelujah!" and give thanks to God in praise and worship even though it is an absolute blessing. The more fearful and trembling thing is that God and idols are in the church of God's house now, as "they set up for themselves Micah's graven image which he had made, all the time that the house of God was at Shiloh" (v. 31). We are now serving God with idols. What is this? Isn't this the broken church?

What should we do? What should we do with our home and our church? We must repent. We the parents must repent and our children must repent. All our family members must come before the holy God and repent of our sins by relying on the merit of the cross of Jesus and the power of the blood of Jesus. We must return to the Lord, who is the Lord of our family and our church. And we must listen to Him and obey the His truth. In particular, we must live a life of satisfaction and gratitude, remembering all the spiritual blessings God has already given us in Jesus Christ. We must humbly and faithfully join the Lord's ministry in building the Lord-centered family. In addition, our church should take our Lord Jesus as the head of the church and obey Him. Thinking of the true Shepherd Jesus who sacrificed on the cross for the flock, we, the pastors, must first repent. We must be broken and thoroughly cleansed our hired tendency and become pastors who have the heart of Jesus Christ. The church is hopeless if we don't first be on fire for God's calling and mission again. But I believe. I believe that the Lord, who is the head of the church, is faithful even though we are unfaithful. Since the Lord loves the souls whom He has forgiven and redeemed the most, He will be merciful to us when we repent and return to Him. We should no longer be the hired pastors. We should no longer love money or other things than God. We must put down all our greed, ambition, and arrogance before His cross. In doing so, our Lord will forgive us and accept us. Then the message we proclaim from the pulpit will be different. The power of God in the gospel that leads to salvation will be manifested. Then our family and church will no longer be broken, but will become the Lord-centered family and church. Then our family and church will be able to shine the light of Jesus Christ in this dark and broken world. Victory!

A family that overcomes the spiritual dementia

“you shall not be afraid of them; you shall well remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: the great trials which your eyes saw and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. ... You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ... Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; ... But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ‘It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. ... Remember, do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD” (Deuteronomy 7:18- 19, 8:2, 11, 18-19, 9:7).

Dementia is a major problem in many developed countries that now become an aging society. At present, 9% of 65-year-olds in Korea are at a high rate of dementia (Internet). The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. It is a disease that cannot be cured in modern medicine. And as time goes by, the symptoms worsen and it can result in death (Internet). Likewise, one of the big problems in our modern day Christians is the spiritual dementia. Now we, Christians, are forgetting the grace God that was given to us in the past. Not only have we forgotten the grace of God's salvation, the joy of salvation, the love of salvation, but now we forget that God leads, supplies, and protects us. And now we are forgetting the God's abundant grace that was given to us and live however we want. We must overcome this spiritual dementia.

When we look at Deuteronomy 7:18-19, 8:2, 11, 18-19, 9:7, there is a repeated word. If I sum up that repeated word, I think it is ‘Don't forget and remember.’ God told the Israelites in the wilderness as they were heading toward the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. As I was meditating these words of God of Deuteronomy, I divided them into three parts and tried to apply them to my family. I hope and pray that we can learn these three lessons and will be able to overcome the spiritual dementia as the Lord-centered family.

First, God told the Israelites in the wilderness to remember what God had done to Pharaoh and to all Egypt in the past.

Look at Deuteronomy 7:18-19: “you shall not be afraid of them; you shall well remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: the great trials which your eyes saw and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.” God told the Israelites to remember well. What did God say to

remember well? This is what God has done to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials, the signs and the wonders, and the mighty hand and the outstretched arms when God rescued the Israelites from Egypt. Why did God tell the Israelites to remember all of these? The reason was because the Israelites might be afraid of the people in the Promised Land of Canaan, saying in their hearts, “These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?” (v. 17) But the Israelites actually were afraid of the Canaanites (v. 19). Therefore, God told the Israelites not to be afraid of the Canaanites but to remember the power of salvation that God has revealed in the past in Egypt. The God who manifested the power of salvation was the God of Israel, and also "a great and awesome God" (v.21), so the Israelites shouldn't be afraid but relied on the Almighty God of salvation.

I heard that my great grandfather and great grandmother were from, Pyongyang, North Koreans. I heard that my great grandfather was a pastor, and that he also participated in independence movement during the Japanese occupation. And I heard that my grandfather and grandmother brought their children, my father and his siblings, to South Korea during the Korean War. Although I don't know all the details but one thing I know and I believe is that God has rescued them during that Japanese occupation and the Korean War. We cannot but give thanks to God for the God's gracious gift of eternal life (salvation) by believing in Jesus Christ. But God also rescued them from all those crisis during the unforgettable historical moments in Korea, the Japanese occupation and the Korean War. In my big uncle's case, while his father was bringing him and his older brother on the way to South Korea from North Korea, they stood at a crossroads. What my big uncle told me few times was if God didn't lead them to the right and safe path, then they wouldn't be able to make it to South Korea. When he was physically getting weak and was in nursing home, he was still remembering at that moment during the Korean War. And he told me that he couldn't forget what his father did for him, carrying him on his back. How could he forget? God has led all of my father's family from North Korea to South Korea and from South Korea to the United States. I don't want to forget what God did to my great grandparents, grandparents, my parents and also their siblings. Although I don't fully know what God has done in their lives, I would like to remember what I know, the wonderful things God has done for them, giving them salvation and delivering them in the midst of crisis of their lives.

We must remember well God's grace and what He had done for us in the past. Especially if we are currently facing difficulties and adversity in our lives, we must remember His gracious gift of salvation that rescued us and our family from the crisis and adversity in our lives in the past. In doing so, we will be able to overcome the spiritual dementia.

Second, God told the Israelites in the wilderness to remember all the way which the Lord God had led them in the wilderness for forty years.

Look at Deuteronomy 8:2-4: “You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.” God told the Israelites to remember again. What did God tell him to remember again? He told them to remember all the way which the Lord God had led them in the wilderness for 40 years. God wanted the Israelites to know the God's purpose, why God allowed them to walk in the wilderness for 40 years. What was the purpose? The first purpose was that God tested the Israelites, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep His commandments or not (v. 2). God led them to the wilderness for 40 years because He wanted to know whether the Israelites would keep His commandments or not. The second purpose was that God has fed them with manna for 40 years, so that the Israelites may know that they live by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord (v. 3). The third purpose was that God wanted to do good for them in the end (v. 16). God wanted the Israelites to remember these three purposes.

I don't know how much my ancestors suffered in North Korea during the Japanese occupation and the Korean War. I think it would be more appropriate to say I don't know. But what I do know and believe is that in the midst of it, God has given all of them daily meals, supplies them with necessary things, comforted them, and protected them until today. I still remember that my grandmother cried in tears when I and my wife visited her in the hospital. So I asked her why she was crying. And she told me that she was crying because she was grateful. She was grateful to God because God raised several pastors in our families. What a great gracious blessing this is from God. I still remember vividly my grandmother shed tears of gratitude and thanksgiving, thinking about God's grace given to our families.

We must remember the grace God has given to us in the past. We must remember that from the past day until today God has provided us with what we need, and how He has tested us and molded us in the furnace of affliction. In particular, we must not forget a great lesson that God has given us, that is we must live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. And we must remember that God is leading us to walk the path of this desert like world in order to bless us. In doing so, we will be able to overcome the spiritual dementia.

Third, God told the Israelites in the wilderness not to forget the Lord their God when they would enter into the land of Canaan in the future.

Look at Deuteronomy 8:11-14: "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." God wanted the Israelites to remember God when they would go into the land of Canaan. But the servant of God Moses became concerned. What was his concern? His concern was that the Israelites would forget the Lord their God (v. 14) when they would enter into the land of Canaan and when they had eaten and were satisfied, had built good houses and lived in them, their herds, flocks, silver, gold and all that they had multiplied (vv. 12-13). In other words, what Moses was concerned about was that the Israelites' hearts would become proud and world forget God (v. 14). Moses knew that when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, became wealthy (v. 13) and became proud, they would say in their hearts, "My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth" (v. 17). So he said to them, "you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth" (v. 18). Furthermore, Moses was concerned when the Israelites would enter the land of Canaan and when they would be prospered, multiplied, and be abundant (v. 19), they would forget their God and would go after other gods and serve them and worship them (v. 19). So Moses told them if they would do so, then they would surely perish (v. 19). Moses knew that the Israelites were a stubborn people (9:6). So they had acted corruptly and they had quickly turned aside from the way which God commanded them and they had made a molten image for themselves (v. 12). Moses knew that the Israelites had been rebellious against the Lord from the day he knew them (v. 24). So he told them, "Remember, do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness" (v. 7). When the Israelites went into the land of Canaan and became prosperous, multiplied, and enriched, they should have guarded their arrogance (8:14) and their righteousness (9:4, 5, 6). The reason is that arrogance and self-righteousness are fatal to causing spiritual dementia. In order to overcome this spiritual dementia, the Israelites had to walk in the wilderness for 40 years (8:2). They had to be humbled in the wilderness (vv. 2-3). Humility is essential to overcome the spiritual dementia.

