

Family Matter (Volume 3)

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Heavenly Husband

When the Lord decided to create our world, He did not do it in secret. All angels were invited to such an event, and a great Universal presentation began.

The heavenly beings flew with interest to an empty place in the center of the boundless Universe and waited to see what would happen next.

The Lord spoke a word, and out of nothing appeared a new planet, all covered with water. And the Spirit of God hovered over these waters.

The angels exclaimed with delight from the unexpectedness, not imagining how one could live in such an environment. Since God had not initiated the heavenly beings into all His plans, they had to guess about what would happen next, and what significance this had.

And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. Gen. 1:3. How beautifully everything became visible!

What suppositions were not expressed. Some daredevils even tried to plunge into the boundless ocean, wishing to understand what was in it, but found nothing except water.

All the angels understood that some kind of surprise awaited them, and they never stopped discussing their assumptions.

The Lord determined the time of day for the new planet, dividing them into day and night, into evening and morning. How new and interesting all this was!

On the morning of the next day, the Lord spoke a word, and part of the water began to rise in a beautiful dome and enveloped the planet with a dense transparent shell.

The space between the waters was filled with air. And the Lord called the expanse heaven.

So another day passed.

The tension of expectation increased. The invited guests joyfully discussed the new events.

The next morning God spoke a word, and the water went underground, exposing the amazing surface of the new planet.

The sons of God exclaimed with joy at the grandeur of what was happening. All these processes were accompanied by the cheerful babbling of water and the noise of the earth's surface opening up.

Not all the water went underground. Rivers formed on the new surface, which crossed everything visible to the eye and merrily ran to beautiful lakes, so that, passing through them, they could flow further, to larger accumulations of water.

All those present were invited to descend to dry land. The angels, without ceasing, sang beautiful hymns and joyfully chirped, filling all visible space with their exclamations. What an interesting world appeared before their eyes! A boundless desert on which one could walk.

But the Lord spoke a word, and grass and fresh shoots of various plants began to come out of the earth. The whole world began to transform, filling all visible space with unusual colors and smells.

The joy of the heavenly beings knew no bounds. Angels merrily circled above the earth's surface, constantly descending to new areas to explore them.

The next morning the Word of the Lord created the Sun and the Moon. Pleasant warmth enveloped the entire earth, warming the happy angels with its rays.

The sons of God decided that this planet was being created for them, and waited for this to be announced.

The next morning God gave a command to the water, and it began to produce fish and birds. New species began to form from ordinary liquid, striking with their beauty and grace. Lakes and rivers filled with living creatures. Merry flocks of birds began to cut across the sky, which, like angels, could fly and swim, making unusual sounds.

The angels lost the gift of speech from amazement, listening to the music of the new world, and then merged with the voices of the new inhabitants of Earth in joyful praise to the Creator. Someone among the angels made a suggestion to stay here and live, and they supported him in this matter. But everyone waited for God's orders and carefully watched the development of events.

The next morning the Lord commanded the earth to produce various animals, and the entire surface began to bulge, bringing forth from dust unusual beasts, cattle and creeping things, which began to merrily run after each other and study the amazed angels, inviting them to games. The sons of God again exclaimed with joy, and some of them took part in unusual games with unusual creatures.

And behold, the Son and the Father announced that they would now create man in Their image and likeness. Everyone was told that a man and a woman would be created. The angels did not understand what this meant, what kind of new type of heavenly beings this was. Silence fell, and everyone began to observe what was happening. The Lord took dust from the earth and molded from it a figure similar in appearance to His own image.

When the deed was done, the Lord bent over the product of His creation and breathed His breath into the mummy. And man became a living soul.

Joyful exclamations resounded throughout the entire Universe. A man named Adam appeared in the world, which means humanity. And a little later the Lord took part of the flesh from the man and created from it a woman, who became Adam's wife.

Everyone understood that God had some special plan. In these new people, some lesson was to be taught to the entire Universe, the meaning of which no one yet understood.

A mechanism to produce their own kind was embedded in people and all living creatures. What did this mean?

In the relationship of husband and wife, something new could be seen that was very similar to the relationship of the Deity within Itself. The mutual tenderness and love of man and woman gave the heavenly beings a figurative idea of what kind of relationship exists between the Heavenly Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Sin attempted to destroy the image of the Lord in man, but God's Son by His death stopped the inevitable catastrophe and made it clear to the entire Universe that saved man would become His bride, with whom He would spend all Eternity.

What an amazing plan the Lord is carrying out in this last time! He is preparing for Himself one who does not even understand what awaits her in the near future!

When the appeal was made to Laodicea, then all the angels were amazed at how wonderfully the Lord presented Himself in unusual symbols, offering His people His hand and heart. Such a step amazed all the heavenly beings.

Everyone waited for the time to come when this message would take effect. All the angels anticipated how the bride would joyfully rush into the arms of her Beloved, never to leave again.

Family life, arranged according to God's laws and principles of love, is a clear example of the relationship that the Lord desires to have with His redeemed people.

The throne that He offers to share with the one who overcomes speaks of the mysterious power that will be given to the victors. And victory itself consists in establishing trading relationships with the Faithful Witness and close knowledge of one's Savior. It is difficult to comprehend such proposals in the mind.

I would be content to simply be someone in God's Kingdom, but the Lord desires to have me as His bride. What does this mean?

From the structure of our society, I understand that a wife is legally equal to her husband in all spheres of their family life and has the power of a spouse. I think that the Heavenly family will have a special legal status in the eyes of Heaven. This mystery is very great.

The Lord does not simply offer us to buy something from Him, but to enter into special relationships with Him that will delight our hearts and bring us special pleasure. The Lord will take care that first of all we feel good, and He will receive immeasurable joy from this. Oh, how to convey this news to all God's children, so that they desire such relationships, seek them and enter into communion with their Heavenly Friend!

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Job 38:4-7; Isa. 54:5; Jer. 51:19; Gen. 1:1-31; 2:1-25; Eph. 5:22-33; Eccl. 7:29; John 3:16; Rev. 3:18-22; 19:7-9; 21:2-3,9-10; 22:17 in light of this lesson.
2. What did you understand from this topic?
3. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
4. Did you enjoy reflecting on the process of creation?
5. Do you understand how deep a plan about us was conceived by the Creator?
6. Why does the Lord desire to become a Husband, and call His chosen ones the Bride?
7. Do you think the bride of Christ will have some special status? Or will she have the same rights as all heavenly beings?
8. Why does the Faithful Witness promise His throne only to those who will buy goods from Him and have close relationships with Him?
9. Is there any connection between the overcomers and those who make purchases from the Faithful Witness from Rev. 3:18?
10. What does God mean when He calls Himself a Husband and us His bride? Does He say something just like that?
11. Does this special closeness with God that He desires to have with us, expecting our decision and consent, bring you joy?
12. Is it necessary to enter into relationships with Christ now, or should we wait until He comes?
13. Have you noticed that the mystery of the family and Christ with the church has many common parallels?
14. What revelations do you have on the topic of our lesson?
15. Is it important for family happiness to have personal and close relationships with Christ?

Husband and wife, love each other

During the Heavenly rebellion, which was organized by the perfect cherub, God's authority was undermined, and some sons of God joined the rebellious angels, becoming infected with the rebellious spirit. God's enemy saw how quickly his ranks were being replenished and possibly hoped that soon all of Heaven would join him, and he would establish his order throughout the entire Universe.

But the Lord stopped this lawlessness and offered each heavenly being to determine their position, after which He removed all the dissatisfied from the Heavenly dwellings and began to implement a special plan for cleansing the Universe from the influence of sin.

The principle of Eternal life is best described in the words of Jesus from John 17:3: "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." All those living in Heaven should have been guided by this knowledge, but instead of the Creator, some of them began to know creation and changed all values, exalting independence from the Source of life and humiliating the One who is Eternal Life.

During this polemic called "war in Heaven," not a single angel died, although many of them chose the right to death. No one imagined how this would end, and how God would act further.

And the Lord decided to create a new world called Earth. At the head of this world was placed man, created in the image and likeness of God. God created from dust two unusual people who were a reflection of His glory and were to become a textbook for the entire Universe, clearly showing the heavenly beings how God's image is reflected in people. Agape love was naturally woven into every cell of human nature and was organically present in everything that the newborn people undertook. This world became a clear example of God's love, hidden in such a manifestation. This mystery was very great,

but it was revealed day by day, filling the consciousness of observers with new revelations about God's glory.

Everyone could clearly see how harmoniously love acts in creation, and how it naturally connects the whole world with its beautiful threads, permeating everything with itself and manifesting itself in everything.

Husband and wife loved each other, not even understanding how one could relate differently to one's own person. No one taught them this. They were created by this Love for love.

It was also amazing that they could produce their own kind and, multiplying, fill the entire earth with loving beings reflecting the image and likeness of God.

The enemy of souls managed to deceive man and make him his ally in the fight against God. God's character in people was defiled by sin. It seemed that God's plan had collapsed, but the Lord foresaw such a course of events and brought into execution a new plan for saving people from the power of sin by revealing His image to them and by restoring this image in fallen people—the glory of His character.

At the time appointed by God, the Creator Himself was born into our world in the likeness of man, who was given the name Jesus. The majesty of Heaven was hidden by human flesh, but His spirit and attitude toward people revealed to the entire Universe the beauty of God's love for man and His hatred of sin. Living among lawlessness, Jesus was not partaker of this spirit, but revealed by His behavior the unchanging love of God, manifested in attitude and service to fallen humanity.

Before His death, the Lord commanded us to love one another. In obedience to this commandment was laid a special plan for restoring God's image in Christ's followers.

The death of Jesus established this ordinance and revealed to the entire Universe the true attitude of the Creator to creation and what love is capable of in its self-denial.

In the restoration of God's image in man is revealed the hitherto unexplored depth of God's love, which, taking the

fallen soul from the depths of sin, lifts it to the unthinkable height of knowing deep God's revelations about Himself.

In love for each other, family members occupy a special place and have a special advantage in clearly showing the entire visible and invisible world the beauty and depth of agape love.

Having a relationship of love with a friend, I am limited by time and opportunities of our communication. There are also some moments in which our knowledge of each other in mutual love is restrained by ethical norms and does not allow going into those areas of the heart that can be opened only in marital union.

Husband and wife in this sense have a clear advantage over brothers and sisters, as they possess the legal right to each other's body, time, attention and care. They do not need to report to anyone about their relationship, they do not need to hide anything from others, they do not have to look for time to talk to each other. They are always together, even if far from each other.

When we were friends before the wedding and got to know each other in this relationship, we understood that in the family we could continue this research even deeper and decided to create a marital union. Understanding the main purpose of creating a family—deep knowledge of each other and opening in this relationship the depths of God's love, we confidently build a solid building of a happy family on the strong foundation of God's agape.

Without mutual love it is impossible to know another person and let him know oneself. If this person became a brother or sister, then our knowledge of each other will surpass any one-sided relationships, although it will be limited. But a family having the spirit of mutual love surpasses everyone and everything in its knowledge.

My memory very well imprints all my manifestations and skills in love with a friend and can very easily transfer them to family and other people, as strong neural connections are formed in

the mind, which automate my attitude toward people, receiving consent from my will to do so.

A loving family is conceived by God with the purpose of clearly demonstrating to the world the beauty of God's attitude of the Deity within Itself and to His creation. And our joint faith in God and personal relationships with Him allow the Lord to reveal through us to the world such features of His Glory that we do not even suspect.

The enemy hates families that are happy in the Lord and attacks them in every way. But love endures all things, and our decision to love each other and be happy in our union helps us to agree about everything, quickly resolve many issues and reject everything alien and unclean.

Being always together, we have much time for each other, and even if daily affairs separate us for some time, we meet again to share our victories and tell each other about our love, trying to discover something new and beautiful in our chosen one.

It is interesting that all our good qualities of soul we find also in Jesus. And one can even take something from Him and try to understand whether this is present in us too. And we discover that this is laid in our hearts to be revealed in due time for further development.

In knowing each other there are no boundaries, and we are glad that we are given Eternity so that at least during this time we could discover in each other eternal deposits of our spiritual treasures, which will enrich ourselves, all our friends and our dear Savior.

It is so great to know God for all Eternity and bring this knowledge into communion with each other.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Eph. 5:31-33; Eccl. 7:9; Gen. 1:26-28; Eph. 2:10; Isa. 43:7; 54:5; Jer. 3:1; Phil. 2:2; Rev. 19:7-9; John 13:34-35; Rev. 12:7-12; Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:13-19 in light of this lesson.
2. What did you understand from this topic?

3. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
4. Is it important to understand for what purpose man was created?
5. Have you noticed that our world was originally conceived according to the family type?
6. What main purpose does marital union have? Justify your answer.
7. Is it important to understand what rights and responsibilities God has placed on husband and wife?
8. What does God expect from our families?
9. Is it important in a happy family for each member to have personal relationships with God and personal communion with Him?
10. Is the mutual love of husband and wife an expression of God's love?
11. If I say that I love God, but hate my spouse, will the Lord accept my love?
12. Should husband and wife start loving each other in old age if they have lived their whole life without love?
13. Will mutual love bring happiness to both spouses?
14. Does the commandment about loving one another apply to modern families?
15. If I do not yet have a family, and I am already many years old, is it important to build a family on the foundation of mutual love? Am I not risking in such a case to remain completely alone?

The purifying fire of love

We are studying in an interesting School with an unusual name "Happy Family" in the light of agape love. If someone thinks that nothing is happening with us, and we are wasting our own and others' time in vain, then read carefully the name of our School. That's exactly what it is: we are learning to build a happy family. For some, this process goes quickly, someone does not understand what should be, and how all this will end. But the Lord does not keep us in one place and leads us to amazing discoveries in knowing each other.

I want to assure and warn you that, learning to love each other with agape love, you will someday receive everything for which you studied and spent your precious time, learning this science. The School of Agape Love does not end when this very love is acquired, but it transitions into a new stage of relationships that carry many different revelations and trials.

The Lord gave us a commandment about loving one another. He spoke it three times, not changing the meaning of love, but adding features of relationships in it. And now the time has come when I decide to begin fulfilling this commandment and find myself a friend for this, who is not against loving me according to the same God's commandment. Not everyone will dare to take such a beautiful step, and I will not choose just any person for the role of a friend who needs to be loved with agape. It's easy to say, but to find and do—that's completely different. But however this happens, God's blessing and approval must be on everything.

It's good when two brothers love each other and begin to grow in this love. Or if two sisters make a decision about unconditional love, then such relationships will not cause any misunderstandings and will be perceived normally. However, the commandment about loving one another does not give us any restrictions by gender. In fulfilling Christ's command there is the following feature. A brother must love a sister, and a sister—a brother. But what about Christian ethics? And how will such love look?

I want to assure you, friends, that when you decide to embark on this path, you will certainly come to the necessity of loving a person who is not like you, but represents your complete opposite, but agrees to mutual love.

When I acquired my first smartphone, I immediately appreciated its advantages in conducting many types of work and activities that I tried to solve with the help of a computer, camera, button phone and other devices, spending a lot of time and money on this. Once in my life there came a moment when I understood that some social networks steal my best time and draw me deeper and deeper. I was offered a world of friends and along with this all kinds of entertainment and pleasures that attracted with their accessibility. At some point I realized that the smartphone began to manipulate my will, luring me to places where I shouldn't go. And I really didn't like this. I decided to execute my phone and render it useless. But the Lord did not let me carry out this foolish decision, inspiring me that the problem is not in the phone, but in my head. And I will not become a winner if I break an expensive thing. I will have to buy a new one, because our modern life is tied to this device and in many ways makes our life easier. Victory consists in learning, having such technology in your pocket, to use only certain advantages that bring benefit and blessing, and at the same time refuse everything that steals time and pollutes the purity of thoughts. And in this struggle I must prevail.

I liked this approach, and I decided to monitor what the smartphone does in my life, and who controls whom among us. It worked. Although my carnal nature sometimes draws me to the dump, I plan my time and interests in such a way as not to enter dangerous territories, and I remove all temptation from my field of vision.

In friendship and love with people of the opposite sex within the framework of church brotherhood, certain rules operate that are important to know so as not to violate them. There are also stereotypes that we are accustomed to orient ourselves by, considering them the norm of life. But when I decide to observe God's commandment and choose for this a person of the

opposite sex, then, whether I want it or not, I invite the fire of trials into my life, and my chosen friend experiences the same. And through this fire all must pass who wish to love one another. The Lord will not shield us from this interesting trial, but is ready to be with us so that the flame does not scorch us.

When I, being a married man, choose a sister as a friend, with whom we decide to love each other, then we open our hearts to this mutual agape, which is not like in the movies, but very deep and burning. I plunge into a world of new experiences that destroy all my understanding about friendship and open new beauty and depth of relationships that I never even dreamed of. Agape teaches me to love and act truly, with all my heart. And this same love passes through the heart of your friend, producing the same action. In other cases—this is not agape, but something human or deficient. I understand that the Lord is showing me the unexplored, and the only thing I desire is to preserve the purity and holiness of relationships, not allowing the flesh to raise its disgusting head to take possession of my will.

At some point I become frightened, and I understand that the fire is very hot and unquenchable. I cry out to the Lord for protection, ask Him to be with me and very much want to run away from all this. But I understand that love endures all things and endures correctly. And the Lord desires to see me as a victor in the fire, and not among curious observers.

If I plan to have love for my friend without experiencing feelings for him, then it's unclear what perspective I'm drawing for myself.

I have been a multiple witness to how many of my fellow believers violated the seventh commandment. And this strengthened in me the conviction that friendship and love between a sister and brother cannot exist. But the Lord shows the true picture. He teaches that genuine agape must exist between His children, but it must be correct, where God's throne and the Lord's principles stand at the center of relationships.

The fire of agape love does not burn me, but purifies my heart from carnal and lustful desires. I learn to love my friend, enter into the fire of this love, study and observe all processes, rejoice and enjoy new discoveries and experiences.

Love shows me the essence and character of my friend. In his open heart I see such a quantity of inexhaustible treasures that I immediately hasten to tell him about them, and he, in turn, shares with me the blessings of his findings in me.

Honest communication about our new feelings and experiences helps us analyze what is happening, pray for each other and make wise decisions for the next steps in our love.

Reading about someone is very simple and interesting, but when this fire burns inside you, then this is a completely different worldview.

My love for my spouse did not become less when a friend loving me appeared in my life. And over time there are more and more of these friends, and we all love each other. And this is beautiful!

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Isa. 43:2; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2:17; 4:8; John 13:34-35; 15:12-13,17-18; 17:26; Rev. 3:17-18; Jer. 32:3; Matt. 24:12; 1 John 3:16; 4:7-13; Rom. 5:5; 12:9; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; 16:14; Gal. 5:13,22-23; Eph. 4:15 in light of this topic.
2. What did you understand from this topic?
3. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
4. Do you have such a friend with whom you love each other from a pure heart?
5. Are the words of Apostle Paul from Rom. 7:22-25 clear to you in light of this topic?
6. Will I begin to do what I consider impossible?
7. Was the commandment about loving one another given only to the eleven disciples?
8. Why does the gold from Rev. 3:18 go through purification by fire?
9. Should one seek and choose those people with whom you will love each other, or should this come by itself?

10. Does my victory consist in avoiding the fire of trials?
11. Does the proposal to love one another from a pure heart cause fear in you? Is this possible between brothers and sisters?
12. Will the Lord guard and teach those who decide to love one another? Isa. 42:1-8.
13. What do you think, if you are learning love and desire to have it, will you someday begin to love someone?
14. What should I do if I want to love, but no one responds with reciprocity? Should I continue searching?
15. Is it necessary to speak about love with those whom you love and who love you? Or is this optional?

Studying each other

What could be more interesting than knowing someone or something? We are arranged so that the very fact of knowing the One True God and Jesus sent by Him is the most important matter and Eternal life itself. John 17:3. In each of us is embedded a thirst for knowledge and hunger for learning. We simply cease to be healthy people if we stop learning and discovering something new.

God is very beautiful and infinitely amazing in the beauty of His character. There is nothing more wonderful than discovering new facets of God's love for yourself and rejoicing that you have seen something new, great and inaccessible in God that you did not know before. The Lord does not hide Himself, but joyfully reveals Himself to those who thirst to know more and deeper about Him. And this knowledge leads us to a common denominator, in which it is written that God is Love. This is that Eternal realization on which everything can be built and any truth and science can be known in the correct light.

Human love, although it is a weak reflection of Heavenly agape, but defiled by selfishness, cannot bring good fruit.

God's love, which we receive through Christ, will never destroy our human attachment, but will wrap it in itself and make it a perfect and powerful force capable of destroying strongholds. Thanks to this union, human love becomes more sensitive, wise, responsive, refined, deep, bringing much fruit and carrying light and power from above for healing wounded souls.

A family in which God's love reigns is the brightest witness of God's love to this world. Giving His disciples the commandment about loving one another, Jesus included in this concept not only His single followers, but also those who under the influence of this love will decide to create a marital union and in this merging of two hearts reflect the beauty of God's agape.

Husband and wife loving each other with Christ's love is the best and strongest testimony in favor of God and His love. There is no more pleasant place on earth than that home where

God's love reigns between brother and sister in Christ. And it is Jesus who makes this attachment living and active.

In marriage you are free to express all your sincere and tender experiences, share affectionate words and say many all kinds of beautiful things that in ordinary friendship may sound inappropriate and suspicious.

It is love that opens wide opportunities for knowing God, both in personal communion with Him and in our relationships with a loving friend. God is beautiful in our mutual love and joyfully reveals Himself to us in our friendly relationships, endowing us with purity of thoughts and perfection of His unconditional agape. And we, understanding that we can sincerely love each other only thanks to the abundance of God's love, tirelessly ask Him for its presence in our relationships and receive what we ask for in abundance. This abundance is enough for other people with whom we meet in life.

The thirst for knowledge, sanctified by God's love, is capable of revealing to us the true meaning of things and any science in the correct key. After all, every law is created by the Creator and embedded in that subject or in those relationships with which we deal.

Deciding to engage in new discoveries in our family, my wife and I began to study each other and the features of our relationships, trying to identify patterns, points of contact between the Divine and human, binding interconnections and development trends. As a result of these studies, we understood that everything surrounding us and relating to us proceeds from the same Divine hands, is created by Him to serve Him and reflect His love.

We decided to study our intimate sphere of life, into which we let no one except God. A whole science of relationships was revealed to us, which is so tasty and beautiful in the light of mutual love, tenderness and harmony that you marvel at the creative potential that the Creator embedded in these relationships.

We simply take some facts and begin to discuss them, sharing our thoughts, guesses, discoveries and revelations, and we discover a harmonious world, special advantages and possibilities in marital relationships that will never be revealed so beautifully outside of marriage.

And if we consider that we are created in the image and likeness of God, then we enter into an incomprehensible world of guesses and assumptions about how the Lord experiences this, having endowed us with these amazing feelings and thoughts.

Many experiences and discoveries in the science of our close relationships so touch and bring us closer to each other that there are no words to correctly describe everything happening inside us. And we simply love each other and become ever closer and dearer in this love.

And it is so simple to respond to the love of one who is your other half and does not mind being it, and does everything possible to put all his love into every word, action and thought about you. You simply cannot respond with something else, because love overcomes everything and dominates in everything.

Sometimes we become so joyful in our love for each other that we have to force ourselves to be a little more serious. But this does not always work out.

Love does not cancel our daily duties, but makes them easy and interesting. It is so great to do something for a beloved person and understand that every your deed and contribution to his happiness brings wonderful fruit in our relationships. And all this becomes beautiful thanks to the constant presence of God's agape among us.

Wishing to study each other, we encounter the same wise laws of our Creator, embedded in our human nature. We are such not because we decided so, but because the Lord created this in us, putting all His wisdom and power. We only need to delve into our structure and identify the beautiful and regular that is revealed to us in the light of this deep knowledge of each other.

In our study and research we can freely touch each other, enter personal space, ask any questions and receive frank answers. And love opens such depths to us in this process that you marvel at how interesting and tasty we are inside.

If we consider the fact that we are as deep and mysterious in our features and abilities as the Lord Himself, in whose likeness we were created, then we can only admire the infinite prospects of discoveries in each other that await us.

Only mutual love can descend to the most hidden depth of our hearts to reveal deeper layers there, inside which new depths are discovered.

And all this becomes our discovery and possession, which is difficult for us to describe in words for outside ears, but we understand even without words what was revealed to us, and how beautiful this is.

But the greatest blessing we receive is when we begin to know God in exactly the same way, plunging into the depth of His infinitely good heart to discover there new possibilities for researching other depths of His beautiful character.

And our mutual love with God reveals such amazing things in our relationships that you never stop marveling at this.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 1 John 1:7; John 8:31-36; 13:34-35; Jer. 31:34; 33:3; Ps. 45:11; 99:3; Isa. 33:13; 1 Cor. 13:12-13; Prov. 4:1-13; Eccl. 1:8; 2:13; Heb. 8:10-12 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Is it worth studying each other in the family?
5. Can friends also study each other?
6. What does deeper knowledge of a friend give?
7. What is the depth of a friend's heart into which you were let?
8. Does God desire to reveal the depth of His heart and let us in there?
9. What consists in deep knowledge of God and each other?

10. Is it possible without mutual love to know someone or let someone know yourself?
11. What will knowledge without love lead to?
12. What advantage does deep knowledge of the one I love give me?
13. Is your heart open to your friends?
14. Does God desire to study us?
15. If I voice my discoveries in a friend, does this help the friend know himself better too?

Creative depth

Communicating with a beloved person, I understand that I am dealing not with a simple friend, but with one whom my soul loves. And love possesses creative power and is capable of creating from nothing something beautiful that becomes a special blessing for both of us, in which we feel good and comfortable.

This process is a natural consequence of love and appears in those relationships where agape takes root and begins to sprout and bear good fruit. The fruit of the Spirit is pleasant not only to the Heavenly Father, but also to those who produce it and taste it in mutual love.

My heart, receiving God's agape, begins to unquestioningly submit to Heavenly laws and live by them, without straining and without trying to observe God's commandments. When God writes His principles in the heart and in thoughts, then I can no longer live by other laws, because I do not want to do this, since my consciousness is united with Heaven and feeds from it.

Although I have enemies—my carnal nature and the forces of darkness, which constantly attack my mind with their temptations and seductions, but God has put enmity in me toward these companions and gives me constant victory in this struggle, while respecting my choice.

In mutual love with a friend, I understand that he should feel good and comfortable in communication with me. But we are completely different, and my "good" does not always suit his "good." And inviting a friend to the depth of my heart, I understand that he may see how deceitful and extremely corrupted it is. And what to do in such a case?

Human love is not very inventive in this matter. And if it has already tasted the Hollywood model of relationships, then it is easier for it to follow it, and then reap the bitter fruits of disappointment and consequences in the form of broken hearts.

God's love protects my heart from the power of sin and begins to create everything new in me. God says just that: "Behold, I make all things new" Rev. 21:5. And these words relate not only to the new earth, but also to the new heart, which allowed the Lord to create good soil in it and plant in it the good seed of God's love.

Our God is the Creator of all beautiful things, and His creative power has not been exhausted. The Lord continues to create beautiful things in my life, preparing me for relocation to the Heavenly dwellings.

"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" 1 John 4:16. God does not cease His creative activity, abiding in me, but does what only love is capable of. Just as I cannot control the work of my internal organs, but only nourish and maintain their normal vital activity through my healthy lifestyle and acceptance of the light of Sanitary Reform, so in my love for a friend not all processes are clear and subject to me. But I can study this creative potential and consciously use its power, setting goals for myself, directing my thoughts and feelings and calling God into my plans.

Love creates in me its "good," which I simply do not have in human nature, and I do not have enough imagination to create a depth of relationships that would be safe for my friend and me and create comfort for us, bringing mutual joy. And I am not alone in this creative process of our relationships. My loving friend also belongs to the same God and opens his heart to good changes that occur under the influence of God's grace.

The depth of our relationships in mutual love for each other, although ours, has one Author—God by the name of Love. It is God's love that creates in me what makes me a loving friend with a pure heart. It creates a place in my soul, taking into account all the features of the friend, all his claims and his freedom of choice.

And whoever my friend may be, brother or sister, my son or daughter, or my other half, love will always create something

new in me specifically for this person. And in this we both will feel good.

I tried inviting other friends into the already existing "good," but noticed that our "good" with one friend completely does not suit other people. For them it is necessary to create what takes into account the dimensions of their soul and their features. And love knows how to do this.

And yet, if there are three or more of us in our love for each other, then with each of the friends I lovingly create my own depth of relationships, and for common use love creates that new depth where we all will feel good and comfortable, where we will be welcome, not worrying about inappropriate size and quality, and where other friends can be added with our consent. But it may also be that at the depth of our hearts from three people a fourth friend appears, whom we accept. In this case, love takes a copy of our depth and creates a new depth, taking into account our features and the revealed needs of the subsequent friend. And it turns out that the already created "good" for two or three does not suffer if the next friend appears, but continues to exist parallel to him already in the new "good," created for the new team.

My deep communication with my wife in the spirit of love and friendship does not prevent my heart from having depth of relationships with other people. And these depths of relationships do not merge into one whole, revealing secrets and mysteries of other friends, but very easily get along with each other while respecting the openness and freedom of each.

And at any depth of relationships the Lord lights His purifying fire, which melts us and makes our gold of relationships pure and very valuable for both of us. And this gold is such a precious treasure, and it can so abundantly enrich us that we become truly generous with love and know from Whom it comes, and where to get it. The Faithful Witness sells us exactly what mutually enriches us.

But for building any depth and any "good," time, my friend and I myself are needed. It is these components in combination with

God's love that create in us that correct "comfort zone," from which no one will drive us out, and which we will take with us into Eternity, where we will feel completely good, and this will not cause anyone any complaints.

If I do not yet have love or a friend with whom I could create our common "good" and plunge into its depth, then remember that Jesus has much of this, and He advises acquiring this with all accompanying blessings from the same Hands. He desires to create everything new in my life too, and He succeeds at this when I invite Him into this life.

Our Savior has such great creative potential for blessing my friend and me in mutual love that if I say there is infinitely much of it, I will not be mistaken.

Studying the science of loving one another gives me a great advantage in that, knowing how love works and what it can do, I can cry out and ask God for more than I have today, and He will show me great and inaccessible things that I do not know. Understanding the laws of love, I do not fear their action in our friendship, but rejoice in this knowledge and can extract beautiful melodies of agape from few notes, understandable to both of us and carrying such "good" that only hearts loving each other can appreciate. And the sounds of such a song are pure and beautiful, because they have one Author, Who is Love.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 1 John 4:16 and tell what you understood from this verse in light of our lesson?
2. Please also read: Phil. 2:13; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; John 13:35; 14:12,26; 15:5,9; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rom. 12:9-10; Isa. 65:17-19; Job 38:33; Gen. 1:1,27; Ps. 99:3; Rev. 3:7-8,18 in light of this lesson.
3. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
4. What did you understand from this topic?
5. Can a person create his own world with his friend or his neighbor by himself?
6. Did you understand what "good" means that belongs only to my friend and me?

7. Has the Lord endowed us with creative power for inventing unique relationships?
8. What can I create in my relationships with a friend if God is not there?
9. Is God's presence important in our love and friendship?
10. Does the Lord participate in the creative process of our happiness?
11. What to do if I have no experience in close communication with people?
12. Do you have such friends with whom you feel good or very good?
13. Is creating a "comfort zone" with your friend something bad, from which you need to urgently exit?
14. Have you noticed that you feel differently good with different friends?
15. Do you have plans to create a new depth of relationships with any of your friends?

Insisting on one's own way

In every person's life comes such a moment when he sees the mistakes of other people or understands the execution of some task in the best way and at the same time expresses his opinion or decision aloud, insisting that everyone act exactly as he considers necessary. But depending on who such a "commander" is and who are those to whom such "valuable instructions" (VI in short) are given, depends the degree of submission or execution of such instructions.

When at work I received an order to cover a roof with tiles, I had to hire other firms to help, since it was beyond one person's power. The helpers did not know how this is done according to regulations, but had their own experience and understanding of this work. And while I was busy delivering the necessary equipment and materials, they began laying tiles from bottom to top, without conducting the necessary marking and measurements of the roof.

Upon arriving at the site, I immediately noticed this violation and stopped all work, which caused a storm of indignation. And before we continued, I had to explain for a very long time how it is necessary to first lay out the top and bottom rows according to size, measure everything, recalculate, and then every 5 rows make a chalk line from top to bottom, and only after this can you begin to cover the roof. When all sizes are checked and established, and marking is done, then you can begin laying the roofing from any place, in the end everything will come together and lie evenly and beautifully.

As understanding of this new science progressed, the storms of indignation subsided, and the hired workers began to do everything according to my prescriptions, realizing what could have happened if they had shown willfulness.

In construction there are things that lead you to error, and sometimes to an irreparable one, if you do not know how to correctly perform work, therefore you should listen to advice, but also know the rules and laws yourself.

There are requirements that must be observed, for example, for safety, and you cannot compromise, as this will cost someone's life or loss of health. But there are moments when you can give VI and simply observe how this is received.

For example, you need to erect a wall at a house. The corners of the building are raised according to level, and then a string is stretched between them, and the wall itself is laid. It can be laid from left to right or vice versa. This is not fundamental, but someone insists that left is better, and someone is more accustomed to the right. Can a conflict of opinions arise? Yes. Is it fundamental? No. But if this work is performed without a level and without a string, then error is guaranteed, and then it will be difficult to fix something. Buildings with crooked corners or uneven walls will not be accepted for operation, and the construction company will suffer large losses.

A family is also a kind of construction site, where two co-workers begin to erect the building of their happiness. Not knowing the rules and features of happy construction, they will build something, but how beautiful, strong and safe this will be depends rather not on their understanding of happiness, but on their diligence and obedience in studying already existing rules and establishments.

As a rule, two confirmed egoists approach the construction of family happiness, who know how to make decisions and know what they need. But in union with another egoist there are crossroads of opinions, where each sees the solution to the question in his own way and does not try to understand the opposite point of view, but begins to insist on his own, believing that by this he brings happiness and order to the family atmosphere.

No family has avoided such adjustments. And here it is important to notice that there are things that are not always fundamental to do this way or that, however there are rules that should not be violated.

For example, my beloved likes to eat bananas from the tail side, and she always insists that I eat this plant exactly this way. And

if I open a banana from the top, this threatens conflict, as she cannot tolerate such arbitrariness, and her mood deteriorates because she believes that I do not respect her and show willfulness. What should we expect if I begin to eat bananas exactly the opposite way? Conflict is inevitable. And as a result we will come to the conclusion that we have no love. Is this question fundamental? No, but the enemy of the soul catches us on such nonsense and makes a mountain out of a molehill. The correct answer in such a situation is hidden in changing the proud heart, which feels calm only in the atmosphere of its own vision and understanding of life.

But let's take the same banana. It's not fundamentally important which side to eat it from, but if it has rotted, then I don't need it from any end, and I won't even allow it to be offered, as it represents a danger to health, although someone might even like the taste.

Distributing VI in the family is very easy when dealing with a compliant soul or with someone who fights for peace in the house and is ready to sacrifice his freedom. But there are moments when a person gets tired of such dictatorship and wants to make decisions himself and follow them.

Giving an instruction is not difficult, but insisting on obedience to this VI threatens to create tension in relationships or leads to conflict. And if you add phrases to this: "Who did I tell?"; "Are you deaf?"; "How many times can this be repeated?", then a crisis of relationships is inevitable.

Accepting someone's point of view, someone's instruction and following this course depends rather on the heart than on the mind. Another person's proposal must be accepted by the soul, for which the consent of the will is needed. The presence of pride at the center of decision-making can become a stumbling block for both sides, and insisting on one's own will only aggravate the situation. Obedience at the level of reason will be short-term and not established in the heart, which may resist, but when reason convinces the will of the logic and wisdom of this or that advice, then the will gives approval, and the heart

joyfully obeys new decisions and creates the correct attitude for subsequent actions.

Love makes any instruction foresighted, wise and unobtrusive. It feels the friend's heart and very delicately touches the soul, trying with its influence to soften every word.

Love catches the mood and disposition. It does not create conflict situations and calmly retreats where there is no need to defend truth. However, it becomes very firm and invincible in those cases when it must go to the end and achieve victory.

When I give instructions to a three-year-old child, I understand that I need to make sure that he does everything as I ask. But when this child is 30 years old, then it's worth first thinking about how appropriate my instructions will be and how correctly they will be received.

Insisting on my own in my family will become permissible when I see inevitable trouble and do everything possible to prevent catastrophe. If the brakes in my car are faulty, then I will do everything so that my wife cannot go anywhere in it, even if she really wants to, despite my recommendations. But when the question arises about taking garbage out of the house, then it's not so important for me if there is a delay in solving this question.

Insisting on one's own without visible blessing for the future gives birth to a spirit of dictatorship, which destroys happiness and love, and this is important to consider when distributing all kinds of useful VI.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Prov. 3:30; 22:3; Col. 3:12-17; Eph. 4:29-32; 1 Cor. 14:20; 16:13-14; 2 Cor. 13:10-13; Phil. 2:1-5; Heb. 13:16-17; Rom. 12:9-21; 1 Pet. 1:13-16; Matt. 5:44-48; Prov. 17:14,19; 28:25 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory when studying this lesson?
3. What did you understand from this topic?

4. Should situation and a person's status be considered when insisting on one's own?
5. Should you achieve your plans and your truth from those with whom you have no authority?
6. From which side should bananas be eaten correctly? Do you have similar problems with your neighbors?
7. How do you feel when someone insists that you do what you don't want to?
8. At what point or when does a simple request become dictatorship?
9. What to do if I consider my neighbor's requests inadequate, but he still insists on his own?
10. Do I have the right to refuse others in their insistent requests?
11. Can pride manifest itself in this or that case, when I ask, or when I am asked?
12. Should I monitor my heart, how it reacts to insistent requests, or when I insistently ask someone about something?
13. How do you feel when I insistently ask you to be attentive in studying these lessons?
14. Does God insist on His requirements?
15. Will I bear responsibility if I lead someone into despondency with my valuable instructions?

Abusive relationships in the family

I have been a frequent witness to how my friends and acquaintances create families, promise each other love and harmony and shine with happiness. When you admire them, it seems that this celebration began to never end. But time passes, and you observe in some friends a completely different picture. Their faces are no longer so happy. Someone among them smiles sadly, and someone begins to share with you their family grief, not afraid to "air dirty laundry." You try to figure out all this and somehow help your dear people, but you understand that the root of this problem lies very deep, and you can only pray that the Lord will intervene and correct it.

Abusive relationships are a form of interpersonal interaction in which one side systematically uses physical, economic, sexual, emotional or psychological violence against the other side with the purpose of control, disorientation, humiliation, manipulation or oppression.

Abuse is an English word that means violence, cruelty, mistreatment, bad treatment. It generalizes all negative qualities, and a person who possesses this vice is called an "abuser." Accordingly, where there is an abuser, there must also be a "victim" of this violence. Abuse can be public or domestic.

I really don't want to talk about this, but the very fact that recently in many families such a spirit manifests itself compels me to illuminate this topic so that each reader can independently figure out who he is dealing with in his union, or what is in the heart of a friend who shows you special attention.

During the period of friendship it can be very difficult to identify sinful vices hiding in the depths of the soul. Sometimes even the abuser himself may not suspect who he is, because there is no one in relation to whom he could manifest these vices. But the Lord sees everything and can reveal such manifestations in advance, removing them from the heart, filling this place with love and friendliness.

Abuse is not an inborn character trait that you can't escape from, but one of the types of temptation that is offered to a person by demonic spirits, so that in this manifestation he feels his superiority and demonstrates power, receiving satisfaction of worldly pride. As a rule, abusers are men, but it happens that women can also possess these qualities of soul.

Such a spirit is very cunning and manifests itself with certain cyclicity according to its development.

First, tension grows in the abuser's heart, caused by an inadequate reaction to this or that situation or to temptation from evil spirits. God's grace can quickly neutralize such influence from outside if a person understands the nature of temptation and turns in prayer to God, or chooses love. But, bypassing these protective barriers, the will decides to invite another spirit to help and unleash all its indignation on the supposed victim in the form of some kind of violence. Violence can manifest in the form of moral insult, sexual rudeness or physical contact with the victim's body.

After this comes a decline in tension, the abuser repents, sometimes asks forgiveness, promises not to act this way anymore, convinces that this will not be repeated.

Then comes restoration of relationships and the time of "honeymoon," in which everything is so beautiful that the experienced pain is forgotten, and bright prospects open up.

And then everything is repeated again according to the same scenario, which confuses the victim, and the person does not know how to act correctly, because everything has returned to normal, and there is hope for change for the better.

Despite all his hatred for the victim, the abuser does not wish to break relations with her and tries in every way to keep her and emotionally attach her to himself, convincing that without him she simply cannot manage.

Violence against a person's will occurs, as a result of which the personality surrenders and finds itself under the power of one who can commit arbitrariness over it at his discretion. And the

unfortunate accepts everything as inevitability with which it is worth reconciling. The victim decides to be a meek person, believing that the Lord will condemn any attempt to break such relationships.

Disorientation of one's neighbor is one of the abuser's favorite tools. He can speak and promise good things, and then, when they begin to remind him of this, he convinces that he did not say such things and did not even think about it. As a result, the listener gets lost trying to prove the unprovable and begins to consider himself inattentive or stupid. The abuser, on the contrary, presents all his stupidity and lies as something significant that must be reckoned with.