God has led my whole family from North Korea to South Korea and then from South Korea to the United States. When I immigrated to US with my parents in February 1980, my great grandmother also lived here in the United States. Although I saw my great grandfather only through a photo, I remember my great grandmother lived here in US until 1981 before she passed away. And I still remember my grandmother crying at her mother's funeral

service. My grandparents have seven children. Now, my grandparents and one of his children passed away. My father is the oldest, and now there are five other siblings live in US. My whole family gathers on January 1st every year to have New Year worship to God, to have bowing ceremony, to eat lunch together and play soccer. According to what my father said, there are little more than 70 people in our whole family. What a wonderful grace of God. God has led our whole family to US and has multiplied us in this land. God's grace that has been poured in our family is so abundant and great. But now we want to look back on ourselves if we forget the abundant grace of God now and that our hearts are proud and forget God and disobey God's commands. When I personally look back my family, we have no merit. What we did is nothing but sin. Only by God's grace and by the merit of the cross of Jesus we are doing the work of the Lord. The Spirit of God who lives in us is doing the work of the Lord, and there is no merit of us.

Our family should abandon the consciousness of our meritorious deed and be filled with the consciousness of grace. Our family should abandon arrogance and be humble. In this desert like world, we must humble ourselves. And we must know that "man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD" (Deut. 8:3). We "shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him" (v. 6). We must "fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good" (10:12-13). In doing so, we will be able to overcome the spiritual dementia. Our family should never forget God. Our family should never forget the grace God has given us. We must never forget the grace of God's salvation. We must remember. We must remember the grace God has given us in the past. Not only that, but we must also remember God's good, pleasing, and perfect will for us to walk the way of the desert like world in the presence. God is leading us to walk this path because He wants know our hearts, to humble us and to know that we live by all the words that come out of the mouth of God. God will lead us and will enable us to enter into Heaven in the future. Until that moment, we must be careful not to forget God. We must remember the twofold commandment of Jesus and live in obedience to His command. Therefore, not only do we have to overcome spiritual dementia, but we also must fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2) and "the same yesterday and today and forever" (13:8).

How should we build our family?

“so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said” (Genesis 16:2).

We must build our family on the Rock, Jesus Christ. We must do so in order to build the body of Jesus Christ on the Rock. In order to do so, we must find the principles of building family in the Bible and follow those biblical principles. There are, of course, many principles in the Bible about building a family. Typically we have Ephesians 5-6, Colossians 3:13-4:1, and 1 Peter 3:1-7. But I would like to meditate on the biblical principles of how to build our family based Genesis 16:2. I hope and pray that this meditation may help in building my family and your family as well.

In Genesis 16:2, we can see Sarai, who was barren and had no child (11:30), telling her husband Abram to go into her Egyptian maid Hagar in order to have a baby (16:1-2). Sarai's intention was that her husband Abram would sleep with Hagar and have the child to build a family. So Abram went in to Hagar, and she conceived (v. 4). And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress Sarai was despised in her sight (v. 4). So Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done me be upon you I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight May the LORD judge between you and me” (v. 5). It doesn't make sense. Sarai is the one who told Abram to go in to her maid Hagar. But when Hagar was conceived and despised Sarai, Sarai blamed on her husband Abram. At that time, Abram said to his wife Sarai, “Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight” (v. 6). Eventually Hagar had to flee from her mistress Sarai (v. 8).

The more I think about this story, the more I think that both Abram and Sarai disobeyed the biblical principles of the marital relationship. In other words, Sarai didn't respect her husband Abram, and Abram didn't really love his wife, Sarai.

First, Sarai disobeyed the biblical principle of marriage, which is to respect her husband Abram (Eph. 5:33).

How can we know that Sarai didn't respect her husband Abram? If Sarai feared Abram, then she should trust him and followed him. In other words, if Sarai respected Abram then she should be submissive to Abram (Eph. 5:22-24). She should have waited patiently by trusting Abram and what he said about the promise of God's blessing to Abram (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 15:4-5) but she disobeyed out of unbelief. She didn't believe God's promise words to Abram, that is “To your descendants I will give this land” (12:7), “one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir” (15:4), “So shall your descendants be” (v. 5). Instead, she tried to have a baby through her maid Hagar by making Abram to sleep with her. Although God promised that “one who will come forth from your own body” (v. 4), Sarai didn't believe God and His promise and performed according to her own will and plan rather than God's will and God's plan. God's will was that giving His promise to Abram when he was 75 years old (12:4), and giving his son Isaac 25 years later which was when Abram was 100 years old. But Sarai couldn't wait for 25 years. So when her husband Abram was 85 years old (10 years after Abram received the promise word of God), Sarai tried to have a baby and build her family by telling Abram to go into her maid Hagar. So Hagar gave birth to Ishmael. Sarai tried to build her family according to her plan which was to make Abram to sleep with her maid

Hagar in order to have the baby instead of the Lord's way to building the Abram's family, which was to have Isaac through Abram and Saria. In short, Sarai didn't build Abram's family by faith.

Second, Abram disobeyed the biblical principle of marriage, which is to love his wife Sarai (Eph. 5:25-28).

How can we know that Abram didn't truly love his wife Sarai? If Abram truly loved Sarai, then he would have led her to the truth. But when Saria told him to go in to her maid Hagar, he obeyed her (Gen. 16:2). The wife Sarai supposed to listen and obey her husband Abram. But it was other way around. Abram obeyed Sarai. Why was this wrong? Surely Abram received the word of God's promise, "one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir" (15:4). If Abram truly believed God and His word of promise, he should have rejected if by faith when Sarah told him to go into her maid instead of obeying her who tried to build the family through Hagar. He should have rebuked Sarai in love, 'You foolish woman, why don't you believe in God who has promised to give us heir through you, not your maid?' When I think about Abram who listened to Sarah and obeyed her, it reminds me Adam. It is because when Eve gave some of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to her husband Adam, he ate it (Gen. 3:6) instead of rebuking her and of rejecting her offer. Adam refused to lead his wife Eve. As a husband, he didn't demonstrate his leadership. And that's why Abram did too. He didn't demonstrate his leadership. He should have led his wife Sarai but he refused to do so. Instead, he was led by her. He obeyed her wrong words (Gen. 16:2). If Abram had truly loved Sarah, he should have refused to listen to the words of Sarah's unbelief, and should have rebuked her in love. And then he should have led her to the truth. But Abram didn't do that. He loved his wife outside the truth. This love has no meaning. If he just tried to avoid conflict with his wife and to keep the family peace by obeying her wrong word of unbelief, this is a big mistake. Love that is not based on truth cannot keep the family peace. In short, Abram didn't build his family with true love.

In order to build our family, we must be faithful to the biblical principles God has given us, no matter what circumstances we are in. The wife should fear her husband. She should respect her husband. The wife who respects her husband obeys her husband's words as she does to the Lord. The wise wife who builds her family by faith submits to the husband's authority (the divine authority God gave to her husband, not authoritarianism) and follows her husband's lead. By doing so, the wise wife edifies her husband. How about husband? The Holy Spirit-filled husband who builds his family by faith loves his wife as Jesus loves the church. Because he loves her with Christ's love he leads her in truth. He doesn't hear the words of his wife's unbelief and agrees with them and obey her. Rather, he rebukes her because he loves his wife. Therefore, he edifies her and builds her up by the truth and to the truth. When the couple is faithful to the biblical principles of building their family in the Lord, and the husband builds his wife, and the wife builds her husband, then our family will be able to stand firmly on the Rock Jesus Christ.

A devout family

“a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually” (Acts 10:2).

What should we do to build a devout family more than a happy family? Through Cornelius and his family, we want to be taught in three ways:

First, a devout family fears God.