Economic violence consists in keeping all family finances under control, especially if the spouse does not work, and giving out minimum means for her maintenance, or nothing at all, declaring this a broad gesture and peak of charity, convincing the victim that without him she will perish. At the same time, the abuser manages the family budget at his discretion and needs, not limiting himself in anything.

Sometimes only divorce can become the best solution for abusive relationships, to give the victim a chance for something better in life. But it happens that a person is so morally destroyed in such violence that nothing in life makes him happy anymore, and he needs nothing more. Personal self-esteem is at zero, no changes in the abuser's behavior occur in response to prayers, and the law forbids divorce. And if there are children, then for their sake a person is ready to endure everything, because how can they manage without a father? And where the way out is, is unclear.

An abuser in the family can be a good friend in relation to other people. He is capable of being a law-abiding citizen and conscientious worker, whose name does not leave the "honor board." But in the family he behaves exactly as his selfish nature dictates. This is a strange phenomenon, but it happens in Christian families too.

In premarital relationships, the Lord will necessarily reveal such a spirit if you pray and fast about this.

And what should one do who, reading these lines, sees such a spirit of violence in his family and begins to understand that this is something abnormal? How to solve this problem without breaking relationships?

It is difficult to give an unambiguous answer in all cases, but love can solve everything in the best way, offering the most acceptable way out.

Jesus was surrounded on all sides by public abusers, to whom He related with worthy respect as authorities among the people, but without yielding to their influence and without losing His dignity under their attacks.

Understanding who I am in God's eyes helps me too to recognize any forms of violence and resist them in the right spirit. In relationship with an abuser it is best to have personal independence from his opinion and not take his accusations to heart.

It is worth remembering that the laws of any country protect the inviolability of the body of their citizens, therefore any sexual or physical violence is a criminal offense for which the guilty will be punished, even if he committed this evil deed in his family. Also the intervention of relatives or friends can become substantial obstacles to the next violence. And in all this wisdom from above and the right Spirit are needed.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Ps. 10:5; Prov. 21:7; 22:24-25; 24:1-2; 29:22-23; Isa. 59:1-8; 1 Sam. 18:10-11; 20:30-33; 25:3,10,25; Matt. 3:7-10; 9:34; 23:3-4,15,27-28; James 1:8,13-16,19-20 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Have you encountered abusers in your life?
5. Can a loving person be an abuser?
6. Do families need abusive relationships?

7. What is the difference between an abuser and a demanding or strict person?
8. Is it necessary to understand and remember that an abuser is not quite an adequate person who does not always understand his problem?
9. What to do if I understood that I am an abuser?
10. Is abuse something hereditary or is it a sin that can be fought?
11. How to help one who is a victim of abusive relationships?
12. Can a loving person be both loving and an abuser?
13. Is it important to know that there are abusers, and how they are recognized?
14. Is divorce the best solution for abusive relationships?
15. Is love strong enough to resist all violence?

Love for an abuser

God's plan regarding a happy family consists in that husband and wife are called to love each other from a pure heart, be friends, tenderly care for one another and develop personal relationships with their Savior, knowing each other.

Love casts out fear, antipathy, selfishness and opens the hearts of family partners to deeper knowledge of soul qualities.

Love suffers long, but at the same time it does not deprive its possessor of a sense of human dignity and boldly opposes any kind of violence against body, conscience and soul.

When the first attack comes, and the situation is new, then a person may become confused, deprive himself of certain protection and become a victim, who on top of everything else is also made guilty of all sins.

Abuse is allowing the carnal nature of man to dominate in relationships with a family partner and accepting services of fallen spirits to satisfy worldly pride.

Love unmistakably recognizes reciprocal love to all its actions and very quickly recognizes another spirit, which can even mask itself with beautiful words. And when a person is informed and taught correct relationships, he is immediately able to identify any type of violence and resist it.

We live in an age of maximum corruption, where all ethical norms and boundaries are violated and at the state level all kinds of abominations forbidden by the Bible are imposed within the framework of law, which do not bring happiness and freedom, but bring many problems into relationships. And this affects us.

Sex between spouses is a time of the greatest openness and vulnerability of hearts for the deepest knowledge of each other. Any kind of violence or domination at this time can deprive these relationships of holiness and activate natural protective forces of the soul, closing it to all types of attachments. And the

abuser will use this closedness for more frequent attacks, which will only aggravate the situation and destroy family happiness.

Also violence in other spheres of relationships does not bring blessing to the family, but destroys what should be built on the foundation of mutual love and service to each other.

The protective properties of the soul will manifest in all spheres of relationships, and this can aggravate the situation and bring marriage to divorce. We will not teach you to divorce, as our School has other goals and plans, but the very fact of divorce does not mean that love is absent there. Sometimes it is love that can lead spouses to such a solution of questions, but all this is individual.

The spirit of love is given by God to teach a person to react correctly to this or that situation, and constant connection with the Savior gives Him power to intervene in family relationships and frustrate the devil's plans for their destruction, giving wisdom in this or that action. All this begins with prayer for love, for help and protection and should never end.

Abusive relationships in the family are not something obligatory that we must experience as disciples of Christ, but a consequence of one of the partners falling under the onslaught of the influence of evil forces and temptations of this world. This can be a short-term phenomenon, when the abuser understands his sin, repents of it and consciously resists it. But these can also be dynamically developing relationships, where carnal nature asserts itself and dominates.

The decision to love your spouse despite his inadequate behavior includes in consciousness special mechanisms for seeking solutions to problems in light of God's will. There is no will of God for one of the spouses to manifest violence, but if this happens, then love helps determine the type of abuse and the method by which it can be resisted. Very good support can be given by family counselors at church, who, having delved into the problem, are able to give necessary recommendations and advice and assist in making decisions.

If this counselor is of the opposite sex, then all sexual questions should be resolved by woman with woman, and man with man. Although it may also be that both spouses turn to one specialist, and then he interacts with both sides, listening to their opinion.

Love is closely connected with God, as it comes from Him and is maintained by Him. Choosing love, I block in myself any manifestation of carnal nature and can soberly approach solving the problem. It sounds like this: "Lord, I choose love, give me wisdom in this decision." And the Lord will necessarily come and give peace and the right spirit.

My body is arranged so that it can automatically block feelings and emotions, and I will have to make efforts to manifest the right spirit, having a serious appearance. But I will learn something good.

If physical violence with assault and causing injuries manifests in the family, then love will suggest how best to distance yourself from this person and maintain the right spirit at a distance. God does not call us to suffer for the satisfaction of the ambitions of those who promised to care for us and protect our body. Beatings, like sexual infidelity, are a violation of the marriage vow and destroy pure relationships, bringing the spirit of Satan into the family union. All this brings deep emotional wounds to the victim, which forever leave scars in memory. But love knows how to cope with these questions too and neutralize their destructive influence on the psyche. It is agape that protects the soul in the best way, but at the same time does not deprive me of the sense of pain. Jesus says to the wounded soul: "It will hurt you, but I will be near." It is God's presence in my love that helps me not to go mad and come out of any situation as a victor.

Even if when solving the problem circumstances developed so that we had to separate to different beds, rooms or apartments, then love for the family partner does not die, but seeks the best way out of the situation and knows how to wait long for good times, not ceasing to hope for a beautiful future.

Love must be unyielding in its actions and decisions. If you do not firmly resist violence, then the carnal spirit in the abuser will progress, and then the situation will only worsen, which can lead to a very deplorable result.

If for my protection I decide to choose not love, but something carnal, then perhaps the problem will be solved quickly, but there will be no victory. And what will I become, turning to demons for help?

Patience and forgiveness are beautiful virtues when they are manifested at the right time. But if I decide to endure a violent person and forgive his behavior every time, not trying to protect my human dignity, then I am not acting from love for myself and for him. God knows how to protect His subjects, although He allows their sufferings.

In Deut. 22:23-26 is described a commandment about crying out if violence occurs against a maiden. And if she does not cry out, then she becomes an accomplice of this sin. Love calls the victim of violence to cry out to Heaven and ask for protection, wisdom and help, and then the Lord will intercede and help solve all questions with love.

Love suffers long, is not proud, does not behave rudely, thinks no evil, bears all things, overcomes all things, believes all things and solves everything in the best way, always manifesting the right spirit, being in constant communion with God.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Eph. 4:15; Matt. 5:44; 7:12; 1 Cor. 16:14; 1 Pet. 3:9-15; Gal. 5:6,12-23; Rom. 13:9-10; 1 Thess. 3:12; Prov. 31:12; Isa. 5:20 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Who did Jesus mean when He said in Matt. 10:36: "And a man's enemies will be those of his own household"?
5. Is it always easy to love when this love is not there?
6. Will unconditional love manifest itself where humanly it is impossible?

7. What do you think, does the Lord know what spirit manifests in abusive relationships, and does He take into account the human factor in reaction to all evil?
8. How to understand where the boundary lies between humility and patience and active resistance to all violence?
9. Do you have experience of how to respond with love to evil? If yes, please share it.
10. Do you always want to love those who do you much evil?
11. Should it be understood that the reaction to evil that relates to family members will not always be the same as to external enemies?
12. When love lives in your heart, will it prompt you to wise decision?
13. Is wisdom from above needed for solving complex family questions related to violence?
14. What happens to a person's will when he submits to the desires of an abuser and endures all his mockery?
15. How did you understand the verses from Deut. 22:23-26 in light of our time and this lesson?

Divorce

We read a verse from the prophet Malachi in the Kulakov translation, Mal. 2:16: "I hate divorce, says the Lord God of Israel, and when you turn the covering under which a wife was taken into violence against her, says the Lord of hosts. Guard your spirit, do not be unfaithful!" In other translations this verse begins with the words: "I hate divorce..."

Divorce is the destruction of a marital union by one or both sides with subsequent legal registration, as a result of which a person receives a Certificate of Divorce and by secular law is considered free, having the legal right to create a new family.

Not so long ago, not only in the church, but also in the world, divorce was considered something extraordinary, and those who went through this procedure were declared unreliable people and had corresponding censure within the framework of the society to which they belonged. Now time has made certain adjustments to this question, and the attitude toward this procedure has become more loyal. But we also have God's point of view on this question and will reckon with it.

The foundational teaching of the true church of God speaks of marital union thus:

"Marriage was established by God in Eden and confirmed by Jesus as a union of love between a man and a woman, concluded for life. Entering marriage, Christians should choose a spouse among their fellow believers. Concluding marriage, they take upon themselves obligations not only to each other, but also before God. Mutual love, honor, respect and responsibility are the foundation of their relationships. They reflect the love, holiness, closeness and constancy of relationships between Christ and His Church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that a person who divorces his spouse, except in cases of adultery, and marries another, commits adultery. Although the life of some families may turn out to be far from ideal, spouses who have completely devoted themselves to each other in marital union in Christ can achieve

close unity in love under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the care of the Church..."

Marriage is one of the strictest establishments of the Creator Himself. According to the words of Jesus from Matt. 5:32, dissolution of this union and repeated creation of a new family is permitted only when the seventh commandment is violated: "You shall not commit adultery" Ex. 20:14.

In our time divorce and repeated marriages have become such a frequent phenomenon that even church ministers sometimes find themselves perplexed when considering such situations, not wanting to lose members of their congregations. Somewhere this is treated strictly, somewhere loyally, and somewhere they manage to publicly bless those who violate clear God's establishment.

The lawlessness that spouses allow into their hearts becomes the most destructive force, which cools love in relationships and prompts husband and wife to forget their solemn promises, following their carnal lusts, being guided not by principle, but by feelings.

The reason for divorce permitted by God is violation of physical faithfulness. As lawlessness and human cruelty multiply, many other factors have appeared that serve as a reason for dissolution of marital relationships. Divorce is not a sin that deprives a person of the right to Eternal life. The Lord has given each of us freedom in self-determination and respects our choice. He continues to love equally both married people and divorced ones. Sin originates where people transgress God's prohibitions and seek justification for their actions.

Remarriage with a living even former spouse is a special case that should be carefully examined. If the reason for divorce was the fact of adultery, or the divorced spouse began cohabiting with another person, then the innocent party has full moral right to create a new family with a representative of their church. In all other cases, remarriage causes many misunderstandings among fellow believers and brings temptation into church brotherhood.

A lawful reason for divorce can be rude or violent behavior, threat to life or health, immoral corruption having a corrupting influence on family members, sinful dependencies and similar things. But divorce in such cases does not give the right to remarriage. The innocent party continues in God's eyes to be the wife or husband of that person with whom they made a union, until death separates them. We cannot indicate any other reasons, allowing new marital relationships contrary to God's will. And we cannot bless these unions.

There are exceptions to this rule, when divorce occurred outside the church, after which a person believed and accepted Christ. Then it is accepted to consider him free and give him the right to create a family within church society. But this order was not established by me, but is so accepted.

Each case of remarriage should be carefully considered by church ministers and brought to the church council. And if there are no Biblical obstacles and objections, then the marriage is accepted and blessed by the entire brotherhood.

A reason for lawful divorce can be verbal assurance by one of the spouses of physical infidelity, when he jokingly or seriously declares this to his other half. This fact is very difficult to prove without obvious evidence, and words about infidelity in this case are themselves a weighty argument that need not be proven.

A controversial question for lawful divorce can be the fact of viewing pornography. A person who is subject to this vice can no longer perceive his spouse as that unique one to whom he promised his faithfulness. With any physical contact he is in his heart not with her, but with those images that he let into his mind. And what should a wife expect from such a partner? And how does she feel about herself? In light of Jesus' words, such a person is considered an adulterer, but while there is no fact of physical infidelity, divorce from such people does not give the right to remarriage.

Those who wish to divorce should understand one most important thing, that Eternal life is worth fighting for and

enduring all the charms of lonely life. There will be temptations, there will be enticing offers, but do not allow sin into your life.

In our time there are many counselors and thinkers, but let your criterion be the words: "Thus it is written!"

There is one more common type of cunning. When divorced church members go to conscious violation of God's order, and they are excluded from church for this. But then they come with "repentance" and ask to be restored through repeated baptism. We, fellow believers, will accept such, but how God looks at such intrigues is difficult to say.

When I create my family, then this union is created forever, and what God has joined together, let man not separate.

Although the statistics of divorces even in God's church are quite high, this does not give me moral right to unpunished addition to this statistics by my actions.

It is also worth remembering that even after divorce, love continues to unchangingly love the one for whom it was given, and who violated the marriage contract with their lustful actions. It does not pass, but changes its attitude, not allowing the grieved soul to perish in the darkness of offenses, heavy memories and bleeding wounds of the experienced tragedy.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Matt. 5:27-32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:17-18; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:8-17; Deut. 24:1-4; Jer. 3:1; 1 Cor. 7:27 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Have you experienced divorce in your life, yours or your parents'?
5. Is divorce always something very bad?
6. What other weighty reasons for divorce do you know?
7. Is breaking relationships the only solution for solving family problems?
8. What to do if husband and wife cannot live together and do not want to divorce?

9. What do you think the Lord experiences when He sees the break of relationships between His children?
10. For whom was the commandment "You shall not commit adultery" given?
11. Why did Jesus not give any new reasons for divorce?
12. Should I know something about divorce if I don't have a family yet?
13. When family life is not going well, what can be invented instead of divorce?
14. What paths of restoration after divorce would you advise to the injured party?
15. Is it always better not to divorce?

Let's live in harmony

Those who have walked through the valley of destroyed relationships remember what pain separation brings from one who lives in your heart, with whom you became one flesh, whom you were accustomed to care for and tend.

Our age can boldly be called the age of attacks on the institution of family. What amazes is how simply strange laws are issued, declaring as family that which is not. Violation of the seventh commandment is no longer considered a crime and is vigorously promoted in many films and books. Young couples do not plan to register their relationships, but seek one who will satisfy them in sex. And sex itself has become so accessible that a person need only want it, and he can immediately receive the necessary pleasures without entering marriage. And all this and similar abominations have a great influence on the mind and desperately try to penetrate the ranks of God's church, destroying from within what God has joined together.

If I ask you whether cutting off a leg is a good and useful thing, then I think you will answer: "No." And you will be right. But if there is inflammation on the leg that threatens the whole body and a person's life, then its amputation is necessary, and one must reconcile with this and live further already without a leg. Jesus also taught that if your member causes you to stumble, then it is better for you to cut it off and enter Eternity without it.

This temptation can be:

1. Ungodly influence of lustful thoughts about another partner;
2. Thoughts about divorce from a lawful spouse without any grounds;
3. My carnal nature, which destroys family happiness with its nagging and anger;
4. Any kind of violence from the other half, threatening my health and life;
5. Physical infidelity of the marriage partner with another person, which is done in secret or became known;

6. Open hatred of the spouse toward my Savior and constant compulsion to blaspheme God;
7. Compulsion from the wife or husband to ungodly life; And much similar to this.

But not in all cases is amputation of the leg needed. If it simply hurts, then it should not be cut off. It should be treated.

Human will is now so weakened under the onslaught of worldly temptations that any test of faithfulness for many spouses becomes a reason for dissolution of marriage.

For example, my friends decided to divorce, and I tried to find out the reason. It turned out that the wife was not satisfied with such a husband who was not able to take her to the sea and lead her through restaurants. And the husband was not able to satisfy the desires of his wife, who constantly compared him with movie heroes. And the husband also did not want to take loans for such affairs. I had to explain for a very long time, with God's help, to these people the economic rules for running a household and "stretching legs according to the blanket." As a result, the marriage was preserved, and much was reconsidered and put in place by the spouses.

In one city, church leadership made a decision to give permission for divorce to all who wished, but with one condition. They had to live together for a month in a special hotel. This was one room with a shower and toilet. In it was one narrow bed with one pillow and one blanket, one table with two chairs, one large plate, one glass and one spoon. The spouses were forbidden to use means of communication, read, watch or listen to anything from outside and leave the boundaries of this room. They had to eat and drink only what they were given. Food was brought to them three times a day and placed in a plate from which they had to eat in turn.

If after a month they still insisted on divorce, then their marriage was dissolved without any objections. But for some reason after such a procedure no one even planned to separate.

The world steals spouses from each other, and they have no time left in this swift race to nowhere to stop and know the one

who lives with you under one roof. Care for each other goes to the background. The desire to acquire and have everything that the world offers has become the main goal of the modern family. And how in such a whirlpool can one build what should have a completely different foundation?

And here we are talking about believing people. When houses, dachas, cars, travels become the meaning of life, and there is no time for knowing God and each other, then what to expect from such a union?

When priorities are incorrectly arranged in the family, then problems in relationships will not be long in coming. But problems are not something evil, but opportunities to investigate them together and come to a common solution.

If there is no respect for the person who lives nearby in relationships, then this spirit also brings discord and manifests itself everywhere.

A family that prays together will always be together. The Lord knows how to keep in peace and love those who strive for this and seek God's blessing, wanting to be this blessing themselves.

Love helps to see all family cares in the right light and solve all tasks in the spirit of truth.

When two egoists decided to create one family, they should devote their time to studying the laws of a happy family and follow together in this direction. Happiness is worth investing time, energy and means in it. And it will certainly be.

Very good help is provided by communication with family counselors who are called and appointed by God for this ministry. A sober view from the side on many family problems can shed light on many incomprehensible questions.

Intemperance in food, in sex, in entertainment, in spending money, in viewing worldly content also harmfully affects relationships.

The absence of any kind of service for the benefit of other people also does not contribute to creating a happy family.

Sin destroys everything, but it has no place in the house of those who wish to live in peace with God and each other.

God hates divorces without weighty reasons, because any break in relationships brings grief, and everyone suffers, including children.

God experienced divorce with the most perfect members of the Heavenly family. When a family is destroyed, there are no winners here. The Lord does not experience happiness from the fact that many members of His family chose the path of sin and now draw others to perdition. But even in Heaven came a moment when amputation became necessary, and it proved impossible to sew the inflamed part of the body back.

And if there are children in the family, then they also suffer greatly from their parents' divorce, considering themselves guilty of what happened. It is very difficult for them to understand why their dear papa and mama became enemies, and then began to live with strange uncles and aunts.

I know cases when my acquaintances experienced infidelity of another spouse. It is painful to see or bear such things. Many did not know what to do further, and I said that by law you can divorce, but you can also forgive, it's up to you to decide. Some chose preservation of the family. It is sad that such things happen, but for someone such sin became a springboard to salvation. The Lord forgives sin when a person realizes his guilt and repents, but the consequences of lawlessness must be borne until death.

Love knows how to forgive many things. It does not remember evil, but always gives a chance for something better.

Somewhere it behaves firmly, and somewhere it is so tender and obliging that you marvel at how it can solve the most complex tasks.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Prov. 10:12; 15:17; Song 8:6-7; 1 Cor. 7:10-17; 13:7; Rom. 7:2-3; Matt. 24:12-13; John 8:10-11; 13:35; 1 Pet.

4:7-8; 1 John 2:9-10; 4:18; Eph. 5:15-33 in light of this lesson.

2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Are Jesus' instructions from Matt. 6:12 relevant in family disagreements: "and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"?
5. Do the following words of Christ from Matt. 6:15 apply to warring spouses: "but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"?
6. Does forgiveness mean that everything in relationships should remain and be as before?
7. Will love suggest the best way out of the most difficult situation?
8. What to do if your head hurts, and you so want to get rid of it, but you understand that without it you also cannot manage?
9. Can love restore destroyed relationships and make them better than they were?
10. Is infidelity always a purposeful sin that one of the spouses strove for all his life?
11. If you fight for preservation of the family, is there a chance that it will not fall apart?
12. Are family problems something terrible that should be feared like fire?
13. Have you noticed that the Lord does not separate families, even when there is no harmony in them, or there is a fact of infidelity?
14. Why did Jesus not condemn the woman taken in adultery? John 8:10-11.

Guilty without guilt

In the life of every married person there are moments when he needs help from outside, wise advice or instruction, for someone to help him figure out a complex family situation where he himself lacks wisdom and experience. And such a person comes to a friend or specialist for consultation, and he is told that in any conflict both are guilty, and there is no such thing as only one being guilty. And since all literate people know how to count, this protégé very quickly begins to understand that he belongs to the guilty, and where there is guilt, there should also be repentance.

I have been a frequent witness to such statements from different sources in different situations. And when you hear the same thing and nothing else, then a certain rule emerges that you yourself begin to apply to yourself and others, without even thinking why so, because situations and people are different.

When two egoists decided to create a family and encountered the fact that someone needs to yield in something, and they don't want to yield, then a protective reflex called "I am right" turns on, and all questions are considered from exactly this position, and those who will support you in your attitude are sought. And when both are right, then it can be difficult to come to peace, since pride does not allow looking at the problem differently. In such a case, any specialist will determine that both are guilty, and will be right.

Wiser people understand that not all family disagreements are fundamental, and it is better to join the ranks of the guilty and quickly settle all questions, if only there is peace in relationships. Their meek agreement and concessions quickly nullify any heat of passions, and admission of guilt and apology brings peace and resolves disputes.

But there are moments when in the family one of the sides dominates in all relationships and considers itself right in all spheres, and puts its partner in the category of guilty, and over

time—in the category of stupid and understanding nothing in life, who constantly need to be taught something.

In such cases, usually a just struggle for equal rights begins, and the conflict resolution is aggravated.

All these problems have a common character. If there is no mutual love in relationships, then conflict is inevitable, and its best solution is hindered. If there is love unilaterally, then this is better than its complete absence. Then a good chance appears for quick resolution of questions without outside help.

But are both people always guilty in a conflict? Should one make and call guilty someone who is not guilty either in fact or in spirit?

A good answer to this inquiry is the life of Jesus, who gave us an example in many relationships. Was the Son of Man guilty of what He was accused of? Did He do something such that He could also be considered guilty? Did He make any mistakes in relationships with people where He could be accused of incorrectness and asked to apologize? Did He ask anyone for forgiveness for His behavior?

I think that the correct answer to all these questions will be: "No, no and no."

Then a fair question arises regarding the Lord's disciples, who, likening themselves to Christ, experience the same attacks from another spirit that were in their Teacher's life.

It is worth remembering that Satan is an accuser who day and night accuses all who have a completely different spirit and decide to be followers of Christ, living in purity and truth. With Satan you will always be guilty even where there is no reason for this. And his influence has enormous power, therefore persecutions, tortures and executions of Christ's followers exist in our days too.

The same spirit penetrates families, trying to destroy the happiness of those who promised to care for each other and tenderly love one another.

Making both sides guilty without discrimination and declaring this aloud, I risk taking the enemy's position and resolving questions guided by his point of view.

There is one interesting fable by Krylov "The Wolf and the Lamb," where the essence comes down to the fact that with the strong the powerless is always guilty, but the matter should be given lawful interpretation. This same principle can be noticed in many family disagreements.

To me, a weak and sinful person, it is characteristic to seek support from equally weak and sinful people, and when such advisors assure me that in any conflict both are guilty, this can only aggravate the situation and confuse it more. It is characteristic of us people to believe authoritative opinion without any investigation, therefore many stereotypes very quickly become our judgment, and then it can be very difficult to change anything.

There is One who is the best Counselor, who never makes mistakes and can help figure out everything I come to Him with. The Lord experienced all trials that fall to my lot, therefore He knows how to help me in any situation. In communion with Him faith and understanding of what character He has are needed. But one should not humanize God and attribute to Him one's own soul qualities.

A person who chooses the path of love, happiness and friendship will not be understood by everyone. By his decision to love he throws down a challenge to the whole world and to the whole host of spirits of wickedness in heavenly places. The enemy of the soul cannot resist love, but he will certainly accuse its possessor of all his sins and will use for this the closest people of the loving person who do not have relationships with Christ.

Love teaches not to make mistakes and always seeks solution to any problems proceeding from agape and being guided by it. Love is the most correct motive that is present in relationships and forms them according to the Heavenly pattern.

The Lord Himself guides the thoughts and feelings of a loving person and makes many changes in his life, endowing him with His wisdom and will to victory. To consider the actions of a loving heart incorrect and declare it even partially guilty in any family conflicts is an attempt to accuse God of imperfection of His love.

Unfortunately, the stereotype about guilt of both sides has so firmly established itself in the minds of many of us that we easily render such a verdict without trying to delve, think and understand.

But there is a dilemma. A loving person does not see his guilt and is not going to apologize without grounds. And his opponent of another spirit is blinded by pride and considers himself right, and does not even allow the thought that he is guilty of something. He would rather agree that the whole world is guilty than take another position. As a result, the problem only worsens.

If someone, loving a close person with whom he has conflict in relationships, begins to apologize before him, seeing only in such an approach the solution of the question peacefully, then this is not a manifestation of his weakness, but a wise approach to settling the situation. Although the root of evil will remain in the proud person's heart, within one day the question can be successfully resolved.

But even loving people can get tired of constant attacks and sometimes try to prove that they are also right and will not let themselves be offended. The enemy of the soul is only waiting for this to discredit the good name of the loving friend.

But Jesus knows how to help those who err and does not judge them for their mistakes, but justifies and instructs further, granting His love.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Prov. 17:15,26; Ps. 14:1-5; 48:16-21; 108:2-7; Matt. 7:1-5; 10:36; 12:7; 27:12; John 8:10-11; Rev. 12:10; Rom. 2:14-15; 8:33-35; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; Jer. 9:4; 50:6-7; Ex.

9:27; Isa. 54:17; Job 9:20; Prov. 10:18; 24:24 in light of this lesson.

2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Have you ever been guilty without knowing of what?
5. Why, when people quarrel, do they necessarily make others guilty?
6. Was Jesus ever guilty of anything?
7. From whom does the spirit of accusation come?
8. When should you apologize if you don't consider yourself guilty, and when is it better to remain silent?
9. In which family is there more peace—where both are always right, or where each considers himself guilty?
10. Does this verse from Prov. 15:1 teach anything: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger"?
11. How is a person's guilt determined?
12. What to do if I am considered guilty of all evil, but I simply love and cannot do otherwise?
13. Does the Lord accuse His children without cause?
14. Does love help to see the essence and spirit of accusations in true light?
15. Do you believe that at the end of time all God's children will be declared guilty of all misfortunes and sentenced to death for this?

Interrupted conversation

In communication with friends, sometimes you encounter various interesting tasks, the solution of which is not always clear, and sometimes completely unclear. But each of us has the Lord, who always suggests the best way out and helps achieve victory.

To one camp gathering came my friends to tell me that they were divorcing and would never live together again. I understood that they needed help, since they themselves were not able to help themselves. They told me about this during dinner, and I suggested talking with them, to which they agreed not very willingly.

We moved to a separate table at the end of the dining hall and began a not very pleasant conversation. I gave my friends the opportunity to express what filled their hearts, and they initially accused each other of all the terrible problems that were between them. While I listened to their position regarding family relationships, I simultaneously prayed to God for wisdom from above, since the situation was interesting. In the course of communication I began to ask leading questions and break their stereotypes, which greatly prevented them from seeing their situation differently.

The Lord sent me the necessary thoughts and words and decided to see this matter through to the end, no matter how much time it took. I understood that if friends were let go like this halfway, then everything would end in divorce. And this is not a solution to the problem, but an aggravation. Fortunately, no one interfered with us, and we talked for more than three hours. The Lord won in this war, and everything ended with my friends deciding to renew their relationships and reconsider many controversial questions that turned out to be not so fundamental.

As a result, after some time they had a son who brought many blessings into their relationships.

I already had experience solving such questions before this and understood that if I started such a conversation, it could not be interrupted.

A year later at the next camp gathering, other friends of mine approached me with a similar problem and declared that they were divorcing. I listened to them and prayed in my heart, understanding that I needed to help somehow. As a result, we talked for a very long time, postponing all other matters, until the problem was resolved in the best way. And the conversation began with mutual accusations, where each considered himself right. I listened to my friends and prayed. God's intervention in such situations always amazes me, and the Lord gave appropriate words, arguments and reasoning.

At the end of our conversation my friends no longer wanted to divorce, but began to plan their family life within the framework of happiness, love and friendship.

In such conversations there is no general rule that would ideally suit everyone in all cases of life. But the Lord reveals the true problem to people who pray about it. He shows the best solution, bringing it to mind and heart.

It is very difficult to help those who have their own vision and do not want to accept something else.

Not so long ago I decided to talk with my friends who could not figure out their relationships. I suggested they meet in Zoom and with God's help figure it out. I gave each the opportunity to express their position and planned to bring this conversation to victory. But Zoom has the peculiarity of interrupting after 40 minutes, and then you have to reconnect to continue.

When our conversation was interrupted, one of the friends decided not to go online anymore, and instead of solving the problem, the situation only worsened. An interrupted conversation does not solve problems, but leaves all questions hanging in the air.

But the saddest thing is that a friend will not always remember all the details of the conversation, but he will never forget what

he felt during our communication. And when the conversation began with mutual accusations and then was interrupted, never reaching the victory of love and friendship, then there is a risk that you too will be entered into the "black list" as one from whom there are only problems.

There is a very good conversation interrupter—this is our phone. Have you ever had it happen that you are conducting a heartfelt conversation in which vital questions are being resolved, and you are interrupted by a call that for some reason you need to answer, and then you try to return to the conversation, but something is already going wrong in it.

When I see that an important conversation is ahead, I turn off my phone and do not answer any calls until all questions are resolved.

Unresolved questions are somewhat reminiscent of a pebble in a shoe. If you pay no attention to it, then it will continue to cause pain and discomfort. And no matter how beautiful these shoes are, while a pebble is in them, they will create discomfort.

Of course, there are also such problems and conversations that are not resolved in one conversation, and you have to meet with people many times and try various options. And the Lord helps in such cases too.

If you remove pride and selfishness from the heart, then all questions will be resolved very quickly and easily, and they will not even arise.

I know such a person who was so tired of constant family scandals that he decided to leave home and temporarily live with his friends. Friends accepted him without unnecessary questions, but did not let this matter take its course. While this person lived as a guest, not knowing how to live further and where to go, his friends did everything possible to help this family recover. They talked with him and his wife for a long time, presented certain arguments, persuaded and prayed. And as a consequence of this care for their friend, this family did not fall apart, but the spouses reconsidered many things and

decided not to go for such separations in the wrong spirit anymore.

We read in Eccl. 7:8: "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." Any matter brought to completion with God's help brings joy and a sense of deep satisfaction to life. And when this matter is restoration of relationships in the light of love, happiness and friendship, everyone benefits from this.

Love knows how to solve all tasks at an early stage and does not bring relationships to crisis. And if this love is mutual, then it so delights loving hearts that there is no need to invent troubles for oneself.

One should also not dedicate strangers to someone's problems. A person who does not know the situation as a whole will find it difficult to have an objective opinion about existing questions, and there is danger that this opinion will become subjective or biased.

If in all families they learned to love each other, how our world would be transformed! There would be no divorces, there would be no orphans with living parents. And soon will come that day when sin will end its existence, and love will reign throughout the entire Universe.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Matt. 5:8-9; Rom. 6:20-22; 12:9-11; Prov. 3:30; 14:1; 17:14,17; 1 Pet. 3:1-9; Gal. 5:13-18; Matt. 19:4-11; 2 Tim. 2:24 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Have you ever witnessed your friends wanting to divorce? Were you able to help them refrain from this step?
5. Why do friends sometimes quarrel in their families and not want to seek peaceful resolution of conflict?
6. Has it ever happened that your important conversation was interrupted and then could no longer be continued in the same spirit?

7. Does the Holy Spirit help resolve family conflicts, using close friends for this?
8. Have you noticed that when you ask God to help you figure out someone's problems, He begins to act and help and use you?
9. What will you do if your friends declare to you their divorce and unwillingness to live under one roof anymore?
10. Should all family problems be resolved by breaking up the family?
11. Will you worry that your friends will forget about your help in preserving their family and will live happily in their little world away from you?
12. What should those do who do not yet have a family, but already have problems with a friend of the opposite sex?
13. If the union of man and woman brings so many problems, then maybe it's better not to marry?
14. Do you think that husband and wife who love each other will bring their different views on life to quarrel or conflict?
15. Does love resolve all family problems in the best way?

Family subordination

When I first heard the word "subordination," I for some reason decided that it meant "distance" and applied it exactly in this context when it came to relationships between the sexes. And such equally "literate" listeners respectfully listened to me, just as I once did, not understanding the true meaning of this word. "Subordination" sounds so savory and so strongly emphasizes the thought that you don't need to explain much.

For example, I say: "I observe subordination in communication with sisters and in relation to the female sex." They listen to me with a smart look and nod their heads in approval. And an understanding person would most likely laugh at such a statement.

Once I decided to check this word on the internet and understand its true meaning and was surprised at how the whole world incorrectly interprets it. It turns out that subordination is a hierarchy, where lower ranks strictly obey higher ones, and higher ones command and manage those who are under their subordination.

The best example of subordination is military hierarchy, where a private soldier is the lowest executive link of an entire chain of commanders, and the supreme commander-in-chief is the highest legal force. With such an arrangement, each serviceman knows his place and unswervingly executes orders of higher leadership, thereby guaranteeing discipline and success in fulfilling assigned tasks.

What will happen if someone in this hierarchy of power decides to act according to his own understanding of what is happening and self-confidently takes the place of a chief, deciding to command those to whom he should submit? Chaos and disorder will begin.

If we take our grammar, then subordination is also present in it between words in constructing sentences, which emphasizes and strengthens needed thoughts and meanings, helping to transmit information more accurately and competently.

Our Christian world is also arranged according to the principle of subordination, where the head of the wife is the husband, the Head of the husband is Christ, and the Head of Christ is God. 1 Cor. 11:3.

When each in such a chain is in his place and consciously does not violate this order, then no serious problems arise. The most interesting thing is that in God's hierarchy the higher serve the lower, and the higher the occupied level, the greater spirit of service is present in the heart.

Such power and order are established by God, who always remains in His place and lovingly serves all His subordinates. All this is beautifully conceived and works. And if subordination exists in the family, then everyone in the family is under the protection and covering of authority higher than themselves.

What actually happens? The enemy of the soul has introduced such confusion into relationships that the concepts of man and woman in the family have shifted or blurred. When the house is managed by two wives, then they will not resolve many questions in the right spirit. Or if two heads, two husbands appear in the family, then there will be a war of worlds. Or if the husband does not have Christ at his head, and he does not want to serve, but strives to rule and dictate according to his own will, then conflict cannot be avoided. As a result, there has been a confusion of concepts, and there is no God's hierarchy. But for family happiness it is necessary to restore everything exactly as the Lord expects, and introduce into this chain of subordination the right spirit of relationships, which is called love.

There is another common type of family rebellion, when a wife, thinking that she occupies the position assigned to her, begins directly or indirectly to undermine her husband's authority. How can this be expressed? The most visible and primitive is verbal insult with the use of such words that humiliate male dignity and put him in the same category as pack animals. Also insults can be not so rude, but sound quite harmless, like: "You won't succeed in anything"; "Again you started another stupidity"; "You'd better do some real work."

When strangers are present in the house, then in their presence you can very successfully humiliate the head of the family, publicly ridiculing his behavior, or make it clear by your attitude that he is nobody compared to the "queen" of the house.

The essence of these and other manifestations of such a spirit is that the husband's authority is undermined, and he, seeing such an attitude, becomes disappointed and loses the desire to fulfill his direct duties, which brings an even greater storm of already deserved insults.

When I served in the army, we had visible order, but we soldiers understood quite well which officers needed to be listened to, and who had no authority. The officers understood this too and could do nothing about it, since the "grandfathers" were the main commanders in the unit. Such a spirit played an evil joke on me, and at the end of my service I was almost sent to a disciplinary battalion. Whatever intrigues we try to build against established authority, it is worth remembering that all authority from God has enough power to suppress any rebellion within its community.

The family is the most complex cell of society, in which there are generally accepted values and norms, but which is formed according to personal perception and will of both sides. Subordination helps create the correct structure of the family, which, when everything is in its place, is easy to fill with everything necessary for common happiness.

Imagine a soldier who suddenly decided that being a colonel is much more interesting, and he has all the abilities for this, and he not only decided this, but confidently goes toward his goal and behaves accordingly. It's funny, because the system itself excludes such ambitions. But when such things begin to happen in the family, this often succeeds. And such things do not happen accidentally. This happens purposefully and uncompromisingly.

Some acquaintances of mine, who have their own private sanatorium, shared with me how once one of the new

employees decided to become the boss and set himself as such in relation to other workers. He even began to point out their mistakes to the owners and ambiguously hinted that only he could solve all questions correctly if they gave him power and access to finances. They had to part with this "talented" person.

Violation of subordination in the family takes its roots from Heaven, when one cherub desired to exalt himself and take God's place.

What does a wife who violates God's family structure gain? She risks losing her family or depriving her loved ones of family happiness. And along with this she can also lose the right to Eternity. Rebellion, however small it may be, is a spirit unacceptable in Heaven.

Of course, it happens that the husband himself refuses to be the head of the family and takes the status of a couch consumer. And the poor wife takes upon herself the functions of breadwinner, driver, plumber, planner out of desperation, for the sake of preserving the family. Then the Lord gives His daughter all necessary knowledge and strength so that she can cope with all assigned tasks. But this should also not be considered the norm of life.

Love in relationships brings us to harmony with God's plan and creates from our family that union which the Creator dreams of seeing. Everyone is in his place. Subordination is observed, and all family members have God's protection and successfully develop in this.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 1 Cor. 11:3; Rom. 13:1-10; Phil. 2:3; Eph. 5:22-25,33; Eccl. 5:7-8; Mark 9:33-37; John 13:12-17; 1 Sam. 15:22; 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:1-10; 2 Cor. 10:4-6; Matt. 20:25-28 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What is family subordination?
5. Can I decide for myself how the structure of my family should look?

6. Why did the Lord establish a certain family order, common to all times and peoples?
7. How will a family with two heads look?
8. Does the true status of a wife in family hierarchy deprive her of the right to clearly express her position or disagreement with violation of ethical or family norms?
9. Why do husbands sometimes not want to be head of the family, or wives strive for this power?
10. Is a person born with understanding of what his family should be like, and what is needed for my family happiness?
11. Why should both husband and wife participate in building family happiness?
12. What to do if I understand that my family model does not correspond to God's plan, but my other half does not want to understand this?
13. Can I be head of the family if my wife does not consider me such and demonstrates this in every way?
14. Do these lessons help you reconsider something in your life?
15. Have the knowledge received in this School changed anything in your life?

Femininity

Femininity is the restoration in a woman's character of the image and likeness of God. The very first woman on earth was Adam's wife. She completely corresponded to the Creator's design and reflected in her character that essence of Divine nature that was originally placed in her by the hands and breath of the Lord of the Universe. Before her fall, woman was so beautiful, lovely and unique in execution that one could admire her without getting tired. And if we consider that the combination of her inner and outer beauty harmoniously matched with her will, which was unpredictable within the framework of holiness and God's love, then we can only guess how beautiful and unique this first girl was. The same could be said about Adam. He was the image and likeness of God and embodied God's representative on our earth, which manifested both externally and internally.

Adam's wife did not need to play some role to be a woman. She manifested her femininity naturally and freely, because there was no need to invent some other model of behavior.

Sin made its adjustments to God's image in man, and now we can only guess what man was originally like. But God's task includes a plan to reveal God's character to man and restore this image in him.