Look at Acts 10:2a – “a devout man and one who feared God with all his household ...” The fact that Cornelius, the leader of the household, was a devout man who feared God with all his household gives us a valuable lesson. And that lesson is that the man, the husband and the father, should take the initiative in fearing God. Then what does it mean to fear God? It is to hate evil. Look at Proverbs 8:13 – “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate.” The Bible says that God hates pride, arrogance, the evil way and the perverted mouth. Therefore, those who fear God should hate them too. If fearing God is to hate evil, then if we think in opposite way, fearing God is to love good. Look at Romans 12:9 – “Let love be without hypocrisy Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.” Look at Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” Look at Galatians 6:9 – “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.” The devout family is the Christ-centered family which the family fears God. The family who fears God hates evil and loves good. Therefore, we should not lose heart in doing good.

Second, a devout family gives many alms.

Look at Acts 10:2b – “... and gave many alms to the Jewish people” Cornelius and his family show two aspects of true godliness, that is fearing God above and loving people down. True devotion means two things must coexist together. The front of the coin is to fear God, and the back of the coin is to love the neighbor. And the specific aspect of neighboring love is giving alms or relief. True godliness is to take care of the orphans and the widows in distress. Look at James 1:27 – “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” Apostle James says that pure and undefiled religion (godliness) in the sight of our God is to visit orphans and widows in their distress. And those who fear God keep themselves unstained by the world. Cornelius was well spoken and respected by all the Jewish people because he who was a righteous and God-fearing man gave many alms to those in need (Acts 10:2). Look at Acts 10:22 – “The men replied, ‘We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. ...’” Our family and church also should work hard to give alms. In fearing God, we must serve our neighbors, especially those who are alienated from society. This is true religion and godliness in the sight of God.

Third and last, a devout family prays to God continually.

Look at Acts 10:2c – “... and prayed to God continually.” Cornelius always prayed according to the prayer customs of the Jews. The prayer customs of the Jews were prayed twice a day (9 am, 3 pm) or three times a

day (9 am, 12 pm, 3 pm). In other words, Cornelius had a regular prayer life. And what is amazing is the fact that Cornelius's prayers and alms were ascended as a memorial before God. Look at verse 4: "... And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God." Here we can see that prayer life and giving alms are connected. The connection between prayer and giving alms shows that prayer is the right prayer when it is based on good deeds (Yoo Sang-Sup). Those who fear God are those who pray. We must strive for regular prayer life. And we must offer a living prayer to God. We should pray to God in fear of Him and strive for giving alms in love for our neighbors. We must live a life of prayer that goes with good works.

A peaceful family

“Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife” (Proverbs 17:1).

What do you think is the final goal of employees' lives? As a result of a survey of 239 employees, 88.7% of respondents answered that they have the final goal of their lives. Nine out of ten workers say they have the final goal in life, and the number one is a peaceful family. 28.3% said that they want to achieve the peaceful family as their final goal of their lives. 27.4% of the respondents said that they want to be the best in their field, 16.0% said that they want to be entrepreneurs, 9.4% said that they want to trouble around the world, 8.5% said they want to prepare their own house, 4.2% said that they want to change jobs and etc.. In order to achieve the goal, 60.4% said that they are working hard, 45.8% said that they are collecting a lot of money, 34.4% said that they are doing activities to expand their network, 31.1% said that they are studying hard every day, 26.4% said that they are doing financial technology. The reason for setting the final goal of life is that 72.2% said that they want 'to live a happy life, 8.5% said that they want to earn wealth and honor, 7.1% said that they want to not be ashamed by others, 6.6% said that they want to contribute to society, and 2.4% said that they want to do their filial duties to their parents (Internet).

In Proverbs 17:1, the Bible says, “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.” What does it mean? It means that it’s better to be peaceful in the family even if we live poorly than to live abundantly with strife in the family. It is said that the old family of Israel shared the leftover food from what they offered sacrifice to God (Lev. 7:16; 19:6; 1 Sam. 9:24). And after offering sacrifice to God, the family members supposed to enjoy meal together. But if there was strife among them, then it is the family with serious dissatisfaction (Park). Can you imagine that after we gave tithe and thanksgiving offering to God during Sunday worship the family members are disputing with the leftover money? The word of Proverbs 17:1 teaches us that peace of the family doesn’t depend on abundance or poverty. And my personal thought is that the cause of strife is not only depended on abundance. Based on Proverbs 17:1, I would like to think about what kind of family is the peaceful family and how we can avoid strife in our family.

First, a peaceful family covers each other's offense. We must not repeat each other's offense in order to avoid strife in our family.

Look at Proverbs 17:9 – “He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.” Once, I posted this question on my personal facebook: ‘Why is it hard to share our prayer topics with one another in the church community?’ One of the brothers in Christ commented as follow: ‘We can share the prayer topic of our heart when there is trust among us. If not, then we can get hurt greatly. That’s why it is possible only with those who have the spirit of keeping the secret completely.’ What do you think of these words? As someone said, the church became the place where we cannot share our prayer requests. The reason is because there are people who "repeat the matters" in the church (v. 9). In other words, there are those who repeat the prayer requests of another person. If we repeat another person’s prayer request, then our relationship with that person will be distanced. Look at Proverbs 16:28 – “A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.” What does it mean? A liar stirs up dissension and separates close friends. When we look at marital relations at home, why do we have strife? Isn’t it because Satan, a liar, separates our marital relationship? How does Satan separate our marital relationship? Satan does so especially by making us to look at each other's offenses more that each

other's strengths and to repeat them not only to each other but to others as well. Although love keeps no record of wrongs (1 Cor. 13:5), Satan keeps on making us to keep record of each other's wrongs in our thoughts, and make us to tell each other about the wrongs. Thus, Satan brings strife and discord in our marital relationship. I cannot help but agree with what King Solomon said in Proverbs 18:8 – "The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts."

What should we do? We must meditate on the love of God that has covered our transgressions. In Ephesians 2:1, the Bible says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins." God made us alive together with Christ even when we were dead in our transgression, and saved us (v. 5). Therefore, the Psalmist said in Psalm 32:1 – "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!" We who have received God's great blessing and love in Christ Jesus must love our neighbors. How should we love our neighbors? We can love our neighbors by covering over their wrongs (Prov. 10:12). We must put effort to cover over our closest neighbor that is our family members' wrongs. Therefore, we must keep the unity of the Holy Spirit in our family (Eph. 4:3).

Second, a peaceful family receives rebuke from each other. We must humbly receive each other's rebuke in order to avoid strife in our family.

Look at Proverbs 17:10 – "A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding Than a hundred blows into a fool." What would you do if your children were offended and fighting each other because they broke the commandments of God and continued to talk about each other's faults? Would you just keep on watching them arguing and fighting? I am sure you won't. I am sure no parents like to see their children fighting. We want our children to love each other and to be at peace. But if they fight, then we have to rebuke them in love. But what if our children are fools so they don't listen to our rebuke? What should we do then? I think we have no choice but to discipline them. But if any of our children hear our rebuke and repent of their own wrongs and have peace with their brother or sister, then how wise are they? The Bible says it is better to rebuke our wise children because our rebuke will go deeper into them more than the hundred blows into the foolish children (v. 10). Isn't this word interesting? Of course we must not interpret this word literally. Can you imagine hitting our foolish children hundred times? What would happen to our children then? Nevertheless, a fool is mocker (9:7) that he won't repent and turn away from his/her wrongdoings. But if we rebuke our wise children, our rebuke will be deeply engraved in their hearts even though there will be no mark of discipline on their body. There is a good example in the Bible about the wise man. The good example is David. How did David respond when Prophet Nathan rebuked him for his sins of adultery and intentionally killing Bathsheba's husband Uriah? Look at 2 Samuel 12:13a – "I have sinned against the LORD" As soon as David heard the Prophet Nathan's rebuke, he immediately confessed and repented of his sins. In the case of Apostle Peter, when a rooster crowed and when the Lord turned and looked at Peter, he remembered the word of the Lord, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times" (Lk. 22:60-61). And he went out and wept bitterly (v. 62). What a wise man who wept bitterly and repent as he remembered what the Lord said? Like David and Peter, those who are wise don't need a hundred lashes. They just need a word of rebuke from the Lord. Then they will confess and repent of their sins. Don't you think our family members need this kind of wisdom?

Those who are wise, that is, the ones who have understanding, will repent of their sins and walk on the right path. We cannot but help ourselves sinning against God and against each other in our family. But if we have God's given wisdom, we will be able to not only know our sins but also the Spirit will help us to confess and repent our sins to God and to each other. Especially, we will be able to receive each other's rebuke humbly and repent and return to God and to each other. When we do so, our family will be in peace.

Third, a peaceful family doesn't pay back evil for good. We must pay back good for good in order to avoid strife in our family.