Nothing adorns a woman as much as her femininity. For a woman to understand what femininity is and how it should manifest in character, the opinion of another woman will be insufficient. Only a man can unmistakably determine the presence of femininity and somehow approximately describe what it is.

Our world establishes its own laws, its own model of relationships and its own appearance, which all people must conform to. Society will not accept exceptions to the rules, and especially one in whom God's image is reflected. The enemy of the soul will do everything possible to kill the natural beauty of pure character reflecting heavenly purity and harmony.

Swimming with the current of this world has always been easier, but to challenge it, choose the path against the current and follow God's plan—all this requires courage and strength from above.

I know one girl. Her father from birth invested in her heart all the best that he discovered for himself in Christ, and in every way encouraged all Christian virtues in her. This child was noticed by everyone wherever she appeared. Her childish femininity, meek obedience to parents, gentleness in character, yielding nature, unchanging friendliness were noted by all adults, and everywhere they spoke of her as a miracle child. But her peers did not value her good soul qualities and in every way oppressed this girl, exposing her to ridicule. As a result, at some point this girl decided to live by the laws of this world, very quickly put everyone in their place and gained unconditional authority among similar teenagers. Everyone began to respect her and reckon with her leadership qualities. But in the church where she went with her parents, her new features were not accepted, and over time she left her native community and went into the world. Now she has various friends outside the church and is no different from her girlfriends. And her proud spirit and arrogance in rejecting any claims repels from friendship with her and makes her good deeds disgusting.

Whether we want it or not, the world in which we live dictates its rules and forms its image on our characters. And since everyone around is the same, I don't think about what we should be according to the Creator's design.

Femininity is what all women will become when at the Second Coming they are given incorruptible nature, and a new heart capable of reflecting God's image and likeness is placed in their hearts.

But there is good news! The Lord can already now restore His likeness in His daughters and endow the character of one who decides to become a woman with His invisible presence in her life.

Let this human nature be crippled and beaten by traditions and concepts of this world, but God is able to correct everything for His name's sake.

The first thing that visibly makes a woman feminine and begins to distinguish her from all the rest of the mass is her correspondence to the female image in clothing. Very long ago the Lord gave His people beautiful light regarding what clothing God's children should have, and how it should distinguish them from the world. Dress reform determines ethical norms, propriety and corresponds to the requirements of time, even if the tastes of many people are perverted. But to live in this light, you need to discover it in your life and accept it for yourself. And for many this becomes an unbearable sacrifice and therefore is rejected.

And what do men see? What there is, and not what God desires to see.

Femininity will necessarily manifest itself in relationships both with representatives of one's own sex and the opposite. This is not something that should be the same and standard in all women, but what has its uniqueness in each separate case and reflects personality features of exclusively one person.

There are general factors that femininity includes—this is tenderness, ability to show care for others' needs, special sensitivity to others' grief, unconditional respect for others' opinions, heartfelt cheerfulness, gentleness in communication, honoring others above oneself, undisguised physical weakness within reasonable limits and natural desire to turn for help to stronger representatives of humanity, warmth in relationships, ability to create coziness, harmony and love in these relationships. Absence of nagging, reproaches for inappropriate behavior, attempts to change a person for the better. This is the ability to find beauty in the surrounding world and sincere expression of one's admiration for everything that happens and surrounds. This is the ability to keep all emotions under control of reason and reveal through one's reaction to irritants harmony of soul, spirit and one's spiritual maturity.

Femininity knows how to find joy in trifles, and also extract precious from worthless, show attention to details and create happiness where it is present. It very skillfully adapts to any life situations and manifests special flexibility in relationships with difficult people, trying not to create conflict situations.

Explanation of femininity may turn out to be much more complex than it actually is. When this soul property is inherent in a woman, she does not think about the next step and does not reflect for long about what to say or how to behave. She simply manifests herself in all her beauty and feels confident, not fearing attacks or condemnation.

Femininity is harmony in relationships with God and the ability to transmit to the world the beauty of God's character, which He writes with His hand in the heart of His daughter that is open to changes. This is cooperation with Heaven, in which the Lord endows the soul with special influence and protection from above, not described in the characteristics of femininity.

If anyone is interested in a woman becoming a woman, it is Heaven, which knows what femininity represents.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gen. 1:26-27; 2:22-24; Eccl. 7:28-29; Prov. 9:10-18; 19:14; 20:5; 31:10-31; Col. 3:12-19; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Pet. 3:1-12; Heb. 12:14 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Does the fact that woman was created in the image and likeness of God bring you joy? What does this mean?
5. Does the Lord desire to restore His image and likeness in woman?
6. Does the prospect of your transformation that the Lord conceived in the plan of redemption bring you joy?
7. Is it necessary to understand God's plan for restoring God's image in us in order to cooperate with it?
8. How do you understand in light of our lesson the verse from 1 Cor. 6:20: "For you were bought at a price; therefore

glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"?

9. How can a woman understand whether femininity is present in her heart?
10. Is a woman's femininity holiness, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Rom. 6:22.
11. Read 2 Cor. 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." Does this verse give a hint about how a woman is endowed with femininity?
12. Do you think a man can better determine than a woman whether a woman possesses femininity?
13. What qualities of femininity are familiar to you?
14. What is femininity needed for?
15. Did this lesson help you think about something very important?

The charm of femininity

At the very beginning of my life with God I bought myself a book by Sergey Kurdakov entitled: "Forgive Me, Natasha!" In it the author describes persecution of believers during the Soviet Union times and how he participated in this and how much they paid for it. But it was interesting to read about how he met a believing girl named Natasha, how he was charmed by her femininity and for her sake left this evil occupation, and later repented and believed in Christ, fleeing from a military ship. And the very title of the book speaks volumes. The most amazing thing in this whole story was that, being a girl of few words, Natasha conducted herself very quietly and at interrogations meekly answered the questions asked. But her femininity and devotion to God made such an indelible impression on Sergey that, even being an unbelieving person possessed by demons, he was charmed by the inner beauty of one who decided to be faithful to God even in the face of mortal danger.

We sometimes don't even suspect what influence we have on the world through our dedication to God and who we are in Him. Not all believers possess this amazing quality, and not everyone charms even when it is present in a person.

Charm is a quality or property that attracts. It evokes delight or admiration in other people. This can be connected with pleasant appearance, appeal or a special way of communication or behavior.

The charm of femininity is the attractiveness that a woman radiates thanks to expressed feminine traits and her devotion to God. It is also connected with how a woman knows how to be attentive, caring and emotionally supportive. This makes her especially attractive and warm. The charm of femininity is not only external influence, but also inner strength that attracts attention and creates a harmonious atmosphere. This is a woman's ability to find balance between tenderness and strength, between sensuality and determination. It creates a

balanced image that attracts attention and conveys a positive impression about the personality possessing it.

Sometimes it is difficult to express in words what happens in the heart when such a person appears in your life. This can probably be described in this way. When she passes by, you feel good, and when she stands nearby, you are happy.

Of course, in such evaluation of a person the human factor can work, when you are charmed by the picture and attractive appearance without inner content. However, when this beautiful person begins to speak and shows her inner state, then you see the picture as a whole. In the case where inner devotion to God is absent in a woman's life, then all her charm bursts like a soap bubble, and then it is impossible to restore something and return to the first impression.

But the presence of femininity in the heart manifests itself differently. Perhaps a woman will not attract attention at first due to modest appearance, meek and quiet spirit. But when this inner devotion to God comes out, then you simply cannot help but admire that masterpiece of combination of holiness and natural inclination to good and love, which attract you with their soul purity.

And if this person is also your friend, then you not only spontaneously admire this soul, but have access to her inner world and can discover in more detail for yourself the entire sequence of God's grace working in a person, being convinced that it does not work in vain.

God is interested in His daughters being feminine, reflecting true God's character in their lives, and His sons being courageous, showing the world the true image and likeness of Christ.

And in order to see each other in the right light, understanding all human imperfection and not paying attention to hidden character flaws, we are given mutual agape love, which faithfully represents us to each other, covering a multitude of defects.

The charm of femininity also includes a woman's ability to create an atmosphere of warmth and coziness, both within herself and around. This can be expressed through care, love of beauty and ability to find joy in trifles, which makes a woman attractive and inspiring. And with all this there is natural cheerfulness that helps you see the world with different eyes.

Respect and tact in relationships evokes reciprocal respect and forms in me special control of thoughts and feelings, not allowing any lust to cross out that heavenly atmosphere that the Holy Spirit creates between us.

It is the Lord who forms in a brother's mind true charm with the femininity of his new believing friend, so that through this influence He connects His children in the closest relationships of love and friendship.

It happens that you love a friend and rejoice in him from a pure heart, and are ready to listen to him tirelessly and be with him, but cannot explain why you relate to this person exactly this way.

There is an external factor, thanks to which through superficial acquaintance you are able to turn your attention to a person, but when you also see the inner beauty of a soul open to love and close relationships in Jesus, then this charm reaches its true goal and delights the heart from within.

Giving us the commandment about loving one another, the Lord anticipated those amazing discoveries that we would experience in relationships, and how we would charm each other with our belonging to Christ. What could be tastier than a friend who, like you, loves Jesus and is tuned to the same love for you? Only Christ can surpass all these advantages of our mutual love.

I think that if we had the opportunity to personally meet with Jesus, then we would all be unanimously charmed by His Divine character, which would harmoniously touch all spheres of our earthly existence and complement everything that the soul so needs.

Something similar we can see in each other, falling under the charm of femininity and masculinity. When we feel good with each other, and we are happy in communication, showing unchanging love and respect, then we can safely say that God's plan of our transformation is successfully accomplished by His Holy Spirit.

Although initially the charm of femininity may evoke strong emotional admiration, but the more and closer you know this amazing person, the more you are affirmed within yourself that this is not just a beautiful person inside and out, but also your friend in Jesus, who is given to you to always delight your heart and be your friend forever. And when heartfelt attachment is already established between us, then the Lord reveals to us such depths of relationships in love and friendship that everyone begins to recognize His disciples in us. And you are not only externally charmed by the beauty of the soul, but know how it looks inside.

Whether we want it or not, we cannot hide God in ourselves. He will necessarily manifest Himself in that wonderful gift of charm that will attract new souls to us.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 2 Cor. 2:14-17; 3:2-6; Matt. 5:13-16; 7:17-20; Song 1:1-2,8-16; 2:2-4; 3:3-5; 4:1-15; 5:9-16; 8:6; Eccl. 7:1; Prov. 15:7; 31:10-31; John 13:34-35; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Cor. 13:1-3; Heb. 12:1-2 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. With what eyes can one see in a person what reflects God's image in him?
5. Are there such people in your life who charmed you with their devotion to God?
6. Is it good to have such friends who bring much warmth, love and light into your life?
7. What to do to become one who would attract others to Jesus through his life?
8. Is it pleasant for you to be in the company of those who admire you and whom you love at the same time?

9. Is it proper to have such friends who are delighted with you and await the next meeting with you?
10. Is God interested in His children being attractive people?
11. Does it depend on me what influence I have on people?
12. What letter do your neighbors read when observing you? 2 Cor. 3:2-3.
13. Is there any secret to being a reflection of God's glory?
14. Read John 15:8: "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and become My disciples." Will your fruit be noticeable not only to God, but also to other people?
15. Did this lesson help you see something in your life in a new way?

Masculinity

Creating man, male and female, the Lord invested in them all His heart, His essence and very much desired through this couple to reveal to the entire Universe the beauty of His character. Declaring aloud that the Deity would create man in Our image and Our likeness, the Creator intrigued all the heavenly beings observing this process. What could this mean?

Those present understood that God's word accomplishes everything for which it was spoken, and everyone tensely awaited something grandiose. Now two unusual beings should appear, man and woman, by the name of human, reflecting God's image and being His likeness. How would they look? What does this mean—in image and likeness? For these beings heaven and earth had already been created, filled with everything necessary for life, for joy and comfort. They were given power over the created planet and all who inhabit it. Even before their appearance in the world they became rightful masters of the earth.

And behold, the Lord takes earthly dust and begins to mold from it a strange figure, with external outlines similar to the Creator. What would happen next? A clay mummy resulted, which had neither form nor majesty. The Lord bent over this strange creation and breathed His breath into the motionless lips, and the dust of the earth became a living soul.

Although angels were accustomed to seeing miracles of the Lord of the Universe, once again they were surprised by His creative fantasy and the deep meaning that was embedded in every word of God and in the destiny that was assigned to man before his appearance in the world. The sons of God exclaimed with joy, asking each other with their eyes about what would happen next. Very recently they witnessed how the Heavenly family was destroyed, and many of the rebellious angels were forever expelled from the Heavenly dwellings. Grief and anguish filled Heaven. Expectation of some inevitable tragedy hung in the atmosphere of God's Kingdom. And against the

background of all these events the Lord decides to create, inviting all who wish to become witnesses of this process.

Perhaps the rebels also somehow observed from afar what was happening, and in their hearts a struggle occurred between despair for the lost place in Heaven and indignation for such cruel treatment toward them. But seeing how a masterpiece of the Lord's creativity came from God's hands, the fallen beings began to devise a cunning plan to deceive these innocent people and capture the pristine planet under their power, to show the entire Universe how beautifully everyone would live far from God, not obeying His laws.

The first man, although still an adult child who had just appeared in the world, already was a reflection of God's glory, which was to reveal day by day to the entire Universe the beauty of God's character. Into the image of man were placed masculinity, wisdom and strength inherent to the Creator. And woman with her tender appearance and femininity revealed to all heavenly beings those hidden qualities of God's soul to which angels did not even pay attention.

We can only guess how the first people looked, but knowing how perfect the Lord is, and that He creates everything best and unsurpassed in all respects, we can safely say that Adam and his wife were beautiful representatives of God on our planet, and if they had not fallen, then all their children would have reflected God's glory in all human diversity.

The masculinity that Adam displayed was inscribed in every cell of his nature and was expressed both in his external appearance and in the inner beauty of God's likeness embedded in the first man's intellect. Giving names to animals, Adam invented new words characterizing the habits of earthly and heavenly creatures. He remembered these names and did not confuse them among themselves when meeting again with those to whom he gave a special name.

His relationship with his wife was an example of heavenly harmony, in which agape love guided all principles and motives of their behavior. Adam's mission consisted in constant care for

his other half and study of this person completely unlike him in all spheres of existence.

The concept of masculinity before the fall and after it began to differ substantially from each other, like day from night. And in our days it has lost its original meaning, and we can understand by this word whatever we want.

And to understand what masculinity is that is pleasing to God and meets Heavenly criteria, it is worth looking at Christ's character and delving into the essence of His motives and goals that He set and achieved.

Jesus' life was a bright example of true masculinity available to each of us. The Lord, being in a human body, grew according to all earthly laws of development and at each stage of His growth He was perfect, both physically and spiritually. His meek but strong spirit emphasized His masculinity in growth from childhood to mature age.

This does not even need to be proven, because it could not be otherwise. Jesus became for us a perfect example in everything and a perfect image of God in every relationship with people, as well as a manifestation of care for needy humanity. Everything good and pure can be found in Jesus, even without knowing Him personally, because evil and wrong behavior is excluded, since He is the Savior of the world who gave His life for our sins. God would not have accepted something imperfect as a sacrifice.

Masculinity is a quality of strength, determination and courage manifested in difficult situations or before life's challenges. It can be expressed in physical endurance, emotional stability and ability to take responsibility for one's actions. It can also include courage to take risks, protect those you love, and express your convictions, even if this requires steadfastness before contradictions or troubles. This is the ability to overcome difficulties without intimidation, maintaining dignity and honesty. Masculinity implies readiness for self-improvement and weighing risks with wisdom and prudence. It is able to accept defeats or mistakes with dignity, extracting lessons from

them. Masculinity is not only physical strength, but also strength stability in spiritual and emotional terms. It can manifest in how a person supports others and stands for justice.

This is the ability to adapt to new circumstances, despite inevitable failures and uncertainty. Courage in recognizing one's weaknesses and shortcomings.

The Lord is interested in revealing this property of His soul to us and restoring this image in us. Masculinity is inherent not only to men, but also manifests itself in God's daughters who decide to be obedient to God's light and live in accordance with God's will. This is the ability to be honest with oneself and others, even when it is difficult. This also includes striving for forgiveness and for having a positive influence on those around.

Agape love is the highest manifestation of masculinity in relationships with other people, and a meek spirit in love is the most militant spirit of a victor with whom Jesus will share His throne.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 1 Cor. 16:13-14; Gen. 1:26-27; 15:6; Heb. 1:1-4; Matt. 5:3-16; Eccl. 7:28-29; Prov. 11:19; Eph. 1:3-10; 3:14-19; Deut. 31:6-8; Josh. 1:9; Ps. 8:3-7 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What is masculinity in light of our time?
5. Do you know masculine people? How do you distinguish them from the rest?
6. Do you find in Jesus an example of true masculinity? 1 Pet. 2:21.
7. Can believing women also be masculine? How does this look in life?
8. Should one know that the fearful do not have a very interesting prospect? Rev. 21:8.
9. Where can one learn masculinity? Matt. 11:29-30.
10. Does God's understanding of masculinity differ from the human one?

11. Does the verse from Rev. 3:18 give you advice on how to become masculine and wise in the last time?
12. How to understand whether I possess masculinity?
13. If I decide for myself to be masculine, what else do I need for this besides the decision?
14. What to do if I understood that there is no masculinity in me? How can I resolve this question?
15. What examples of masculine people from the Bible do you know? Heb. 11:33-40.

Should you always be who you are?

Have you ever heard such an expression in response to your complaints about the strange behavior of your life friend: "Well, that's just how (he or she) is!" And you have to accept this miracle as it is. And if this treasure justifies its sins in this way, how should such statements be properly perceived?

And when you try to make a useful remark about the fact that sometimes the natural behavior of your friend does not fit into the framework of your perception, you run into a wall of misunderstanding and again hear a brief statement that what is, is.

Although we are all different and unique in our own way, sometimes this uniqueness is destructive to good relationships and you have to ask for strength from above to accept a friend as he is. And, strangely enough, such nature very actively manifests itself exactly this way in the family in the company of the one with whom he decided to live his whole life. And there's no getting away from it.

If I am who I am, in the spirit of love and friendship, in care and service to my other half, then such a natural state is met with open arms and joyful anticipation of a beautiful mood. But if by this expression I make it clear that I am not just an egoist, but a complete egoist who, besides himself, loves and accepts no one, then I think this statement will not make anyone happy.

If you hear such egoistic things from a friend, this leads to thoughts about what to do with him. But if this comes from the abundance of my heart, then it's worth thinking about how others hear this, and what this means in the eyes of Heaven.

Being yourself is honest and right. But it's worth understanding the spirit of such a "self-being person." Let's take an egocentric model of behavior and see how it behaves outside the home.

I decided to be myself at home and began to notice that such nature of mine depresses my wife, brings a military spirit into relationships and does not bring happiness.

When I go to work, where I am a simple salesman, my management requires my polite attitude toward clients and an atmosphere of smiles in the workplace. And they don't care what I'm really like. They pay for my working time, wanting me to be as their expectations require, otherwise I'll have to look for another job. I become what I need to be in order not to be fired. And I do well playing the role of a happy salesman. And over time I become really happy in this sphere.

My friends have rallied a friendly collective where it's customary to joke, help each other, share problems and solve them together. They simply won't accept me into their society as I am, and I have to play the role of a responsive friend and even become a small leader in promoting good ideas.

Among rich buyers who often invite me to their corporate meetings, I also cannot be myself, otherwise deals will fall through, and I play the role of a decent businessman.

Coming to my attending physician, I don't dare call him a "free doctor," though sometimes I want to. But I understand that in such a case I will become "hopelessly ill," and therefore I have to play the role of an interested listener and give gifts to get a free appointment next time.

In church I simply shine with purity of behavior and speech. Although there too I have to play a righteous person, I'm so used to this that I can't even imagine myself different among my dear brothers and sisters.

In communication with police I am very polite, where else to go, since they are authority.

In the neighbors' meeting I also play a resident interested in public order. And wherever I go, everywhere I play someone and quite successfully. And I have so entered into these roles that sometimes I don't know what I'm really like.

And only at home do I understand that I can be who I am, but on condition that there are no guests or strangers in the house. And I consider myself so important that I constantly remind my wife how lucky she is with such a wonderful husband. But for

some reason she doesn't like this, and she keeps trying to come up with a new occupation for me or expects some household chores from me, not understanding that I'm a creative person with very high intentions and abilities.

One family counselor advised me to start playing the role of a caring husband at home, who would only think from morning to evening about how to serve his wife and how to delight her heart with care for her pressing needs. I immediately perceived this suggestion with hostility, considering it hypocrisy and playing theater. Who needs such a performance? After all, this wouldn't be me, and I so wanted my wife to discover a creative personality with high flight of thought in me and love me for this. Then I would appreciate her feelings and begin to respond in kind. But she only knows how to ask me for six months to take out the Christmas tree to the trash and not walk around the house in street shoes. Sometimes such attitude even becomes annoying. When I'm at home, I don't want to do anything at all, because this is the only place where I can safely walk through the expanses of the internet, delving into all world events and getting tasty and healthy food at the appointed time.

But what if I actually take and try to play the role of a caring husband? I'll see what comes of this? So be it, I'll start from next Sunday.

I woke up early and immediately asked my wife what she would like me to do for her. She was surprised and asked once again to remove the Christmas tree. I immediately got up, took the garlands off the tree and carried this dried tree to the yard. It was May, and the neighbors were surprised where we got such trees. I asked what else to do. My wife timidly expressed the next request, then the next and another. I successfully played the role of a caring husband, watching my spouse out of the corner of my eye. And she didn't understand what was happening, but was very inspired.

The next day on the way home I bought my wife flowers and invited her for a walk. She agreed with surprise. And during communication I suggested that the next day we dine together

at our first restaurant. It was so interesting to observe what things my theater play produces.

Over time I caught myself only thinking about my wife's happiness and coming up with new ideas, which I then implement with her. And my wife kept waiting for when I would become myself, to understand that this was only a dream that ended so quickly. But I had already gone on principle and decided to play my role further, despite any difficulties.

After several months of successfully playing a caring husband, my spouse decided to call me to a frank conversation and asked what had happened to me that very Sunday, why I suddenly became so attentive and caring.

And I listened to her questions and didn't want to tell her the whole truth, fearing that she would reject me and stop accepting my service. During this time I had so entered the role that I no longer wanted to leave it, seeing how happiness began to run after our family, although we didn't invite it. I simply wanted to play theater, but as a result I understood that this was no longer a game, but life.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 1 Tim. 1:5-6; James 3:13-17; Matt. 6:22-23; 15:7-9; 23:25-28; Rom. 8:28; 12:9-10; Eph. 5:25,33; Prov. 11:9; Job 27:7; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2:1-3,19-21 in light of our lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What thoughts came to you when reading this lesson?
4. What did you understand from this topic?
5. Does the meaning of the presented topic change if the expression "play a role" is changed to "I'll try to live this way"? What's the difference?
6. Can constant playing someone change a person's thinking?
7. Will the Lord assist those who want to play a caring person with the goal of improving family relationships?
8. Can a person get used to doing what he practices every day?
9. Do a person's thoughts follow his deeds?
10. What will happen if I, being hypocritical, begin to do good deeds? Will this benefit those for whom I do these deeds?

11. Is a person born with righteous thoughts and desires that subsequently make him caring about others?
12. Have you ever had to force yourself to be kind or caring, and then were very happy about it?
13. What will happen if I don't play anyone, but will be myself, honestly demonstrating my selfishness?
14. Does the word "play" not bother you?
15. Do you agree that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked? Jer. 17:9. Can such a heart somehow change? Can it be replaced with a more decent one?

Game or strategy

The family is the most interesting and most complex enterprise that has ever existed in the Universe. This is that closed territory where he and she study, know, love and delight each other. All their inner discoveries about each other enrich hearts and open new possibilities for further development of relationships.

When Jesus is present in these hearts, then He also contributes to building a strong family and constantly blesses these relationships.

A great danger to family happiness is represented by this world with its temptations, carnal human nature which always tries to put selfishness on the pedestal of relationships, the enemy of the soul with constant attacks from outside and my wrong choice of life priorities. And only thanks to God's grace can one resist all temptations and seductions and overcome them with unconditional love.

Family happiness is that goal which is worth setting in any family and decisively moving toward it together. To achieve this goal not all means are good, but only what is approved by God and has common sense.

Agape love is the driving force awakening my enthusiasm and endowing me with all kinds of ideas about how to improve relationships, how to serve my wife and how to delight the heart of the one I chose. Love is the eternal engine in building everything beautiful and pure. It doesn't need to play theater or create an illusion of sincere relationships. Love is the most correct behavior toward one's life friend.

Not everything is open to me in questions of happiness, and I constantly learn to apply new strategies in achieving this goal. If I don't know how to care for my spouse's needs, then, understanding that this needs to be done, I choose this path and begin to implement what was planned. Even if I don't know how, moved by love, I begin to learn this and bring this new

experience into the treasury of my practical skills. And something good comes of it.

It is very important to understand that if the same action is called differently, then perception from outside will also be unequal. If I decided to care for my wife and called it playing a caring husband, then most likely such care will not be accepted with joy. But if I call this same action a new relationship strategy, then they will meet me halfway and assist in all questions.

The culture of surrounding society has its influence on my mentality, and this forms me in accordance with generally accepted standards. The church also has its own mentality in accordance with God's laws and teaches to accept the purity of the Gospel into one's life. And all this I bring into my family, where we already have our understanding of relationships and begin to build what will be ours forever.

When I consciously choose the path of unconditional love, then this spirit begins to form my consciousness in accordance with God's mentality, taking into account the culture of the society in which I live, and our church values.

Love teaches me to consider the needs and expectations of other people, to relate with understanding to their features, to take into account their worldview and, if necessary, to adapt to each individually. Apostle Paul wrote that he became all things to all people, to win at least some for salvation. 1 Cor. 9:19-22. Even this can be called hypocrisy if there is no love at the base, but lies a desire to glorify oneself. God will not accept anything good that is done with wrong motive or false foundation. Jesus repeatedly condemned the hypocrisy of those to whom great trust was shown and spiritual authority was given.

Any of my playing at something or someone will sometime tire me or form in me a habit of always being such. But coming trials will test the strength of all my actions and reveal what is firm and constant.

Love is not a game at something good, but my changed consciousness which suggests to me the choice of the best

strategy in achieving some goal. Family is the most interesting long-term project for embodying all God's designs regarding two people who decided to become one whole person and be happy in this wholeness.

Family happiness is the result of correctly chosen love strategy embodied in our relationships. This is a whole science that concerns only me and her and waits for when we will comprehend it with all our heart, discovering new laws of our happiness for ourselves and embodying them in our life.

My innate selfishness will always try to bring its values into our relationships, but love will not cease to keep my carnal nature on its back, not allowing it to raise its disgusting head.

Our union with God gives us many advantages in building a happy family, but does not protect us from mistakes or from choosing wrong strategies. God grants us complete freedom of action, but at the same time desires to pour streams of His light on us and give us wisdom in knowing new revelations about family happiness that need to be studied.

For example, my wife and I decided that intimate life should delight us every evening and bring us true family happiness. But as a result this began to destroy our mental and physical health and bring many problems into relationships. God sent us light in this question and revealed that abstinence puts everything in the right places. We accepted this light, began to live in it and appreciated these advantages, understanding that satiation is destructive.

Love teaches us to love each other, laying a strong foundation at the base of our relationships, and God's light calls us to build a strong building on this foundation. And wisdom from above shows us how to apply all God's light in our family so as not to miss anything good and important.

Although we have some idea about happiness, to have it we need to begin learning this and embodying the received knowledge in our life, and for this special wisdom from above, from God, and our joint efforts are necessary.

Love knows the spirit of family happiness and will always incline my heart in this direction. And I won't have to play some role, but, being moved by the spirit of love, I will realize all good strategies in our family world.

Love is not a game at something good, but a strategy for improving my worldview in accordance with God's principles and rules. This is a strategy for improving the quality of life of my neighbors and relatives. This is a strategy for successful embodiment of God's designs in what and whom I touch.

Love is eternal life with eternal blessings, and it never ends. Any game has its beginning and its end. But the very process of playing can change my consciousness and bring something new and unusual into my life. Playing a caring person, I can taste the blessing of such behavior and remain in it. Or I can continue playing this, flattering my vanity and receiving benefit.

Love guards my heart from such mistakes and makes everything correct, strong and constant.

While I lived alone, I didn't really understand the need for love, but my family made this need pressing and relevant, and God embodied this in my heart at my request.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 1 John 3:18; Rom. 12:9; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Prov. 17:17; 18:2; 22:11; Luke 7:47; Eph. 5:28; 1 Thess. 4:9; Matt. 23:27-28; Job 20:5; 27:8; 2 Cor. 3:5-6; Rom. 7:14-25 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Is it worth monitoring how you name your actions and plans?
5. What is the difference between a game and a strategy?
6. Do you already feel how love draws you to good deeds?
7. Is it worth remembering that God is Love, and he who abides in love abides in God?
8. Why doesn't love need to play theater?
9. Did you read the Biblical verses that were suggested above?

10. What do you understand by strategy? How does this look in life?
11. Why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees for hypocrisy, since they did such good deeds?
12. How do family relationships differ from church ones? Why is what can be practiced in the family sometimes unacceptable in church?
13. What advantage does sincere love have over professional acting?
14. How can I understand whether I love my other half or am playing someone?
15. There are happy families, and there are unhappy marriages. Is there something neutral?

Unity of the family in diversity

Each of us has locks in our house, thanks to which we can close something and make it inaccessible to others. A lock helps preserve material valuables intact, can limit access to my personal space and perform other functions. It can be built-in or padlock.

And for this lock to work correctly, it needs a key that fits exactly it. In union with this key all functions of the lock work properly, and it excellently copes with its purpose. Without a key this complex mechanism becomes unsuitable and can only pretend that it exists, but it will exist only either in open or in closed form. A foreign key will not solve the lock's task, and a multitude of other locks will not help it work as intended.

Likewise, a key by itself is not capable of independently doing what it accomplishes in union with a lock. And two keys or more will never solve that task which only a key and lock together can handle. Foreign keys or locks also do not solve expected tasks.

A lock by its internal structure is a more complex mechanism, which sometimes can become unusable or rust, or need lubrication. A key, unlike a lock, is simpler in its structure and more stable. The owner of this complex mechanism always carries the key with him or stores it in a reliable place, so that at the necessary time he can perform the assigned task for which the key and lock were created.

I like weather when the sun shines, it's warm outside, a quiet wind pleasantly strokes my skin, and birds sing all around. When I go outside and it's raining, or frosts have come, or clouds have covered the whole sky, this doesn't embarrass or upset me. I know that the sun exists, that it hasn't gone anywhere, that however cloudy or rainy it may be around, this is a temporary phenomenon that needs to be endured.

Depending on the region where I live, the weather around me can differ drastically from those places where it's always warm and everything grows year-round. But this doesn't embarrass

me either. I adapt to the weather conditions of the area and am not surprised by any phenomena, even if they are very unexpected. I decided that nature has no bad weather, and this decision allows me to always be in a good mood and accept what happens around me. And you can always count on the fact that at any time of year or day, at any temperature, I will be as joyful and friendly as in warm season.

It is said that it is not good for man to be alone. And I internally understand that when I live in solitude, I lack something or, better to say, someone. And this someone cannot be just anyone, just to be. I understand that there must be correspondence to those spiritual requirements and my personal perception that are placed in me by God.

My heart determines the person who suits me most, and informs the mind when this corresponds to my expectations. And the mind begins to study and seek paths to the heart of one with whom together we could very successfully solve God's tasks that He has set for us. And the Lord expects that in union with Him and with each other we will perform everything correctly.

Taking as my wife the one I chose, I have a general idea of what she is like overall, but at the same time I heard that I am marrying all seasons, and unexpected weather that can change with amazing speed. I don't want to belittle the structure of the female mechanism by this, but understanding that we are different, I don't expect that this will be a copy of me who will think like me and approach many questions in complete agreement with me. Such knowledge helps me tune myself to any weather in my house and be stable in performing those duties that God placed on me: to love, care, warm, nourish, please, be faithful and tender, not expecting anything in return except that she too will somehow participate in building our common happiness.

And so, the wedding took place. And I now see not by hearsay, but from personal experience, that a completely opposite and unpredictable in feelings beautiful person appeared in my house, with whom I feel very good and interesting.

I see how different we are, but this doesn't prevent us from creatively approaching the performance of common tasks and solving different problems. We are drawn to each other, and in these embraces of love and trust we can do amazing things that are beyond the power of loners.

They say that children are born in the union of man and woman, very similar to them. We believe in this and actively wait for when such a miracle will happen in our family too. These new family members cannot appear by themselves. They need us for this, such different ones, but very suitable for solving this task.

My thinking and some male features suit me very well, but sometimes don't fit into female logic. They say that they have some hemispheres in their head arranged differently than ours. Everything should be laid out on shelves for me, in strict sequence, and I try to bring this order into relationships. But, for example, women's days come, and I understand that I need to wait out this time and calmly do what is necessary.

Sometimes I find a cozy place for myself and occupy it to think about nothing and just sit like this. Fishing helps very much in such cases. But I don't eat fish, and therefore have to conduct such events at home. And my wife can't understand how it's possible to think about nothing. Apparently, I'm hiding something. But I'm just rebooting this way for new deeds and victories.

Good for me if my wife will also study me and understand that I am not her, but am ready to serve her and please in many questions, while having my own life position and my own views on things.

I don't always understand the hints with which my wife wants to achieve some results. If she says she's cold, then I immediately look for warm things to save her body from incomprehensible frosts at +20. And she's offended that I didn't understand that she just needs to be embraced and in such position warm her soul.

And offenses are probably the main weapon of influence that my other half brought into our family from her childhood, and

she tries to somehow influence me with it or achieve something. But I understood that this is a means of manipulation, and therefore don't give in to such provocations and in prayerful spirit wait for when the Lord Himself will remove this root of pride from our relationships. Of course, sometimes I also express my attitude toward "inflated soap bubbles" of female offenses, but at the same time I don't surrender my positions, which very suits my spouse, and she will certainly sometime come to herself, and everything falls into place.

It's worth understanding that every woman has her own temperament, which will never change. If she's quick in everything, then she'll be the same in the family. If she's slow, then even if the whole world around is collapsing, she won't start living and acting faster. The same can be said about us. Therefore watch what you choose.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Amos 3:3; Eccl. 9:9; 1 Cor. 7:33; Gen. 2:22-24; Prov. 5:15-19; 11:16; 12:4; 14:1; 15:8; 25:24; 31:10-31; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Pet. 3:7-9 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your memory?
3. What interesting thing did you find for yourself in this lesson?
4. What is family unity? How and in what does it manifest?
5. Do you like God's plan for family structure, where two opposite beings become one whole person? Gen. 5:2.
6. Why did the Lord create man and woman different and at the same time give them attraction to each other?
7. Is God present in all family relationships among believing spouses? How to understand that He is in our family?
8. Is unity in diversity possible? If yes, then how to determine that it exists?
9. What do you know about features of men that only they have?
10. God's word is written in Gen. 3:16: "To the woman He said: '... your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'" How can these ordinances lead the family to unity?

11. What to do if I want to have unity in the family, but there isn't any?
12. What could be the reason if husband and wife pray for unity in the family, but there isn't any, but there is constant struggle and conflicts?
13. If there is mutual love in relationships, will there also be unity there?
14. Will the Lord give wisdom to that family in which husband and wife want to correspond to God's plan, but do nothing for this?
15. If I consider my concepts about family happiness correct and don't want to know another point of view, what happiness will I build?

Continue Doing It Yourself

When I was a child and teenager, it was natural for me that my parents took care of me, and I didn't even think about what it cost them or how much I cost them. I simply grew up under their control and considered everything in our house mine, and their care for me their natural obligation, which they never disputed. I think each of us goes through a similar path until we become independent and self-reliant people.

The time comes when we leave our parental home and acquire our own house or apartment, or room, or bed in a dormitory. God, granting us life in our parents' family, did not plan for us to remain under their care for our entire life path. But the age comes when a son or daughter becomes an adult and leaves their parents to start earning themselves and managing a separate household.

And someone decides to continue living with their parents, giving them part of their salary or giving nothing until they create their own family.

One way or another, a person gets used to taking care of themselves, without preventing their parents from continuing to show their usual care.

And then comes the moment when someone appears in the life of the lonely hero of this story who attracts all his attention and conquers his heart. All thoughts and feelings are absorbed by this new candidate for personal relationships. And these relationships can quickly end or transfer to another interesting character, or develop and reach the decision to create a family.

And what should this family be like? Most likely, our he and she will build together what they were taught in their families and what they managed to learn about building a family hearth in their parental homes. But most of all, on the eve of the wedding, they dream about each other, about the one who was able to conquer their heart and is probably the best partner in the world, who will care for their other half as their parents did,

and in response to such treatment, they will also be able to receive similar care.

Finally, the wedding. Parents rejoice to tears, and all the invited guests wish much love and happiness, while the newlyweds are already savoring how they will surprise everyone with their happy family life, not imagining what they will have to go through.

The honeymoon arrived. The money received as wedding gifts went to cover wedding expenses and pay for the honeymoon trip. After the romantic journey, they had to plunge into everyday life and plan their life so that every day would be a holiday of love.

The wife decided to surprise her husband with her culinary talents, making a daily list of those products he needs to buy on his way home from work, and every morning hands her beloved another bag of trash, asking him to throw it out.

And the husband can't get used to the new cuisine, as his wife is accustomed to eating canned food and semi-finished products, now teaching him this way of eating too. And he wanted her to cook as tasty and healthy as his mother did.

Also, every day the new mistress of the house makes another request for her husband to wash the bathtub after himself, not scatter clothes around the rooms, wash his own socks and underwear, not snore at night, and perform household work when asked.

The husband, meanwhile, decided that his wife should uncomplainingly handle household chores, from washing dishes and cooking food to cleaning the home and doing laundry. At the same time, he couldn't understand why, when he lived alone, he took out a little trash once a week, and now it's a whole bag every day. He concluded that his wife produces trash in his absence and decided to share this conclusion with her, believing that she should also take out the trash herself.

As a result, an unpleasant dialogue ensued, where each tried to explain to the other their dissatisfaction, their direct

obligations, and their attitude toward the occurring events, pouring out on each other what had managed to accumulate. After such a conversation, they didn't really want to go to bed together. But there was nowhere to go, as there was only one bed in the house, and they had to lie down with their backs to each other as far apart as possible. Each considered themselves deceived. She feels like a servant, and he feels like a porter.

In the described problem, the colors are exaggerated, and not every family experiences such an experience, but somewhere it does take place. I want to ask these people whether it was easy for them when they lived alone and did what became unbearable for them to do in the family. And what changed when you entered marriage? Expectations changed, and with them came demands, and obligations appeared that can be placed on another's shoulders.

When two egoists decide to build something common, then they will have to consider the other's opinion and make concessions somewhere, and somewhere step over themselves and do what they are asked to do. But there are things that are better to continue doing yourself, as was done before creating a family. Then the question arises: "What is a family for if I'm going to do everything myself?" Or: "Why do I need a wife or husband who does nothing in the house?" Never ask these questions to your other half. If you truly wish to build happiness, then start serving and pleasing each other, joyfully doing what you know how to do. And let your partner ask to take over this responsibility if they want to make your life easier. If something is hard to do yourself, or there's no time for it, you can always ask for help, and it will come.

The wife should understand the following. If she serves her husband and cares for him, considering him a king, then he will make her a queen and will serve her. But if she starts to dominate and command in the house, then she will never gain respect for herself but will become an always dissatisfied servant of everything and everyone. And a man has enough power and strength to accomplish this.

And here we're talking about people who believe in God and keep His commandments. Jesus himself established such a rule: "... whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all" Mark 9:35. Service to neighbors begins with family.

Family is not an expectation that, finally, someone will serve me and attend to my needs, but an alliance with a person you want to make happy, whom you decide to care for and love simply, from a pure heart. And family responsibilities can always be calmly negotiated, discussing these issues in peace and love. If it's difficult for you to do for another what you joyfully did for yourself, then you shouldn't blame them for laziness or cunning. Most likely, this is a problem of your heart.

Any obligation can be approached with a different spirit and made into a problem or solved quickly and without noise.

If I don't like a dirty bathtub or dishes in the sink, it would be much safer to joyfully fix this myself than to blame another and expect them to perform what they possibly don't even understand. "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" Amos 3:3.

Usually, there are no complaints about children when they simply and peacefully live with you, producing nothing but dirt and trash. Time passes, and children learn order and cleanliness. And how is a spouse different? They also have no family experience, and this needs to be learned.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Ecclesiastes 9:10; Philippians 2:4; 1 Corinthians 16:14; Mark 10:43-45; Romans 12:9-10; Ephesians 4:1-3; 5:22,25; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Proverbs 15:17; 29:23; John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 4:8 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Is what is discussed in this lesson personally familiar to you?
5. Should you wait for your other half to do those things you can do yourself?
6. Do you need a family if you're going to do everything for two by yourself?