Look at Proverbs 17:13 – “If a man pays back evil for good, evil will never leave his house.” The family, in which evil never leaves, rebels against God’s will, disobeys God’s words and does unrighteous things. And because they do unrighteous things, they meet disaster in their family. That biblical example is David. King David paid back evil for good. In other words, he purposely killed Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, who was loyal to him and his kingdom, so that he repaid evil for good. As a result, his son Amnon raped Tamar like his father David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. And as David killed Uriah, Absalom, the brother of Tamar, killed Amnon. These family calamities came because David disobeyed God’s will and His commands. It was the result of his unrighteous acts.

So many families now are facing family disasters. It seems like there is never ending discord in the families. What are the problems in the contemporary family that are filled with wounds, pains and suffering? One of the problems is the sin of our family. Many families are suffering now because they are sinning against God's will, disobeying God's Word, and doing evil rather than good. The family that cannot taste the goodness of God, that doesn't feel the grace and love of God, and is not humble before God, but rather is arrogant eventually rebels against God's will, disobeys His commands and does unrighteous. What must we do? We should listen to the words of 1 Peter 3:9 – “Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.” What do you think of the word of God, that you should repay evil with blessing? We should bless our family members even when we hurt each with our lips in the midst of strife in the family.

When I was working out before with mp3 on my years, I heard 1 Peter 2:23 Jesus didn't retaliate when people hurled their insults at Him but he suffered. As I heard this word and meditated on it, I thought to myself that I shouldn't say the same thing to other people when they say the things that displeased me. We should not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21). We must suffer from doing good rather than doing evil. This is the will of God for us (1 Pet. 3:17). Although our souls forlorn when people repay us evil for good (Ps. 35:12), we must not grow weary of doing good (2 Thess. 3:13). We must turn from evil and do good. We must seek peace and pursue our family peace (Ps. 34:14).

Fourth, a peace family drops the matter before a dispute breaks out. We must drop the matter before the dispute breaks out in order to avoid strife in our family.

Look at Proverbs 17:14 – “Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.” Why do we usually start a quarrel in the family? Is it because of big things or just a little thing? There are few Chinese words that I found in the Internet. Let me translate into English: (1) “百年偕老” (Growing old together): As a couple, a husband and a wife grow old together in harmony. (2) “偕老同穴” (Growing old together and are buried in the same grave): Since the couple lives in peace, they grow old together when they are alive and they bury in the same grave when they die. (3) “蝸角之爭” (Fighting over small things): Literal meaning is that fighting on the horns of a snail. It means that small countries are fight each other. The couple is fight over very small thing. The reason why couples and children fight each other is starting from a very minor matter. That's why Proverbs 17:14a says “Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam” What does this mean?

Have you ever been to Hoover Dam, near Las Vegas? If you have heard that there is water leaking in the dam, will you still walk on the dam and look around? Think about it. If there is a very small hole in such a large dam, and water is coming out in small quantities, will you still stand over the Hoover Dam and continue to look the dam and its surround? Even if it is very small hole with small amount of water leading, I am sure that if people working at the dam find out, then they will certainly tell the tourists to flee and not come near at all. Why is that? Isn't it because it is very dangerous? When I think about this, I think there is a perfect Chinese word for it. It is “水滴穿石”. It means that if water drops continually, then it will eventually punch a hole in a stone (Internet).

Even if it is a very small hole in a big dam, if you leave it alone, the dam will collapse, and it will have a great damage. That's why King Solomon said in Proverbs 17:14b "so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out." But it seems like we aren't obeying this word of God. We aren't dropping the matter before the dispute breaks out. As a result, small argument gets bigger fight. What's the problem? Look at James 4:1 – "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?" The problem is our desires that battle within us. And if we don't control these desires but just keep on fighting and quarreling, then we will be those who love a quarrel (Prov. 17:19). And if we love the quarrel, then we will love sin (v. 19). After all, the reason we fight and quarrel in our home is because of our desires that battle within us. And there is covetousness in us that desires to fight and quarrel (Jam. 4:2). For example, when the couple is fighting, they start fighting when their desire is not satisfied by their spouse, that is, when they don't get what they want. When we put down what we want (covetousness), we can prevent the fight. But how difficult is it to actually put it down?

There is a book titled 'Put down' by a former missionary to Mongolia Pastor Yong-gyu Lee. I think after he published that book he wrote another book titled 'Put down more'. Although he could have pursued worldly success with his Ph.D. degree at Harvard University, he went to a remote area as a missionary and served the Lord. But that wasn't why he wrote his book 'Put down'. What he emphasized in his book was death of self in Christ as Galatians 2:20 teaches (Internet). And this is what he said in his book 'Put down': 'There is a very small child in us. That child is a crying child who wants to be recognized. When this child's desire is not satisfied, he makes our inner self very difficult. We live in our emotions without knowing that there is a child in us. However, this child can only be restored and rested through the love and recognition of God. Satan constantly makes us obsessed with what we don't have. As long as we are obsessed with what we don't have, we cannot enjoy what we have received with joy. As we seek the recognition of the world, we are held in this world. That is how much we miss our freedom from heaven. God said, 'I see the perfumed jar in you.' The very next word drove me into surprise and pierced my heart deeply. 'But the jar wants not to be broken yet even though it was given in front of Jesus' feet.' Because of that word, I saw my unbroken self. Although I went all the way in front of the Jesus' feet, I realized my pride that didn't want to be broken. I saw in me that I wanted to be respected. I thought because of that I was hurt by someone else's words. A deep sob came out of me. I made a pledge to God in sadness. 'God, I see parts in me that are still unbroken. I want to break my perfumed jar'. Although I was offered in front of Jesus' feet, I cannot send forth a sweet fragrance if it's not broken. When the perfumed jar is broken and all the perfume in it flows out, we can commemorate the cross of Jesus' (Internet).

There is a story among old traditions fairy tales of Korea. 'It was not long before she was married. But one day she was crying in the kitchen without making rice. Her husband who saw her crying asked her why she was crying. She said because she had burnt the rice. The husband, who heard this, said to her, 'It is my fault that I brought little water today because I was busy and that's why you burned the rice because of little water.' And he comforted her. When she heard this, she was more tearful because her heart was touched by what he said. His father-in-law, who was passing by in front of the kitchen, saw this scene and asked her why she was crying. When he heard what she said, he said that it was because he was too old and weak that he couldn't cut the firewood small enough. So the fire was too strong and that's why the rice got burned. And he comforted his son and daughter-in-law. When her mother-in-law who heard all these came and told her daughter-in-law that it was her fault because she is too old that she couldn't smell the rice cooking and forgot to tell her daughter-in-law the time to put down the rice. So she tried to comfort her daughter-in-law as well. The old people told this story and said it was "家和萬事成" (Chinese word). It means 'when one's home is happy, all goes well.' If we look at this story, we can see that no one blamed her who burned the rice, but everybody tried to comfort her as they reflect on their mistakes and blame on themselves. In this way, peace comes. And all is well in peace. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us. This Holy Spirit unifies our hearts. Therefore, when all our family members are obedient to the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to live in understanding, forgiveness, comfort and encouragement and live heavenly life in our family (Internet).

A successful family in God's sight

“He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. ... And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him” (2 Kings 18:3, 7).

Is your family a successful family in the sight of the people in this world? Or is your family successful in the sight of God, even though it's not in worldly perspective?

What is the family that is successful in God's sight? In 2 Kings 18:7, the Bible says that King Hezekiah was successful in whatever he undertook because the Lord was with him. What does it mean? It means that because God was with Hezekiah, he was successful. Why was God with Hezekiah? It was because he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done (v. 3). So, those who are successful in God's sight are those who do what is right in the sight of God. I would like to meditate on King Hezekiah, who did what was right in God's sight, and thus he was successful in God's sight, focusing on the words of 2 Kings 18:1-7. I want to find three principles from King Hezekiah who was successful in God's sight and then apply those three biblical principles to our family. I hope and pray that this may be an opportunity and a challenge for us to build our family into the successful family in God's sight.

First, a successful family in God's sight removes all the sins of the family.

Look 2 Kings 18:4 – “He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)” King Hezekiah removed, smashed and destroyed the high places, the sacred stones, the Asherah poles, and the bronze snake that Moses had made. This was what King Hezekiah did right in the sight of God.

In order for our family to be the successful family in God's sight, we must remove and destroy all the idols in our home. We must eliminate idols in our hearts such as our love for our spouse, children, or parents more than God. Also, we must repent for loving money more than God. We must repent for loving everyone or everything more than God. We must also get rid of all the sins in our family. We must repent our sins that the husband doesn't love his wife as Jesus has loved the church and that the wife doesn't fear and respect her husband as the church supposes to the Lord. Also, we must repent our sins that we don't honor our parents and obey them, and we don't bring our children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, instead we are provoking them. We must repent all of our sins that we don't live for the glory of God but live only for the glory of our own family. We must remove all the idols and the iniquities of our family. God will be with such family and the family will be successful in God's sight. The family that removes all the idols and sins is the successful family in God's sight.