7. Can a proud heart filled with egoism build family happiness?
8. Why does it happen that we are benevolent toward children's idleness, but our spouse's idleness angers us?
9. What should you do if your spouse doesn't want to take out the trash? Is it worth spoiling relations with them over this?
10. What should you do if your wife doesn't want to cook food?
11. What does serving your family consist of?
12. Does love open new possibilities to see those spheres of serving your family that you didn't know before?
13. Read 1 Timothy 3:5: "for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" What is common in caring for family and caring for the prosperity of the church?
14. Should spouses distribute family responsibilities and then diligently perform what is expected of you?
15. What should you do if you have to do all the household chores yourself?

And Remember the Whole Way

The goal of development and the main achievement of our family is Heaven. We do everything possible to get there and be full citizens there, knowing and keeping the Heavenly laws. Our path in this direction is very fascinating and blessed, and we have to constantly ask for something great and inaccessible in order to take the next step and rise higher.

When my wife and I just became friends and weren't planning to create anything, even then the Lord began to bless our relationship with interesting revelations about love and friendship, and the Agape School of Love opened to us an amazing world of new possibilities in relationships with people. We began to practice the laws of agape, happiness, and friendship on each other, and never ceased to be amazed at how they work and how beautifully they combine with our everyday life and business life. In the light of the science of love, our life was transformed, and biblical narratives came alive and became very tasty and practical. The God of love turned out to be much more beautiful than we had previously imagined Him.

All our successes and failures, experiences and joys painted with the colors of past battles the perspectives of future victories. We gathered into our hearts all our lived experiences and constantly sought new knowledge and adventures for spiritual growth.

Although our life was full of constant trials, still the happiness that we decided to build with our own hands confidently erected its strong walls around our family, making our home a quiet harbor where one could rest, rejoice in life, share love with each other, and constantly thank God for such mercy and such a wonderful gift that we always had in our home, which we were for each other.

We persistently went toward our happiness and greatly valued all our achievements in this matter. Our home truly became a piece of Heaven, and all who visited us or communicated with

us also rejoiced, wondering why we were like this and where our secret was hidden. We pointed everyone to Jesus as the Foundation of our joy and thanked God for everything.

Once, while reading the Bible, we noticed the commandment described in Deuteronomy 8:2: "And you shall remember the whole way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." And then followed a listing of all God's blessings and warnings.

We decided to discuss this question because a clear impulse appeared to stop and understand how this concerns us.

Remembering the history of the Israeli people, we drew parallels to our family and understood that this God's commandment also relates to us. The world that surrounds us is not so safe and can at any moment swallow us, knock the oars from our hands, spin us in the whirlpool of its vanity, and throw us with the waterfalls of its temptations onto the stones of abundance and idleness.

We also noticed that our family happiness could become that comfort zone which, having created for ourselves, we wouldn't want to leave for more fruitful work in God's field and would fall into various temptations. A dilemma emerged. We fought with all our strength for our happiness and constantly asked for it from Heaven, and having achieved it, we risked becoming lukewarm and falling under the curse of Laodicea.

But having begun to remember our whole path by which the Lord led us, how He tested us and fed us with daily bread, we constantly convinced ourselves that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Remembering our past experiences, we rejoiced at how the Lord constantly cared for us, how He crushed enemies, how He made us thirst for Him and satisfied us to abundance with blessings.

We simply saw how He carries us in His arms and continues to do so while we give Him our cares. Isaiah 46:3-4.

Knowing the history of Israel's apostasy, we in no way wanted to go the same path and perish 30 centimeters from Eternity. They say that the most insurmountable wall is between the head and the heart, which many have erected for their destruction, flirting with this world and not paying attention to God's calls.

Remembering the experiences of past years and our path to God and with God, we rejoiced and thanked God's Providence. Even our meeting in this world and the decision to be friends also looked quite interesting, as part of God's grandiose plan about us.

It was useful to remember our falls and how the Lord lifted us up, and how we swiftly soared so as never to fall. We remembered how our sins were forgiven, and what joy we experienced under the influence of God's grace.

Summarizing the results of bygone battles, we saw how not we by our strength, but the Lord won victories and accomplished the great and inaccessible. And if we recount all the revelations from above that revealed the fullness and beauty of truth and led us to deeper relationships with Christ, then without the instructions of the Holy Spirit we would not have had all this in our life.

Remembering everything that happened to us, we wanted, like Paul, to say that we, not forgetting what lies behind, press forward to the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

We also understood that success and all our victories directly depended on our faith in God's Word and on obedience to His prophets. Even following everyday advice had special power and brought abundant blessings to our home.

The question of further living in our home appeared on the agenda. Although we lived in rented housing on the outskirts of the city, we clearly heard the call to leave large cities, and then small ones, and took to heart to follow this advice.

Analyzing our spiritual growth, we realized that city life binds us to this place, and with each year it will be harder for us to move from there, and someday it will become completely impossible. The life of many fellow believers was confirmation of this, and we didn't want to be like Lot and risk our family's salvation, believing that by taking this path of moving to rural areas, we would have something to compare with and something to remember.

Not having the possibility to quickly change something, we gave this care also to God, beginning to conduct searches and seek answers to our questions.

It was decided to take our family happiness with us, wherever the Lord might point us. And while no clear answer from above was heard, we continued our usual life in the occupied place.

Reflections and discussions about the traveled path helped us see what we achieved thanks to the power of God's grace. We understood where we should go, what we had managed to experience, and what we still had to face. The victories of the past opened to us the picture of God's participation in all our battles and how our will, uniting with Christ, gave decisive rebuff to the enemy's onslaught, opening to us the path to new victories. Knowing and seeing Who helps us to this place, we were not at all afraid to take a step into the unknown, because past experiences had tempered us and given complete confidence in God and in fulfilling that part where human efforts are also necessary.

It was interesting to analyze the development of our relationships in love and see how God's hand led us, testing and granting the strength to love. And our love for each other was with us.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Deuteronomy 8:2-20; 9:7; 32:7; Exodus 13:3; 20:8-9; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 46:3-4,9; John 15:20; Ephesians 2:11-14; Hebrews 10:32-39; Revelation 3:3 in light of this lesson.
2. What did you understand from this topic?

3. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
4. Why does the Lord call us to remember our whole path?
5. What should be forgotten, and what should be remembered?
Philippians 3:13-14.
6. Does the experience of past years help you at the present time?
7. Are there things that the Lord forgets? Isaiah 43:25; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17.
8. Is it joyful for you to reflect on how the Lord leads you through life?
9. Can it be that the clouds of today's trials try to spoil your life and convince you that everything in it is bad?
10. Do memories of how the Lord has cared for you all your life instill faith in you?
11. Does Jesus fulfill His promise to be with you always?
Matthew 28:19-20.
12. What should I do if I have just believed, and I have nothing yet to remember?
13. What does remembering victories and blessings produce in your heart?
14. Do you see God's hand and His guidance in your life?
15. Does gratitude to God and praise fill your heart when you remember your whole path?

Freedom and Independence of the Family

Our life in the civilized world flowed quietly and peacefully. Our household was established, all the nearby stores were thoroughly studied, my work brought, though small, a stable income. Church service took place weekly in the usual order, and once a quarter, according to schedule, there was a "love feast."

We could predict everything that awaited us in the next day of our weekdays, if the world didn't give us any adventures, or if we didn't arrange some celebration for ourselves.

Such a way of life was so established and predictable that we began to fear that this could become a trap for us, in which we would sweetly fall asleep and oversleep something very important. We read that all the virgins from Matthew 25:5 fell asleep, and we understood that a similar fate awaited us. Our communication and growth in love for each other brought significant variety to our weekdays, and we constantly invented new topics for discussion and implementation.

Once I proposed for discussion the topic of our freedom and independence, to understand where we are, what we can change ourselves, and where we need wisdom from above.

Freedom is when you belong to yourself, and no one tells you how to live, and doesn't establish their rules and orders. Only God does this, with Whom you have friendly and trusting relationships.

Independence is when we can plan and arrange our life and household independently from the world, from external sources of financing, food, and energy supply, independently from others' opinions, while remaining dependent on God, His care and mercy. Since we consider our independence within the framework of our family, we understand that we are partially dependent on our care for each other, but this is a pleasant dependence in which we don't mind living and developing.

Being in the city, and even in someone else's house, we are dependent on many things and services that are provided to us and for which we need to pay and pay much and constantly. Water, heat, food, transportation, electricity, rent, garbage collection, and all kinds of insurance constantly pull money from us, and we cannot simply refuse this and become independent, but must constantly think about where to get the means to pay for all these services.

We decided to find out what we could do in our family to be as free as possible and less dependent on the world, understanding that we live in the last times and knowing that there is advice from the Spirit of Prophecy about how to accomplish this.

We established that living in our own house, having our own well and garden and alternative sources of energy and heat—this is the best thing we could have. Even the greatest money will not make you independent if you don't have your own agriculture and garden on which you could grow your products.

We also understood that acquiring modern freedom and independence in our days costs very dearly and requires large capital investments.

Also, as long as I work for someone, I will always be dependent on the employer and will have to do what he tells me, not setting my own working hours and not deciding many questions independently. Although there is my social security and some stability in this, I understand that at any moment a compromise with my conscience may arise if my boss decides to violate God's law and begins to incline me toward similar behavior.

Financially we are currently provided for and even have small savings in a tin can, understanding that only cash money makes us independent and free in how to store and spend it. But since there are constantly talks about canceling cash everywhere, we understand that we become vulnerable and at some point may be left with nothing. And the exchange rates in the external market can very quickly devalue all our savings. And how good it would be to arrange our household so as not to depend on

money and not have constant expenses for paying various services.

We also noticed that air and sun remain free everywhere for us, but not everywhere can we use this fully, and city air can hardly be called perfectly clean. We don't know how clean and useful the water flowing from our tap is, but we understand that if it's turned off, we won't have it, and the nearest river is quite far away. Also in city conditions there is invisible electromagnetic radiation that can destroy our health with its rays, and we don't want to depend on pharmacies and doctors at all.

Researching this question, we understood how unfree and dependent we are, and how simple it would be to bring us into trouble by cutting off even one of the sources of our life support, and there are so many of them, and they are all not ours.

The only thing in which we were independent was in our love for each other, although even here we didn't belong to ourselves.

And what to do personally for us to get out of this vicious circle, we didn't understand, but we knew that we have the Lord, Who gives wisdom to everyone who asks of Him.

Understanding our dependence on the world became the first step in the path to our independence.

After conferring, we decided to do everything possible to gain complete freedom from the world and its services and, as much as possible, achieve this before our natural death from old age.

The desire to be independent gave us the realization of complete dependence on God. And to become absolutely free, we need to be God's slaves, trusting only in His complete provision.

Oh, if we had lots and lots of money, then we could easily move to any point in the world and arrange our household there. But alas, our reality is somewhat different, and we would so like it to be like in the movies, or for a kind rich uncle to appear who would leave us a large inheritance and a house with all

conveniences. But we don't seek easy paths, but having made a decision, we begin to seek ways to accomplish it.

There was a thought about finding one of our sanatoriums and moving there to live, performing service and helping develop this sphere. But we didn't know how decent and believing the people who would accept us would turn out to be, and whether we would fall into a more deplorable state if after long years of service we were asked to leave this place and find something else.

First we decided to develop our independence, relying only on God, and in prayer gave Him all our worries and fears, believing that He would open to us the path that would be ours and help us acquire what we desired.

We also considered the question of whether I should study to become a pastor and become a minister. But in this there should be not only my desire, but also a calling, a gift from God, support from the church brotherhood, and understanding of all the responsibility. It's difficult for me to judge the freedom of such people, but I think that this ministry has a special status in Heaven's eyes and special blessing in this world, making pastors people dependent on God's complete provision.

And while we haven't grown to such consciousness, we had to make plans for the future ourselves and think up what path would be best for acquiring our freedom and independence. But this course was already chosen, and we didn't want to retreat.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read 2 Chronicles 20:20; John 8:32,36; Matthew 17:25-26; James 1:5-8; 1 Corinthians 7:20-23; 1 Corinthians 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1; Proverbs 3:5; Revelation 3:18 in light of this lesson.
2. What did you understand from this topic?
3. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
4. What is freedom in your understanding?
5. How does freedom and independence from the world look in your life?

6. Does a person need wisdom from above to understand their true condition and find the best way out of difficulties?
7. Would you like to live independently from this world?
8. What prevents us from being independent from the benefits of civilization?
9. Is it bad to be free and decide for yourself how to live, what to eat, and how to manage your resources?
10. Do you think the world uses its power over those who depend on it?
11. Does the Lord give us any advice on how to gain freedom and be independent in the last times?
12. What should I do if I see that I cannot refuse the services of this world and don't imagine how one can live without them?
13. Is it easy to start building something new in life?
14. How much money do you need to have to be independent and free?
15. Did Jesus give us an example of true freedom?

An Interesting Decision

Three frogs were sitting on the shore of a lake, and two of them decided to jump into the water. How many frogs remained sitting on the shore after this? The correct answer: three.

If someone tells you that this year they want to go to Antarctica again, you would immediately ask them when they managed to visit there last year. To this the person would say that last year they also wanted this. Wanting and being are not the same thing.

Once I told at a missionary meeting about my missionary project that I was implementing and shared the need for helpers. After this, one person assured me that he had decided to help me, having experience, knowledge, and means for this, which greatly rejoiced my heart. As a result, nothing happened except making the decision, and I had to finish the begun work with other people.

One way or another, we make some decisions daily, but they are implemented only after we begin to undertake something in the given direction.

When my wife and I reflected on how dependent we are on this world and its benefits, the Lord opened to us many sides of our lack of freedom. He showed how vulnerable we turned out to be in all matters, and how we cannot change some things or are not ready to give them up just like that. But we understood that any dependence gives an excellent opportunity for manipulating our consciousness and well-being.

After consulting with each other, we decided not just to understand this question, but to take concrete steps toward the best way out of any dependence, guided by reason and wisdom.

But before beginning to undertake something, we made sure that we had unity of mind, unanimity, and could agree about everything, bearing together all possible difficulties and deprivations of a new way of thinking and life.

Since we understood that without God's participation we could not change anything, we turned to the Almighty in fasting and prayer about our need, asking Him for help and participation in our plans. And after this we faithfully proceeded to implement concrete steps toward the set goal.

We know that our Heavenly Father has many means for bringing all our desires to life, but He uses natural things to teach us trust and independence in decisions and actions. Therefore we assured the Lord that we trust in His omnipotence, but will humanly do what a person should do.

Initially, my wife and I made a list of all our dependent sides and began to reflect on what we should start with and what to decide later. We immediately saw that our desired independence would cost us very dearly, and taking credits and loans for this was not part of our plans, because the borrower is servant to the lender. (Proverbs 22:7)

To earn more money, something needed to be invented or changed. I made a proposal according to which I become an independent entrepreneur and open my construction firm to have my own orders and receive money without intermediaries.

My wife was afraid that we would be completely left without means if there was no work, but overcoming her fears, she assured me of her support and decided to make preserves and freeze products in case of hard times.

Since we were only learning to make our first steps toward freedom, we needed to comprehend and study much.

Before opening my individual entrepreneurship, I decided to research all possible forms of enterprises and choose the most relevant one for myself, so as not to fall under big taxes and not move from one dependence to another.

I began to recall all my acquaintances and friends who have their own business, contacted them, and asked them to tell me about all the pros and cons of private business. My wife and I carefully listened to stories and advice from experienced people

and wrote down all wise recommendations, studying the world of money and self-employment that was new to us.

It turned out that even in this science there exist many of its own laws and rules, and there are quite a few pitfalls that were not visible and unfamiliar to us as beginners.

I also began to look for clients from whom I could receive work and payment for its completion. This turned out to be not so simple, but some of these people knew me and assured me that they would think of something for me. Meanwhile, my wife studied internet possibilities and how one can advertise and find work in various social networks. And then in the evenings we shared our achievements, planned further actions, and proceeded to implement them.

When I began to have an idea of how one's own firm functions, then I wanted to know whether God would approve my steps in this direction and whether He would bless me.

Working in different firms and with different bosses, I always prayed for these people and saw how the Lord blessed their business, and I thought that if He so blesses unbelieving people, then He would probably bless me too when I open something of my own. But to understand how the Lord looks at all this, I decided to take fasting and prayer until an answer. It happened that this fell on the Christmas holidays, and I could be at home and in quietness and peace pray and reflect. On the third day of fasting, the Lord gave me a clear thought that He would never leave me and would be with me wherever I invite Him, and that in God's word and in the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy there are many useful counsels for conducting honest business and entrepreneurial activity.

After this God's answer, I decided on the next step and informed my boss that I was quitting of my own will in connection with beginning independent activity. The boss was very surprised and puzzled, as he had big plans for me, and he didn't have a suitable replacement. I said that I would work for another two months and then leave. He assured me that I could receive orders from him too, since he knows me and trusts me.

The decision made was interesting and very complex in implementation, since I had no experience and didn't understand much, but my wife and I undertook everything possible to make this step toward our independence and move into complete dependence on God.

The last day of my work at the firm was an ordinary working day. I completed the necessary tasks, gathered all my tools that I was accustomed to working with and, taking their photograph, sent a request to the boss asking if I could take this with me. To which he gave approval, and I went toward my freedom with a feeling of something new and unusual.

I still had to not only leave the old job but also properly register the new enterprise. I decided that I would open a Limited Liability Company (LLC for short) and call it an interesting name describing my activity. For this I registered with a notary in advance and gathered all the necessary documents, which were approved, accepted for consideration, and transferred to the registration court.

My spouse experienced all my adventures together with me and wholeheartedly supported me, convincing me that she believed in me and that the Lord would help. At the same time, she never forgot to pray for this project.

As a result, the decision made became a fact of our life.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Genesis 3:19; Exodus 20:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12; Psalm 68:10; 90:10; 127:1-4; Proverbs 10:16; 11:16; 13:11; 14:23; 16:26; Ecclesiastes 1:8; 3:13; 4:9; 5:11,17-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:8-10; 1 Timothy 5:18; Amos 3:3; Ephesians 4:28 in light of this lesson.
2. What did you understand from this topic?
3. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
4. Do we need to make some decisions?
5. What will a decision made look like without subsequent actions? Matthew 21:28-31.
6. Is it right for a person to arrange their own business in the last times?

7. What should I do if I want to break out of the existing system and become independent from everything, but don't know how? James 1:5.
8. Does labor with one's own hands bring blessing to life?
9. What types of labor do you know?
10. Is it worth learning from others' examples of creating one's own enterprise if you're not planning to create anything?
11. Will the Lord bless those who completely rely on Him but also take some steps themselves?
12. Is God interested in my material well-being?
13. Is it worth inviting God to participate in all your earthly plans?
14. Does a believing person have the right to open their own business and plan it so as to earn a lot of money?
15. Do you have experience in private entrepreneurship?

A Labor Agreement with God

When I had made the final decision to open a firm, then before registering it with official authorities, I wished to conclude a labor agreement with God. Taking an earthly template as a basis, I reworked it for my need. Below I present the text from this contract:

Labor Agreement

Labor agreement between the Creator of heaven and earth, the Ruler of this world and the entire Universe, called the King of kings and Lord of lords, and his servant, humble slave "[My name]."

On such-and-such date in such-and-such city is founded a construction enterprise under such-and-such name, hereafter referred to as the firm, whose full and absolute Owner is Lord Jesus, hereafter He is referred to as the Owner. By His mercy, "[my name]" is appointed as earthly manager of this firm, hereafter he is referred to as the manager, for signing and concluding earthly contracts and deals.

The firm's manager receives the right in the presence of worldly and uninitiated people to call this enterprise "his firm." He is also endowed with authority to bear full legal responsibility for the organization and labor activity of the enterprise according to the laws of the country.

For managing the enterprise, the manager and all his employees will be endowed with heavenly wisdom proceeding from the Owner, according to prayer from James 1:5-6.

For successful completion of work, the manager and enterprise employees will be endowed with spiritual and physical strength according to the promise from Psalm 29:11; 68:35; Isaiah 40:29.

The manager is the direct representative of Christ to all people and the bearer and spreader of the Light of life proceeding from God's throne of mercy and love.

The contract comes into force after its composition, signing, and prayer of faith. The term of the contract is unlimited. When deciding to close the firm for personal motives, economic or political situation, the contract regarding this enterprise remains in force until the final action necessary for liquidating the firm.

All profit of the enterprise belongs to the Owner. Full responsibility for managing material means belonging to the given enterprise is placed on the manager. In the presence of uninitiated people, to avoid misunderstanding, the manager may call these means "his own."

The manager is endowed with heavenly wisdom from above for proper management of enterprise finances.

Conditional capital is contributed by the manager and is property of the enterprise for development and payment of necessary bills and services.

All enterprise income must be accounted for, declared, and open to any official person requiring a report.

All taxes from enterprise profit and turnover must be honestly and openly paid according to legislation.

All bills, debts, and wage payments must be honestly and timely paid according to requirements and agreements.

The tenth part of the manager's salary belongs to the Owner and is timely transferred to needs provided by His Word.

Enterprise profit at the manager's discretion may be spent on necessary enterprise development, supporting missionary projects, and other needs not contradicting God's will.

Salary for the manager is established by the manager himself depending on needs and requirements of his life support. Salary for enterprise employees is established according to labor agreement.

Illness. Death. Injuries

In case of illness, death, or accident of the manager, the Owner reserves the right to his healing, treatment, or death. He holds the manager's life in His hand, and no one will steal it.

The manager bears responsibility for preserving enterprise property and monetary means. He ensures security from their accidental or purposeful plundering. If those encroaching on this property threaten the health or life of the manager, then on the Owner's advice he may give what will be demanded of him under full responsibility of the robbers, transferring all judgment over these people to the Owner. The life of the manager, his employees, and his family is a priceless gift of God and stands above all riches of this world.

The Owner undertakes to guard the manager on all his paths from evil (Psalm 91) and if necessary to send all His Heavenly host for support and protection.

In case of client refusal to pay for completed services and work, the manager may appeal to appropriate government services, while giving all final judgment to God (James 5:4), not trying to take money by threats and force, but lovingly warning the non-payer about coming problems from the Owner.

The manager is organizer and executor of all types of work from enterprise clients. When performing assigned tasks and communicating with people, honesty, tactfulness, activity, friendliness, kindness, love, and cheerfulness are expected from the manager.

The manager is expected to plan work so that it is not detrimental to health, as well as care for his rest and special time for communication with the Owner.

The manager may take vacation at any time at his discretion for strengthening spiritual and physical forces.

The manager reserves the right to report on enterprise income and expenses. He must ensure that by his conversations he does not reveal secrets of firm management that may affect the success and prosperity of the enterprise, and also not reveal secrets of trusted persons to a third party.

The enterprise Owner reserves full right to punishment, reproof, education, depriving peace in the heart, and dismissing the manager in case of violating any points of this agreement.

The Owner has the right to close and liquidate the enterprise and disperse all means in case of future threat to the soul and eternal life of the manager according to His promise from Jeremiah 29:11.

Deuteronomy 28:1-14 The Owner in His Word promises to be with the manager everywhere he goes and to bless all who bless him. With the manager's obedience, to grant him joy, peace, and success in everything, and also to endow him with His Holy Spirit and special influence of friendliness and love, visible and felt by all people.

The Owner takes responsibility for forming a new heart and right thoughts in the manager's life, for endowing him with power from Above and wisdom.

Also from the Owner is expected the search for clients needing the firm's services who are capable of paying for completed services.

If there is need for new employees, helpers, and workers, then the Owner in due time will take care of this and send those people who will contribute to the development and growth of the firm and formation of the manager's good character. If

there is need to dismiss unfit people, then grant understanding for resolving this question without damage to human dignity.

There is also a request to the Owner for special influence on those who will refuse to pay for completed orders, so they realize that they are robbing God, not man, and repent of this and find peace. Request to help not be their judge, but friend.

Request to teach how to be a faithful manager and not attach the heart to earthly and temporary things.

To answer all needs not described in this agreement according to love and mercy.

[City name]. Signatures of both parties. Date of signing.

Owner's Signature: Creator of Heaven and Earth, Ruler of this world and the entire Universe, called King of kings and Lord of lords – Jesus Christ, my Savior. "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20

Manager's Signature: [My name and autograph].

A copy of this agreement is kept in Heavenly dwellings as testimony to all who wish.

End of agreement.

Postscript: After many years of independent work, I have convinced myself that everything included in the Owner's responsibilities was observed by Him in all points of the signed agreement. He remains faithful to everything we agreed upon.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Proverbs 16:3; Joshua 1:7; Acts 5:38-39; Isaiah 31:1; 40:29-31; 2 Samuel 22:23; Proverbs 6:6-8; Psalm 5:12; 32:10; 37:16; 143:8; Exodus 20:9; Ecclesiastes 9:10; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Colossians 3:23 in light of this lesson.
2. What did you understand from this topic?
3. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?

4. Do you know that this "Labor Agreement" is taken from the real life of the one who writes these lessons to you?
5. Should other people be obligated to conclude similar agreements?
6. Will the Lord participate in those enterprises where you invite Him and make Him Owner?
7. Will the Lord condescend to be Owner of some small construction company or some other enterprise?
8. Is God interested in my earthly successes?
9. Does the Lord know about my need for material means, and will He give me strength and wisdom for acquiring earthly goods? Deuteronomy 8:18.
10. What will happen to your enterprise if you don't dedicate it to God?
11. What is God's enterprise? What types of enterprises can be called God's?
12. Is it proper for a Christian to receive money from other people for his labor?
13. Do you have questions about this lesson?
14. Does the Lord condemn those who with childlike faith compose similar agreements with Him, inviting Him into all their affairs?
15. Will the Lord care for the success of that enterprise in which He is Owner?

The World of Business

They say that if you want to understand a person, you must walk his path in his shoes. Something similar can be applied to the world of business. When you are a simple hired worker, you see your work through the eyes of a worker who has certain rights and obligations. But when you become an employer and producer, you see the whole picture completely differently.

There is certain statistics on observing individual entrepreneurship and private business that is worth knowing and understanding before you plunge into this world. About 80% of private firms go bankrupt and close in the first three years of beginning their activity. When I come to the labor market as a newcomer, experienced clients form a certain opinion about me, and they cautiously enter into business relationships with me. Not only your professionalism plays a very big role, but also your attitude toward people, respect, honesty, and friendliness. We deal not with soulless robots, but with the same people who have families, who get sick and dream of happiness in their lives. But for many of them, money has become the meaning, and the "golden crown" of this world—the goal of life.

Combining your faith, love, and friendliness with business will seem impossible to many, but God has a different view on this, and He can teach each of His sons or daughters to combine all these things in life and be His witnesses in every place.

A Limited Liability Company differs from other forms of enterprises in that in case of failure or bankruptcy you lose only your firm and everything that is listed on it. And in other cases you bear responsibility with all your property. For example, if I took a bank loan for building a residential complex, and the next crisis didn't let me finish the job, or all sales hung up, or the house was not accepted and is subject to demolition, then the bank will deal only with my firm, and my private life will be inviolable. In all other cases, all responsibility lies on all my property, and they can hang all debts on me that will need to be repaid.

When you become an entrepreneur, no one pays anything for you anymore, and you are surprised at how many all kinds of "pumps" and "vacuum cleaners" there are in life, which come to you for what's theirs with enviable constancy, and they don't care whether you have something or not. You must give everything they demand and expect, and you need to earn all this first and at the same time still live on something yourself and support your family.

If I deal with new clients, then I don't know what kind of people they are and how decent they are in paying for orders, but I have faith that they are honest. Also, the internet exists, where you can read reviews about people you plan to deal with.

The world of business is an ocean of interesting opportunities to improve your financial situation, but it's worth remembering that there are many cunning and hungry sharks there who don't disdain anything. However, God and His protection exist, and those who have decency and honesty and remain faithful to this, despite everything.

It is written that much increase comes by the strength of an ox. Proverbs 14:4. When you work for yourself, only you bring profit to your firm, and this is your main income, but when people work for you, they can contribute to the prosperity of your enterprise and free your hands, allowing you to engage in searching, organizing, and solving other tasks. However, people need to be paid not only their salary, but also social payments made for them, which they don't see but which are mandatory by law: medical insurance, pension fund, vacation pay, bonuses, and years of service. And all this can require much more expenses from you than you think.

The money that comes into the firm's cash register is not yours to just take and spend like that. Half, and sometimes more of what you receive, can be safely set aside for taxes and various side expenses, and the remaining money will go to purchasing materials, tools, paying salaries, and so forth.

You shouldn't rejoice too early that large financial receipts are coming. It won't always be like this. You shouldn't despair if the

cash register is empty and nothing profitable is foreseen. This also won't always be like this. Everything has its place and chance, but there are also patterns.

Being a businessman is not a consequence of having business, but rather a way of your thinking that is formed not in one day, but in the process of your becoming in this sphere and acquiring businessman's experience.

It's worth considering the fact that God, Who gives you strength and wisdom in acquiring wealth, also observes your activity and expects from your profit support for those spiritual projects that serve the good of society.

If I opened a commercial enterprise, then it should bring profit, and from this profit I need to plan charity. If I decide to give everything away, believing that the Lord will supply all my needs, seeing my generosity, then I think reality will differ from expectations, and I will first be very surprised that I'm left with nothing, and then I'll start asking for wisdom from above in managing my affairs.

It's always easy for me to be generous with other people's money or with what I could only dream about. It was especially simple to give what you didn't earn by your labor. But when you earn your bread by the sweat of your brow and know its price, then giving it for God's work, you give along with it your heart and part of your life and soul that was spent on acquiring this wealth. And you don't know how other people will receive this and how they'll evaluate it.

Communication with family members helps greatly in business, with those who love you and experience all your victories and failures together with you. This is invaluable help that so inspires you for any labor and gives you courage to enter the unknown and go toward the intended goal. And if your spouse shares your faith in God and constantly prays for you, then this becomes the most substantial contribution to your labor and success. Family in business is that oasis that gives you rest and reloads your consciousness, making you understand that work is not the meaning of life, but only part of God's plan for man.

And complete stopping on the Sabbath from all affairs and cares shows me and all my surroundings Who is Main in my life and Whose law is written in my heart.

As business developed, we understood that there are many legal ways to withdraw monetary means from the firm to our family, so that we could plan various prospects, save for all kinds of needs, and engage in good deeds without damage to the family budget. It's not always stable, but always interesting.

You can watch without tiring how fire burns, how water flows, and how they give you salary.

As in love, in business there are its own laws and orders that fully agree with God's will and act constantly in relation to any person. Every businessman remains a person who wants to be happy and healthy, wants to know that someone loves him and wants to be a friend. This exists in your business too, if you have this in your heart and give it to those who need it.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Psalm 90:10; Deuteronomy 5:13; Proverbs 6:6-11; 12:9; 14:4; 18:9; 21:25; 31:10-31; Acts 18:1-3; Ecclesiastes 3:22; 4:5,9; 5:11,17-19; 9:10; 11:1,6; Isaiah 44:12; Jeremiah 22:13; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9; Romans 13:6-7 in light of this lesson.
2. What did you understand from this topic?
3. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
4. Is there a difference in judging an entrepreneur's work from outside and from inside?
5. Is it necessary to have an idea about the internal structure of any enterprise?
6. Have you noticed that our whole world consists of large and small businesses?
7. Is it bad for a believing person to have their own business?
8. If some person has been engaged in business for a long time, will they have formed businessman's thinking?
9. To trade, buy and sell with one's own and others'—is this good or bad for a believing person?

10. Will the world of business become bad if you have a bad opinion about it?
11. What happens to those people who stop working with their hands?
12. Why did God command us in His commandment to work six days and do all our work?
13. What is the difference between a hired worker and a private entrepreneur?
14. Does the Lord understand business better than businessmen?
15. Do you have plans for your own business? If yes, do you understand what you will have to face?

Faith and Vision

When I approach an intersection where a traffic light is installed, I understand that I need to stop at a red light, yellow suggests I wait and prepare, and green opens the way for me, and I can boldly move forward, knowing that nothing threatens me.

But there are cases when the traffic light is turned off and shows me nothing. Then I begin to assess the situation and circumstances myself, pay attention to road markings and posted signs. I look right and left and, having convinced myself that there's no danger, cautiously continue moving, making allowances for careless traffic participants.

I often meet people who want to work for God and are ready to dedicate their lives to serving Him, but no traffic light burns on their path regarding this, and therefore they undertake nothing, believing it's better not to risk but wait for a clear answer.

I would also like to ask God about everything and immediately receive His answers to all my expectations, and only then proceed to action. When you have a wise Leader in your life Who makes no mistakes, then it's so easy to work in obedience. He said, and you do. He corrected, and you go further. He stopped, and you wait patiently.

In the Bible and works of the Spirit of Prophecy there are many red and green signals. Warning and prohibiting signs are placed everywhere, there are markings and direction indicators everywhere, and all these works harmoniously interweave with each other, revealing the general picture of movement toward eternal life in the Heavenly kingdom. The Lord has already prepared an answer to practically all my questions in all spheres of life. One only needs to study these traffic rules and boldly set out on the journey. The Holy Spirit will certainly remind at the right time everything I studied and present correct answers to all my "how?" and "why?"

But my nature is such that I don't want to spend time reading and deeply studying anything, but my soul rushes into battle, to

victories in Christ, and I only need to know God's will, whether He approves my decision. Then I can move mountains.

But why does God remain silent and not communicate with me as I want? After all, I'm ready for service and sacrifice. Just one word from Him, and no one will stop me anymore. And waiting for an answer, I get lost and undertake nothing, but so want to place all responsibility on God and in case of failure blame Him that He sent me there. And He remains silent again.

My wife and I discussed this question for a long time and tried to understand why the Lord often remains voiceless and turns off all traffic lights, leaving only road signs and markings.

When I planned to create a family, I also wanted to hear from God a clear definition "the one or not the one," but never heard it. However, I received a comprehensive answer when I got to know my girlfriend better and in this knowledge discovered an amazing world of a person opposite to me. The character of one who didn't differ from other women with special talents and wasn't "seven spans in the forehead" was thoroughly shown to me, but she opened her heart to me and became my faithful friend, invariably loving me at all times.

And I no longer prayed about whether this woman was the one, but about whether I was the right man and whether I could justify her trust and not fall flat on my face. When I understood that it was easier for us to be together and more interesting to go through life together, then I began to pray like this: "Lord, if this is not the person with whom I should connect my further fate, then You destroy our relationship!" But fortunately, nothing was destroyed, and our relationship led us to say to each other before God: "Yes, yes," and we still don't regret it.

God teaches us to live independently, relying by faith on His invisible presence in our lives and observing what is revealed to us in His word. He sometimes calls us to take a step into the unknown and continue trusting Him with our lives, leaving us the right to decide for ourselves where to go and what to do.

When I opened my construction enterprise, I didn't hear specific prohibitions or approval from God, but He made it clear

to me that He would be with me wherever I went. Maybe God sees a pastor or teacher in me, but I don't know about this and, choosing the path of a builder, I see how His hand is present in all my affairs, although mistakes in work also happen.

Jesus, advising Christians of Laodicea to undertake something, calls them to buy goods whose meaning He doesn't explain, declaring that believers will be victors in what they don't understand. And such an approach is incomprehensible to very many, so they undertake nothing regarding this call. But we began to study and delve into the meaning of these mysterious symbols, and such depths of God's heart were revealed to us that are so simple and beautiful that it's impossible to ignore them and pass by. It became easier for us to buy everything offered and live in this, constantly opening to Christ at His voice and knock, than to do nothing.

God calls us to believe Him and His prophets, and then we will have success. To believe is not to hear a clear instruction, but to take a step into the unknown, giving all consequences to God and entrusting our lives to Him.

I'll say honestly, it wouldn't be quite comfortable for me if the Lord brought some woman to me and said this is your wife, depriving me of independent choice. I think the bride also wouldn't be very happy to receive someone against her will, even the best in the world. But when it's our decision, we value what we went toward so persistently and prayed for so much. Everything I know, comprehend, and discover by faith and personal efforts becomes very valuable and dear experience for me that no one can take away. And I can boldly speak about my faith and how the Lord abundantly blessed me in this.

Practically, answers to all questions are hidden in the Bible. And they don't always unambiguously say "yes or no," but rather: "try, trust, test, act," assuring that God's children have special status in Heaven's eyes.

If someone began to teach me that before undertaking something, I need to understand whether the Lord approves this step, whether there's God's will for me in this, and whether

this will be right, then most likely I would undertake little and would be in constant offense at God for His silence. But actually His will has long been revealed in the works of His disciples, and I'm promised freedom in independent choice of my lifestyle and in multiplying those talents given to me for management.

Many of my projects were implemented by my personal initiative, when I had only a burning desire to do something for God as a foundation. And He, seeing this, blessed all my labor. If there were no helpers, then I knew that the Lord always helps, and I went alone, believing that this was necessary. And in the final result this faith in the best brought abundant blessings for all.

To tell God "no" when He says "Go" is very dangerous for the soul, so the Lord remains silent, offering us to test ourselves and learn to walk by faith, not by sight.

God's counsel is not a commandment, and a commandment is not counsel. And it's important not to confuse these concepts and try what is unclear, and be obedient in what is clearly revealed and not subject to discussion.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read 2 Corinthians 5:7; 2 Chronicles 20:20; Philippians 2:11-15; Luke 9:62; 21:19; 2 Peter 3:9; John 14:26; Habakkuk 2:3-4; Hebrews 10:38-39; 11:1,6-8; John 8:32,36; Psalm 139:23-24; Galatians 3:11-12 in light of this lesson.
2. What did you understand from this topic?
3. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
4. Do you like making difficult decisions?
5. Is God interested in having you choose your own path and walk on it?
6. Have we been given enough light and instruction not to choose something dangerous?
7. Will the Lord keep from evil people who make independent decisions on some questions, believing that the Lord will not abandon them?

8. Is my faith manifested if I decide on some good deed, not knowing how Heaven looks at this?
9. How is faith expressed in making difficult decisions?
10. Is the Lord interested in the earthly success of His children?
11. What should I do if the Lord doesn't answer in any way, but I want to do something?
12. Should I wait for God's answer if He asks to wait?
13. How does faith differ from presumption?
14. How can I understand that God approves my choice and my decisions?
15. If my choice of path doesn't contradict God's word, do I need to ask God for blessing and personal presence on this path?

Can I Do This?

When he and she create something common, their affairs and cares don't decrease in connection with this union, but multiply many times over.

Working in the sphere of construction and home renovation, I noticed that single people don't build private houses for themselves and don't rent large apartments. They mostly content themselves with minimal comfort, and they don't need so much. But when a person has a family, and then children, the requests and desires of household members become so great that satisfying their needs requires many resources, time, and all kinds of service companies.

These families aren't afraid to take large loans and then spend several decades paying debts in order to live in coziness and comfort.

And as for household affairs, with creating a family and arranging domestic life they somehow become so numerous that you're constantly busy with something, and these affairs pursue you as a long list throughout your subsequent life. And to somehow escape from all these cares, families found themselves a loophole—going on vacation and paying big money to do nothing for at least some time and allow others to service their rest.

However good this vacation may be, you always have to return to the place that's called "Home," and then do everything that's called household affairs.

Solomon once called all our life vanity. But there's vanity without special meaning, and there are simple household occupations that gladden hearts and make spouses dearer and closer. Well, what's surprising if we were created to work six days and do all our affairs?

When all responsibilities in a family are distributed honestly and equally, then everyone knows what's expected of them and doesn't claim more. But into such everyday life and routine you

can bring a small holiday for the soul and disturb the usual order of things by doing them with love.

Love is very wise and capable of thinking up what will make another's life happy, constantly gladdening the heart of your other half. Agape thoroughly studies the love language of a life companion and tries to periodically communicate in it.

It perfectly sees how someone labors for the family's good with all their heart or does their duties reluctantly because it's necessary. But one way or another, love prompts a spouse's heart to attack their friend with an active proposal: "Can I do this?" And then it immediately pours into work and tries either to do everything instead of the one who performs this labor, or begins actively helping another if it doesn't receive all the work entirely.

The goal of this lesson consists not in beginning to dream about such a caring life companion, but in becoming the one who, being moved by love, wishes to think in this direction and allow their love to build further plans for active participation in another's life. You can read these lines and think about where to get such a friend. Our goal is not to point you to a "fishing spot," but help you become that very fish that will gladden the one who has it, if, of course, this fisherman exists.

It is written in 1 John 3:18: "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Caring for another, helping in affairs, and transferring another's burden to your shoulders—all this was the norm of happy relationships in all times, and I think Eternity won't be an exception in these matters, but will provide much more eternal opportunities to eternally think about the happiness of other eternal neighbors.

When I begin to reflect or speak about Eternity and how good it will be for all of us there, and how joyfully we'll care for each other in Heaven, lining up to serve neighbors with whom we'll intersect, then for some reason people listen to me with sadness, thinking that this beautiful time is still very long to wait for. But why wait? For us, Eternal life has already begun by faith in Jesus. The Holy Spirit birthed us from above for

Himself, and then He begins to teach us the rules of Eternal life so that we would be wise children of God in every place. And God the Father Himself endows us with Heavenly agape, which produces in us both the willing and the doing according to His good pleasure.

It's not at all necessary to ask your spouse whether you can help them. Sometimes you just need to say this, declaring that you'll take on their responsibilities. When the heart wants to arrange a holiday for another, then love will always find suitable words and expressions for how to better announce this. It only needs a reason to manifest itself, and love has plenty of fantasies about how to do this.

I want to assure you that when you begin mutually or unilaterally to build your family happiness, it will certainly come into your family or into your heart. But let everything be with love, so that everything is honest and right.