Second, a successful family in God's sight trusts in the Lord.

Look at 2 Kings 18:5-6: “Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the LORD and did not cease to follow him; ...” King Hezekiah trusted in the Lord and the Bible says “There was no one like him among all the kings of

Judah, either before him or after him” (v. 5). What an amazing evaluation this is about King Hezekiah. When the king of Assyria sent his supreme commander, his chief officer and his field commander with a large army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem (v. 17), King Hezekiah went up to the temple of the Lord (19:14) and prayed to the Lord (v. 15). He prayed for God’s deliverance (v. 19). He held fast to the Lord (18:6). When he did so, God heard the supplication of Hezekiah, who relied on God and saved the city for His sake and for the sake of His servant David (19:34). This was exactly what King Hezekiah did that was right in the sight of God.

In order for our family to become the successful family in God's sight, we must trust God completely. We must not depend on our own understanding but only our God. Especially when we meet difficulties and hardships, we must rely on God. We must cling on to God. We must earnestly pray to God. This is because our God is the God who listens to the prayers of the upright. Our God will hear us and will save us. The family which trust and depend on God of salvation is the successful family in God’s sight.

Third and last, a successful family in God’s sight keeps the commands of the Lord.

Look at 2 Kings 18:6b – “... he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses.” King Hezekiah kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. Indeed, this was the king’s duty. The king supposed to write for himself a copy of the Moses’ law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests and he supposed to read it all the days of his life (Deut. 17:18-19a). The purpose was that he might learn to fear the Lord his God, by carefully observing all the words of the law and the statutes (v. 19b). In doing so, the king’s heart might not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he might not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left (v. 20). The king supposed to fear God, rely on Him fully and keep His commandments. Hezekiah was such a king. Therefore, the Bible says that he did right in the sight of God.

We must keep the commandments of God in order for our family to be successful family in God's sight. In order to do so, our family members should read the Bible for the rest of our lives and learn to fear God. When we fear God, we will not turn to the right or the left. The family that keeps the commandments of God is successful family in God's sight.

Is our family the successful family in God's sight? Are we and our family doing what is right in God’s sight? We must get rid of all the idols and sins of our family. Our family members should trust God completely and cling on to Him in prayer. Our family is to keep the commandments of God. In doing so, our family will become the successful family in God's sight.

Family story:

Thanksgiving and prayer

August 16, 2012. Thursday evening.

At 9 o'clock in the evening, we sat round in our room and had time for family worship.

I prayed to God first and then I asked couple of questions to my three children:

'Do you have anything to give thanks to God for this summer vacation?'

'What have you learned in this summer vacation?'

Thankfully, all three of my children were thankful to God.

The children might have been a little hard on their own (in my opinion).

But when they gave thanks to God, I was grateful.

Also, I was grateful to hear that the children had pleasant summer vacation.

When I asked them what they learned, the youngest children Karis said,

"No matter where you are, no matter what you do, no matter what circumstance you are trust God!

Perhaps she learned this from her church teacher at the Vacation Bible School. haha.

After we talked about what to thank God for and what we have learned,

I told my daughter Yeri who was sitting right beside me to share her prayer request first.

She asked us to pray for her school so that she could have good start of new school year.

Then my wife, who was sitting right beside Yeri, asked us to pray for her so that she might be able to devote herself to feed all the family members well.

And then Dillon suddenly asked for his new cellphone while talking about his father's cell phone. Haha.

Maybe Dillon had a thought that I should buy my own new phone too because when her mom went to a business trip and when I took my three children to the T-Mobile shop near our house to buy my wife a new cell phone in order to surprise her, I didn't buy my own.

(When I picked up my wife from the airport with my children, and when I gave her the new cell phone, she almost got angry and said to me 'Why didn't you buy one, get one free?')

So I told her that I didn't need one yet so don't feel sorry but just say "Thank you". Haha.)

When I heard Dillon's prayer request, I told him that I don't need a new cell phone.

And I told him that we don't need to buy things if we don't need them.

There are many things that we don't need but the temptation is that our greedy hearts crave so many things in this world. Haha.

After Dillon listened to me, he nodded at me. It seems to me he understood what I told him.

Karis also asked us to pray for a good teacher as she was about to start a new school year too.

So I told Karis (and Dillon and Yeri too) that I have been praying for them not only to meet the good teachers but also good friends who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally I shared my prayer request.

Since the thought about Jeremiah came into my mind, maybe because I was meditating the book of Jeremiah these days, I asked my wife and three children to pray that I would be a pastor who faithfully proclaimed God's word.

After sharing this prayer title, Yeri started praying for her mom, mom prayed for her three children, especially Dillon, Dillon prayed for Karis, Karis prayed for me, and I prayed for Yeri and my whole family.

I was thankful to hear my three children prayed for my father who went to a mission field and gave thanks to God for their mom who came back safely from her business trip.

And I was comforted by Karis' prayer.

To summarize the Karis' prayer for me is as follows:

- (1) God, help daddy to continue to be a great pastor
- (2) God, help daddy to continue to work hard.

I hope and pray that my family be continue to thank God and continue to pray to God.

Family story:

‘Give me a lot of money in this New Year’

Monday, January 2, 2012.

At 11:30 am, before we go to my old brother’s house for a New Year family gathering, I first gathered in my house with my wife and three children in the living room and gave praise to God. Since this New Year one of the three goals of our church is to have once a month family worship, so I want to have New Year family worship. I first suggested my wife and the children to praise “God is so good.” The reason is because during our marriage worship about 15 years ago, the indwelling Spirit reminded me Psalms 34:8, “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Also, I wanted my children to know that ‘God is good, All the time!’ After we praised “God is so good”, we sang the hymn “Jesus loves me this I know” to God. I wanted to sing this hymn because I sang that hymn many many times when my first baby Charis was in the Los Angeles Children Hospital Intensive Care Unit for 55 days. And I really wanted Dillon, Yeri and Karis to know experientially that God surely loves them and that’s what the Bible says. After we praised God, I asked my three children to bow down to me and my wife (as New Year Korean tradition). Then Yeri got serious and said that she really doesn’t know how to do it. And she asked me that when she bowed down to us she supposed to say “새해 돈 많이 주세요”(‘Give me a lot of money in this New Year’). Hahaha. So I asked her who taught her to say like that and she said no one. She really didn’t know and that was why she asked me. Haha. So I taught her to say, “새해 복 많이 받으세요”(‘Receive a lot of blessing in this New Year’). (In Korean, what Yeri said and what I taught her, there is one word difference.) After receiving our children’s bowing down, I gave them some money to each of them. Then we got into my car in order to drive to my old brother’s house for the New Year whole family gathering. And suddenly the youngest child Karis got off the car and went back to the house because she forgot something. Haha. Guess why she forgot? Haha. She wanted to her piggy bank. Haha. So I told her to leave the piggy bank at the house because she could lose it. Then she said something to herself and took her piggy bank back to the house. And she grabbed an envelope in her hand. Haha.

Family story:

Praying with two hands together

Friday, April 15, 2011.

Yesterday Thursday evening, we had left over El Pollo Loco chicken and pasta for dinner for dinner
Then I and my wife sat on the sofa in the living room and had conversation as we were eating two pieces of bread
with butter on it.

My wife mentioned about my sermon on a day before, Wednesday night Prayer Meeting and how she received grace
through it. I also shared with her the grace that I received from my sermon.

While we were having conversation in the living room, our three children finished their dinner.

So they went to another living room to watch TV and a DVD movie.

My wife and I kept talking until the movie ended and the children went upstairs to their rooms.

Especially we talked about Henry Nowen's book that my wife has been reading and challenged by it these days.

As I was talking to her, I feel that God is working in the life of Jane, my wife, whom God loves more than I do.

Especially when she acknowledged her weaknesses and shortcomings to me and said that God seemed humbling her,
I said to my wife, 'God is answering my prayers.'

My prayers for her all along in our marriage life was that 'Lord, help my wife Jane to realize how great sinner
(pronounced "Jane" in Korean slowly sounds like "sinner" in English) she is before the Holy God and grant her
humility more and more.'

That was why when she said God seemed humbling her, I said to her 'God is answering my prayers.'

I also said why I gave her one tulip and six roses once a while.