Even if you decided to begin implementing something good through force, don't give up, but go forward, and happiness will catch up with you.

Only please consider that if you, following these counsels, constantly wait for when this happiness will finally appear, and you'll start doing everything from the heart and for the heart, then possibly you won't wait for what is spoken about here.

We very much like when we're sincerely valued and respected, when our good deeds are noticed and spoken about, when all our labors for others' good are received with joy. And wings grow on us! We want to do even more and be even better. But let these expectations be not the goal, but become a consequence of your good deeds. Live already now by the rules of Eternal life, think already now about neighbors' happiness, don't dream about yourself, and all these eternal laws will come into your life and line up in a beautiful queue to bless you with their joy and influence others through you.

I'll ask a question. How many people now think about your happiness and dream of caring for you? None or one, or very few. And how many people will think about your happiness in

Eternity and do something for this? All. And has Eternal Life begun for you, or are you waiting for its beginning with Christ's Coming? Don't you want to join already now this group called "all," to become that exception to the rules that thinks not only about itself but also about others? Don't hurry to answer me anything. Share your thoughts first with God, and let Him help accomplish what will bring you joy and gladden your family.

The time will never come when I have no one to care for and no one to help and serve. And whether I need this now, I decide myself. Without God and His love I won't be able to do something correctly, although something good might result. But with Him and in Him I'm capable of anything. Without me, God won't do what He could accomplish with me, although He has sufficient means and strength.

God needs me and my decision to care for another, and then all His strength will become mine, and His love will attach wings of enthusiasm to me and think up many interesting types of service in which not only I will be happy, but also those to whom my care will be to their heart and will lighten responsibilities.

I want there to be a struggle in your families for willing performance of your own and others' affairs, which will become yours.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Galatians 6:9-10; James 4:17; Philippians 2:4,13-14; 4:6-9; 1 John 3:18; 5:11-12; Ecclesiastes 6:10; 9:10; Romans 13:8-14; Exodus 20:9; Psalm 34:13-17; 37:25-28; Revelation 14:13; Luke 6:31; James 2:26 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Does God call us to do good deeds without expecting reward for this?
5. Do you think Heaven will value what you begin to do good in your family by personal initiative?

6. Have any good projects of good deeds for your relatives and close ones arisen in your plans after studying this lesson?
7. Do you think performing someone's responsibilities will bring you special blessing?
8. Is it worth paying attention to what spirit and what mood you do good for your spouse and what goals you pursue?
9. Should I be the first to begin doing good or performing someone's affairs if my heart isn't accustomed to this?
10. Is it worth doing something for someone at all? Won't these someones sit on my neck?
11. Do you think it's difficult to do what this lesson teaches? If not, then why are there few who live like this?
12. If you have no experience doing others' affairs, what should you start with?
13. Does the Lord do for you something you could do yourself?
14. If the Lord teaches us to do good simply and even love your enemies, is it worth listening to this?
15. Does the Lord give strength and wisdom to those who take the path of caring for others and selfless service?

Closed Family Territory

Family is the most complex organization in the entire Universe. It is God's property that by the fact of creation came from His hands, and which He blesses to bring forth fruit of mutual love.

The mystery of earthly family relationships is unique, and according to the Creator's design they should reveal the glory and character of Heavenly relationships of the Godhead. This mystery is so great that there are no suitable words to correctly express and describe God's entire plan regarding the invention of family union.

The very principle that family is created forever speaks of the fact that the couple begins a process of lengthy education, which in the course of its development should lead newlyweds from one phase of relationships to a deeper and higher level of education.

Family is the most closed society, which has its own secrets, its own rules and orders, its own settings and agreements, its own traditions and holidays. Coming into your friends' family, you become a witness to what is opened to you at the moment of visit, and what you can see during the period of staying in this house. But you don't know what happened in this family before you, and you'll never know what will be in it when you leave it. There are family things that will never be told or shown to you, although you'll perfectly understand that they exist and what they represent.

God endowed family with freedom of self-determination, freedom to find its own model of relationships, freedom of movement and choice of residence, freedom to plan its own size, independence from others' opinions, freedom to love each other according to understanding of this process, and many other factors that can properly develop only under conditions of absolute freedom.

It's also amazing that family union, being the most conservative establishment with the most radical restrictions of freedom, at the same time doesn't deprive the will of each spouse of

freedom to choose the path by which a person decides to go through life, independent of anyone. For example, if I wished to believe in God and worship Him in spirit and truth, but my spouse doesn't share my convictions, then remaining husband and wife and living in one house, we're free to each go our own way of faith or unbelief, finding unity in other spheres of life and having physical intimacy, independent of our religious beliefs.

Love in family can also develop only under conditions of freedom to choose such mutual attitude toward each other. Husband and wife begin to love each other and allow this God's gift to completely possess them, but they cannot understand how this happens. As we don't know how a seed sprouts and where life comes to a planted plant, so we'll never understand why everything worked out this way for us, and differently for others. Love, although it comes from One Source and has no limitations in itself, manifests differently in each family, depending on people's peculiarities and the makeup of their characters.

Love makes any relationships perfect and covers a multitude of flaws and shortcomings with its perfection. It, like pure snow consisting of billions of beautiful snowflakes, covers all family cares and problems and brings everything to a better state. When there's mutual love in relationships, and husband and wife understand, know, see, and feel that they love and are loved by each other, then everything else becomes an addition and useful supplement to this love. And nothing can replace or fake relationships of love.

This is God's plan—to be present in each family through His love and give meaning to everything that happens there.

It's precisely the presence of love that determines how truly happy this or that family will be.

Wise people who have their life experience always advise newlyweds "not to air dirty laundry," that is, not to share in all details with others what happens in their family. And sometimes you so want to complain about crying injustice that

takes place. But here lies the danger that such stories can discredit your spouse. Any family conflict will sooner or later be resolved by you, but those who know about your problems may remain with the bad opinion you expressed and long have a biased attitude toward the one about whom you previously told many bad things.

My family is surrounded by an invisible God's hedge, inside which the Lord knows about everything happening and gives His wisdom and goodness for resolving many disputable questions. By sharing my family problems or secrets with my neighbors, I destroy this hedge and open the door to the influence of outsiders, not knowing what spirit they'll bring into our family and into my consciousness. Good for me if this person is wise and, understanding the problem, offers its best solution, praying and supporting me further. But woe to me if another spirit takes up this question and begins offering me non-God's methods for getting out of difficulties. Or if my confidant begins retelling all my problems in their own way, secretly to the whole world.

I remember a case when one brother had a big problem in his family that he didn't know how to solve, and he shared his trouble at a house church meeting, asking for help. They listened to him attentively, and then someone from those present told his wife that he goes around and complains about her to everyone. And instead of solving the problem, it became so aggravated that only God had the power to solve it all without bringing the family to divorce.

Divorce destroys everything, leaving bitter traces of pain and disappointment after itself. Although in some cases it's unavoidable, and this is also provided by freedom, it's better not to bring affairs to such a decision.

A great blessing in protecting family from various problems and divorces can be family counselors who are appointed by God to determine the true cause, see the root and essence of the problem that has developed, and offer the best way out of the created situation, and then supervise this family in confidential conversations. Usually this is done by not-young people who

have their personal experience and experience of many years' observations of other families. As a rule, they'll never tell others about you, but may give an example from your life without naming your names to help other families solve their problems in the best way.

In all other cases, by sharing your problems with outsiders, you risk aggravating them and allowing others' opinions to influence your consciousness.

Wounded feelings and bitterness of offense can prompt a person to open their family's secrets to anyone who first meets them, but don't hurry to pour out to an outsider what they don't need to know. It will become easier for you, but whether this will bring good to your family, you don't know.

If you have a friend who loves at all times and appears as a brother in time of misfortune, and always turns to God, casting all their own and your cares on Him, being guided by God's methods, then rejoice and thank God for such a blessing, but always put God as the priority of your confidential stories. And God knows how to help you, directly or using your friend's abilities.

And let everything be done with love.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Ephesians 5:31-33; Genesis 1:28-31; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:5-6; Ecclesiastes 9:8; Psalm 31:4; Proverbs 13:3; 20:19; 22:28; 24:30-31; Deuteronomy 27:17; Leviticus 19:16 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Is it revealed to you through the example of earthly family how the Heavenly family is arranged? Have you thought about this?
5. Is it important to understand that God is the Inventor of family unions, however strange they may seem to us?
6. What is closed family territory? How to determine its boundaries?
7. What are family secrets needed for?

8. Should you tell everyone about your own and others' family problems?
9. Do you need to tell God that something in your family is not happening as you would like?
10. What to do with curious friends who want to know more about my family than I want to tell them?
11. What spheres of family life should always be closed from everyone?
12. What to do if you keep your family secrets, but your other half shares them with everyone?
13. How does a family counselor differ from a neighbor?
14. Is it worth turning to family counselors for help if you can't solve some questions yourself? Won't this be a violation of boundaries?
15. What useful thing did you extract for yourself from this lesson?

Should One Divorce?

In the life of every family, unpredictable conflict situations may arise, which the enemy of the soul will use to destroy relationships and sow seeds of disappointment, alienation, pride, and offense.

When discord occurs for any reason, then Satan immediately comes with his arsenal of services and his main deception called: "You must divorce!" And when conflicting spouses are overwhelmed by negative emotions and feelings, it is very easy for the enemy to root in their hearts the thought of dissolving the marriage, and then to persuade their imperfect minds to bring this matter to an end, regardless of the consequences.

Divorce is a psychological and legal process of ending a marriage, which includes the division of property, determination of parental rights and responsibilities toward children, as well as other legal matters.

An important aspect of this process is the protection of the interests of children and the creation of conditions for their well-being. The court may decide how financial support for the children will be provided, in whose custody they will be, how parental responsibilities will be distributed, how parents may meet with their children, and how much time they may spend with them.

The reasons for divorce can vary, from foolish and trivial disagreements to serious and life-threatening dangers and actions within the family. If one looks at the root of all these reasons, it is selfishness of one or both spouses.

Selfishness is the absolute opposite of love. It tends to grow endlessly, which ends with the absolute right to death.

Love also has an inexhaustible potential for perfection and self-development, whose end is Eternal Life.

Many people create families because they are tired of being alone, and then divorce for the very same reason.

When a serious disagreement arises, the enemy of the soul immediately seeks to divide the spouses emotionally, and then to rule over each separately, implanting his methods to aggravate the crisis. This is a very strong influence of the powers of evil in the heavenly places, and it should not be underestimated. In such a state of mind, a person is unable to think adequately and make sober and correct decisions.

Help at such a time of testing may come from:

- * God's principles, written in the mind and heart;
- * wise people, who will immediately evaluate the situation and point to the best way;
- * prayer to God for intervention and wisdom from above;
- * unconditional love, which a person has previously come to know;
- * time, which does not rush into radical decisions, but gives an opportunity for passions and tensions to subside, to understand the true cause of the conflict, and to point to the possibility of resolving the problem.

In any case, it is important to resolve not to take hasty actions in carrying out bad plans.

Divorce is a bad solution, and sometimes a very bad one.

When a person's leg is sick, I don't think the best solution would be to amputate it. Any sensible doctor will first prescribe treatment, give advice, and recommend medication in order to save, relieve, and heal your leg. And you yourself, seeing what is happening, will cry out in prayer to God and ask not for amputation, but for healing. You will spare no expense just to avoid losing that part of your body which is yours and without which you cannot live.

And even if that leg becomes numb and no longer responds to the body and nerve impulses, you still will not remove it, but will take the necessary measures to live with it further and drag it along through life until death, not losing hope that it might unexpectedly heal. You will buy crutches or a wheelchair, adapt

your home to new conditions, but you will by no means part with your useless leg.

And if the leg simply hurts but normally performs its functions, then you will have to put up with the pain and somehow live.

Of course, if the disease of the leg becomes a mortal danger to your health and body, then nothing else will remain but to lose it forever, however painful that may be.

Love teaches us to approach any family disagreements with wisdom and a different perspective. It soberly evaluates any conflict and makes the decision to love. No matter how deeply a proud heart is wounded, love allows God to place into a person's nature a different heart, sensitive to God's principles and statutes.

Any crisis in relationships, love perceives as a new opportunity for its manifestation, as a springboard for the free flight of thought and feelings in the given direction.

Any situation, no matter how difficult, love sees from another perspective and evaluates from the position of love and respect for the freedom of choice and actions of another person.

Love does not think evil, and therefore any decision made from love will not harm the soul, but will enrich the treasury of wisdom and life experience.

Love knows how to make the right decisions to love not only in one's own family, but also in the lives of other families. It is able to share its experience and tell of the victories of its principles, persuading listeners to choose the path of love and forgiveness.

For some, it may seem unthinkable to live in unbearable family conditions where one has to do everything alone and earn one's own living, but love gives meaning even to such a way of life, investing itself fully into every action.

We read in Galatians 6:7-9: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit

reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

The fruits of our harvest are not always immediately visible, but there are certain principles that we accept by faith and wait for their fulfillment. Sowing love, I do not expect these seeds to bring forth fruits of malice and selfishness, although the reaction to my actions may be just that. But the seed of love will surely sprout and bear much fruit, which, if not pleasing to my other half, will nourish me and all the Heavenly host.

Where love reigns, Satan can do nothing. There will simply be no place for his temptations, especially if love is mutual.

Love is the banner of victory for the conqueror of the last days, and the family is the place where the most difficult lessons are learned in the formation of character and the honing of skills for taking ground. Love teaches me to distinguish good from evil and to choose the better. It cannot force another to act with love, but when my heart is under its power, it helps me to apply the strategy that gives me victory.

Should one divorce when trials have come into my life and new opportunities for the manifestation of love have opened? Of course, I am not always ready for the blows of fate, which fall unexpectedly or from behind, but love always protects my spirit from manifestations of selfish nature and gives joy in such trials, and even more so in the ultimate victory.

If your spouse is of a completely different spirit, and there is no chance of his salvation even with all your unconditional love, then prepare yourself for the fact that you will enter Eternity without him, and keep loving.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Eph. 4:15; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; 16:14; Prov. 11:29; John 17:3; Isa. 40:28-31; Ps. 106:9; Gal. 5:6,13; 6:7-9; Hos. 8:7; Eph. 4:1-4; 1 Thess. 3:12; 5:14-24; Rev. 3:21 in the light of this lesson.
2. What other Bible verses came to your mind?
3. What useful insights are there for you in this lesson?

4. What did you understand from this topic?
5. Should one divorce the one he promised to love in any situation?
6. Do you think love can change everything for the better in your life?
7. We read in Isa. 58:12: "...and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach..." Is it within the power of a loving person to receive such a title in his family?
8. How can one understand that the way of love is far better than grievances and resentments when everything in the family is collapsing?
9. If you have a family, has there ever been a time when thoughts of divorce came during a conflict? How did you think about it later, when the conflict subsided and you experienced joyful moments in the arms of your other half?
10. Can the Lord correct the situation in a collapsing family if you begin to ask Him for help and love?
11. Should every conflict be regarded as an opportunity to learn something?
12. Is it necessary to create a family if there are so many problems in it?
13. Do you believe that love conquers all and makes victorious the one who is guided by it?
14. Why do conflicts and disagreements bring with them disappointments and bad thoughts? How can and should this be resisted?
15. Do you find in the life of Christ those examples of behavior and His reactions to evil that would help you resist evil in your family?

Another's Wedding

The older we become, the more events we experience, and the richer our observational experience becomes.

Throughout my life I have attended many wedding celebrations, and then I would always observe the newly formed families, wishing to understand the secret of their marital happiness or unhappiness.

Another's wedding is such an event that always arouses special interest! It is pleasant to see the bride and groom, who are inevitably dressed up, happy, and radiant. It is extremely interesting to watch how two different people become one, how they look at each other, what beautiful expectations and grand plans they have for their union.

Although there are usually many guests, and everyone wishes the young family love and happiness, you always want to congratulate them in some special way and share your sincere joy for them, becoming a special friend in their life. However, you later realize that there are many with such intentions, while the bride and groom need each other more and are not thinking about you at that moment, so you quietly step aside and wait until you are needed.

Other people's weddings can vary – from modest gatherings with two witnesses to large assemblies of all sorts of friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, and church brethren. And all is paid for with silver. But every time this event is held with joy and expectation of something wonderful and promising happiness.

When the solemn words of counsel and blessing are pronounced, you believe that all this will surely come true for this family, and that, joyfully passing through all difficulties, they will come out victorious, because that is the very reason they are creating their family.

Since marriage is God's project, it is the Lord Himself who unites two different people, by their consent, into one whole

person. Even if these people do not believe in God, the very fact of their union and their solemn promise to become husband and wife before representatives of the highest state authority is sufficient for their marriage to be considered lawful. Yet God always desires to give something more and willingly blesses all who seek His blessing as well.

At worldly celebrations, it is somehow customary to drink alcohol. Through this, many newlyweds, without realizing it, invite demons, who bewitch people and push them into all sorts of foolish acts. And all this sometimes ends very tragically. However, many worldly people already have it ingrained in their minds that a wedding without alcohol is not a real celebration, and that there will be no joy there.

But when you attend a sacred celebration where the bride and groom belong to God, you see how their dedication is reflected in the organization of the wedding celebration:

- * No alcohol;
- * Wisely chosen music;
- * A solemn wedding program;
- * Clean and wholesome food on the tables;
- * Respectful treatment of all guests;
- * Absence of foolishness and vulgarity;
- * Decent clothing on the bride;
- * A reverent atmosphere of the celebration, and much more that attracts God's angels and inclines the hearts of people to friendly fellowship and holy joy over the creation of a new family.

From my many years of observation, I can confidently conclude that those newlyweds who approach the choice of a life partner and the preparation of the wedding celebration with reverence and care later turn out to be just as pure and reverent before God's law in their family life. Although exceptions are possible.

It is interesting to observe guests from the world when they attend a Christian wedding without alcohol and dancing for the first time. They feel great surprise and tension, thinking it will be boring. But when God's presence touches their hearts, they then experience heavenly joy and immerse themselves in the atmosphere of Heaven, marveling afterward how one can be happy while having a sober mind. God knows how to make everyone joyful, bypassing worldly traditional views and rules.

Already as a believer, I was obliged to attend the wedding celebrations of worldly people. Though the atmosphere was not always reverent, the prepared meals and food not always wholesome and clean, and the background music not at all holy, yet with God's help I managed to keep my conscience clean and strictly adhere to the principles I was taught in God's Church. Sometimes, knowing in advance what the cuisine would be, I would warn the bride and groom that there were certain foods I did not eat, and they usually took care to provide me with suitable food.

How interesting it is to attract attention by living according to God's principles! Everyone immediately becomes curious how it is possible to live this way. And you direct their gaze away from yourself and your plate to Christ and to that light of the Health Reform which the Lord has given to the world. And meaningful conversations result.

When your heart is filled with love and friendliness, when you want to care for others, to give and to rejoice, then others notice this spirit as well, and very likely they will willingly receive and listen to what you wish to share with them. Love knows how to speak even to strangers in the right language. Another's wedding is not only a celebration for your soul, but also for all the invited guests. And with such an attitude, it is very easy to gain new friends and discover new hearts.

When one of my close relatives decided to celebrate his wedding on a Sabbath, at first I refused to attend this event, but then my friend explained to me that I must be there for the sake of this person. I disagreed with this viewpoint, and to understand who was right, I sent a description of this problem

to many trusted pastors and spiritual mentors. I needed an answer as to how to act. And all unanimously answered me that I should attend this wedding, which I did. One must learn everything and draw conclusions, even if sometimes it is very difficult to break certain stereotypes in the mind.

Christ said that until His Second Coming people will be marrying and giving in marriage. Therefore, we must learn with what spirit and purpose we should attend such events.

Once I was even asked to preach a sermon at another's wedding. It was unexpected, but the Lord gave the necessary words and reminded me of the truths I could share with others. And I noticed that the public counsel you share with the bride and groom is often very helpful to the guests as well, because it helps them reconsider something in their own family relationships. So, one must always be ready for such surprises. We do not know when the Lord will give us an attentive audience and to which wedding He will bring us, but today's learning of God's truths will prepare my heart to always give an answer for my hope and to share that love which everyone needs.

The very first event at which Jesus performed His miracle was another's wedding. The Savior attended and blessed it. It is worth remembering that sometimes we may be the only representatives of Christ at someone's wedding, through whom the Lord can give His blessing to a new family. And let the "shoes of readiness" to proclaim the Gospel to the world always be in their place at any time of year. And the Lord, seeing our readiness, will surely find where and when to send us.

Also remember that your wedding, though it will be another's for others, may become a testimony of the best and happiest life in Christ.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Matt. 22:2-5; 25:10; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9; Isa. 6:8; 61:1-3; Eph. 6:13-18; Eccl. 8:15; 9:7-10; Ps. 34:28; Prov. 1:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:23; 9:16; 2 Tim. 4:2-4 in the light of this lesson.

2. What other Bible verses came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Have you often attended other people's weddings? If so, what did you experience at that time?
5. Do you know that there will also be a Wedding celebration in Heaven?
6. Do you want the Heavenly wedding to be yours, and not another's?
7. What should one do so as not to merely hear of another's wedding of the Lamb and His bride, but to be there?
8. Should the Heavenly Bridegroom know His bride before the wedding and spend time with her?
9. Do you think the Lord is now offering His hand and heart to His beloved to prepare her for the wedding celebration?
10. Does God's people of the last days have any special advantage over believers of other times in the history of Christianity?
11. Why do you think Jesus, regardless of persons, loved to attend all sorts of celebrations and meals to which He was invited? Luke 15:2.
12. Should we remember the example of Jesus and not forget our mission?
13. What does another's wedding mean to you? Delicious food, the opportunity to make new friends and share something useful, or something else?
14. Is there a difference between a worldly wedding and a Christian wedding? If so, what is it?
15. Should we attend worldly weddings if we are invited?

The Constancy of Family Happiness

In every endeavor, there are certain laws and characteristics that apply to all people. Any enterprise contains a sequence of so-called seasons and periods of trials. Family is the most interesting and most complex institution in the world. It cannot automatically endow its members with an abundance of happiness without the active participation of both partners in investing their strength, resources, and life energy into one another. And if we consider the fact that our world is full of things aimed at destroying family happiness, then we understand that constant resistance to the spirit of the world and vigilance are necessary.

Let us take as an example the construction of a cozy house in a harsh climate. In warm weather, one can build almost anything, and both inhabitants who love each other will feel warm and cozy in any dwelling, even without windows and doors. But the weather changes, the comfort is blown away by the first winds, cold sets in, and one must search for safe places in the home in order to somehow survive and not freeze. Often in such cases, the most beloved and closest person is blamed. But it is not their fault if the house was built incorrectly. And when there are obvious problems in a relationship, it is not necessary to look for someone to blame, but rather to find a solution to fix everything.

The purpose and meaning of building a cozy home is that it should be comfortable for everyone, always protecting from water and dampness, from winds and storms, from cold and heat, from thieves and unwanted visitors, and from prying eyes. This protection from external factors does not come by itself but is created through joint efforts and wise knowledge.

It should be noted that wisdom can be obtained from God, money can be earned or borrowed, children can be born and will somehow grow up, but if you or your partner lack common sense and a sober outlook on life's difficulties, you will hardly be able to build something beautiful together.

Even in the worst house, one can arrange a cozy room just for oneself and be happy there in a way, but this will not make the whole house comfortable and safe. In building family happiness, conscious participation of both sides and their constant investment of themselves in each other's happiness are required.

If I build strong walls from good material, and behind me my wife comes with a big sledgehammer and tests the strength of my walls, then I will have to dream long about something good while living in constant ruins. A home where an evil spirit has settled will never be cozy or safe.

God protects His children in any home and teaches them love and peace, surrounding them with His care. When all members of the family, in turn, have personal relationships with Heavenly powers, then the principles of Heavenly relationships will be prioritized in family life.

To make your life partner happy, you must find out what makes them so and begin to serve them from a pure heart, without violating your faithfulness to God. This requires perseverance, wisdom from above, and constancy. Love helps to have all these good qualities and promotes the continuous development of good relationships.

Our mood is our hormones, which live by their own laws and are released into the bloodstream under certain conditions. It is important to know and study your physiology and bring your life into harmony with the laws of nature.

If we decide to break circadian rhythms in our family, we will not avoid health problems.

We are what we eat. Our food must be not only tasty and attractive but also useful, and in recent times—safe as well.

The eight principles of a healthy lifestyle should not only be known but also accepted in the heart. If there is love in our relationships, it will cover everything, and even ignorance in matters of health will not destroy our attachment to one

another. But it is better to be healthy and wealthy in this love than poor and sick.

Although my wife and I are one, we are still separate individuals who have freedom, their own worldview, and their own relationship with God and priorities in life. This should always be remembered and taken into account, respecting another's opinion and choice. But our desire to build mutual happiness helps us find points of contact and move through life together in one direction.

We decided to bring into our home only that which will contribute to our development, education, happiness, and comfort, and not destroy our love. Communication helps us identify these points and jointly decide what to accept and keep, and what or who has no place in our home.

The happiness of our home completely depends on our personal relationship with our Savior and obedience to all God's laws in the spirit of love and truth, without fanaticism or dictatorship. And the greatest danger to our family happiness is that something may appear in our lives that distracts our gaze from Christ and ties us to this world. The influence of the world on all of us is constant, and it longs to rush into our family and fill us with its garbage. Therefore, we desperately resist and set boundaries, asking God for help.

We decided not to have a television in our home, but the internet is a different matter. This is something we cannot completely exclude from our lives for now, but we understand that everything that comes into our home through it must be under the control of reason and the Holy Spirit so that we do not lose our connection with Heaven. Here we must be vigilant, constantly watchful, and prayerful.

Our prayer life also contributes to the building of happiness and gives God authority to change in our lives what we cannot. He warns us of danger and troubles our conscience when something goes wrong.

But the greatest thing the Lord gives us is His love in our love for each other. When, by Christ's commandment, you love your

wife, and she responds with the same spirit, then in such a relationship you can build many wonderful things and come to agreement on everything.

Love senses the mood of a life partner. It knows what they need and what they dislike. It constantly conquers new heights in personal relationships and helps to dive into the depths of the spouse's soul, discovering oneself there and finding something useful for us. Love forms in us such relationships that can develop eternally and will never weary or disappoint us. You not only know your beloved friend but also feel their mood and understand their needs, striving to please them in everything.

And our mutual love comes from God and is given by Him so that, passing through our hearts, it may cleanse them from selfishness, fill them with happiness, and, as joyful praise, return to the One who so generously poured it into our lives.

We understand that yesterday's experience is not enough for today, so each new day we build new relationships of love, happiness, and friendship, taking into account the valuable experience of past days. We invest ourselves in each other and in God so that in this union we may build something strong, cozy, and eternal. And we succeed.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Mark 10:42-45; Psalm 1:1-3; 91:9-12; John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:11; 4:7; Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:22-33; Proverbs 11:16; 17:17; 18:8; 24:26; Ecclesiastes 9:9 in the light of this lesson.
2. What other Bible verses came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. How many people should take part in building family happiness?
5. Do you think your personal happiness and your family's happiness are the same thing?
6. Can a happy person lack a happy family?
7. What is a happy family?

8. Should one be afraid to create a family if there are no examples of happy families around?
9. Why is it that during a wedding all newlyweds believe they will have the happiest family, yet with time some cannot bear each other?
10. What should I do if I notice that an evil spirit is penetrating our beautiful family and destroying our relationship?
11. Can Satan simply enter our relationship and ruin it without our consent?
12. Do you enjoy being in the company of those you love and who love you? Does such an attitude make you helpless?
13. What is the advantage of love over another spirit?
14. Do you think the 144,000 will love their household members, even if they are of another spirit?
15. Is happiness a coincidence or a law?

Respecting Freedom of Choice in the Family

Very often we speak about the fact that love is respect for a person's freedom of choice, that such a spirit must also be present in the family, and that this is one of the important components of normal relationships. But how should this be manifested in my life and in my family? For some, this question remains unanswered, even though the mind agrees with such an order of things.

Freedom of choice in the family means that husband and wife have the opportunity to express their preferences, opinions, and make decisions within the framework of family relationships. This includes respecting the individuality of each family member, discussing and working out joint decisions, as well as accepting each other's boundaries and rights. Freedom of choice contributes to healthy and harmonious relationships in the family. Although husband and wife are the closest people to each other on the whole planet, they still maintain their individuality and may have their own worldview and life values.

Freedom of choice also means the ability to express one's feelings and emotions, to share one's needs and desires without fear of condemnation or suppression from other family members. This creates an atmosphere of trust, support, and mutual understanding, which is important for healthy family relationships.

The best example of respect for freedom of choice can be observed in the relationship between God and man. God is the indisputable Authority and Sovereign of all. He is the Supreme Lawgiver of the Universe. All existing laws of nature and morality are established by Him and upheld by His Spirit, regardless of our faith and obedience. Yet the Lord gives us freedom of self-determination, not interfering in our choice of life's path unless we ask Him.

The first people were created perfect and developed in every way. God's law was inscribed in their hearts, and when they began to violate God's commandments, guided by their own

choice, no one stopped them. A single small warning would have been enough when the wife entered into dialogue with the serpent, but no one interfered with the freedom of choice of those conversing. When the first woman brought the forbidden fruit to her husband and he ate it, no one prevented them in this matter, even though the whole Universe watched to see what the first people would do. God knew what their disobedience would bring and what it would cost the Creator, but He did not interfere with that wrong choice.

It should be noted that respect for freedom of choice made the way to the tree of knowledge of good and evil free, while the violation of God's command deprived people of free access to the tree of life. Man could no longer freely partake of the source of blessing, for that way was guarded by an angel with a flaming sword.

Respect for freedom of choice in the family also allows that spouses may prefer a poor model of relationships, which will destroy their happiness, make their life difficult and unbearable, and deprive their hearts of peace. But the dictatorship of goodness will not bring happiness to the home either, although it may preserve discipline and order.

True freedom in family relationships is where the Spirit of God reigns. Without understanding the plan of Salvation and the laws of love in relationships, a selfish person cannot live in harmony with God and with others. The culture of society may shape certain good qualities in the soul and protect it from corruption, but in personal relationships one must have special sensitivity to the needs of another, which a selfish heart cannot have by nature.

Only true love can grant true freedom of choice to family members. Love creates the most favorable atmosphere for communication and decision-making. There is no fear of condemnation from the loving life-partner, no fear of attack or harm. Such an atmosphere contributes to the normal functioning of all the organs of the soul and body. When a person feels safe, then he finds peace and can freely resolve many issues and tasks without fear.

In the ideal family with the right spirit, one can expect right relationships. But we live in a world where evil reigns, and where our mission is to seek new candidates for salvation and, having found them, to draw their souls to Christ and teach them obedience to the truth.

As a result, many family men and women decide to follow Christ and make a covenant with Him through baptism, while their spouses prefer to live as before and change nothing in their lives. Thus, two spirits begin to live in one house, constantly opposing each other. For God, this is a standard situation in which He takes the whole family under special protection for the sake of one of His children, and blesses the entire household through the prayers of the believer, while at the same time teaching His son or daughter to respect the freedom of choice of their unbelieving family members, while treasuring their own freedom from the power of sin, which they receive by faith in Jesus.

Very often believers must struggle, defending their rights to freedom in the family and to the observance of God's commandments, but the Lord forbids imposing His principles on others against their will.

For example, it was revealed to me that eating unclean food is sin and abomination. And I decided to save my wife from this sin, though she did not see it that way. I threw away all her unclean food from the refrigerator and said that this would no longer have a place in our home. Then I took strict control over all finances and food purchases. I did not explain anything to her, did not ask her opinion, did not inquire into her understanding of the matter, and did not suggest that we study it together and, taking my new convictions into account, find some common solution. My holy dictatorship simply leaves no room for freedom of choice. God does not approve of such an approach, though it may seem to me the right decision.

God's way of winning hearts is very long and delicate. Sometimes a warning about the consequences of sin may be stern, direct, and sobering, but then begins a prolonged process of teaching, during which love takes into account a person's

abilities and does not force them to live by the letter of the law, but seeks to inscribe the spirit of God's law into the heart, so that a person understands why it is better to live this way and freely chooses the better path.

Freedom in love also includes the opportunity for each family member to develop as a person, making decisions that correspond to their own goals, interests, and needs. This means supporting and encouraging the self-realization and self-expression of each family member, as well as creating conditions for the discovery of potential and the achievement of personal goals and dreams.

I respect the one I love and always take his or her opinion into account, because I understand that this person may see life differently from me, and perhaps this will also change my worldview. We all influence each other, and love in this influence can lead us to unity and like-mindedness, though independently from each other.

Love feels boundaries even in the closest relationships and does not violate them. It respects another's point of view and shows the advantages of new perspectives, if they do not contradict God's truth.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read 2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 John 4:18; Galatians 5:1,13-17; 1 Corinthians 8:9; John 8:32,36; Psalm 71:1-3; 119:45; Isaiah 58:6-8; Luke 4:18-19; James 1:22-25; 1 John 5:1 in the light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What is freedom?
5. What is freedom of choice in the family?
6. Can a person be free without Christ?
7. Can believing husband and wife be unfree? In what ways can this lack of freedom manifest itself?

8. Are love and freedom of choice something in common?

9. How do you understand 1 Corinthians 7:29 in light of our lesson: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none"?

10. If I respect someone else's freedom, should I expect that my freedom of choice will also be respected?

11. Is there a risk in giving freedom of choice that the wrong path will be chosen?

12. Should we force another person to do what we consider good and right?

13. Is resentment an enemy of all freedom?

14. How can we determine if everyone in our family has freedom of choice?

15. What should we do if we do not know what freedom of choice is and are accustomed to living under the dictatorship of each other's opinions?

16. How can a person who is dependent on the opinion of others be set free?

Freedom of Choice in My Family

Freedom of choice in my family begins long before marriage. Only a truly free person can give genuine freedom to another. And it is always important to understand that my freedom is not permissiveness that allows me to sin, but the free choice of a path on which I can express my love and obedience within the framework of God's law.

The enemy of the soul offers his so-called freedom, which is nothing other than a life in sin. Sin does not liberate but enslaves my will under the power of lawlessness. Because of the increase of lawlessness, love in me grows cold, and its place is taken by the carnal nature and fear.

By deciding to dedicate my life to Christ and choosing Him as the Husband of my will, I allow God's love to teach me Heavenly principles and to cast out all fear from my heart. Through faith in Jesus, I receive complete freedom from the power of sin while living in absolute dependence on God and His power within me. Thanks to this, I skillfully resist the spirit of Satan, the temptations of this world, and my carnal nature, which try to plunge me into the slavery of sin and deprive me of my right to Eternity.

I know firsthand what sin is like inside, and how it attracts, promising many desirable pleasures. Yet the love of Christ has freed me from this satanic power and has given me true freedom.

Observing with what respect the Lord treats my decision, allowing me to choose any path while advising the best, I learn how I should also treat other people by respecting their opinions.

When choosing a life partner, I was guided not by a direct command from above about whom to take as my helper, but by listening to my heart, to sound reason, while also studying the advice of wise people and the Spirit of Prophecy, and not forgetting to pray.

And when that special person appeared in my life, who in a unique way conquered my heart, I did not deprive her of freedom of choice, but expressed my feelings of sympathy and my desire to become her friend, giving her the opportunity to decide for herself what to do in this situation. I do not know the heart and thoughts of my chosen one. I do not know her past, her tastes, and her views on life. And if at first I loved the outward appearance, then in the process of close acquaintance I discovered the inner world of this soul, which turned out to be the complete opposite of me and my views. But this did not repel me; on the contrary, it attracted me.

In friendship and communication with the one who wished to become my new friend, we are free to decide whether to develop our relationship toward building a family, to stop and remain friends, or to part ways like ships in the sea.

By choosing a friend, we allow him or her to dive deeper into our hearts and to discover those hidden talents that await their first explorer, who has a genuine interest in the uncharted source of the soul — a friend who will not be afraid to bring to light the hidden talents and treasures of the heart in order to enrich us both.

As a result, we get to know each other so well that we realize — there is no avoiding marriage. But even as we stand before the altar, we hear the pastor who has decided to unite us ask whether we agree to take each other as life companions. And we still have the freedom to say “yes” or to decline.

A new family imposes certain obligations on us that we must fulfill toward one another, being free to choose the time and manner of fulfilling them. My freedom of choice does not relieve me of the responsibility to care for my wife and to do what is expected of me. By choosing God’s daughter as my wife, I gave a promise to her Heavenly Father that I would love her in every situation of life and care for her under all circumstances and moods. I am free to choose another path — the path of self-indulgence and selfishness — but that is the path of death, and I prefer the path of love, happiness, and friendship.

Of course, our family life begins with intimate relations, which are not customary to discuss with others. Yet I will tell you that even in this, we respect one another's freedom and moods, always asking if it is the right time to develop intimacy in order to receive the desired blessing. Here, we must be guided not only by spontaneous feelings but also by the principles of purity and holiness.

In terms of food, we have different tastes and habits toward certain products. These do not change in a single day, and sometimes one has to sacrifice personal desires to eat what is not exactly to one's liking, while pretending to enjoy it. But with time, we adapt to our shared kitchen and identify the foods and recipes that nourish and strengthen our bodies and please us both.

Yet even in such unity, if I begin preparing something for the family, I first ask whether my wife will eat it or if I should make it just for myself. And my wife likewise always asks me what I would like to have for lunch.

When one of us decides to take time for fasting and prayer to discuss questions with God, we grant each other that right and do not disturb one another.

In union with the best and most beloved person, I always have many different tasks and concerns that I prefer to resolve only with Jesus, laying upon Him many things that are beyond my strength.

In the pursuit of truth, we have agreed to study the same works so that we may later discuss what we have heard or read together, but this does not obligate us to act only in this way, and each may learn what is needed at the given time.

In our family we have one faith. We are members of the same church and believe in one God. But if my wife decides to change her convictions and reconsider these matters, she has complete freedom to do so, though this does not deprive me of the right to pray for her and to offer her the better way.

We study the laws of health together, but we do not use them to strike each other. Rather, we allow each to personally choose the lifestyle that is acceptable to the other, and then we adjust to one another. If I enjoy skiing, and my wife prefers walking, I am free to find other skiing enthusiasts and sometimes spend time with them. And if my wife decides to take sewing classes or organize a club of her own interests, which I am not drawn to, I do not oppose her involvement in it.

My work in construction is not the most desired profession for my beloved, yet she does not object to me earning a living this way. She always asks me to be careful and prays for my safety.

When disagreements arise between us on various issues, we do not quarrel but grant each other the right to retain personal opinions or we strive to clarify and find the best solution.

In choosing our friends, we also have freedom, while ensuring that these friendships do not destroy our family. It is not always interesting for me to be in the company of my wife's friends and listen to their discussions of new dishes, so I am free to find an activity in the garage or something else useful.

All our freedom and respect for each other's choices is based on our mutual love for each other and for God, which has made us free and loving spouses.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read 1 Pet. 3:7; Gen. 2:16-17; Isa. 30:20-21; Rev. 3:18; Gal. 5:1, 13-14; 2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Sam. 12:22-23; Jer. 6:16; Prov. 16:29; John 8:31-36; 14:6; 1 Cor. 7:23; Matt. 24:12; Rom. 7:2 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What is the difference between true freedom and permissiveness?
5. Does freedom release married people from their family responsibilities?
6. Does my freedom in Christ give me the right to live in sin?

7. Is the dominion over the wife mentioned in Gen. 3:16 a voluntary slavery into which the woman gives herself?
8. Can the absence of love in a family make those people free?
9. In what way does love free the mind, and what freedom does it give others?
10. Are you free to leave a loving person or to live with him further?
11. Why are loving people more often hated and “bitten” than the powerful and dictatorial?
12. Do you see the similarity between Jesus’ love for you and how a husband should treat his wife?
13. Do you think love and freedom will simply come into your family if you only decide to have them but make no effort to grow and establish them?
14. What advantage does freedom give in family relationships?
15. Are you free in your family? If so, from what?

Wife

When creating our world, the Lord first prepared all the conditions for human life, and then created man himself in His image and likeness, in the image of God.

The name Adam means "humanity," and the first commandment, which was also a blessing spoken by the Creator, was as follows: "And God blessed them, and God said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every animal that creeps on the earth" Gen.1:28.

God did not simply create man. He created a family of two people capable of reproducing their own kind. The family is an image and model of Heavenly relationships. And the creation of the first people became the fruit of this Heavenly union, into which a special Divine plan was laid, designed to reveal to the entire Universe the beauty of the Deity.

Although Adam received a wife only when he began to especially need her, not understanding at the time what was to happen, nevertheless the appearance of woman in this world turned out to be the most desired event, which took place in great abundance.

The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and, taking one of his ribs, created woman from it, endowing her with Divine qualities of soul opposite to masculine ones.

Woman was created for man from the very beginning. And if Adam at some point felt lonely and could not himself find a way out of this state, then a wife was immediately given to the husband, having been conceived as his part, which the Lord handed over to him. God had to separate man in order to then unite him.

Although the first people had no choice, and they were created in each other and for each other, apparently they were quite happy in this union and had nothing against it. The Lord knew

what He was doing, and in this clear example, in the union of new people, in their human relationships, a special depth was hidden, which was to clearly testify to the entire Universe about God's love. The earthly family was an amazing mystery that all heavenly beings would have to solve throughout all endless ages.