The reason is because John Calvin's T.U.L.I.P: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement,
Irresistible grace, Perseverance of the saints.

As we were about to finish our meaningful conversation, I said to her 'Let's pray to God together.'

When I saw her put her two hands together in order to pray, I put my hands on her two hands.

And my wife prayed to God first and then I prayed to God.

My wife, who prayed to God together with her two hands, wept.

She prayed earnestly and sincerely to God in tears.

When my wife finished praying, we could hear little bit our children talking.

But since we were praying to God with two hands together, after my wife finished praying, I prayed to God.

When I was praying to God, I especially prayed for Jane, my beloved wife, like this:

'Thank you, Father God.

I thank You for pouring out Your precious grace in the life of my beloved wife.

Above all, I thank You God for unconditionally electing such greater sinner like Jane
who was totally depraved, and poured out your grace of limited atonement.

I thank You God for your irresistible grace upon Jane so that she believes in Jesus Christ
and has eternal life.

Father God, You love Jane and You chose her and called her,
and You gave her gracious gift of faith to believe in Jesus Christ.

I believe that You who started good work of salvation in her,
You will complete your salvation until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

After I finished praying for Jane, I saw Karis walking toward the kitchen.
I thought she saw us praying. So I went up to her and explained to her that mom and dad needed to pray together.
Then we all went upstairs and were prepared to sleep.
And I heard the sound of Dillon's room turning the light off.
So I went into Dillon's room and told him 'Let me pray for you.'
Then I laid my hands on Dillon's forehead and prayed to God:

'Thank You, God.

Thank You for showing Your restoring love through Dillon after the first baby, Charis' death.
God, may You be with Dillon, whom You love,
and may You make him to be truthful and faithful as his name "Dillon" means.
In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen.'

After I prayed, I opened my eyes and saw Dillon put his both hand together.
After I said 'Goodnight' to my beloved son Dillon, I went into the girls' room next door.
When I saw the youngest daughter Karis, she was already sleeping on her bed.
Since Yeri wasn't sleeping, I covered her with her blanket and said 'Let's pray.'
I placed my hand on her forehead and prayed to God like this:

'God, You let us experience Your abundant love through the gift of life Yeri.
May You enable Yeri to be twice fruitful for You.'
(When I gave her the name "Yeri" I thought about Joseph's second son "Ephraim" which means 'twice fruitful.')

After I prayed for Yeri, I came to our room and I saw my wife reading the Bible.
So I took my Bible and I began to read it beside my wife.
Then suddenly my wife laughed out loud. Haha.
Few days ago, she did the same. She was reading the Bible and suddenly she laughed out loud. Haha.
So I asked her why she laughed.
I think she laughed because the disobedient Israelites said to Joshua before God that 'Just as we obeyed Moses ...'.
I think she laughed because what they said didn't make sense at all.
So I told my wife that we are no different from the Israelites.
Therefore, we had to admit that we should pray harder and harder to God with our two hands together.

How should we prepare for parting from our beloved family?

“When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again And they were accompanying him to the ship” (Acts 20:36-38).

I remember what sister-in-Christ Ja-ok Kim said before she passed away: ‘Cancer is not a difficult thing, but it is a disease that gives us time to prepare for parting.’ Perhaps it is because we all know that we may not have time to prepare for a farewell with someone we love. So I thought about this: ‘I should be ready for parting from my beloved wife and children.’ The reason I came to think this is because there is no order of death and to leave this world, and I don’t know when God will call me Home. Especially when I think about my loved ones more than myself, I always think that it is good to make some preparations for parting. Then how should we prepare for parting from our loved ones?

In Acts 20:36-38, Apostle Paul gave a farewell preaching (vv. 18-35) to the elders of Ephesus in Miletus (v. 17). And then he knelt down and prayed with them all (v. 36). “And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him: (v. 37). And they accompanied Paul to the ship (v. 38). Based on these words and Paul’s farewell sermon, I thought how we should prepare for parting from our loved ones in seven ways:

First, I always want to show faithfulness to my beloved family.

Look at Acts 20:18 – “And when they had come to him, he said to them, “You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time.” Apostle Paul reminded the elders of the Church of Ephesus how he was with them the whole time from the first day that he set foot in Asia (v. 18) until he stayed there three years (v. 31). How did Paul live with the saints of Ephesus for three years? At least I think Paul lived faithfully among them. In other words, I think Paul showed faithfulness to the church saints during the three years in Ephesus. The reason I think this way is because Paul said to the elders of the Church of Ephesus, “You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time” (v. 18). When I think of the word “the whole time” in this phrase, I think Paul had been with them for three years consistently, unwavering and faithfully so that the elders of the church of Ephesus knew that well.

I don’t know when God will call me to heaven. So I don’t know when I have to say goodbye to my beloved family. But I want to be faithful like that of the Apostle Paul until that moment. I want to live faithfully with the power of God’s grace, just as the faithful Lord does so to such sinner like me. Thus, after I die, when my family thinks about me, I hope and pray that they can say ‘My husband/my father lived in a coherent state faithfully without leaning to the right or to the left.’ Isn’t that God’s grace? Of course, my beloved family will see most of my unfaithfulness. But in the midst of such unfaithfulness, if they can see even little faithfulness in me for the Lord and His church, isn’t that God’s amazing grace and faithfulness? So I want to show consistent faithfulness to my loved ones today, tomorrow, and until the day of my death. I hope and pray that my loved ones may remember the faithfulness of the Lord which appeared little bit in me to their hearts even after I leave this world and to be with the Lord forever.

Second, I want to show serving the Lord to my beloved family.

Look at Acts 20:19 – “serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews.” It was serving the Lord that Apostle Paul did faithfully when he was with the saints of the church of Ephesus for three years. Paul served the Lord faithfully. The Ephesian church elders knew this too (v. 18). So Paul reminded them how he faithfully served the Lord when he was with them and the rest of the Ephesian church saints for three years while he was preaching the farewell sermon. He told the elders of the church in Ephesus that he served the Lord with "all humility and with tears and with trials" (v. 19). Although he had many hardships due to the plots of the Jews, Paul served the Lord faithfully and humbly by not ceasing to admonish each one of the Ephesian church saints with tears night and day for a period of three years (v. 31). Wouldn't the Ephesian church saints have seen his tears? Wouldn't at least the elders of Ephesian church remember the tears that Paul shed for three years? How could they forget the precious tears of Apostle Paul who loved them, served them, admonished them and shed tears for three years? Although they might not remember his teachings and admonitions, the Ephesian church saints would have remembered Paul's tears in their hearts forever. I thought about the Ephesian church elders' heart who were saying goodbye to Paul, who served the Lord and the Ephesian church saints with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon him through the plots of the Jews (v. 19). In Acts 20:37, the Bible says that “they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him.” When they thought about Paul who loved them, served them, admonished them and shed tears night and day for three years and when they thought about not being able to see his face again (v. 38), the Ephesian church elders wept aloud (v. 37). It is beautiful tears of love.

I want to shed these tears too. Especially, I want to shed tears of repentance, tears of gratitude and tears of devotion, three kinds of tears that I shed during the college retreat in Victory Presbyterian Church in May 1987. Wouldn't it be beautiful if not only my loving Father God sees my tears but also my beloved family see my tears and decides to serve the Lord with tears as the Holy Spirit works in their hearts? I would like to have such a beautiful farewell moment with my beloved family. I want to have beautiful death not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of my family. When my beloved wife and three children thought of my death, I hope and pray that they may be able to say, ‘My husband/my father served the Lord faithfully and humbly until he died. I am sure he had many trials when he used to serve the Lord and His church. But he endured them and patiently served them in tears. I cannot forget his tears. And I want to serve the Lord and His church with humility and tears as well.’ Then, isn't this God's great grace and my death is beneficial?

Third, I want to seek the profit of my beloved family.

Look at Acts 20:20-21: “how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Apostle Paul spent three years in the church of Ephesus, “serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews” (v. 19). Especially, he didn't hesitate to preach anything that would be helpful to the Ephesian church saints (v. 20). And he taught them publicly and from house to house (v. 20). And the thing that he didn't hesitate to preach to them was repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 21). He testified solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God (v. 24). In other words, Apostle Paul declared to the Ephesian church saints the whole purpose of God (v. 27). Why did Paul do that to them? Why didn't he hesitate to proclaim to and teach the Ephesian church saints anything that was profitable? The reason was because Paul loved them. I remember the words of 1 Corinthians 13:5 – “it does not seek its own.” Since Paul loved the Ephesian church saints, he didn't seek his own but theirs. Therefore, for their profit, Paul preached and taught repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to the Ephesian church saints, bearing witness to the good news of God's grace to them.