Because of sin, relationships with the Creator were severed, and discord appeared between people. However, the family was preserved, and its institution was not abolished. The family and the Sabbath are two of God's institutions from the sinless world that were not canceled because of the fall. They were brought out of Eden and exist to this day. The enemy of the soul attacks these God's institutions most of all and does everything possible to destroy or abolish them, but the family and the Sabbath still exist, and the Lord desires to separate them from all that is unclean and present them to the world in their pristine and natural beauty.

Creating a happy family is not the goal of some inspired enthusiasts who have nothing to do. This is God's plan for the last time, which is successfully carried out by people who begin to study and delve into it.

The enemy offers the world lies and vigorously advertises them by all possible means, and people believe these lies, not wanting to know anything else. But the great power of truth is that when you know it and accept it into your heart, no falsehood can shake you or dissuade you from the truth. No arguments will force a person to believe lies when he has known and accepted truth into his mind and heart.

A wife is a woman with whom a man is in official marriage, and with whom he is in family relationships. This is a life partner with whom a person shares joys, cares, and responsibilities. A spouse can also be a source of inspiration, motivation, and support for her husband. By God's design, she is mainly the person who creates a cozy atmosphere in the home, maintaining the emotional well-being of the family. In addition, a wife can be a partner in solving everyday problems and achieving common goals.

A woman possesses an amazing ability placed in her by the Creator - to carry fruit within herself and give birth to children. In this she is irreplaceable. And after birth, a woman becomes a mother to her children and connects her life with them until death itself.

Mom is the very first and most important teacher who passes on to her children all her knowledge, her culture, her language. This is the mentor under whose influence the child's character is formed.

A wife is a friend to her husband. Although she is appointed as his helper and is under his authority, she is one whole with her family partner, has common rights with him, lives in the same house, being a full representative of her family.

A wife is a whole science that can be studied throughout earthly life without discovering all the secrets laid in her. There will never come a day when a man will say that he understood a woman and knows what constitutes her essence and what she thinks about. And the very presence in the home of such a unique being makes family relationships interesting, educational, and amazingly delicious.

A wife is also a source of emotional, spiritual, and physical pleasure for her husband. At the same time, she herself receives similar pleasure.

God has placed in human nature the attraction of man and woman to each other, which, being under the control of reason and will, unites the right people at the right time in a happy union. If someone decides to build family happiness without God as the foundation, being guided by knowledge from Hollywood entertainment culture or their personal understanding, then their marriage is doomed to unhappiness, and the family to suffering. However, God is able to restore any ruins if both partners want this and begin to make efforts, accepting God's plan.

The enemy of the soul has set a goal to discredit woman, both in the eyes of man and in her own eyes, but it should not be so. A wife should know and understand that she is the image and

likeness of God, and she is God's representative not only for her children, but also for her husband, because she is a daughter of the Heavenly King. Correct understanding of her purpose and who she is in the eyes of Heaven helps a woman always maintain her dignity and be God's representative in any situation and in any place.

Difficult life circumstances or belief in the enemy's lies can destroy a woman's self-esteem and faith in herself, but this does not mean that God has rejected her and considers her worthless. God's love is able to restore the image and likeness of the Creator in any woman, if that point of no return from Satan's nets has not been crossed, after which nothing, unfortunately, can be changed.

A wife is created for her husband to have a special influence on his thoughts and feelings, to soften and improve the man's character in many life issues, making him perfect. And a God-fearing wife is capable of this because she cooperates with Heavenly Powers and is led by God's Spirit.

Many do not believe in family happiness because they do not know its laws and do not see a clear example in their environment. But it should not be so. Happiness exists, and it only needs to be found, accepted, and made one's own. It is in complete harmony with God's principles and restores God's plan in the life of every person. And both spouses should participate in this - the man and his woman.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Eccl. 9:9; Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18,21-25; 1Cor. 11:8-9; Prov. 5:18-19; 11:16; 12:4; 14:1; 19:14; 31:30; 1Cor. 11:8-9,12; Eph. 5:33; Rev. 19:7 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Who is a wife?
5. Why did God create woman not from dust, but from man's flesh?
6. What role does a woman perform in the family?

7. Is there a difference between a home where there is no wife and a home where there is a female presence?
8. Is there a difference between a home where there is a wife and a home where there is a believing and God-loving wife?
9. How do you understand the passage from verse 1Cor 11:7: "...man is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man"?
10. Is every wife an ornament of the home and glory of her husband?
11. Is it important for a woman to understand who she is in God's eyes and how unique she is?
12. It's so wonderful that there are women in this world! Does this make you happy?
13. Does God understand woman?
14. Does the Lord desire to see His likeness and image in woman?
15. What makes a woman worthy of praise?

How to Understand a Woman?

When the question is asked about how to understand a woman, it usually brings a smile to the faces of all present. Someone expects to hear another joke on this topic, someone wants to share their observation, and someone wants to tell another anecdote. Moreover, women themselves sometimes don't mind learning something unusual about themselves. And as has become customary, the same answer is given to this question, which sounds: "No way." And since this is absolutely impossible, it's not worth trying to understand anything.

Jokes aside, but if such questions have firmly entered into common use and are accepted by society as an axiom that doesn't even need to be proven, then a generalization has occurred. All women fall under it regardless of age, intelligence, and social status. Thus, there is social generally accepted discrimination, with which women themselves quite agree. And there are those who go further and single out from the representatives of the weaker sex a special group of the most stupid, blonde women, who are united by white hair color. And the enemy of the soul so skillfully presents woman to the world in a distorted light, doing this with refined sarcasm, that even people who believe in God accept such statements without investigation.

And when it comes to female logic, then this expression causes not only a smile but laughter in many. As a result, all this unfounded sarcasm is by default directed at the Creator of that very woman, and there is unofficial humiliation of the creative abilities of the Heavenly Constructor, Who created an incomprehensible being, which is not only stupid, but also inadequate, which cannot be understood in any way.

Is this really so? Let us consider this question from a Biblical position and understand what and who stands behind this.

God created woman completely opposite to man, so that in such a different way of thinking and feeling she could become his helper in life's field.

And this opposition attracts man to woman, and woman to man, which is the Creator's design, which is very difficult for us to understand completely because of the presence of sin in the world.

Relationships between man and woman in friendly and brotherly communication or in family union carry many positive revelations for both sides, which in the right spirit and purity of thoughts enrich these people and bring abundant blessings.

If we take the process of God's creativity described in the first chapter of Genesis, we can notice that it developed from simpler to more complex, and at the very end God created woman in His image and likeness, in the image of God, placing in her nature His qualities of soul and character, so that in combination with masculine virtues this union would reflect the fullness of Divine beauty and harmony.

Sin interfered with God's design to reveal the special meaning of creating a family union, and we cannot even assume what the family would be like in a sinless world, but I think when sin is completely destroyed, never to appear again, then the Lord will reveal to the entire Universe the true meaning and spirit of family relationships.

Did the Lord create something incomprehensible to man? When I encounter something opposite to my worldview, something that looks completely different, then I naturally want to figure it out and draw something new and useful for myself.

Understanding a woman is very simple when you relate to her with love and delve into the meaning of what she says, when you try to adjust to her way of thinking and look at the world from a different angle.

In every woman is laid the desire to be beautiful and attractive, which makes her in demand and desirable in the eyes of man, and this is not a vice or something that should not be.

I think that one of the greatest desires that all the saved will have when they receive new bodies at the Second Coming of Christ will be the desire to see their new appearance in a mirror. From the reaction of our friends we will understand that

we have a beautiful appearance that will delight all the dazzlingly beautiful people around us, but most of all we will be interested to see ourselves and carefully, in detail, examine our new features of incorruptible nature, which will be ours forever. Therefore, when now a woman tidies herself up, looking in the mirror, this should not be considered something bad. She is made this way, and this cannot be taken away from her.

A woman is very easy to understand when you have friendly communication with her and listen to her attentively, not trying to bite or humiliate her. She, seeing in you her friend and brother, begins to open up more and more and explain how she sees and understands something. Love in relationships brings unity of thoughts and harmony of feelings, which makes any communication desirable and pleasant.

The fact that we differ from each other in many respects makes our conversations interesting, educational, and delicious. No one can elevate a man and raise his social status in his eyes like a woman who loves him, who sincerely admires his masculine qualities and is not ashamed to talk about it. A woman's strength is manifested in her weakness, just as a Christian's strength is in his complete dependence on God and in recognizing his powerlessness before His power.

Worldly society has gone further, inventing offensive names for those who understand their wife, respect and love her, serve her and take her wishes into account. These people are ridiculed and humiliated in every way. But don't let this confuse or disappoint you. Loving your wife is a Heavenly norm of life and a natural feat in a normal family. Loving your sister in faith is fulfilling God's commandment. Loving a woman is an opportunity to reveal to her the love of our Creator and clearly show her that she is a very valuable friend, who is no worse than you, and whom you understand perfectly.

If it is difficult for me to understand a woman in some matters, then there is the Holy Spirit, Who is able to reveal to me much more than eyes see and ears hear. The Lord is interested in us

understanding each other, discovering something new in this for ourselves and seeking such communication.

If worldly stereotypes about woman are very firmly established in my consciousness, then the Lord is able to destroy them and put His love in my heart, which sees everything differently, understands everything and everyone and humiliates no one.

If someone cannot understand a woman and declares this with sarcasm, this speaks of his stupidity, incompetence, and pride. And God resists the proud.

One can not understand someone if they speak in a different language or are deprived of reason, but our society consists, as a rule, of adequate people who can express their thoughts and feelings aloud very logically and thoroughly. And if something in the behavior or words of your dear and close women is unclear to you, then start praying about this and learning to understand them, and you will definitely succeed.

Hardly anyone would humiliate their mother with such questions, yet she is also a woman who gave you life and always cared for you. A woman can always be understood and one should strive for this, because God created her for man, so that it would be interesting for him to live with her, be friends, communicate, and marvel at the vastness of her mind.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Gen. 2:22-24; 1Sam. 25:3,23-35; Acts 1:14; 16:14-15; 21:5; 1Cor. 7:3-4,16; 11:7-9; Ps. 127:1-3; Prov. 11:16; 19:14; 31:10; Mal. 2:13-14; Matt. 27:17-20; Luke 8:1-3; John 20:11-18; 1Tim. 2:8-15 in light of this lesson.
2. What other Biblical women came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Who wants to humiliate God's creation-woman and discredit her?
5. Did David understand Abigail when she came to him to ask mercy for her husband? 1Sam. 25.
6. Do you understand the works of the Spirit of Prophecy? Are you not confused that they were written by a woman?

7. Are there women in your environment whom you respect and understand, and listen to?
8. How do you understand the expression "love understands everything" in light of our lesson?
9. Will a loving heart humiliate someone or not take them seriously?
10. What should a woman do who has no authority with her husband and cannot influence him in any way?
11. Does the Lord watch how His sons treat their wives and women in general?
12. Should the advice from 1Tim 2:12: "But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet" be understood literally and not communicate with the husband and not open one's mouth in church?
13. Did this lesson help to understand and see something important?
14. Does the Lord call us to understand each other?
15. If in some cases you cannot understand a woman, is it worth generalizing this misunderstanding and applying it to all women and cases?

Family Offenses

If we try to understand why family relationships are destroyed and find the root of evil, we will understand that the offense of one or two partners has closed all paths to reconciliation and deprived them of the desire to fix anything.

Offense is one of the most common types of pride, which affects the mind and closes God's Spirit's access to a broken heart. Offense blocks consciousness and common sense, giving the carnal nature power over the will and feelings of the offended person.

Offense can be caused by wrong behavior, insult, or causing pain from the spouse, which accordingly causes a bad reaction to such treatment. This reaction can be expressed by retaliatory aggression, irritation, despondency, or withdrawal for a prolonged time. A lump comes to the victim's throat because of crying injustice, and the mind refuses to seek a solution to this problem, closing all access to the heart. And the only way out in such a state of mind is to break off relationships and distance oneself from the source of pain.

And if spouses are forced to sleep in the same bed due to lack of another place to spend the night, then a bed of any width will seem very cramped to them. In such situations, many decide to somehow smooth over the conflict through physical intimacy, letting feelings and hormonal experiences overshadow the pain of offenses and be distracted by something pleasant. But the root of the problem remains, and there's no getting away from it. The next conflict of interests and opinions brings even more pain and misunderstandings.

But one must somehow live. And what to do when I feel like a victim of crying injustice and consider myself absolutely right in my view of the situation? And in such a state of soul, I seek allies and like-minded people who will support me, justly condemn the offender, and give "good" advice on how best to take revenge for the harm caused to my soul.

Do you think it's possible to solve urgent problems with such a spirit and do it correctly? Yet many for some reason choose this path and then carry deep wounds within themselves, not even guessing that another way out of any crisis is possible.

During meetings and dates, people in love had enough wisdom and restraint to go around sharp corners and not notice many things, but when similar misunderstandings happen in the family, for some reason one doesn't want to approach them wisely.

It happens that restraint or weakness of character helps avoid conflict situations and not react immediately, but accumulate all offenses in the heart, believing that they will somehow leave on their own. But sometime this cup also overflows and an explosion occurs that destroys everything. And if both sides in the family are easily offended and consider themselves right in every respect, then finding a wise solution can be simply impossible.

Offense can also arise when I create in my mind a model of how a person should behave and react to some action. And when they act differently, this causes protest in me.

Time can also partially smooth over my offenses and draw my attention to other events, but it will not remove the problem of my heart.

There is a way out of this swamp into which pride drives the human soul deceived by the enemy. One must understand that any offense is sin that kills me and deprives me of the right to Eternity. No matter how right I consider myself, God does not welcome my offendedness in any form. The only thing I need is repentance and power from above for victory over myself. The spirit of forgiveness gives the Lord power to cleanse my heart from offense and malice, but this does not make me a victor. Victory comes only when I choose love for my opponent and in exactly this spirit begin to react to their behavior and attitude toward me.

There is another side of family offense - this is when my heart abides in God's love and wishes all household members good

and happiness, while the opposite side does not have such a spirit and sees me as guilty in everything. Life on a powder keg results, which periodically explodes, bringing harm to itself. Then it calms down until the next explosion. Not every person likes to live in a minefield, but not everyone has a choice in this matter, so one has to resign oneself to such a fate and develop good thoughts and feelings within oneself.

Jesus was often surrounded by people who were offended at Him and demonstratively turned away from Him, but the Lord did not respond to these people in the same spirit. He had enough love for any trial, and He came out Victor from this struggle. Now He wants us to have the same power and the same spirit in the struggle with our carnal "I" and to react correctly to temptations from outside.

If I allow God to remove the root of offendedness from my heart and teach my will to forgive everyone and everything, and then fill me with His love, then there will be no talk of any divorces. Such thoughts will not even come to mind.

I don't always have the ability within myself to solve all my issues related to emotional experiences. With my mind I understand that I need to somehow live and react differently, but the heart acts faster and incorrectly. Then it can be difficult to fix something. Therefore, turning to a specialist in these matters can become a good solution to many problems.

Lonely people usually don't get offended due to the absence of an irritant. But this doesn't mean they are clean from such a spirit. However, in a state of loneliness, one can begin to learn the right things and become a victor before the battle begins. The fire of trials will come and expose all my weaknesses.

Offense is a dead animal in a clean spring. And this animal by its decomposition poisons everything around itself, so it's impossible to be healthy and happy, believing that this dead creature is safe for me and for those whom I give these waters to drink. One cannot ignore it. And only I can remove this corpse from my source of life if I understand how dangerous and poisonous it is.

But the saddest thing happens when I get used to my offendedness and even try to somehow love in such a state of spirit, convincing myself that I am a loving and pure-hearted Christian. And only eye salve from above will help me see my true condition.

The family is the most valuable institution in which happiness cannot reign if offense lives in it even in one of the spouses. Loving my offensive other half, I will be happy because I love, but I can never call my family happy when such a spirit is manifested.

We must build happiness together, watching that nothing unclean weaves into the harmony of our relationships. Our love for each other helps us see all dangers and immediately discuss all misunderstandings, finding a way out in apology, forgiveness, respect, and tender care for the other's feelings. We don't give the enemy the slightest chance to push us toward offenses, because it's more interesting for us to love each other and yield than to fight for our rights and be offended. Love gives the right answer to any disagreement and shows the more excellent way. And most often love simply doesn't give cause for the arising of an unclean spirit. Why give power to what destroys and poisons?

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Matt. 5:44; 6:14-15; 18:32-35; Rom. 12:9-10; Lev. 25:17; James 4:5-8; Gen. 16:5; Jer. 6:6-7; Lam. 3:59; Ezek. 45:9; Mal. 2:16; 1Cor. 6:7-8; 1Pet. 1:22 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What is offense?
5. Should one distinguish pride from emotional or physical trauma or pain?
6. What kind of offense is discussed in the lesson?
7. If someone in the family intentionally causes someone pain and offense, will the injured party be guilty of their offense?

8. Do you know such people who are offended at the whole world and are always dissatisfied with something? Is it pleasant for you to be in their company?
9. What benefit does offense bring to family relationships?
10. How to fight the bitter feeling of injustice when my other half doesn't agree with me and has their own opinion?
11. What curse does the spirit of offense bring into the family?
12. Whose side is God on in family quarrels?
13. How can love solve issues with offenses?
14. Is it easy for you to love those at whom you are bitterly offended?
15. Is your offense a valid reason for breaking off relationships?

Our Family World

My family is a separate state that my wife and I created ourselves and within which we continue to improve existing laws, expand our borders, identify crimes, and do much else to make life in this country safe, comfortable, and bring much joy to both of us.

At first we didn't know what we were building, but we dreamed of something good, like in the movies. However, we realized that someone else's family model might be interesting, but in reality it doesn't fit into our size and expectations at all.

Living with parents in their countries, we adopted some family traditions and values and tried to establish them in our home too, but after small conflicts we understood that we need to create our own republic that will suit both of us.

Life in the church and our active participation in church events also brought corresponding norms of behavior and worldview into our world, which we decided to make part of our country. But over time we realized that not every public behavior is acceptable in personal relationships. Also, not everything we allow ourselves to do at home is decent to display publicly.

We are not opponents of something new and interesting, and we always want to try everything in our personal sphere, choose what's suitable from this and then stick to it.

God's law is the foundational criterion for our country of all our internal regulations and traditions. We make sure that everything is within the framework of God's approval and blessing. And when these boundaries exist and are observed, then within their limits we can do, build, decide, and plan everything we desire.

Our country is located not only in our home, but also in our hearts, and we always take it with us wherever we go together, without imposing our decisions on others.

In our relationships there are things that we never bring outside and that we never tell anyone about. For example, our

appearance corresponds to Dress Reform, and we never, even as a joke, when we are completely alone, exchange clothes with each other. But when we are just the two of us, and no one sees us, we allow ourselves to wear very short clothing or not wear it at all. We won't allow ourselves to appear before you in such a form, but when we are alone, this doesn't embarrass us, and sometimes even makes us happy. The presence of a third person in our home immediately puts us within the framework of decency, and we make sure that all parts of the body hidden from outside eyes always remain such, even when we bend over or raise our hands up.

We don't put our intimate relationships, caresses, kisses, and the like on public display, although we don't mind practicing this and looking for something new and pleasant when we are completely alone. The most we allow ourselves in public is to hold hands or hold tightly to handrails and each other in public transport so as not to fall. Also when meeting or parting we may hug and quickly kiss each other on the cheeks, and leave the rest for later, when there are no witnesses around.

Our personal communication differs very much from what we say in the presence of other people. We have our intimate names, which we joyfully call each other and respond to, but we never pronounce them in the presence of others.

There were cases when our friends accidentally heard how tenderly we call each other, and then they also tried calling us by these words. In their mouths such words sounded with sarcasm or even mockery, which taught us to keep such things under control.

We share much of what is accepted in our home with people who come to visit us or spend a long time in our company. And we don't know whether everything can be told and whether everything can be shared with everyone. But through trials, mistakes, mockery, or insults we begin to understand over time where we can let outsiders in, and which spheres of our country should be closed to them.

Everything that happens between the two of us, we leave between ourselves and God. Only the Lord is initiated into all our secrets, and He has direct access to all our relationships and decisions.

But with all our closedness we try to be very open and hospitable for receiving guests, for friendship, and for personal communication with dear friends. There are cases when in conversation with other people, in order to help them with something, we have to tell about what's happening in our family. But at the same time there's a request that the person not retell our secrets to other people. But this is rather an exception to the rules than the norm of our life.

We are accustomed to sorting out and discussing all our conflicts together, not initiating outsiders into them, but we are not opponents of help from other people when it's difficult for us ourselves to decide something correctly.

Our country has Christian roots, and we joyfully accept into our laws any amendments and innovations that will make our citizens more loving and happy.

Our family traditions are established with our mutual consent and then bring us much pleasure. For example, when we have nothing to talk about, I sit on the sofa, and my wife on the armrest, we tenderly embrace, and each of us silently thinks about our own things, not peeking into the other's thoughts. We can sit like this for a very long time without saying a word, but we don't teach others to do the same.

Our bedroom is closed to everyone forever. This is a special region where even the closest relatives cannot enter.

We understand that such festive days as the Sabbath are mandatory for our home, and we always rest together on this day. But we also have some family holidays that have no Biblical basis, however we still celebrate them with each other, and sometimes invite guests too. The Lord has given us freedom to establish in our country those holidays in which we can manifest the spirit of love and gratitude for the years lived, for the blessings received, for the wedding anniversary, for

finishing some education, for the light poured out, and much else. We decide ourselves how and where to celebrate these events, what to eat, and whom to invite.

Sometimes people come to visit us without invitation, and we don't mind a visa-free regime, but this forces us to cancel all our plans and orient ourselves very quickly in the situation that has arisen. Despite this, we decided to rejoice in uninvited guests and receive them with hospitality, necessarily offering them food if they are hungry. We also decided not to violate our eating regime because of spontaneous events in our home, and often guests eat our food without us. But when we go to someone for a dinner invitation, then we make sure our stomachs are empty by this time.

When we come to our parents in their families, then we, although we are the dearest people to them, don't violate their traditions and laws, but simply love them.

Our family is our world, mine and my spouse's, and it will never become yours with your rules and principles. Although we don't mind learning something and bringing something new and useful into our relationships.

All our relatives and friends will never become citizens of our country, although they may have free access to many of its regions. We have the right from the Lord to build what suits both of us, and the Lord respects our laws and blesses us in them.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Gen. 2:24; 2Cor. 6:14-15; Amos 3:3; Eccl. 4:9-11; 5:17-19; 9:9; Gal. 5:13-15; Eph. 5:8-11,22,25,23; Rom. 12:9-10; 1Cor. 7:33-34,39; Prov. 5:18-19; 19:14 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Can married people organize their family at their discretion, or should they take into account traditions accepted in a given place?

5. Does Heaven reckon with our order in the home and our daily schedule?
6. Do you think husband and wife are masters in their family? Won't such a hierarchy be a challenge to all their friends?
7. Is it possible that if something brings happiness to other families and unites them, then in your family it's inappropriate or vice versa?
8. Will there be a difference between family happiness built on Biblical principles from that which is built on worldly traditions? If yes, then in what way, since both bring happiness?
9. Should my parents, relatives, or friends establish rules in my family if they have more experience in family life?
10. What to do if we start establishing our own rules in our family, and because of this our parents deprive us of material support?
11. Does freedom in the family mean freedom from others' opinions, rules, standards, and values?
12. Don't these lessons impose alien values on you that destroy your established family relationships and concepts about family?
13. What benefit will we derive if we have absolute freedom from others' opinions in our family, but don't know what to do with this?
14. Does freedom of choice of one's path to family happiness imply freedom to sin and live as everyone lives?
15. Can there be true family happiness where there is no God in the heart and in relationships?

Small Things of Family Life

Our entire life consists of various small things that we live through, produce, and receive. And all our time consists of short seconds and minutes that sequentially add up to hours, days, and years. Any construction of a large house begins with laying the first small stone, and a large city begins with the first house.

If you look at any oil painting, you can notice that it entirely consists of small strokes that the artist applied in a certain order, giving form and appropriate color to those objects depicted on the canvas. And the longest speech is made up of short words that give meaning to what is said.

A person lives and maintains their vital activity thanks to brief inhales and exhales, short heartbeats, brief meals. And a road of thousands of kilometers begins with the first small step.

Our families live by small decisions, cares, discoveries, events that bring something good and interesting, in which we then feel comfortable, or something sad and unbearable, from which we so want to run away.

Family happiness is not something huge that falls on us from Heaven as inevitability. This is what we begin to build together, applying small efforts day after day, stone after stone, stroke after stroke, and as a result we get exactly what we were creating.

One incorrectly placed stone may not so strongly affect the strength of the entire building, but it can spoil the entire appearance with its incongruity.

Small things of family life are important components from which, essentially, the entire family is formed. Small signs of attention, kind words, insignificant deeds and actions, small gifts, and many other barely noticeable things done in the spirit of love draw a picture of our family happiness, helping us construct something great and amazing from these small things.

I often noticed how some tiny good thought turned into a good idea and became a goal for achieving which great deeds were accomplished, consisting of small efforts.

What does it cost me, making a small decision, to wash dishes or take out garbage not according to schedule? Practically nothing, but this brings a small good stroke to the atmosphere of our happiness.

There are small things that need to be paid for with silver, for example, buying a bouquet of flowers, but they also gladden the heart and bring unforgettable good emotions.

If you don't attach importance to such small deeds of love and wait for something, as they love to show in movies, grandiose and pompous, without applying personal small efforts to fulfill insignificant tasks, then you can wait your whole life without getting what you desire.

One person decided to become a millionaire. He began to dream about what great deeds he could accomplish thanks to his fortune. And he became so mired in his dreams that he simply didn't want to spend his precious time on some small things of life, considering it not a "millionaire's" business to scatter over small things. As a result, he achieved nothing, but in his ambitions became an unreachable monument to human stupidity.

Another person, a friend of the failed millionaire, decided to set aside funds according to his ability each week and invest this money in promising projects. He studied the market and its interconnections, saw peculiarities and possibilities. Sometimes he risked something to understand what was good and what was bad, and drew conclusions for himself, choosing the right course for his investments. His capital gradually multiplied, and money worked and attracted outside investors. Having earned his first million, he didn't spend it on his personal needs, considering that not so much is needed in this life, but invested these funds in the next project, which brought corresponding profit.

If I decide to become a millionaire of my family happiness, then, in the big picture, I will begin to understand that the same principles and laws operate in this sphere as in any business, so big dreams won't change much in my life. But when I turn to God with small prayers, begin to study the market of family relationships, choose the one who is dear to my heart and maintains communication with God, then a long-term perspective of interesting changes in our life appears. If I begin to invest in this person my strength, my love, my material values, my time, and my life, then most likely, over time, these investments and insignificant contributions will begin to multiply and return to me with profit, which I can more successfully continue to invest in our relationships.

And if after some time we decide to create a common business called family, then we will have a joint goal for our combined capital investments, so that we receive all the profit that will serve us for further plans. And everything grandiose that we might achieve consists of small good decisions that we weren't afraid to implement. In this common cause we don't make a mountain out of a molehill, although we understand that elephants don't appear from emptiness either. And if we strive to get what we've never had before, then we need to begin doing what we've never done before.

Our wealth is in our power, and we understand the true value of those small things that seem insignificant but make a very large contribution to our happiness.

The most interesting occupation is extracting the precious from the worthless. Although we are a small family that externally differs in nothing from other families, inside our world we are very rich because we listened to the advice of the Faithful Witness from Rev. 3:18 and began to try acquiring what truly enriches us, and through us each other.

Love may seem to a person like some small thing of life, but we, taking it into our business, learned to extract the most precious treasures of knowledge and experiences that we didn't have before and about which we didn't even dare to dream.

Great love in our relationships consists of small signs of attention, of small good deeds and insignificant things that we accept in the spirit of love and agreement. We don't have a certain formula of happiness revealing our big secret. We rejoice in everything and give thanks for everything that happens to us, because for people who love each other, all things work together for good.

Eternity, however big and eternal it may be, doesn't frighten us with its scale. It too will consist of small deeds that we will accomplish day after day, gaining experience through solving small questions.

Any education begins with the first short lesson, which opens a small door into the big world of great knowledge.

And our spiritual life began with the first small prayer that was addressed to the Great God.

And we must accept that our earth and we ourselves consist of tiny atoms, which in interaction with God's power and wisdom composed what the entire visible and invisible world is created from.

Inviting such a Big and Great God into our family business, we are not afraid that He will bring huge happiness into our family that will crush us. We know that the Lord will give us day by day little by little what will become big and good.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Gal. 5:9; Ex. 23:30; Eccl. 5:10; Rom. 8:24; Jer. 15:19-21; Ps. 36:16; Matt. 25:23; Luke 16:10; 19:17; James 3:4-5; 2Cor. 8:12-15; Isa. 40:26 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What are the small things of life?
5. Is God interested in our small cares?
6. What do big things consist of and how do big deeds begin?
7. Is love something small or not?
8. How does love manifest itself in important and big deeds?
9. Where did you come from?

10. What does the Plan of Salvation consist of?
11. Are there any small things in your life that don't interest God at all?
12. Why is it necessary to understand the importance of small things in family relationships?
13. Can a small thing in your eyes be a big problem for someone?
14. What will a person become who won't react to family small things of life, but only solve global questions?
15. Are you interested in dealing with someone who isn't interested in your small things?

Man in the Family

A man is the complete opposite of a woman and is arranged completely differently, which can be difficult to imagine. He will never become a woman and will never see things the way she sees them. His thinking will always differ from the feminine, and by appearance it won't be difficult to distinguish him among representatives of the weaker sex.

An adult man in his magnificence represents a perfect model that will be impossible to change to one's taste, adjust to oneself, or improve. Such stability is placed in man by the Creator Himself, which often prevents changing opinion if it has already formed. It may seem that such constancy in views is stubbornness, but it is exactly this that helps bring started work to completion, see the goal and go toward it, not losing common sense in critical situations.

We are not considering here people with damaged minds or those inclined toward abusive behavior, so if you are surrounded by other people, don't rush to conclusions that all men are like them.

God created man for the family. And when the first person understood this and began to seek someone like himself, he received a woman as a gift.

The union of man with woman becomes a springboard to more perfect development of both spouses, to studying previously unknown character traits and to many advantages that family gives. It is precisely in the family that the most precious talents, negative character traits, and peculiarities of different views on life are revealed. But, strange as it may seem, it is precisely the opposition of opinion and thinking that attracts two completely different individuals to each other most of all.

A man thinks rationally, while a woman thinks emotionally. For example, a bouquet of flowers in a man's understanding is a completely useless thing. It's not edible, wilts quickly, costs a lot, brings joy for a short time, is not subject to long-term and

repeated use, but causes many positive emotions in most women, which are pleasant to observe and receive.

There is a concept that men love with their eyes, while women love with their ears. And this should be taken into account even in the family. Beauty is given to a woman in order to attract a worthy man to herself, and then gladden her husband's heart for all subsequent life. And to the husband, even when he has gotten used to the presence of a woman in his home, it is not at all indifferent how she looks, and it's difficult for him to get used to the fact that for the sake of others his spouse transforms into the most beautiful image, while at home she may allow herself to wear old and torn clothes, not comb her hair, and be as she is.

A wife wants to hear words of love, admiration, and care from her beloved. She must understand that he is a leader who will protect her, and behind whose back she will feel good. And when a woman feels good, then she may think that the man will also feel good from similar experiences, but the husband has other expectations.

Every man greatly needs admiration, praise, and respect from his wife. For him these sincere manifestations are spiritual bread that he will always gladly consume and receive.

When a husband comes home hungry, then an experienced spouse understands that he needs to be fed, and only then tell about all the events and problems that happened during the day. As for tasty food, everything is clear there, but it's worth remembering that your husband is hungry for your praise and admiration of him. He may never say this about it, but he always desires it. And since he is hungry, he needs to be fed exactly this, watching which particular compliment is more to his heart and raises his self-esteem. Don't be afraid to do this. You won't overfeed him. If the husband doesn't receive this from his wife, then he will seek a feeder in another place.

When a man sees that he is not respected, then all other efforts of his wife become secondary and not so important to him. Understanding that he is nobody, he cannot make his wife a

queen. If he is a doormat for wiping feet for you, then your status will be the same. You will be the wife of this doormat and nothing more.

The Bible speaks about a king and about what rights he possesses and what power he has. If this same principle and respect is applied to a man, then he will quickly appreciate such treatment and decide to make his wife a queen, whom he will care for and love.

Not many men are generous with compliments to their wives, especially in expressing their feelings or pronouncing words of love. But if this is important for the wife, then she needs to somehow convey to her husband that she needs this, and make sure that he understood her.

Not all men can simultaneously do many things, so they shouldn't be loaded with something else if they are busy with some work.

When you want to tell your husband something, then first make sure that he hears you and understands what you are talking about. At this moment he may be thinking about other global questions and be absolutely deaf to all your speeches not because you are uninteresting to him, but because he didn't manage to switch to his wife until he finished thinking about all his ideas. As a result, he won't fulfill any of your requests because he simply didn't hear them. Don't be offended by this. You should catch the moment when he is listening specifically to you, and then speak about what he needs to know.

Men don't know how to guess about your plans and expectations. If you need their attention, kind words, or care, then they need to be told about this directly. Your hints or desires are not always clear to men. If you dream about changes in your family and believe that your husband should guess everything himself, then you will have to dream for a long time yet. Specificity of what you need will help quickly get what's necessary.

God's love works miracles of amazing changes over any man. What is sometimes beyond a woman's power can only be done

by the Lord. Therefore, ask God to talk with your husband and convey to him what is very important for you. God knows how to answer such prayers.

If you like to teach your husband, give him valuable advice and instructions, scold him and say what a good-for-nothing he is, then remember that all this only destroys relationships and distances the man from you. He knows better than you how to live and what to do, but for the sake of peace in the family he has to endure such things and seek his place and respect for himself outside the home.

No husband likes when someone raises their voice at him or shouts. Therefore, if you are bursting with such desires, do this away from your husband to your phone. He will endure everything and forgive, but the man's mind can receive irreparable damage.

Sometimes husbands experience a reboot of the mind, and during this time they may not think about anything, not talk about anything, and even not understand what is happening to them. This property of the soul can be seen in all its beauty while fishing. You shouldn't be afraid of this, but should understand that such a state is a norm of life. If there's no fishing rod, then the husband will find another way to disconnect from the world.

God created us different, and therefore it's worth studying these differences and in love for each other make new discoveries for ourselves in this sphere, not being embarrassed to share them with each other.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Gen. 2:18; Phil. 4:8; Prov. 11:16; 12:4; 14:1; 19:13-14; 31:25-30; 2Cor. 1:12; Eph. 5:22-24,33; 1Pet. 3:1-6; Amos 3:3; 1Tim. 2:9-13 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What other peculiarities of men do you know? Do you agree that this lesson doesn't list all the differences between man and woman?

5. Why did the Lord create us so different, and then also unite us into one whole?
6. What will happen if a wife judges her husband by herself and attributes her soul qualities to him?
7. Why is it important to know and understand the peculiarities of differences between man and woman?
8. Are you planning to use new knowledge about the opposite sex for the benefit of your family?
9. Does the Lord know how to find an approach to a man's heart?
10. Do you believe that God can produce more changes in any man in a short time than all his wife's efforts in her entire life?
11. Should one remake a husband to one's taste? Will something good come out of this?
12. Should one treat one's husband like a big child?
13. What to do if it's difficult for you to accept that your husband is not like you, and moreover is appointed to be your head?
14. What new did you learn for yourself in this lesson?
15. Is it difficult for you to understand a man, if you are a woman?

How to Understand a Man?

For some reason it is commonly believed that a woman is the most mysterious being, which is very difficult to understand. But it turned out that this is not so at all, if you approach this question very seriously. A woman can and should be understood. But how can a woman understand a man who thinks differently, is arranged completely differently, doesn't react to emotional fluctuations, and sometimes behaves very strangely contrary to all expectations?

The main thing that women need to understand is that a man is not a girlfriend who has similar experiences and hormonal disorders and immediately understands what is being discussed, knowing the essence of the problem from within. Men are far from such physiological and emotional changes and perceive reality more soberly and calmly. If he is informed about how the female organism and her thinking are arranged, then he can understand her desires and expectations, but if he is ignorant in this matter, then one shouldn't expect sympathy or support from him. A man simply won't understand your foreign language of feelings and will consider any claims against himself unfair and unfounded.

A man and his character is that area of natural sciences that every woman needs to discover, study, and navigate for herself, like a fish in water. Currently there are many studies and new data in this area that the internet offers, but when turning to such sources of information, it's worth remembering that people not born again may present you with one-sided information about the carnal inclinations of the stronger half of humanity and try to describe its characteristics apart from God.

It's worth noting that a believing man differs in many parameters from one who doesn't have personal relationships with Christ, and therefore is arranged completely differently and thinks differently.

What wounds a woman's soul may be an ordinary scratch for her husband, which he won't even pay attention to. He is simply

arranged this way and doesn't experience everything as deeply as his wife.

If this man is your husband, with whom you have lived for a long time and have common children, this doesn't mean that you completely understand him and have studied him so thoroughly that there's nothing left to discover. Just as it's impossible to say that you know everything about the World Ocean if you live on its shore but have never explored its depths, so it can be said about a man who is familiar to you as a family member but has never let you into his hidden depths.

When I decide to study Chinese, then in the textbook I see nothing but hieroglyphs and understand nothing. But over time I begin to delve into the meaning and significance of each stroke and discover an amazing world of new culture. And the more understandable this language becomes to me, the more interesting it is to learn everything that was previously inaccessible.

Knowing your husband happens only when he loves you, accepts your respect and reverence for himself, receives from you everything necessary that his body and soul need, and sees your genuine interest in him as an amazing person whom you wish to study, understand, research, in order to admire him even more and gladden his heart.

Men are not such closed personalities and impregnable bastions as it may seem with constant contact with them. But the windows of the soul can be tightly closed from one careless word or wrong intonation in the voice. And nothing can open them except your sincere love and constant respect addressed to him.

Don't think that all men know themselves and understand how they are arranged. They too are ignorant in this matter and sometimes spend their whole lives on autopilot of the settings placed in them by the Creator, never understanding how everything happens. This is like when I get behind the wheel of a car and know how to use everything in the cabin, but have no idea what happens under the hood. And the car goes, listening

to the commands of my legs and hands, even if I don't understand how the internal combustion engine works and what it's needed for.

A wife is given to a husband to help him discover himself, his inner world, his abilities, and direct all these discoveries for the common good for building a happy family.

Ignorance in knowing oneself and one's family partner is inherent in both sides, and therefore instead of blaming each other and humiliating for significant differences in views and reactions to one or another question, it's worth thinking about how well I know myself and how my life friend is arranged.

If spouses have mutual interest in studying each other and discovering themselves in all the depths of their nature, then endless perspectives in this knowledge open before them. They will be as limitless as you allow them to develop.

God placed Eternity in our relationships with Him, during which we will constantly discover something new, great, and inaccessible in God's character that we didn't know before. And these discoveries will never end.

Also in knowing each other, husband and wife have no limit after which they cannot discover anything more in each other. I know such families in which people lived their whole lives, have grandchildren, but don't know each other and are surprised at how strange and incomprehensible this spouse is, not even trying to understand why they are like this.

It should be taken into account that sin in relationships blocks the heart and mind in you and your partner and presents a person's character in a distorted form, and in such a state it's difficult to discover anything, except perhaps another vice, which doesn't bring joy.

Love from God destroys all barriers, opens closed doors, fills life with light, and brings beautiful things into family relationships that gladden both spouses. Love teaches to build everything correctly, respect another's opinion, understand

their desires and feelings, take into account circumstances and facts of life, and share oneself in different situations.

When love is mutual and there are no boundaries for entering a man's heart, then it's up to you to decide what to do with this. Love doesn't force you to study someone and understand them. It quietly waits for your interest and your activity.

If you don't understand your husband, then you shouldn't blame him for this; maybe you yourself don't want this or don't know how to do it. It's not always easy to start what you've never done before. And approaches to your husband's heart may be like barricades that he created to protect himself from your attacks. But love will destroy all this. It's never too late to apologize for past mistakes and offer something new and good in future perspective. A husband is not a stranger, and it will be easier for him to restructure under your research and learn together with you to discover something amazing in himself, worthy of admiration and compliment.

Love teaches to respect your husband and in this respect gives him everything necessary for the soul. Discovering the new world of your man for yourself, you will understand that he is created for respect and cannot be a man without this, and if he doesn't receive this at home, he finds such treatment in another place.

Studying the arrangement of her husband, a wise wife will understand that all men are similar to each other in soul, and will treat them with respect, understanding their needs, considering them unique as well.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read 1Cor. 7:12-17; Rom. 12:9-21; 1Pet. 1:22; 2:17; Prov. 2:10-15; 11:16; 14:1; 31:26-31; Ps. 127:1-6; Eccl. 4:9-12 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Is it necessary to understand a man?
5. Can there be problems in the family due to not understanding each other?

6. What will give a wife knowledge about who her husband is according to God's design?
7. What happens when a wife judges her husband by herself?
8. Will it be humiliating for a woman if she decides to make her husband her king?
9. Should a man fight for his right to be the head of the family if the wife doesn't think so?
10. Do you think you will learn something more about your husband if you begin to study him?
11. Should one take into account the husband's temperament and not expect changes from him in this regard?
12. If your acquaintance's husband is better than yours, should you inform your spouse about this?
13. Do men know themselves and how they are arranged, and what their difference from women is? Do they all possess such insight?
14. Are you inclined to study people of the male gender in order to better understand them?
15. Do you think men will treat with respect those women who understand them?

Respect for Husband

In the world there are many people who are customarily respected and to whom reverence is shown. These may be famous or wealthy personalities. People who have power over you, such as a boss or president, those who are much older than you or stronger. Sometimes a person is forced to respect such people because it's accepted in society and is considered a norm of life.

Respect is conscious recognition of the value and dignity of another person, their rights and feelings, their religious and moral freedom. This is a manifestation of care and courtesy toward personality. This is physical and psychological inviolability, attentive attitude toward the rights and needs of another, honoring them as higher than oneself. Respect is manifested in accepting opinion and choice of life path, in attentive attitude, in the desire to be useful and timely in providing help, in selfless service.

Respect for another person is not considered something humiliating, because it is in Heaven's eyes a mandatory part of God's design even among holy beings. It also implies a person's awareness of their own value and dignity, which God's son or daughter possesses.

Love is a manifestation of respect for every person regardless of how much higher or lower they are than you in social status.

Respect for husband is conscious understanding of this natural need of every man that is not a wife's obligation, which is an extremely important aspect of his vital activity for him. A husband needs this like regular nutrition, like water and light.

There was a time when I still couldn't do anything in my professional activity and didn't know the language of the country I moved to live in, but very much wanted to be a builder and work in this sphere. And I decided that the most suitable place for me was to be a builder's assistant, which happened as a gift from the Lord. This was a woe-assistant who taught his boss patience, endurance, and the search for

understandable expressions so that work would go without mistakes and delays. It was very difficult for me to help do the right things without knowing the laws of construction, but I learned and studied this science day by day, year by year. Soon I became a mason, then a foreman, and after some time opened my own company, and now I myself bear full responsibility for the execution of work. And it is precisely now that I understand that having all this experience and knowledge of construction laws, I can be a very professional assistant, foresee mistakes and understand in advance what needs to be done, from which side to approach solving different tasks.

God gave woman to man as a helper, placing in her the potential of creative and intellectual abilities that are not characteristic of man but are available in great assortment in every woman. This potential doesn't reveal itself and become in demand immediately, but day by day, year by year, a wife learns life wisdom and acquires necessary skills and knowledge in building a happy family. And, being in fact of creation and God's design a more perfect and developed personality, she is capable of very professionally fulfilling the role of helper, while respecting the one to whom she was given by God.

A husband, being according to Heaven's design the boss of his family, teaches his protégé many family types of improvements, personally participating in this and respecting the one who was given to him by God.

Respect is not some complex action to which one needs to force oneself with all remaining strength. This is a natural desire to honor the one who lives with you under one roof.

A man feels very well how much he is respected and how this is manifested. He sees everything in this attitude. And you can't deceive him by presenting a fake. Having complete intimacy with his wife, he feels every movement of her mood and how sincere she is toward him. And when respect flows from a pure heart naturally, then the man gladly accepts this as due, although he may not show that this is pleasant to him, and is not obliged to do so.

When everything in the family is in its place, and everyone fulfills the role that the Creator of the family intended, then relationships will develop harmoniously and correctly.

If a husband decided to change his religious views and stopped adhering to God's commandments, this doesn't give the wife the right to stop showing respect to him. On the contrary, in her love and care for him she can show her husband God's love and help him return to the true path, if nothing threatens her life.

The gift of respect and understanding of how it should manifest itself is given by God and is written in the heart. God did not assign the wife to rule over her husband and does not approve of such a spirit. Any anger, shouting, grumbling, offense, evil speaking, dissatisfaction toward the head of the family the Lord regards as disrespect toward Himself.

It is not the husband who creates authority for himself as head of the wife, but this responsibility is entrusted to the wife. And with her respect for her man she very successfully fulfills God's purpose and makes her husband spiritually satisfied, worthy, and significant in the eyes of other household members and her friends.

For some men it's enough that they not be hindered in implementing all their plans and always be nearby. He is satisfied when his opinion is listened to without unnecessary comments. Another expects admiration and praise addressed to him, to understand that he has an excellent support group that is generous with kind words of approval and will always find in him something to rejoice about. When respecting a husband, it's important to understand his love language and express your attitude precisely in this language. But it's worth remembering that an extra kind word addressed to the husband, said in the right place and at the right time, won't be excessive.

If a man doesn't receive worthy respect in his home, he won't die from such treatment, but will automatically seek it in another place, spending his time outside the home or outside the family. And he will definitely find those who will respect and value him or at least create such an appearance.

Love consists of respect, and this can be understood by seeing how much God respects His creation and human choice, even if it goes against God's plans.

Respect for husband is like good seed that, having sprouted, will bring good fruit in relationships. And this fruit will nourish not only your man, but yourselves as well.

For a husband not to perish from hunger, it will be enough to boil potatoes in their skins and make scrambled eggs. He will eat this and receive reinforcement of strength, but will not gain that pleasure that his soul needs. Also in showing respect, if unconditional love is present and the desire to make the husband happy and if his mind is not damaged, your attitude and all your deeds will be very tasty, desirable, and in demand in his eyes.

In respect for her husband, a wife learns submission to God's will, preparing to manifest a similar spirit in dealing with other men. And they will see and feel this and begin to respond in kind, as they receive what they always need.

It's worth always remembering this natural need of male consciousness and not being afraid to give the husband what he so needs.

A wife has a need to be loved, and she may decide that her husband needs this too, but he needs respect more, and this is worth remembering.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Rom. 12:9-10; Lev. 19:32; 1Pet. 1:22; 2:17; Phil. 2:1-5; 2:25-30; James 2:1-4; Ps. 2:12; John 12:26; 1Cor. 15:16; 1Sam. 9:6; 15:30; 2Kings 5:1; Eccl. 10:1; Ezek. 22:7-8; Acts 5:34; 1Thess. 5:11-13 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. How can one respect a husband so that it would be pleasant to Heaven?
5. Should one ask the husband himself what kind of respect he likes?

6. Does the verse from Matt. 7:6 relate to our topic: "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces"?
7. What should respect not be, or what you consider respect? For example: fears - means respects.
8. What role does love play in respect for husband?
9. Should one take into account the difference in thinking and perception between man and woman when choosing your approach to husband's heart?
10. If your husband is younger than you or doesn't have the life experience that you possess, should you first educate him under yourself, and then begin to respect him?
11. For what should men be respected, and for what should they not be?
12. Will God give wisdom to a wife to relate correctly to her husband if she wants to honor him with her unfeigned respect but doesn't know how to do this?
13. Should one remember that respect is very important and necessary for a husband?
14. Should one teach one's children to honor their father, and how is it better to do this?
15. Did you learn something useful and new for yourself from this lesson?

Family and Sabbath

The creation of our world happened according to the Deity's plan, in strict sequence - from lower forms of life to higher. After creating the plant world, God gave command to the water to produce fish and birds, and on the sixth day at the Lord's word the earth produced cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth. When this God's order was also fulfilled, the Creator began to create man from the dust of the earth in His image and likeness. Every cell of Adam's organism was carefully thought out and created from available material, and when the body was ready, the Majesty of Heaven breathed into His creation the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Woman was already conceived in God's plan and until a certain time was part of man, awaiting that moment when the Lord would extract her from Adam's depths. And soon this time came. God separated woman from man to give her to him as a helper and life companion. Thus the Creator created the family and blessed it for multiplication and dominion over the earth. It would not have been difficult for God to immediately create millions of people and populate the entire earth with them, but He decided to produce the entire human race from one blood, so that our world would be one big family born from their own kind.

The seal of creation became the seventh day - the Sabbath. For man this was the second day of his life, which he spent in communion with his Creator, sharing with the Lord His rest from all works. "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God created and made" Gen. 2:3.

Family and Sabbath formed the foundation of human existence, on which communication was built horizontally and vertically.

And then the unplanned fall of man occurred, as a result of which the first people were expelled from the Garden of Eden, where they met with their Creator and communicated with Him. But the family was not destroyed as a consequence of sin, and the Sabbath did not cease to be the Sabbath. These two

monuments of God's power and authority were inherited by people and preserved to our days. The entire world exists thanks to the family, and the Sabbath remains the Sabbath and sounds almost the same in all languages.

The enemy of the soul hates God and His creation, and everything that God does. Family and Sabbath have always been the subject of special attacks by the evil one, and now we see how the world relates to these God's institutions. To protect the family, the Lord commanded married people not to divorce (1Cor. 7:10), and the observance of the Sabbath He clothed with His mouth in a commandment (Ex. 20:8-11), mandatory for observance by all people and even working animals.

A happy family is God's dream for the last time. In the message to Laodicea He precisely affirms that we don't know how unhappy we are (Rev. 3:17). Modern people have stopped believing that the family can be happy, because there is no example of this and there is no knowledge about how this happiness can be built and then maintained among the sea of temptations of this world.

People are offered and imposed with all kinds of sinful models of relationships, and even in unions between men and women there is no place for obligations to society and to each other. Families can be created and destroyed with particular ease.

And what has the world turned the Sabbath into? It has become a park-and-household day in which everyone prepares for Sunday rest, not thinking about the fact that God has not canceled His commandment and comes to meet with His creation precisely at the time that He Himself established - from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday (Lev. 23:32).

Happiness and obedience to God's statutes and commandments are one whole. God does not give happiness in sin and is not interested in a sinful person living forever. The enemy cannot harm that soul who lives in agreement with God's plans and in obedience to God's commandments, but he has the opportunity to offer people to sin for the sake of temporary pleasure or

accepted lifestyle. And he enchants those who enter his territory out of curiosity.

A happy family is what all God's children should strive for and in which they should live. And the Faithful Witness from Rev. 3:18 offers to buy from Him precisely what will make any family happy and righteous, if both its members follow this plan.

If you hear that somewhere there are people who do everything possible to create a happy family on God's principles and teach this to you too, then show interest in this science and support these people with your attention and desire to build such happiness in your own life.

And it will come to your home. It will get used to you and will, like a shadow, follow at your heels and offer you new ways to experience it.

The Sabbath is a part of time that belongs not to me, but to God. And He desires to bless me on this day and sanctify me. If one begins to study the meaning of the Sabbath, then any sensible person will understand that this statute includes much more than just rest. Meeting with the invisible God, obedient children receive special blessings of God's presence not only for this time, but also for all spheres of their vital activity and for the remaining days of the week. The world can create difficult conditions and times for Sabbath observance, replacing it with its counterfeits, but nothing can shake the soul faithful to the commandments, in whose heart God's law is written.

Unfortunately, among Christians there were those who decided to replace God's time with another day or declare it an everyday holiday, but there is no Biblical basis for this. Even now I can boldly offer the largest sum of money for one Biblical verse about the holiness of Sunday, and no one will be able to present what is not in the Bible. Then the question arises: "Why observe what God did not command, and violate what is so clearly stated?" But unfortunately, people don't hear such questions and don't think about what consequences sin and law-breaking bring.

Sabbath keepers are not saved through this obedience. Their salvation happens by faith in Christ and through personal relationships with Him. A happy family also won't save anyone, but it will become a consequence of obedience to God and observance of all God's commandments, including the commandment about love for one another.

I must choose now whom to be faithful and obedient to and whom to serve, and happiness will come as a consequence and as inevitability of my devotion to God.

Interesting times and tests of our faithfulness to each other and to the Lord await us. Don't think that if you decide to live in a happy family and in complete obedience to the Creator, then the enemy will leave you in peace. He will attack God's statutes in your life in every way and disappoint you in them. However, God has already won in this war and will not leave us alone in this confrontation.

Nothing gladdens the Lord so much as children faithful to Him, ready to be unshakeable and happy in any trials. And the enemy is powerless before such a union.

Although a believing person doesn't feel God's presence, but knows God by faith, not by sight, this doesn't mean that God is not in the life of this faithful servant. The time will come - feelings will come too, and God will reveal Himself in all glory, and then everyone will see the difference between the righteous and the wicked and the holy and the unclean. But for now let us believe and love, and do what the Lord advises to fulfill.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Gen. 1:26-29; 2:18,22-25; 1Tim. 3:2-5; 5:8; Eph. 5:22-25,33; Mark 2:27-28; Ex. 31:13; Lev. 26:12; Isa. 58:13-14; 66:23 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What attacks on the family are familiar to you?
5. Why is it so important to preserve the family union?
6. Why does the enemy of the soul hate happy families and wish to destroy them?

7. How can one resist Satan in his destructive work of destroying family happiness?
8. What is the Sabbath for you?
9. Has God somewhere canceled His commandment about observance and holiness of the Sabbath day?
10. Do you know Biblical verses about the holiness of Sunday?
11. Why does the entire Christian world sanctify the day about which nothing is written in the Bible?
12. Does God accept worship to Himself on the day that He did not establish for worship?
13. Should I remain faithful to God in Sabbath observance if members of my family decided to violate this commandment and call me under threat of divorce to do the same?
14. What is more important: obedience to God, even if the family is destroyed in the process, or preservation of the family, even if God's commandments have to be violated in the process?
15. Will the Lord honor those families that honor Him?

Praise Your Husband

Praise is the emphasis of hidden or visible virtues of a person, which in a special way gladdens and inspires both the listener and the speaker of such compliments.

If there is a man in your home with whom you have linked your life forever, then it's worth knowing that words of your praise and gratitude are as necessary for him as intimate closeness with you and your tasty and healthy food.

Many women don't know this, and almost all don't practice it. A husband won't die of hunger if you don't praise him, but this mechanism and this need is laid in him because he is the image and likeness of God. He is a creative personality, and he needs to fly. Praise precisely contributes to the successful growth of so-called "creative wings," thanks to which your husband can accomplish such amazing things that he might never decide to do because of your silence.

If you want your husband to start doing what he has never done before, then begin praising him as you have never praised him before.

Don't confuse praise with flattery or express it for the sake of a checkmark or desire to get something in return. Men understand your motives very well and don't accept counterfeits. If a wife has nothing to say, then it's better to say nothing and start studying this question and applying such a language of love by fact and necessity.

Understanding how important praise is to a husband, don't unleash a waterfall of kind words on him if he's not used to receiving such from you. If you are in constant confrontation or irritation, then your praise won't be accepted. It will be understood with precision in reverse.

If your husband is irritated or upset by your words of praise and gratitude, then don't say them to him. This means that your spouse is an exception to the rules, to whom a special approach

needs to be found. Mainly though, your sincere praise will be accepted with joy and pleasure.

Don't start doing what you won't continue. Understanding and seeing that your husband needs your positive assessment of his hidden and open characteristics, he should be fed this constantly. And the suggestion that he find something himself and eat last year's canned goods of good memories won't work. Your spouse requires "fresh products" and "hot pies," especially if he willingly shares his new achievements, experiences, and victories with you.

If he doesn't get at home what his soul so needs, then he will seek this recognition in another place, and will definitely find it.

Praise brings blessing not only to the one who hears it, but also to the one who expresses it.

Why do we praise God? Why does the Bible write so much about this? Because it builds good relationships between me and the Creator. It teaches me to notice the invisible and be grateful for what is received, lifts mood, emphasizes the Lord's value in my eyes, fills my heart with joy, is an expression of my faith, and is very pleasing to the Deity who listens to me.

Now take all these advantages of praise and apply them to the one who is created in the image and likeness of God. This need to receive and give is placed in every normal person.

Praising your husband is a whole science that should be studied and made part of your life. It is a key to mutual understanding, to reducing tension in relationships, to establishing positive communication, to building trust and creating a strong emotional connection.

Praise should be spoken to the point and fact. With its help they find and emphasize what is obvious, or express what you wish to see in a person, looking at him with eyes of faith.

A man is pleased when you notice in him the manifestation of masculine qualities, such as strength, courage, endurance, steadfastness, faithfulness, wisdom. If you start emphasizing his external beauty, he may not understand you.

Don't humiliate your husband by praising him like a small child. For example, smarty, good boy, clever boy. This can only be said in expressing your feelings in special cases so that no one else hears. You are not his mother, and don't need to thus adopt the head of your family.

Standard phrases, for example, "well done," "good," "let me kiss you," are not praise, but carry news that this is a deserved compliment. They don't cause special joy. Words of love are also not praise, but an expression of your feelings and attitude, which doesn't emphasize the virtues and characteristics of the man, but gladden his heart.

When you see or feel that your husband is asking for praise, then give him this in abundance. He will gladly eat everything you treat him with and will be very grateful to you for such a tasty gift for the soul. A man needs to understand his significance and uniqueness, and who, if not his wife, can contribute to this.

Praise can become a very powerful motivator in your husband's creative life and spur him to discover and develop those talents and abilities that in other cases won't be in demand. Try to "attach" wings to your husband and teach him to fly, try new things, invent unique things, and support him with your sincere joy for his successes in this creative area of his life. Remember that behind every successful man stands a wise wife, thanks to whose support he was able to conquer another peak and improve this world.

Praise is also appropriate in the intimate sphere of family life. And here too wisdom from above is necessary to find the right words and emphasize what especially gladdens you. But do this so that no one else hears your revelations.

You shouldn't praise a person for his laziness, lack of initiative, or indifference to you. You shouldn't encourage evil vices either, praising how well he scolded someone or put them in their place. It's better to say nothing.

In any man is laid the need to be needed and useful, in demand and valuable, and when you emphasize this with your sincere

praise, your husband hears you, agrees with your words, and becomes attached to you with all his heart.

Don't be afraid to praise your spouse in front of other people, without humiliating his masculine dignity and without revealing your personal family secrets. You shouldn't call your beloved by diminutive-affectionate words in front of strangers, such as "bunny," "kitty," or "fish." Let all these names be only in your personal use.

If your husband is open to praise and expects this from you, then talk with him about this and ask what gladdens him most, what he counts on, and what he feels. It happens that in your eyes something is praise, but for your husband it's humiliation, or vice versa. In communication with a friend dear to you, you can learn many useful things.

Love for your husband will necessarily express itself in defining those properties of his character, behavior, and hidden potential that he perhaps hasn't even thought about.

We all expect praise from God when He says to us: "Well done, good and faithful servant, ...enter into the joy of your master" (Matt. 25:21). But we will hear these words at the very end as a result, and already now we can gladden each other's hearts and voice the good that we notice in each other or that we want to see.

Questions for reflection on this chapter

1. Please read Phil. 4:8; Prov. 27:2; Ps. 19:8; 33:3; 116:1-2; 2Sam. 14:25; 1Pet. 2:20; Rom. 2:29; 2Cor. 1:12-14; 6:3-10; 7:14-16; 10:18; 11:10-12; Phil. 1:25-28; James 3:14; Jer. 9:23-24 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Do you like to hear praise addressed to you?
5. Do you think others like to hear what you like too?
6. What does praise produce in the heart and in relationships?
7. How does praise differ from flattery?
8. Did you know that praise is needed by men, although they themselves say little about this?

9. What to do if you're not used to praising anyone, and you're not drawn to this?
10. Do you think your praise will be a stimulus for your husband to become who you see him as, and do you believe that he can achieve this?
11. What is not praise?
12. How does praise "for something" differ from praise "because"?
13. Are you interested to see the influence of words of praise on your life friend? Are you planning to practice this?
14. Do you think those whom you begin to praise and in whom you will make unique discoveries will stop respecting you?
15. Where and how can one learn to praise other people?

Admire Your Husband

Admiration is a feeling of deep respect, joy, gratitude, delight, love for the object of one's veneration, which can be expressed in encouraging words of praise or in other manifestations of special treatment. If praise is capable of finding and identifying certain character traits and talents in your husband, which fulfills his emotional needs, then admiring him is a special celebration for his heart. This is a kind of cherry on the cake that gives the entire complex structure a finished look and is the most desired treat, sufficient for one chosen person.

Not many men experience such an attitude from their wives and sometimes don't even suspect that this exists and is possible, so they don't even expect it, although they wouldn't be against experiencing such treatment.

Admiring your husband is recognizing him as the most significant person in your family for his unique qualities of soul, for his talents and successes, for the fact that you have him. This is a high evaluation of his intellect, his moral values, his giftedness and simply his personality as a whole.

Such an attitude very strongly binds two close people to each other, gives a sense of confidence in love, awareness that you have support and can count on it even in difficult times. Admiration creates a friendly atmosphere in the family and inspires something better and beautiful.

By nature, each of us is unique in our own way and possesses many hidden and undeveloped talents, which may manifest themselves in one way or another. An attentive eye is capable of quickly identifying these human characteristics and emphasizing them through approval and admiration in the form of positive ovations and loud exclamations.

Examples of such an attitude we can find in the description of living creatures from the book of Revelation. These creatures are at God's throne and constantly exclaim day and night: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come" (Rev. 4:8). Undoubtedly, the Lord God evokes admiration

from all His creation, and the mouths of all begin to praise the Majesty of Heaven. We find confirmation of this throughout the entire Bible. Such practice is also present in human relationships, but much less frequently and in special cases. Unfortunately, when a mortal person begins to be publicly exalted and placed on a pedestal of honor or worshipped, this does not always have a positive influence. But within the framework of the family, admiration looks quite decent and is a special expression of delight, which greatly pleases both spouses and brings them closer.

Men value praise and rejoice when their wives admire them, teaching this to their children as well. Every family father is pleased to be special in the eyes of his household, who sincerely express their enthusiastic feelings aloud and exalt the head of their home above themselves. And how will the joyful father and husband respond to such an attitude? Only with mutual love and the desire to somehow specially serve his dear and close people.

Admiration is always a celebration for the soul, and you sometimes don't even know when it will come and whether it will come at all. This comes from a loving heart that learns to see good and knows how to properly notice even insignificant details, pointing them out appropriately.

Admiring your husband also helps to see him as your partner, ally and friend, with whom you can share the joys and difficulties of life, build common plans and dreams, grow together as a couple and develop as one whole.

Admiration can convey the thought that you are better than me, stronger, wiser, more gifted and more successful, which doesn't embarrass me at all, but on the contrary - pleases me. And I hasten to share this with you. Admiration requires certain expenditures of my life energy, but I don't regret sharing it, because such an attitude carries a positive charge that inspires both of us to something very kind and good.

To admire your husband is the ability to see his strong sides even in moments of weakness or failure and to acknowledge his

efforts and endeavors in achieving common goals in relationships and in life.

This need is embedded in every man, and any woman who knows this property of the male soul and skillfully possesses this gift can very quickly emotionally attach any representative of the opposite sex to herself, capturing his heart. And the man's task includes understanding the true motives of such female behavior and establishing appropriate boundaries in relationships if this crosses permissible limits and leads to violation of God's law.

Knowledge of men's needs and skillful use of them can become a blessing in family relationships or bring curses if applied for lustful purposes.

Any man will be pleased to hear about admiration for his masculine qualities and strength. Even putting on an indifferent appearance, he will gladly catch every kind word addressed to him and modestly rejoice in his soul that he was so noted. Therefore, don't be afraid to admire your husband. If he is normal, then he will understand and appreciate everything correctly, even if he doesn't show it.

But don't think that all your admiration will be accepted. If it is sincere and from the whole soul, then this will be understandable and pleasant to every husband. But if the admiration turns out to be feigned or foolish, then the reaction will be corresponding.

Jesus only once accepted universal admiration from the people, when he entered Jerusalem as the predicted King, sitting on a young donkey. People, not understanding it themselves, admired him under the influence of the Holy Spirit and laid their clothes and palm branches under the feet of the Great Teacher. And the Lord accepted these people, knowing that after some time many of them would shout completely different words of curse.

We should not lose our heads and vigilance either when someone today decides to honor us with their delight and admiration. We should not reject these people either if they

thus sincerely express their best feelings and emotions. Perhaps this is how they manifest their love for you or God's desire to support you in some matter and inspire you to something greater.

If you don't have such a gift and you can't imagine how you can verbally admire your husband or friend, then try to develop this in yourself and apply it as intended. A celebration for the soul of the person you have chosen will be appropriate in any family and in any society.

Men who are not accustomed to hearing such things addressed to them are initially confused and embarrassed, and then quickly get used to it and expect the next portion, trying to do everything possible to receive it. But there are rare exceptions to which one should not pay attention.

Love knows how to express itself both in calm words of praise and in loud exclamations of delight and admiration, bringing with these words itself into the heart of the listener and establishing itself in the soul of the speaker.

Women are also not exceptional people, unworthy of their husbands' admiration. They also need such an attitude and gladly accept from their beloved ones what their soul thirsts for. An example of exchanging words of admiration can be found in abundance in the book Song of Songs and learn this art, bringing each other joy and happiness.

And may everything be with you with sincerity, love and wisdom.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Zeph. 3:14; Ps. 5:12; 29:12; 44:14-18; 91:5; 95:11-13; Job 38:4-7; Zech. 9:9; Song 1:3,14-15; 4:1-7; 5:10-16; 6:10; 8:6-7; Is. 16:10; Luke 15:32 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What is the difference between praise and admiration?
5. Do you know how to admire your loved ones in their presence?

6. Do you think that the admiration which is manifested within the family framework would be appropriate in a large community?
7. Why don't many wives even think about the fact that their husbands need their praise and admiration?
8. What to do if I want my wife to admire me, and I do everything for this, but she doesn't understand this or doesn't want to?
9. Can excessive praise and admiration from a wife make a husband become proud?
10. What do you think a spouse who admires her husband experiences?
11. Does the verse from Phil. 2:3 relate to admiring your husband: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves"?
12. Try to practice the knowledge you've gained on your dear person. And then share your impressions. You can do this by phone.
13. What should be done so that the practice of admiring your husband becomes a habit and norm of life?
14. Will your husband receive blessings from your knowledge that you don't practice in your relationships?
15. What to do if there is understanding of truth, but there is no husband or wife on whom to apply the acquired knowledge?

What Your Husband Doesn't Like?

All people are children of one father and mother, but at the same time, we are all separated by boundaries, languages, culture, traditions, skin color and many other factors. But there are two groups of people who, although they always remain different and opposite to each other, are unchanging and similar in their kind and internal structure. These are men and women.

Describing the characteristics of characters, habits and tastes of men from Africa, one can safely say that in Europe or America they are exactly the same, except for people with damaged minds.

Cultural characteristics can form masculine pride and dignity in a man, but he will never become a woman and will not think and see the world as she does.

Your present or future husband, although he is a unique personality, is still similar to his other brothers in his way of thinking. If this is a believing person, then he has a great advantage, and the difference is that he is capable of hearing God's voice and changing something in his habits and tastes under the influence of God's grace. In all other cases, men are very stable beings in whom no special changes occur over the years. If you understand who your potential partner for family life is and what kind of mindset he has, then you can be confident that little will change in him over the years.

The righteousness of Christ is capable of improving and establishing God's principles in your husband, but sin can also destroy everything good in him. And these two forces will always fight for possession of his mind and will.

If you got a patient man who knows how to restrain his feelings and emotions and willingly serves you, this doesn't mean that he is not like everyone else and can be remade to suit yourself. This means that he loves you and considers your expectations, taking upon himself part of the masculine responsibility for family happiness.

If your husband is younger than you, this doesn't give you the right to be his educator and teacher. It won't work. He won't tolerate such an attitude and will fight for his right to be the head and make decisions himself.

A man doesn't like it when they try to make him a woman and girlfriend, expecting from him feminine reaction, thinking or behavior characteristic of the weaker half of humanity. He will never react to the same event in the same way as his wife. Perhaps, seeking an easy path in life, he will want to become a dependent and taste life without worries and obligations, but this will not make him what he should be according to the Creator's design.

Your husband will never like your dominance in decision-making. For the sake of peace in the family, he may make some concessions, but this will be temporary in nature.

Teaching your husband about life, giving him advice or valuable instructions, determining his place in the family - this is what causes righteous protest in his heart, and he will never love such an attitude.

A man will never like having his voice raised at him, being scolded for his mistakes, your grumbling and lamenting. He will never love insults addressed to him or any kind of physical violence from your side.

He will never respect a woman who loses her temper and takes out her indignation or dissatisfaction on him.

Be careful when you advise your husband to study some science or take some training to improve his level of knowledge and development. He may consider this humiliating and not react at all to your suggestions. And don't give him books about how to become a real or business man. Let him come to this himself.

It's difficult to deal with a proud person, but masculine pride is not always a sin. A man wants to be a leader in his family, and it's the wife's role to encourage this quality of his nature and support this status at all times.

If it's difficult for you to restrain your bad emotions, then you shouldn't pour them out on your husband. This will change little, and relationships will be destroyed. It's better to share all your negative experiences with God. He will accept and understand everything, and comfort you.

You don't need to save your husband from his failures. Just be nearby, don't judge him and let him make his own decision about getting out of the situation.

Reminding him of past mistakes, sins or inadequate actions will not bring you happiness to your home and will never be appreciated with respect for your memory.

Don't try to convince your husband that your opinion is more correct and better. Give him the right to make mistakes and to independently search for the right solution.

Don't remove from your husband his responsibility to be the main and primary breadwinner and to decide for himself how he should earn money to support the family.

If your salary is higher or more stable, then never reproach your spouse with this. He won't be happy that you exalt yourself above him.

Such expressions as: "But I told you!!!" or: "You should have listened to me!!!" or: "How many times do I have to repeat this to you!!!" and similar should not sound in your home.

Your husband won't like your participation in finding better work for him or hints that he earns little. Let him decide these questions himself, and you listen and support him, inspiring with kind words.

Husbands don't like it when they are compared with other men, setting strangers as an example to follow or worse, putting them higher and as a reproach.

When a man falls into despondency and solves his problems, then you don't need to sympathize with him or pester him with offers of help. Your cheerfulness and optimism can do more good than you think.

Don't rush to load your tired husband with your stories about the events of the day. He's not always ready to listen to you and needs peace.

Giving advice is welcomed only when it's asked for and needed. But try to advise in such a way that this doesn't place responsibility on you for unforeseen mistakes. Let the last word be with your husband.

Communication with your husband about what he likes and what he doesn't will help you learn a lot of interesting things about the inner world of a man, will form trust and give prospects for avoiding mistakes in this area. If you learn new details from him about what he doesn't like, then be sure to remember this and try to consciously not violate these boundaries. Of course, common sense and free will should be present in everything.

For example, if your husband doesn't like your refusal in something you don't want to do or can give him, then this is your right, and he should understand and accept this. Violence against the will is inadmissible in a happy family.

A believing husband will perhaps be more loyal to all your ignorances and mistakes in behavior. But with a man who doesn't know God, it's worth being very wise and careful so as not to create problems where they can be avoided.

By the reaction and responses of her spouse, a woman is capable of quickly determining what else, outside the list of this lesson, he doesn't like. You will never remake your husband. Don't waste energy on this. God can change something in his life, so cooperate with God and adapt to what you have.

Love for your husband is capable of closing his eyes to many of your mistakes. If he understands that you do and advise him everything out of love for him, then he will accept this in simplicity of heart and will not resist it.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Rom. 12:9-10; 1 Tim. 2:11-12; 1 Pet. 3:1-2; Prov. 12:4; 14:1; 19:13-14; 21:9,19; 25:24; 31:10-12; Col. 3:18;

James 3:13-18; 1 Thess. 4:9-11; Amos 3:3; 1 Cor. 7:16; Eph. 5:33 in light of this lesson.

2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What else do you think husbands don't like about their wives?
5. Is it worth considering your husband's tastes, mood and expectations?
6. Why did the Lord create us so different?
7. What advantage will a wife have from knowing what her husband doesn't like?
8. Is it necessary to know what your spouse doesn't like? If yes, then for what purpose?
9. Does God consider the tastes and views of a man?
10. What should a man do whose wife consciously provokes him to dissatisfaction by doing what she wants?
11. If a man is quiet and modest, does this mean that he likes everything?
12. Do you think your husband will honestly tell about what he doesn't like if he is asked about this?
13. How will the behavior of a woman look who, having learned what her husband doesn't like, will do it to spite him?
14. Did this lesson give you new knowledge? If yes, then how do you plan to apply it?
15. Does a husband have the right to express aloud what he doesn't like?

A Real Man

If you ask any woman about who a real man is and what qualities he should possess, most likely each of them will tell you that for her a real man is a person who meets her expectations and needs and does what is currently relevant for her.

For example, a single mother with two small children will say that a real man never abandons his wife. A deceived woman will say that he should be faithful, a young girl will wish that he be romantic and give flowers with candies, a businesswoman will prefer that he turn out to be a man of word and deed. As many people as you ask, that many subjective opinions you will hear. And what will men say? Each of them will also have their own vision and understanding.

And how will the world answer? It's better not to listen. Advertising from all sides creates an image of this "real one" who drinks fashionable beer, drives expensive cars, doesn't work anywhere and yet is fabulously rich. And young people are instilled and imposed with the image of a person who has many girlfriends and can change them like gloves. Probably there are no greater speculations about anything than about defining who should be real. And some kind of mirage is created that exists only in movies, but which few have achieved in reality.

However, there is God, Who created this man and put His law in his heart, but man fell and went into many thoughts. And yet God's word defines a special group of people who fear God and honor Him in their lives.

We read Prov. 9:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." From here begins everything most real and unshakeable. There are many masculine qualities that make a man valuable, correct and real, but his faith in God and Jesus sent by Him is a solid foundation for any good qualities, which acquire their strength and establish a person's will in all good. Without a foundation,

even the most pompous and beautiful building will crack and be destroyed during unexpected testing by bad weather.

The most real man is Jesus. He shows us an example of behavior in this world. The Holy Spirit will teach every man who believes in Christ to be real.

Love is the most correct motive and driving force in setting a goal and achieving it. It firmly connects a man's will with the Foundation of his spiritual and everyday wisdom and restores God's image in the heart.

When there is the correct Foundation and the driving force of love, then it's not difficult for the Heavenly Teacher to endow His son with good qualities of soul, which are worthily appreciated not only in Heaven, but also on this earth.

Goal-setting is what gives the right direction to the movement of all human resources. A man determines the goal of his life and confidently goes toward it, asking for strength and wisdom on this path.

Responsibility is what becomes a principle of life for a person who understands that obligations are placed upon him which he cannot leave without harm to other people. Any kind of work, service, education, creating a family union, having children - all this places upon a man those obligations which he simply cannot fail to fulfill. Any man will have to give an account for the trust shown to him.

It is expected that a man will be master of his word, and his promises will not diverge from his deeds. And any deed will have the correct motive, based on his relationship with God, on love and obedience to God's will.

Freedom, which only the Lord can give, gives a man the power to make independent choices in all spheres of life.

Control of the higher powers of mind, will and logic allows him to manage the desires, inclinations and instincts of the soul. A person led by the Holy Spirit will not let them dominate over his will, even if the world teaches otherwise. He has understanding of all these processes in life, and he has access to power from

above for victory over every thought, making it obedient to Christ.

Such a man is faithful to his principles, like an arrow to a compass. He justifies the trust of those with whom he binds himself with obligations, and allows others to hope in him and create strong business and personal connections with him.

Developing his relationships with women, he doesn't play with their feelings, doesn't offend them and realizes the responsibility of family relationships before starting or suggesting something in this direction. And if he does embark on the path of creating a family, then he maintains his faithfulness and doesn't remove obligations from himself, even if something isn't going well in the relationship.

A man doesn't become real by the fact of being born into this world or even - being born again. This is a process of growth and formation that makes God's man spiritually and emotionally mature, opening to him extensive potential for development.

Such a man is not afraid to make mistakes and confess his mistakes, forgiving also those who make mistakes in relation to him. He will never lower himself to start hating someone or become a judge of someone's life or conscience.

Such a man loves to learn, master new sciences, delve into the essence of matters and try everything in the practice of life. For him, any sphere is an opportunity to expand his horizons and learn something useful and interesting.

The heart of such a man is open to everyone, and he can contain everything in himself, knowing how to cast all his cares upon Christ, following the example of his Heavenly Teacher.

Such a man is happy himself and capable of making everyone around him happy, not depending on their mood or opinion. He is not afraid to laugh at himself if there is reason for it, but will never humiliate another in his own eyes.

Such a man doesn't worry about his beauty and appearance, but doesn't allow himself to be untidy and dirty. He observes the condition of his physical and emotional health and is master

of his mood. He is morally and emotionally stable and ensures that this stability is based on mercy and justice toward his neighbors.

Such a man loves his friends and neighbors according to the commandment at all times and, like a brother, will appear in time of trouble.

You will ask about where to find such men, such real ones. They exist with God, and He forms such character in each of His sons. He accepts him, preparing him for life among holy beings. When this process is launched in the heart by God, then it doesn't matter at what stage of growth it will be interrupted by death. Such people will always be alive in the eyes of Heaven and will inherit Eternity. If you were fortunate to meet such a man and become his friend, brother, sister or wife, then value these relationships and support them with your mutual love.

Only such a real person will be able to notice and appreciate a real man. His principles of life and moral purity are not welcomed in the perishing world, and many will laugh at him and persecute him, as they persecuted Christ, and even want to kill him. But the opinion of the world is not a criterion for a real man. He awaits God's approval and has it within himself in the form of love, happiness and friendship. He is not afraid to share these good qualities of his soul.

What if, reading these lines, I don't find myself to be real? What to do if I'm not like this? The principles described here were not invented by the author of this lesson, but are placed by God into the open heart of every man.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Gen. 1:27; 1 Sam. 16:7; John 13:15-17; Ps. 1:1-3; 14:1-5; 110:10; Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Prov. 1:7; 28:20; 1 Pet. 1:13-16; 2:21; 1 Tim. 5:8; Matt. 25:21 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Are there still real men in this world?
5. What other qualities should a real man possess?

6. What distinguishes a real man from other men?
7. How can you determine that you are dealing with a real man?
8. What is the difference between a believing man and a worldly one, if both are real?
9. What benefit will it be to a person if he is real, but harms his soul and doesn't have the right to Eternal life?
10. Did Jesus give us an example of a real man? If yes, then in what way, since He had no wife and children?
11. Can I declare about myself that I am real?
12. Should a man orient himself to worldly standards and requirements for evaluating his completeness?
13. Does Heaven evaluate every man according to its own standards?
14. What to do if I understood that I am not real?
15. Was this lesson useful for you? If yes, then what benefit will this knowledge give?

What Your Wife Doesn't Like?

Do men ever think about what their wives don't like? Somewhere subconsciously we know this, but sometimes masculine pride prevents us from delving into the world of a woman's feelings and emotions and figuring out how she sees me and how she evaluates my behavior.

If a woman doesn't like only two things about a man: everything he does and everything he says, then it's not worth delving deeper into details and trying to understand her. But when communicating with a sensible person, you can hear many useful statements for reflection.

The best way to find out the answer to the question of this lesson is to ask your wife about it, but if she fears your disapproval and conflict because of her sincerity, then she is unlikely to agree to tell the whole truth. Therefore, it's better to ask other people's wives about this and carefully listen to what they tell you. And they have much to share. But don't use the knowledge gained to harm other families, saying something like "what a willful wife you have, friend."

Below I will provide a brief list of what I learned from my sisters.

A married woman doesn't like this:

1. Indifference and non-participation in her life. She wants to be the center of her spouse's attention. To see his interest in her as a creative personality, as a life companion. She needs someone to whom she should tell everything that has accumulated in her heart during his absence.
2. Being a man and performing masculine duties, taking upon herself the role of husband and performing heavy physical labor with a healthy and capable husband who has no mood to do what is expected of him.
3. When her husband plays on his phone or computer, forgetting about the surrounding world and household chores, and then boasts about his successes in the virtual world.

4. Suppression of her will by his authority even in good deeds and unwillingness to take her views on things into account, when the husband considers only himself right and only his opinion correct.
5. Talking in loud tones, shouting, harshness, rudeness, profanity, insults. All this is like devastating hail that kills a tender plant and sows fear, offense and despair in the heart from awareness of one's helplessness.
6. Comparing his wife to other women for the purpose of humiliating her feminine or physical qualities. And at the same time, consciously ignoring her merits and uniqueness.
7. Absence of gratitude for the visible work she does for the benefit of the family, and taking everything as duties she must fulfill because it's her responsibility.
8. Absence of compliments and tender words, especially when she asks for this and expects to receive what she desires.
9. Absence of tenderness and love in relationships, especially when the wife shows with her whole being or says that she needs this now.
10. Absence of surprises, insignificant signs of attention, romance in small things. Life by schedule eventually becomes tiresome, but there's no initiative to somehow decorate domestic weekdays. At the same time, there's active participation in someone's life on the side.
11. When the husband talks only about himself and his problems, and considers everything else empty and uninteresting.
12. When he brings external problems into the home that he couldn't solve, and pours all his negativity on his wife, even if he later comes to his senses and apologizes.
13. When he expects from his wife only positive emotions, positivity and everything pleasant, but doesn't want to listen to her experiences and avoids conversations on such topics in every way, not letting his wife into his inner world either.
14. When the husband puts the woman on his level, both physically and mentally, not wanting to understand and study the psychology of women, and demands from her what she shouldn't do, and to be what she cannot be.