Which husband/father would seek his own profit than the profit of his family? Isn't he working hard to support his beloved family? But more important than this, I think, is that husband/father to nurture his wife and his children as the head of the family. So I don't forget Ephesians 5:29 and 6:4 that there is a great responsibility for me to nurture my beloved wife and three children. Then how should I nurture them? I should make my wife and my three children disciples of Jesus Christ (Mt. 28:19). As a spiritual teacher in my family, I must teach my beloved wife (and three children) to obey everything the Lord commanded me (v. 20). The purpose of doing so is to cleanse her (my three children) with the Word of God (of course before that I myself must be cleansed with the Word of the Lord each day) (Eph. 5:26). In doing so, my wife and I will be able to love one another with sincere love from our hearts (1 Pet. 1:22). Also, as spiritual teachers of my three children, I shouldn't exasperate them, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). I must nurture and teach them to obey Father God. And I should raise them as God's children who obey their parents as they obey their heavenly Father God (v. 1). And I think the children who honor their parents (v. 2) can honor other adults. Why should I do this? It is because I want my wife and my three children to be prosperous and be in good health, just as their souls prosper (3 Jn. 1:2). My purpose is clear. It is to seek the profit of my beloved family. The reason is because I love my wife and my three children with the love of God.

Fourth, I want to show my life that is being led by God's calling and mission to my beloved family.

Look at Acts 20:24 – “But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.” Apostle Paul was bounded by the Holy Spirit, and was on the way to Jerusalem, not knowing what would happen to him there (v.22). He knew that the Holy Spirit solemnly testified to him that in every city, that they bonds and afflictions awaited him (v. 23). And Paul would have known that the danger that he would lose his life by the Jews who tried to kill him. But Paul didn't consider his life of any account as dear to himself (v. 24). In other words, he considered the Lord's mission that was given to him more precious than his own life. That was why in order to finish his course and the ministry which he received from the Lord, he didn't consider his life of any account as dear to himself (v. 24). What a wonderful man of God? Shouldn't we have this kind of value too?

I received two promised word of the Lord. The first promise word of the Lord is John 6:1-15, which I received in 1987 May during the Victory Presbyterian Church college retreat through the guest speaker named Pastor Young Ik Kim. The Holy Spirit touched my heart and inspired me to surrender my 'two fish and five loaves of bread' kind of life to the Lord. So now, with the full grace of God, I become a pastor and am serving the Lord's church. The second promise word of the Lord is Matthew 16:18, which the Lord gave me through the guest speaker Pastor Won G. Kim at the Korean Church Renewal Pastoral Council in 2003. After receiving the Lord's word "... I will build my church ... "and when I was praising "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord", I cried in tears thinking of Victorious Presbyterian Church. I missed the beloved Victorious Presbyterian Church. So I resigned from the Seohyun Church in Korea, which I served until the end of November of 2003, and returned to the United States on December 3. And I took office as a senior pastor of Victory Presbyterian Church on December 21 when my father Pastor Chang Kim retired. And so far I have been serving the Lord's church with my beloved wife and three children. When I think of these two promise words of the Lord, I think my mission is to share the Word of God (Jn. 6:1-15) and to build the Lord's church (Mt. 16:18). And to expand the kingdom of God by building the body church of the Lord. My vision is to raise the Christ-centered visionary leaders and to send them into this world to expand the kingdom of God. In fulfilling this mission, I must build my wife and my children as a leader of my household, and build His church members as a leader of the church. I pray and hope that I will be able to faithfully complete this mission by the grace of God. So when I leave this world, I hope and pray that my beloved wife and three children have this memory of me.'

Fifth, I want to commend my beloved family to God and to the Word of His grace.

Look at Acts 20:32 – “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” Apostle Paul said to the Ephesian church elders, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (v. 28). The reason he spoke to them was because Paul knew that after his departure externally “savage wolves” would come in among the Ephesian church saints, not sparing the church members (v. 29). He also knew that internally from among the Ephesian church saints men would arise, speaking perverse things in order to draw away the disciples after them (v. 30). That was why when Paul was giving his farewell sermon to the Ephesian church elders he said “be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears” (v. 31). And then Paul commended them to God and to the word of His grace (v. 32). The reason he did so was because he was convinced that God and the word of His grace “is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (v. 32). Can you imagine that the church elders (both the teaching elders and the ruling elders) are not standing firm in the word of God’s grace? Then, what will happen to the church saints? What will happen to the church saints from the extreme temptations of not only externally, but also internally? Won’t they leave faith and lean to the right or to the left? Isn’t it terrible to think?

I often think of myself leaving this world, leaving behind my beloved wife and three children. The reason why I think this often is because I have gotten more and more of the viewpoint of death through the death of the senior members of Victory Presbyterian Church whom I had privilege to serve until their deaths and even their funeral services. When I look back on my own life from the death perspective and deeply think about what kind of death I would like to have in the future, I would like to think how good it would be if I would be led by the Lord's calling and being used by Him as His instrument in fulfilling His mission and go to Him peacefully. But at the same time, I cannot help but think about my beloved family. I often think about what life would be like for my beloved wife and three children when I leave this world. Of course, I think about their life of faith. I hope and pray that they continue to live for the glory of God. It seems like there isn’t much that I can do for them. So what I can do for them is to entrust them to God and the word of His grace. Thus, I pray to God for them. I entrust everything to God in prayer. As the Bible 1 Peter 5:7 says, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you”, I am casing all my anxiety on the Lord my God. The reason is because God loves my family more than anyone else in this world. I am taught to entrust my family to God, especially to the word of God’s grace (Acts 20:32). My responsibility for that is to convey the words of God’s grace to my family, "the gospel of the grace of God" (v. 24), and to teach them to dwell in the grace of God's salvation. Then when I leave this world, my family will be firmly stand on the words of God’s grace and will be able to receive the inheritance among all those who are sanctified (v. 32).

Sixth, I want to show my beloved family that I am working hard without covetousness.

Look at Acts 20:33-34: “I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me.” Why did Apostle Paul say this to the Ephesian church saints as we was preaching his farewell sermon to them? Wasn’t it because there were so many temptations that were tempting the Ephesian church elders? Maybe it was because a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis (19:24) would tempt the Ephesian church elders with money. Maybe that was one of the “trials” (20:19) that Paul went through when he was in Ephesus for three years. If such temptation was with the Ephesian church elders, Paul would entrust them to God and the words of God’s grace, so that they might not be tempted by such temptation of covetousness and commit the sin of idolatry (Col. 3:5). Then the Ephesian church saints who see their elders overcoming the temptation of covetousness would be able to

overcome the same temptation as well. And maybe the good way to overcome that temptations was to work hard with their own hands as Paul did (Acts 20:34). Above all, if the Ephesian church elders truly loved their brothers and sisters in Christ of the Ephesian church, then they would have obeyed the Moses' Ten Commandments "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Exod. 20:17). And they would have worked diligently like Paul, earning their own money. If I as a church leader be without covetousness and be cleaned, what precious life of faith will that be?

I still remembered what my father said when I asked him for an advice regarding my own struggle. At that time when my wife and mother-in-law were preparing for our marriage, buying some furnitures, I kind of stuck between both women and I didn't know what to do. So I asked my father what I should do. And he said to 'go beyond material'. In my mother-in-law's position, she wanted to do lot for us, buying some good and expensive furnitures for us but my wife didn't want to because they were too expensive. So I didn't know what to do between two women. That was why I asked my father what to do. I still remembered that my mother-in-law won and she bought us undeserved furnitures for us. Another thing I still remember is when we got married my wife told me 'How the evangelist could eat the Korean BBQ.' Haha. Perhaps my wife thought that the evangelist shouldn't eat expensive ribs. Haha. But eventually I ate the ribs. As I think about living a life of thrifty, going beyond material, being free from all the material temptations, not covetousness but being satisfied by Jesus alone, I want to learn to be content whatever the circumstances (Phil. 4:11-12). So I want to show my beloved family that I am satisfied with the Lord alone. And I want to show my family that I am doing my ministry diligently, without greed. So when I leave this world, I hope and pray that my beloved wife and three children will think 'My husband/my father was without greed but was satisfied with the Lord only and worked hard for the Lord, His church and His Kingdom and passed away peacefully.'

The seventh and the last, I want to be an example to my beloved family.