15. Doesn't take responsibility for solving family issues, expects that everything will resolve itself or through miraculous help from outside.
16. Doesn't give her time and attention for simple human communication, for closer acquaintance with his other half.
17. Striving only for physical intimacy, and after satisfying these needs, indifferent attitude to all other things.
18. Greed, inability to be generous, indifferent attitude to the needs of other people, and especially to his own household.
19. Unwillingness to work with his hands and his mind, but to live at others' expense or be dependent on the state or his relatives, while having sufficient strength and health for successful work.
20. Disrespectful attitude of the husband toward the female sex, when he speaks badly or humiliatingly about women and ridicules what he doesn't understand.
21. When he gives hope and makes promises but doesn't fulfill them.
22. Unreliability. When the wife cannot rely on the man, but must solve all issues herself.
23. Unwillingness to grow, learn, achieve more.
24. Untidiness in clothing and appearance, carelessness, non-observance of hygiene.
25. Uncut umbilical cord from his mother, when his mother is allowed to dictate her rules in the house and dominate in the kitchen.
26. When the man grumbles, complains, complains about the whole world, says that everything is bad. Such behavior doesn't give a sense of stability.
27. When the spouse gets offended without trying to solve problems, and demonstratively expresses his dislike, considering himself always right.
28. Inability and unwillingness to love and understand one's neighbor and absence of efforts to develop in this direction.
29. Hypocrisy. When he is at home as he is, and in public plays the role of an attentive and kind person. When spiritual values don't interest him, but in public he is especially pious.
30. Unfaithful to his wife, both in physical intimacy and in his thoughts, allowing himself to flirt with other women.

31. When he makes the home a dormitory or shelter for everyone, not considering his wife's opinion.
32. Abusive relationships or psychopathic outbursts in relation to his wife or household.
33. Nitpicking over trifles and especially regarding the performance of women's household duties.
34. Intimidating with divorce in conflict situations.
35. When he doesn't care for the material support of his non-working wife, reproaching her that she eats bread for nothing and does nothing for the family.
36. When there's a division of the house, money and all property into yours and mine.
37. When the wife takes second or third place before relatives, friends or work colleagues.
38. When he makes claims to his wife about her excess weight or non-youthful appearance.
39. When the husband deceives.
40. When the spouse has sinful addiction or lives in vice.

A fair question arises: "How to live with such a man?" But, surprisingly, our dear sisters have this in their families, pray for changes for the better and believe that someday this time will come, and everything will be different.

Love helps to understand women's needs and expectations and to undertake something so that your wife is happy and receives from family life what this family was created for.

It's not characteristic for men to change, but God's grace is capable of changing much in their hearts and making them suitable both for their wives and for life among holy beings.

Reading this lesson, every husband and wife should remember that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God, even if they achieved something in this world.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Eph. 5:25,28-29,33; 1 Pet. 3:7; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 1:7-11; Gen. 3:11-12; 1 Sam. 25:25; Esther 1:10-12; Rom. 5:3-5 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?

3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What else might a wife dislike about her husband?
5. Is it always right to express aloud what you don't like?
6. Should a wife also behave so that her husband respects her?
7. Can a woman destroy family happiness with her own hands?
8. Is it necessary to be satisfied with everything, even if not everything in your life happens as you would like? 1 Tim. 6:6.
9. What to do if you understand what you don't like, but nothing in your husband's life changes because of this?
10. Is it important for a husband to understand what his wife doesn't like?
11. Should a man consider what spirit moves his wife in her claims against him?
12. What do you like about your men?
13. Can a woman's expectations be inflated under the influence of other people?
14. If something about your husband doesn't please you, but it doesn't cause you problems, is it necessary to focus attention on this and create problems?
15. Was this lesson useful to you? If yes, then how?

Influence on Each Other

A man and woman who decide to enter into marriage create a union of opposite views, opinions and characters, different hearts. And in this union they become, according to the Creator's design, one whole person or as it is written: "one flesh."

In the family, a man and woman have the greatest influence on each other, which forms in them the mindset of a married person. Such a person cares not only for himself, but also for the one who belongs to him.

Such influence can be different depending on the spirit by which the spouses are led. The Lord placed man in society so that in this communication people, influencing each other, would form certain relationships and a culture of behavior. The family is conceived as the most influential cell of society, to which the soul of its members is attached forever.

We won't talk about failed families with rough relationships. This and similar behavior was not part of God's plan, but is a consequence of sin and human selfishness. The influence in such a union is destructive, both for the psyche and for health.

In a union of love and harmony there are much more prospects and opportunities that constantly gladden the hearts of both spouses and teach them to seek and find in each other many useful qualities that bring benefit to both of them.

Influence toward good gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to convey to the mind and heart the most important revelations about God's mercy and love, about acceptance and forgiveness, to endow consciousness with faith and hope.

Without suspecting it themselves, loving husband and wife form characters in each other that suit them both and make them suitable for Eternity.

Love thinks no evil and feels very well this foreign spirit in family relationships, and immediately does everything possible to neutralize the influence of another spirit and offer a better

form of behavior. With mutual agreement, such abominations are very quickly identified and destroyed by the decision to live friendly and peacefully.

The world is full of all kinds of traps and stresses into which people sometimes fall, but they have a home oasis where they can find peace and recover. The family is not a testing ground for new types of weapons, but a resort place with a gas station, where each member is under special God's protection from the influence of evil forces.

If a husband knows that he has a home where he is unconditionally loved, awaited, valued and respected, then this gives him courage and strength in overcoming various difficulties and obstacles. The awareness that he will soon find himself where he will feel good helps a man to endure and be a winner in any vicissitudes. And this place of comfort and joy appeared in his life not by chance. He himself built it and invested all his strength, means and soul into it.

The influence of a loving wife on her husband's heart and a loving husband on his spouse's heart is very great. It binds their hearts with such strong chains of love that no distances will ever be able to separate them. Being faithful in such a union is not difficult. Why spoil what is so beautiful?

The influence of love and good in the family is a natural atmosphere in which God Himself is present, and He invisibly forms visible friendly relationships. If two agree to love each other no matter what, and will apply all their efforts, will and subordinate all their desires to this, then they will certainly achieve what they agreed upon. And where love is, there is God.

It's difficult to build something when a destroyer follows you, but when two specialists get down to business, then the Lord blesses their work many times over, because He is Love.

Any relationship begins with adjustment and getting used to new living conditions. People must get to know each other, feel the general atmosphere, make their contribution to the

relationship, and then, understanding who they are dealing with, agree on an indefinite prospect of building a happy union.

Only those who are happy by themselves, who have this source within themselves, can build common happiness. Such a person is capable of inspiring others, understanding and accepting other happy people. If someone thinks that for happiness he needs a happy person, then perhaps he will not become truly happy. For complete happiness, the Lord is necessary and life in harmony and obedience to the laws of happiness.

The influence of a cheerful woman on her husband sets the tone for their communication and pastime. By inspiring her spouse to positivity, the wife will receive much more from him than she can imagine. And if she offers him her bad mood, this will also affect the general atmosphere, and it will be difficult for her to understand why her husband doesn't guess about her expectations of love and sympathy.

Hidden expectations regarding the husband will always be hidden from him. He is not a telepath to guess and fulfill them. And thoughts that "if he loves, then he should guess, because I guess about his needs" will not find embodiment in life. The wife needs to voice her desires aloud, then one can count on their fulfillment.

Desires can be expressed directly, for example, "please hug me," or indirectly: "How good it would be for me if you hugged me." In the second case, there is always a factor of free will and decision-making. Of course, it's worth considering the situation and the husband's ability to respond. If he is driving at the time or carrying heavy bags, then you are unlikely to immediately get what you want.

The stability of masculine character also influences the wife. Having studied her spouse's characteristics, she knows what he is capable of and what can be expected from him, and within these frameworks can count on his participation in her plans.

Family relationships are formed according to the scenario of two sides, and at some point that family model is created which may not have significant changes for years, unless something

unusual happens, for example, pregnancy, change of residence or work, or illness of one of the spouses.

Influence toward good is sowing that will bring corresponding fruit in relationships as well. If I, having various feelings, consciously choose good for family relationships, then this seed will take root and produce what it consists of. Good people value good and multiply it, giving much more in return.

If you were unlucky and your other half has an evil spirit, but could have been different, then don't give up and always remember that you influence your spouse, and what this influence will be, you decide. God will always be on the side of His children, never ceasing to protect them and influence through them.

Love is the most powerful force for good. It knows how to create beauty where nothing existed and was not foreseen. It is intuitively needed by every person because it is an embedded need of the soul. Just as man was not created for cold living conditions, so he was not created for cold relationships in the family. The family is that place where two should be warm and cozy in each other's company, where God can be invited and one can be oneself without fear of being judged or rejected. The influence of such a family extends beyond its boundaries, to all relatives and loved ones, to brothers and work colleagues, and the seed of good is sown further, and good fruit ripens for a good harvest.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Amos 3:3; Judges 16:15-17; 1 Sam. 25:30-35; Gen. 3:6; Gal. 5:14; 6:2; John 13:34-35; Rom. 13:8-10; Prov. 12:14; 14:1; 16:28; 26:22; 31:26; 1 Cor. 7:16; 11:8-9; 15:33; Eph. 5:33 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Is it important to understand what influence you are under in your family?
5. Is it important to understand what influence you have on your household?

6. Do you think bad company corrupts good morals?
7. Are there people in your environment who influence you toward good?
8. Why does God forbid His followers to marry unbelievers? Ezra 9:12.
9. What is dangerous about negative influence from your household?
10. How can one resist negative influence in one's family?
11. Does Jesus have any influence on you?
12. What to do if I saw that I influence toward evil?
13. What influence do these lessons from our school that you study have on you?
14. What part does the Lord take in my influence on others?
15. What useful things did you learn for yourself in this lesson?

The Rich Man

Once I saw an interesting picture depicting a meeting of two married couples. In one couple, the man had a Mercedes symbol instead of a head, and in his wife's thought bubble was a pink heart. In the second couple, everything was reversed - instead of the husband's head was a pink heart, and in his woman's thought bubble was a Mercedes symbol. The author of this picture very clearly showed the biggest problem and deficit of family values of our time.

One should not go to extremes and consider wealth and the ability to earn money a sin or some special blessing to the achievement of which it's necessary to devote one's entire life. Money will never lose meaning in your life. Our world is built so that we must have some means to pay for something and live on something.

Many women, preparing to create a family, somewhere in their souls dream that their future husband would be well-off and know how to earn money. Women want to be protected from this side. Modern cinema brightly advertises the life of rich people, showing a beautiful facade and leaving behind the scenes the realities of what happens in the mind of a successful person.

Let's examine this situation without fitting all men under the same parameters, because there are exceptions.

Would you like to marry a millionaire? We answer: "Yes."

But do you know how the rich live, what they breathe, what they experience? What do you expect from a union with such a person? If you think that with a millionaire you will have a carefree well-fed life, fascinating travels and continuous romance with universal abundance, and he will also become a priest in the family and help you around the house, then I hasten to assure you that life is not a movie.

If you delve into the daily life of this interesting millionaire, you will be surprised by the amount of cares placed on his

shoulders. Such big money must be earned, and not as is customary, with a shovel in hand. One needs to have corresponding knowledge, skills, connections, vision, goals, courage. And if this man managed to earn his million, which lies in pure form in his personal bank account or in a tin can, then he is unlikely to stop and start spending everything for his and your pleasure. His mind is already set to constantly look for new projects in which accumulated resources can be invested to multiply them.

Meanwhile, you are waiting for your husband from work, wanting to communicate with him, go somewhere or travel, spend time together and do something common. And here he comes after another work day, during which he held nothing heavier than a phone and pen, and tired, lies down on the couch. He is home and can finally relax. And he has no time for anyone. He may love you, but business life has sucked all his resources, and he simply cannot give you what you expect or what you dreamed about, rejoicing that you would become a millionaire's wife.

By choosing a rich man as your life companion, you are also choosing for yourself his service to this wealth. For a man, his work, where he can earn and where he represents something, is sometimes more important than family. And if the wife demands time and help for herself, then it will be difficult for him to understand how to leave important things to deal with the family. The husband believes that he is fulfilling the most important obligation of providing for the home, and therefore should not be distracted by other questions.

And if this person, in proportion to his busyness, has psychopathic problems or is an abuser, then you will have little joy from life with such a life companion.

There is an interesting law described in Eccl. 5:10. "When goods increase, those who eat them increase; and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?" If you look at the flow of money that passes through the hands of very rich people, you will be surprised how many all kinds of pumps and leeches rob them legally. How much he needs to

spend or invest first to earn something. And sometimes one has to risk everything to get something or preserve what has been received.

You will hardly be told about all the cares and problems that rich men face. What you consider valuable may be ordinary for him. And the richer this millionaire is, the more cares, stress and vanity he has.

We live and work in a sinful world, and intersect with unbelieving people who have completely different values than ours. And all this influences not for good. Blessed is that husband who has Christ in his mind and decides everything with Him and receives wisdom and blessings from Him, and such people exist, but not all are such. They usually achieve this while already having that wife who, like a sail, inspires him to feats and supports him during crisis. But someone else's successful man will never be yours and cannot make someone happy just because he is rich. All these things lie in God's power, and He decides what path to lead a person and what to allow in his life, and from what to protect.

A rich person who knows how to make money has the mind of a rich person and in any situation will find opportunity and a way to become rich. But this doesn't yet mean that he is a wonderful and caring family man. He is simply a wealthy man. Wealth and God are two competing life goals. It's impossible to serve both simultaneously. So Jesus taught in Matt. 6:24.

Will a rich man be generous in charitable deeds? How much will he be able to devote and give to God through needy neighbors? Will his ears be open to their requests for help, and will this become his life priority?

If the Lord gives wealth to someone, then He will ask much more from this person than from those who were entrusted with less.

Satan attracts us with his golden crown to this world, to himself, and gives this crown to whomever he wants. And the Lord offers people the crown of life and gives it to those who

begin to believe in God, show obedience and live in harmony with Heavenly laws.

But rich men have heart and soul. They, just like many others, are unloved, unhugged. They often don't have real friends who would love them at all times, and they live in a different world and understanding of time. One needs to have a special approach to them and learn to understand them in order to give them something greater.

If you dream of having a rich husband, then think and answer yourself honestly, why. Do you need him to give you something, or are you set on him receiving something from you?

To understand the mind of a rich person, one needs to walk in his shoes.

Jesus says to the rich people of the last time that they don't even know how poor and miserable they are. We read this in Rev. 3:17. And He is not mistaken. Blessed is he who will hear this rebuke and follow the advice from verse 18, acquiring what the Lord offers to buy.

We are given the example of the rich young man who did not follow Jesus' advice from Luke 18:18, and the tax collector Zacchaeus from Luke 19:8, who decided to dedicate part of his property to God, although he was not asked about this. They were both rich, but each chose what he considered more important.

God will never condemn a rich person for giving much and sharing with others, participating in their needs.

Dreaming of wealth, think, will it be for your good?

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Luke 6:24-25; 18:18-27; 19:1-10; Prov. 11:4,16,28; 13:8; 18:23; 23:4-5; Gen. 13:2; Eccl. 5:11-18; 9:11; Song 8:7; James 2:1-7; 5:1-9; 2 Cor. 8:1-3; 9:7-12; 1 Tim. 6:17-19 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?

4. Why, despite all Biblical warnings about the danger of wealth, do many people choose exactly this path?
5. Who is a rich man? How do you understand this?
6. Is it worth judging rich people by yourself, not having similar experience in earning money?
7. What feelings do rich people evoke in you?
8. What to do if you don't want to live in poverty and scarcity, but at the same time are afraid to be rich so as not to risk Eternal life?
9. Is being rich or striving for it a sin?
10. Why does God give so many warnings to rich people, but at the same time calls wealth and abundance of everything a blessing?
11. Why did Jesus choose for himself the life of a simple worker and poor wanderer?
12. Do you think the mind of a millionaire differs from the mind of a billionaire?
13. Why does the Faithful Witness from Rev. 3:17 call all rich people of the Laodicean period poor and miserable?
14. Why did Jesus say that it's impossible to serve God and wealth? How do you understand this? Does this mean that among Christians there will be no rich people?
15. Was this lesson useful for you?

The Sixth Commandment

Throughout the world and among all peoples, the murder of a person is considered a criminal offense for which strict punishment follows. In giving this commandment, the Lord very briefly declared: "You shall not murder" Ex. 20:13.

After this, other statutes appeared explaining the rules of relationships between people. Also, God's people were explained what measure of punishment should be chosen for violators of the law. The Lord is very wise and just in His statutes, and the people accepted everything that was said from above. Hardly anyone would claim that this commandment lost its force with Christ's death, and it's not worth observing, since Christ fulfilled the entire law.

Living on this earth, Jesus gave a deeper understanding of the law, revealing the spirit of the commandment. In the Sermon on the Mount, He very accessibly explained what is considered murder in Heaven's eyes, and what punishment simple words of cursing bring, which people say to each other without thinking.

The family did not become an exception. It too is a battlefield between good and evil. And on this field, love, tender attachment, kindness, respect, tenderness, care, attention and many other good qualities often perish, making a person's soul empty and unsuitable for Eternity. The judgment over weak people who, under the pressure of someone else's anger, lost their human appearance and personal self-esteem, will not be as strict as over their tormentors. But if a person became a victim of another's cruelty and rudeness, as a result of which he began to despise and hate his offender, this does not give him the right to Eternal life. With such a spirit, hardly anyone will inherit salvation, even if he was oppressed on this Earth.

Jesus taught in Matt. 5:21-22: "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother,

'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire." The Lord very clearly made it understood what is murder in Heaven's eyes and what punishment all violators of this commandment deserve.

If I consider someone foolish and tell him about it, insulting his feelings, then the highest measure of punishment awaits me. My rough word is an instrument of murder. This is how God understands it.

What happens in a person's heart when he becomes angry at someone and says something rude addressed to another? He opens the way for an evil spirit, which in alliance with man's carnal nature begins to kill God's image in the speaker's heart and endow this soul with qualities of demonic forces, establishing the mind in pride and in its righteousness. As a result, the person created in the image and likeness of God perishes. Sin was born in the soul of the curser, which at first was not so big and completely unnoticeable, but like a sown seed, this sin begins to grow and bear its evil fruit in the sinner's soul.

The problem of sin is that the sinner himself cannot deliver his soul from this evil. He doesn't have such power to free himself from this authority.

Let's look at Satan's rebellion. This angel was the crown of wisdom and beauty. He lacked any defects. But he became proud of his position and envied that God's throne was higher. This caused indignation in the covering cherub, which became the seed of evil that destroyed both Lucifer himself and those who believed him and became infected with the same spirit.

The war in Heaven was ordinary polemics, as a result of which the souls of holy beings began to perish, because they became sinful and unsuitable for eternal life. Satan himself did not understand what sin leads to, and what destructive consequences evil produces in the sinner's soul. The murder of the Son of God became the culmination of the complete fall of the fallen cherub and his host. And it all began with a small

word of dissatisfaction that the Son of the morning began to nurture in his heart.

Jesus did not accidentally clarify and reveal the spirit of the sixth commandment. He wants to convey to each of us that even the most harmless, in our view, insult to our neighbor is a seed of evil and an instrument of murder of our souls.

Words possess amazing power to convince the listener and influence his consciousness. I think I won't say anything new if I declare that with a word one can kill a close person. In history there are many examples when people lost the desire to live in response to rude words addressed to them and left this world by taking their own lives.

What does an evil word do in the listener's heart? It is capable of killing good feelings in him, destroying heartfelt attachment, annihilating friendliness and cooling love. One rude word spoken in an evil spirit can instantly destroy everything that was built over years. This is like an explosion of enriched uranium, which is very small in itself, but upon reaching critical mass releases colossal energy that sweeps away everything in its path. After such an explosion, it becomes impossible to restore the destruction.

Once I met a family that was engaged in guardianship of children from dysfunctional families. At that time they had a one-year-old girl. They told that when they received her at four months of age, she would shrink completely at the sounds of human speech and become hard as stone. Her parents were deprived of their rights for rude treatment of children, and this girl was given for rehabilitation. The new guardians had to spend a very long time bringing the poor child out of this pitiful condition. They gently communicated with her, caressed and kissed her, lovingly cared for her. As a result, the child came alive and began to develop normally.

If a person's soul does not have God's protection, then it is very easy to wound or kill it. But if love lives in the listener's heart and God's grace reigns, then all the evil words of the world will not harm it, although they may spoil the attitude toward the evil

person. God's person will continue to love his offender and reviler as an enemy, but will not experience heartfelt attachment to him, and they will not have mutual love.

Love is capable of unilaterally continuing to treat evil people kindly, wanting to revive their hardened hearts, but it will never be mutual with another spirit. Just as the north and south poles of the earth cannot unite, so love and evil will have nothing in common.

The family is the best place for developing the closest and kindest relationships. God has everything necessary for building a happy family. If both spouses agree to communicate tenderly and react to difficult situations, not allowing any evil to manifest itself in their relationships, and take God as their helper, then they will succeed in building what God wants to see in their union.

The seed of evil, although it carries destructive power, will not gain its power in a good heart, even if it somehow tries to get there. A person who loves God will immediately discover the foreign substance and run with this in prayer to God for deliverance and cleansing. And his loving listener will understand that trouble has happened to his friend, and he needs to be supported in prayer. Then together they will celebrate victory and agree never to give place to evil.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Lev. 19:16; Eph. 4:29-32; Ps. 30:13-15; Rom. 1:28-32; James 3:6-18; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Col. 3:8-10; Matt. 5:44-48; 1 Tim. 6:3-6; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; John 13:34-35 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Do you understand the spirit of the sixth commandment? What else does it forbid doing?
5. Is every evil word a violation of the sixth commandment?
6. Is it possible to violate the commandment "you shall not murder" without words?
7. Is killing in computer games a sin in Heaven's eyes?

8. What and who teaches us to violate the sixth commandment?
9. Does secular authority's loyalty to spiritual violation of the sixth commandment mean that it can be violated and go unpunished?
10. Why did Jesus teach that we will be condemned by our words or justified by them? Matt. 12:37.
11. Is it worth watching your words when you really want to prove your point or express indignation?
12. How do you feel when people shout at you or when you are insulted?
13. Can one justify evil words by the fact that Jesus also called the Pharisees snakes and offspring of vipers? Matt. 23:33.
14. Are there substitutes for evil words in your language?
15. Will polite words spoken with an evil spirit be considered a violation of the sixth commandment?

The Seventh Commandment

After the commandment "You shall not murder," God said: "You shall not commit adultery" Ex. 20:14. This command was written by God's hand on stone tablets on both sides. God very briefly expressed the essence and principle of relationships between men and women and took under the protection of the law the sanctity of the family union. In this commandment there are no loopholes to somehow bypass this God's requirement, and only the death of one of the spouses gives the right to remarriage.

But the spirit of the seventh commandment extends not only to the concrete action, but also to a person's thoughts, which no one except God sees.

Secular laws in Western society are formulated in such a way as to protect the integrity of family relationships while spouses want to live together, but at the desire of one of the parties this marriage can be dissolved, and divorced people are officially allowed to create a new union with another person.

Also, no secular authority will prosecute you for marital infidelity, and no one will exclude you from church society as a law violator for your thoughts.

But there is God, Who is the same yesterday, today and forever. His commandments are just as relevant in our days as at the time of their proclamation, and God's law was not canceled by Him even with Christ's death.

What do we see now? The seventh commandment is trampled at all levels of civilized society. Books, films, billboards - all this imposes other values on people and pushes society into the abyss of sin.

The enemy of souls knows that if he succeeds in corrupting a person in at least one thing, this law violator will be guilty of all and will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

In Jesus' time, the divorce procedure was simplified to the simple desire of a husband not to live with his wife for personal

reasons. It was enough for a man to write a divorce letter, and he was considered free. Moses gave such permission for special cases of abusive relationships to preserve the life and health of women and children, but people perverted this exception to indulge their carnal desires and made it a norm of life.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus revealed the spirit of the commandment "You shall not commit adultery" and very clearly made it understood that it had not been canceled or replaced by anyone, but remains an unshakeable requirement for people, which condemns not only their actions, but also their thoughts and feelings. The Lord, who knows how to read hearts and knows thoughts, did not give the slightest chance for lawful violation of His statutes at any level of human life. At the same time, God does not deprive each of us of freedom of choice and does not punish us immediately for violating His law.

Explaining to people the spirit of the seventh commandment, Jesus said in Matt. 5:27-28: "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Understanding the spirit of the law and the structure of masculine thinking, one involuntarily asks oneself: "Who can stand?" But the Lord does not command something impossible, but gives grace to those who decide to be obedient to the law even at the level of thoughts. I know firsthand what thoughts come into a man's head, especially if a woman gives reason for such lusts by her appearance or behavior. I also know how one can resist this sin with God's grace and overcome it at the level of thoughts and feelings.

Since masculine thinking in the matter of lust differs radically from feminine, many sisters simply don't understand what their brothers or their husbands, who want to be pure before God, encounter and struggle with.

The availability and impunity of our time have removed all limiters in the minds of many men, and they are captured by

streams of sin that carry them to destruction, and men don't even understand what is happening.

Lust can come into a man's mind from his carnal nature even when looking at a decent woman, but very often representatives of the weaker sex themselves become temptation and sowers of lustful thoughts when they expose for display those parts of the body that should be covered and belong to the gaze of only one husband. And when you directly or indirectly make a remark to a sister in faith about her revealing clothing, little changes in her wardrobe. Only the attitude toward you worsens, as toward a person who has some problems that he wants to solve at the expense of limiting others' freedoms. But it should be noted that the violator of the spirit of the law is not only the one who develops lustful thoughts in himself, but also the one who gives reason for this and is a temptation for weak-spirited brothers.

The sin of violating the seventh commandment differs from all other sins in that it provides sensual pleasure and brings many positive emotions, and if a person's conscience is seared or disconnected, then his life turns into a continuous sinful celebration, where he seeks new partners and finds them. The mind of the adulterer is damaged to such an extent that nothing remains for him but to accept the right to death and continue living in this sin.

From the example of the rise and fall of many civilizations, one can clearly see that their prosperity and flourishing inevitably led society to sensual corruption, after which fall was inevitable and happened very quickly.

The sad story of Sodom and Gomorrah is a convincing example that there are sins that finally deprive people of God's mercy, and God's justice comes into force.

The seventh commandment is given for those who are married or befriend those who have families. God commanded us to love one another, not placing restrictions on gender and family status. And this is a very interesting test that only the pure in heart will be able to pass. For a brother and sister to love each

other is very easy and joyful, but in these relationships clear boundaries must be established not only regarding external behavior, but also in the area of thoughts and feelings. The Lord gives His Spirit so that His children can fulfill the commandment about loving one another without violating the seventh commandment. And this can and should be fulfilled.

Can a husband remain faithful to his wife while loving his sisters from church? This is the essence of Christianity - to rule over the deeds of the flesh by the power of God's grace and bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

God will pass all His gold through fire. He will refine His children in the furnace of interesting trials. And this will be very easy to endure for those who in their hearts have died to sin and live for God. No temptations affect such people, and the Lord keeps them from evil according to His word from John 17:15: "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one."

The Bible also teaches that among the 144,000 will be people who were not defiled with women (Rev. 14:4). Such a characteristic clearly speaks of the fact that the thoughts, feelings and deeds of such people were completely under God's control, and they were faithful in keeping God's commands, not becoming a temptation for others.

When God's law is written on stone tablets, then it judges the violator, but when it is written by God in the heart, it protects the soul from violating the law. I do not commit adultery not because it is forbidden, but because I don't want to live in this sin and commit it even at the level of thoughts.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read James 1:13-15; Deut. 5:18; Lev. 20:10; Prov. 6:32-35; 30:18-20; Matt. 18:7; 19:7-9; Mark 10:11-12; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Luke 17:1-2 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What is adultery?

5. What types of relationships does the seventh commandment apply to?
6. Is viewing indecent scenes, photographs and reading erotic novels a violation of the seventh commandment?
7. Why is it so important to understand not only the letter of the law, but also its spirit?
8. Why didn't Jesus condemn the woman caught in adultery from John 8:9-10?
9. It is written in Heb. 13:4: "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Why will God judge this category of sinners in a special way?
10. Why is it said about the group of 144,000 that they were not defiled with women? After all, many of them will be family people.
11. Can a brother and sister in faith love each other, be close friends and at the same time not violate the seventh commandment?
12. What should a person who keeps the commandment "You shall not commit adultery" be like? Does he need to lead an ascetic lifestyle so as not to expose himself to temptations?
13. What to do if I don't violate the seventh commandment in fact, but have evil thoughts that I cannot simply get rid of?
14. Does God's grace extend to fornicators and adulterers?
15. Was this lesson useful for you?

The Eighth Commandment

He who said: "You shall not murder! You shall not commit adultery!" also said: "You shall not steal!" Ex. 20:15. This command relates to direct encroachment on someone else's property and extends to a person's thoughts and feelings.

The fact that this commandment was spoken very briefly, without additional explanations, carries within itself a very deep possibility for amazing discoveries for seeking and truth-thirsting minds.

Theft is the illegal appropriation of someone else's property and possessions without the owner's consent. This is any kind of fraud, copyright violation, robbery, kidnapping, both privately and at the state level.

It is written that whoever sins in one thing will be guilty of all (James 2:10). It is also said that thieves will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:10).

Someone else's property or possessions can be things, land plots, a person's free choice, his personal space, his intellectual achievements, plans and dreams, his happiness and spiritual inheritance that he received from his parents.

The eighth commandment can be violated at an unconscious level, for example, through non-repayment of debt, unfulfilled promises, retention of books, cassettes, disks or other information carriers taken for temporary use, as well as damage to someone else's property without compensation for the damage caused.

Not every thing or property is needed by its owner, and somewhere he himself may through his absent-mindedness lose something or leave it unattended in a public place, giving others temptation to violate God's commandment.

I live in Germany, in that region where it is not customary to steal and take what belongs to others. And this has so entered into the culture of the local population that you are not afraid to leave or forget your things on the street, knowing that no one

will take them. And it is interesting to observe how many builders performing street work leave their tools unattended and go to lunch or on other business, not worrying that something will disappear.

The commandment "do not steal" can also extend to family relationships, where spouses give all of themselves, their freedom, their best years of life, their habits and interests to each other as a blessing for building a happy family. But someone is found who begins to illegally steal one of the spouses to satisfy personal needs, lust of the flesh and other needs, and then this person completely destroys the family.

Also, any abusive relationships in the family can rob a person and deprive him of peace in his heart, everyday happiness, mental health and hope for a happy life.

God loves every person and cares for any of His creation. He respects people's choice, the right of their personal property and personal space. By giving the eighth and other commandments, the Lord openly established the rules of relationships between people and Himself. And it turns out that the commandment "You shall not steal" also extends to relationships between God and man.

Man began to rob God. Ask with what? With tithes and offerings that the Lord designated for Himself in the form of support for His servants. Mal. 3:8-10.

Besides this, God also set aside for Himself a certain part of time, which man cannot simply appropriate with impunity for satisfying personal interests.

The fourth commandment says: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work..." (Ex. 20:8-10).

If we dig even deeper, God created man for Himself. And when this God's property chooses another god for itself and goes into the world, not trying to understand God's will, then by this very thing the sinner steals communion with Him from the Creator

and deprives himself of the right to the Kingdom of Heaven. God will have to punish such people and give them the right to death.

Once, when taking Jericho, God declared this city His own and devoted it to destruction. But someone was found who decided to take something from the devoted things as a lawful trophy. And such an action brought a curse upon the entire community and almost destroyed it. The culprit was, fortunately, found and punished. From this example in history we can see that thieves are capable of becoming a curse not only for themselves, but also for any God's work, because such people deprive their neighbors of promised blessings.

It is sad that believing people of the last time can also enter the category of thieves, falling under the influence of the world and cooling toward God's purpose. The Faithful Witness therefore calls them lukewarm, assuring them that they don't even know how poor and miserable, blind and naked they are, and moreover also unhappy, robbing each other and God with their pitiful condition.

Jesus offers us a way out of such a position by purchasing certain goods from Him.

By enriching myself with Heavenly gold of faith and love, I thereby make not only myself richer, but also the Creator Himself, my neighbors, with whom I share this tested gold. The white clothing that I acquire from the Faithful Witness is a symbol and uniform of an honest person who does not rob God and his neighbors, but on the contrary, becomes a source of their blessing and enrichment through endless transmission of Heavenly gold.

Love respects the freedom and property of every person, and not claiming what belongs to others, it is ready to share its own and what is in the power of its possessor. It loves to give itself away. And what will bring happiness to other people, make someone's life better, help solve problems and make them as loving and happy.

Love dedicates all the intellectual property of a person to distribution and service to other people, motivating them to live and work for the happiness of others. It only thinks about what else to give, so that someone else's life becomes easier, better and more interesting. If you have such a loving friend, then value him, and he will constantly enrich you with his Heavenly gold.

Appropriating someone else's property or possessions through legal means, with the owner's permission, is not a sin. Moreover, this is part of God's plan for correct relationships between people, since it is more blessed to give than to receive.

I remember a case when I decided to give a good new chainsaw to one of my friends who would really need it. But someone stole it from me. It was so sad that I couldn't gladden someone's heart and bring benefit to someone. Although this thing was no longer mine, and I wouldn't use it anyway, but the very fact that it went not for its intended purpose caused me significant damage. It turns out that they robbed not only me, but also that friend who could have become the owner of this wonderful tool.

God has prepared many different blessings for us to enrich us with them and make His servants happy. He has already parted with His bounties in His heart and awaits the next buyer of this Heavenly oil from the parable in Matt. 25:1-12. But the enemy of souls does not want us to become possessors of the Heavenly, and replaces this with the earthly. And what happens? Instead of becoming rich in God, I become poor and miserable. But it shouldn't be so. God doesn't want us to steal from ourselves our right to Eternity, and offers us the very best that will make us suitable for life in Heaven.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read Deut. 5:19; Rom. 13:8-10; John 10:8-10; Prov. 1:17-19; 28:24; Lev. 19:11; Ex. 21:16; Josh. 7:11-12, 19-26; Titus 2:9-10; Eph. 4:28; Mal. 1:12-14; 3:8-10; James 2:10-12 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?

3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. Is it possible to be a thief in God's eyes while considering yourself an honest person?
5. Is it always bad to appropriate someone else's property without the owner's consent?
6. How can the eighth commandment manifest itself in the family between spouses?
7. Will the Lord consider not only a person's deeds, but also his thoughts?
8. What to do if I find myself in such a situation where I cannot help but steal? For example, my entire business is built on deception, but brings great profit.
9. How is violation of the eighth commandment manifested in thoughts?
10. Is someone who steals from the rich to give to the poor a thief?
11. Can one's behavior steal from a neighbor his right to Eternity? If yes, then how can this happen?
12. Does love for God and neighbor solve the problem of theft in a sinner's life?
13. Why, if a person sins in one thing, does he become guilty of violating all the commandments?
14. How not to become a thief in God's eyes?
15. Is every theft within the framework of state laws theft in God's eyes?

The Tenth Commandment

In giving the world the Ten Commandments, God briefly expressed the entire essence of man's relationship with man and man's relationship with God. Any of God's commandments can be fulfilled in a visible way, according to the letter of the law, and one can consider that this is sufficient. However, one should consider that God's statutes also imply spiritual condemnation for violators, which extends to the secret thoughts and motives of man.

The tenth commandment very clearly says: "You shall not covet..." particularly pointing to the thoughts of the soul, which no one except God can know and see, unless a person expresses them aloud.

Regarding any commandment, any hypocrite is capable of declaring to his neighbors that he does not commit what it forbids. However, how can one prove to society that your thoughts are pure, and you think only in the right direction, not allowing any temptation to overcome you?

It should be considered that the original sin was reborn precisely in the heart of a perfect being who occupied the highest position among other heavenly inhabitants. And if angels could read each other's thoughts, they would have been surprised by the hypocrisy of the covering cherub and would hardly have supported his rebellion. Satan's accusation begins with the words: "And you said in your heart..." (Is. 14:13). Before the whole world are exposed the true thoughts and motives of behavior of the one to whom the greatest trust was shown and who occupied the highest position.

Let's give an example of such influence in our time. The president of any country is a legal entity whose word and signature are an expression of the will of the highest authority. And hearing this or that decree certified by the president, all the people of his country are obliged to fulfill it. And somewhere in their souls all people believe that this trusted person has the purest motives and does everything for the

benefit of the people. No president will ever tell you about everything that moves him in making this or that decision. And we would be very surprised if we could learn the true motives of the country's top leadership.

The tenth commandment opens every heart and exposes before God all the thoughts and desires of man. It is said: "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife" (Ex. 20:17). The question arises: "Does this prohibition extend to your neighbor's husband?" The answer is unambiguous: "Yes." God expressed in His law the principles of correct attitude of people toward God and relationships among themselves. If there were no such commandment, then envy would be considered a norm of life and would not bring so much trouble and disappointment to people.

What does a person who violates the tenth commandment acquire? By and large, nothing. And what does he lose? He ceases to be content with what he possesses.

The principle of the tenth commandment is directly connected with our inner happiness. If someone has everything, but this doesn't satisfy him because his neighbor possesses what he would also like to have, then such a person can hardly be called happy. Envy does not bring happiness and peace to the heart. God did not plan to breed happy sinners and make their life in sin beautiful.

What did this small sin lead Satan to? To losing his high position, being cast out from Heaven, becoming a murderer, and then dealing with God's Son Himself. Satan did not acquire anything he desired, but lost everything he had. And even now he envies all the saved, because they inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, will sit on the throne and will live forever.

Building a happy family implies that the thoughts of spouses will be pure from secret desires that violate God's commandment. What good will envy bring to a family? Nothing. And what will this family lose if it develops such a spirit in itself? Everything. But for some reason such thoughts and desires take place in the hearts of many.

While Satan is alive, and we have carnal nature, such envious thoughts can come to mind, and something needs to be done with them. While a weed is small, it's easy to pull it out and remove it from the garden, but when it has taken root and grown, more effort is needed to get rid of this problem.

God's love immediately recognizes the unclean spirit of envy, because these thoughts contradict the spirit of self-denial and deprive a person of contentment with life.

How would this commandment sound today in modern language? "You shall not covet your neighbor's apartment; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his prosperity, nor his success, nor his car, nor his smartphone, nothing that belongs to your neighbor."

Things have changed, but the principle remains the same. Imagine a sinner who violates this commandment and gets to Heaven. He will envy others' crowns, others' clothing, others' position. He will not be gladdened by others' happiness, and he himself will not be happy. And someday his dissatisfaction will pour out into a new rebellion against those whom he envies. What is the surest way to get what you don't have? Kill, take by force, steal and destroy. This is not the spirit of Heaven, but the lust of the flesh.

The world is driven by envy. This is a powerful stimulus in successful trade, in the arms race, in GDP growth, in economic development. But we are not of this world, and God expects from us other priorities and goals, revealing to us the spirit and meaning of true values.

The grass in someone else's garden may seem greener, but it also needs to be mowed. A man dreaming of someone else's wife doesn't understand the consequences of his desires. Essentially, he wants quick happiness without obligations and in an unlawful way. What does he need to go through to lawfully obtain what he desires? His wife must die, the husband of the desired woman must die. This widow must show interest in the new man and somehow love him against the background of her grief. They must somehow correspond to each other in

many matters and go through a long procedure of premarital relationships to make an error-free choice. The man must take upon himself new obligations and responsibility for the happiness of the new wife and her children, if any, and then offer her his hand and heart. Will the envious person be ready for such trials? Will he be faithful in thoughts and feelings to the one he finally received? No. The quick path through violation of the seventh commandment would suit him better, but he doesn't have even that.

But God weighs everything and offers the better way, the most excellent way, the way of love.

Envy destroys any friendship, any good relationships and will give its victim nothing except vanity of thoughts and vexation of spirit. But love will bring happiness, many imperishable treasures, prospects of Eternal development, many new friends, new revelations and abundance of everything that is even difficult to imagine. One can even envy those who simply love not as you do, but sincerely and with all their soul. Is it worth indulging such a spirit? Maybe start with love and instead of sinful desires strive to give, serve and bless your neighbors, so that through you what they so lack would multiply and increase?

Is it worth weighing your true motives and desires yourself before getting on God's scales, where I might turn out to be very light? But understanding your problem will not solve it. Power from above is needed to overcome this sin and completely remove it. Love cleanses an envious heart very quickly and forever. It prays for those whose wife is better, and rejoices in their happiness. And it knows how to give and surrender itself.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read 1 Cor. 13:4; Deut. 5:21; Prov. 6:23-29; 12:5; Rom. 7:7-11; 8:5-10; 13:8-10; Gen. 6:5; Job 31:1; Ps. 138:2-4; Matt. 9:4; Mark 2:6-8; 2 Cor. 10:4-6; Phil. 4:8; Heb. 4:12 in light of this lesson.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?

3. What did you understand from this topic?
4. What does correct fulfillment of the tenth commandment look like?
5. Why does the Lord require purity in thoughts from us?
6. Will a person be able to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven if his deeds are right, but his thoughts are impure?
7. How can I determine if the desires in my heart are right?
8. What to do if envious thoughts come to mind and there's no way to get rid of them?
9. What does an envious person acquire?
10. Why is it said about love that it does not envy?
11. What is dangerous about envy?
12. How can one help an envious person get rid of this sin?
13. Does the success and prosperity of your loved ones make you happy?
14. How can the tenth commandment be quoted in a positive sense? Now it says what cannot be done, but what can and should be done?
15. Was this lesson useful to you?