Look at Acts 20:35 – "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Apostle Paul showed an example to the elders of the Ephesian church. The reason why he couldn't covet was because he remembered that the Lord Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (v. 35). That was why Paul didn't fall into the temptation of covetousness, but was able to work hard with his own hands to his own needs and to the men who were with him (v. 34). Not only that, but Paul by working hard he helped the weak (v. 35). Paul, who showed this example, preached the farewell sermon to the Ephesian church elders and told them that they too should follow his example and work hard to help the weak (v. 35). The reason is because it is blessed life (v. 35).

I want to show what a blessed life is to my beloved family. I would like to show my beloved three children how living in action rather than mere talk is a blessed life in the sight of God. I want to show them how I have enjoyed God's gracious blessings in my life through my appearance from behind. If I could show them an example of the truth that it is more blessed to give than to receive, then I think even if I close my eyes, my beloved children will be able to open their spiritual eyes and follow my footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21). Especially, I want to leave a beautiful footprint to my beloved family by living and working hard until the day when I cannot work and helping the weak people, those who are in need. Therefore, even if I leave this world, I hope and pray that they can follow my footsteps that are written on the tablets of their hearts.

I have come across one of the TV news that touched my heart. It is the new about Josephine Smith who became a New York city firefighter like her father. Her father was a firefighter in the 9/11 incident but passed away. But thirteen years after her father's death, she became the firefighter after completing all tests and all tough training. When I was watching that news, I couldn't forget two scenes. The first scene was that firefighter Josephine Smith

was smiling brightly on a building ladder, wearing her firefighter uniform and hat. Another scene was a picture of her father who passed away. Her father's impression looked good. At the age of 47, he was killed by the 9/11 incident. So I guess that his daughter Josephine Smith was in a high school. I thought about her heart when she lost her beloved father in her adolescent year. I thought about how much she loves her father that she also became a firefighter after her father. When I think of Josephine Smith who is a firefighter and serving a New York City like her beloved father, I also think that I should become an example to my three beloved children as well. I want to pursue the change of my character by shifting that thought into practice and becoming habitual. I would like to show my beloved family that I keep on getting rid of all my covetousness and working hard for the Lord and His church. Also, I want to be profitable to my family by showing them through my appearance from behind that I am serving the Lord humbly and faithfully with passion and patience as I am lead by the Lord's calling and mission. As I entrust my beloved family to God and to the word of God's grace, I want to imitate Jesus Christ until I die so that I may be able to leave Christ-likeness footsteps on the tablets of their hearts.

Family story:

"Dad, when you die, I will remember you."

February 24, 2009.

More and more, as I live in this wilderness-liked world, I feel and experience more sorrow and sadness, a lot of hardships, distress and full of death. My heart is heavy and sore. But somehow I like to feel heavy and pain in my heart for some reason. I want to be a little bit heavier and more painful. As I do so, I want to pray to God. And in prayer, I want to remember the memories that God has given me that are more precious in my heart.

I think a life is making memories. I think that it is life to make beautiful memories in the Lord through the meetings that are permitted in the sovereignty of God. Among those meetings, there are meeting with our parents, brothers and sisters, relatives, friends, teachers, and so on. Some meetings are meeting for a long time on this earth, planting precious memories that cannot be forgotten forever. I think that the meeting with our parents and our spouse is like that. Some other meetings are memorized deeply in the corner of our hearts, even though it is a short meeting. Especially nowadays, through the Internet, we are able to extend our meetings and have unforgettable memories through short meetings that God allows. Especially when we go through the hardest moment of our lives, God leads us our meeting so that we can pray for each other in the Lord and the indwelling Spirit uses us to comfort each other. Those kinds of memories of love that God gives us, we keep them deep in our hearts.

Today I wrote a letter of love in prayer as I thought about a co-worker in Christ, whom I met in the sovereignty of God. It is a short, about 2 years, fellowship with him in the Lord, but I cannot forget the three or four time meetings with him in Korea. When I was writing the letter as I recall those memorable memories, my youngest daughter, Karis, who couldn't go to school due to a cold, was making a card diligently for her mom and her dad, me. I was writing the letter from my room in front of the computer, and my beloved daughter Karis was making the card at the desk in the living room. Then Karis brought the card she made to me. So I stopped writing the letter for a moment. Then I opened the pretty card that Karis made. And I saw what Karis wrote inside the card. She said 'I love my dad' and she wanted me to like the card she made. I was grateful to Karis. So I hugged her with love. Then, when I tried to write the letter again, Karis was next to me and seemed like wondering what I was writing. So I told her that 'I am writing this letter to my friend in Korea.' And I told her that my friend might die soon because he is very sick. Then Karis said to me, "Dad, when you die, I will remember you." Haha. It seemed like Karis is saying that I was going to die soon. Nevertheless, when I look at Karis' pure and simple face with no sadness, I once again had time to think about what Karis said, "Dad, when you die, I will remember you." My heart was grateful and I felt good because my beloved daughter would remember me. Haha. The reason was because I think it is a blessing to have someone to remember me. But I cannot help but think about what kind of memories I am making for my daughter Karis. Of course, not only Karis, but also Dillon, Yeri, my wife, my parents, all my family and loving church members, my beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, and my friends who do not believe in the Lord, I cannot help but thinking about what kinds of memories I am giving to them. The reason is because if the contents of memories are far from Jesus, then those memories are not beneficial to them at all. But if they see little Christ in me, such great sinner like me who lives by the grace of God, and my imitation of Jesus can be written on the tablets of their hearts as beautiful memories, then my I think that life will be beautiful in God 's sight. I want to live such a beautiful life. I want to die as a person who reminds Jesus so that only God may receive glory from me.

Conclusion

The Lord let me meet my wife, the best spouse, as the gift of precious grace to me, who has never dated. It was like a miracle to me. I was preparing myself for my marriage and my future mate, believing that the Lord would provide my spouse if it is the Lord's will, without any expectation of unrealistic or realistic about marriage. To me, the Lord has made me to meet my wife in His way in His time and made me to fall in love with her. I still remember Jane came down to Los Angeles, where I live, from San Francisco, where she used to live, without sleeping for about 35 hours and I proposed her on a bench near Santa Monica beach, "Are you willing to sacrifice with me to the Lord?" But she didn't say anything. So I just kissed her. And after six months, we got married. Haha. I still remember when Jane and I was having our wedding worship, I remembered the things that had happened to us from the time I first met my wife to the moment we were having the wedding worship, like a video, and Psalms 34:8 came to my mind, "Taste and see that the Lord is good ". At that moment, my heart moved and I couldn't stop crying. I saw my wife crying beside me even though we didn't have any conversation at the moment. This is how the Lord made us to meet and to get marry to start the marriage life together.

My wife and I had never quarreled during the period of six month, starting from the time we first me until we got marry. But when we went on a honeymoon, we fought for the first time. Since then, we had a lot of conflicts. One of the reasons was because we were so different from each other. And we didn't know each other very well and didn't know how to love and respect each other even though I had been reading and studying in preparation for my marriage. Haha. Now I cannot remember well when and how we had conflicts so many times. Haha. What I remember clearly still is that God gave my wife and I the precious gift of life, first baby "Joo Young" in Korean (meaning: "The Lord's glory") or "Charis" in English (meaning: "grace") and she was in the Los Angeles Children Hospital intensive care unit (ICU) for 55 days and she died in my arms after some of the family members had the final worship in ICU. For my wife and I, the first baby's death was a great trial. But in that great trial, the Lord gave is Psalms 63:3, "Thy lovingkindness is better than my life, my lips shall praise thee" and enabled us to experience our Savior God's marvelous and wonderful love for us and to praise God (Gospel song: "My Savior's Love") with our hearts and our lips in tears. At that time, I realized little bit through the death of the first baby Charis that God's love is holy love. Then the Lord gave us the second child "Dillon" (meaning: "truthfulness and faithfulness") and enabled us to experience that God's love is restoring love. Through the third child Yeri (English name is "Sophie"), the Lord allowed us to experience God's abundant love. And through the youngest child "Yeun" (Korean name that means "Jesus' grace") or "Karis" (same name as our first baby "Charis" that means "grace"), God made us to confess "God is love." By that love of God, my wife and I, our children and our family came thus far to this day. The Lord has made many good memories of our family for us. And because of those good memories, He has erased the bad memories that were in us. We have come to this day, enjoying the peace that the Lord has given us.

The dream for the family that the Lord has given me is to build the Lord-centered family: The family that the Lord receives glory, the family that is submissive to the authority of the Word of the Lord, the family that loves each other with the Lord's love and the family that suffers for the Lord and His church. I hope and pray that the Lord build my family and your family as the family witness community that shines the light of Jesus Christ in these days where there are lots of broken families. May God fulfill this dream in the Lord.