

# **The art of living together**

A book on how to live together in marriage.

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## Authors' note

This book builds on the core Biblical rules for life.

If we look at history, we will find that in the periods where people lived their lives according to the Bible, societies were positively changed.

Hans Nilsen Hauge, a simple farmer's son, who lived in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, became the leader of an evangelical, "down-to-earth" revival that prepared Norway to be an independent country in 1905. The Norwegian constitution, written in 1814, is founded on the Biblical values and it guided our forefathers through the difficult times that led to Norway's independence in 1905.

When God created man in His image, with all the qualities necessary for him to be a true image of Him, the Bible says that He looked upon all that He had created and said; "All is good". To be able to preserve this condition, God gave man some simple rules to live by. By the help of these principles, God wants to show us the path to a harmonic life together as husband and wife.

## The principles

Genesis 1:26 states: "Then God said: 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...'"

In Gen. 2:24 God then specifies the principles for marriage:

1. For this reason the man will leave his father and mother
2. and be united (faithful) to his wife
3. and they will become one flesh (weaved together)
4. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame (naked in mind and spirit too)

In business they use "the Pareto principle". This principle says that 20 % of the effort produces 80 % of the result. Our experience after working with conflict in marriage for over 20 years, is that the maxims found in Gen 1:26 represent the 20 % producing 80 % of the result. Or the other way round, 80% of all the problems people have, have their root cause in violation in one or more of these rules.

This makes it simple, yet challenging. It is summarised in the question; do we want to do God's good will, for then to reap the blessing? *"If anybody chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own"* Jesus said in John 7:17.

Judith and I have tried these rules in our own lives. It has taken time to acknowledge what this means. We have to say as Paul: *"...I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it...I press on towards the goal to win the prize"*. We can say that together we have got the taste for the good life God has intended for us; therefore we have the passion to pass it on to others.

## Living together is an art.

Living together can be taught and practised. It can be passed on as a good heritage to coming generations by living as good examples and role models for them. The home is the arena where we all have to pass the exam. Next after God I want to give honour

to my beloved helper Judith. She has since 1960 been faithful by my side. That has made it possible to acquire more and more of the wisdom the Lord has for those who are faithful. Without her effort in our marriage this book would in best case be empty theory. Our lives are the best reference we can give. We want in our humbleness to be good role models. We want that our lives to be our testimony; *“The Lords power was made complete in weakness”*.

God’s word creates a road. That road is to be travelled. It does not help us standing in the wayside admiring it, or describing its beauty. It is only any good to us if we use it, the way it was intended. We have tried it and can assure that it leads to life! We want to pass on the baton – to everybody wanting to find God’s original plan for their lives. Jesus said *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”, for they will be filled*.

We also pass it on in the sense that you are free to use and copy this book in as many copies you see necessary, as long as it happens in wholeness and without profit. Our attitude has always been: copying mandatory!



The book has to be read in full to gain the correct understanding. If you are blessed by what you read, or has any suggestions for improvement, we would appreciate your comments.

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## 1. The road back to the paradise lost.

Many people, after they have read in the Bible about how it was in the beginning, may have thought: "If I only could get back to paradise". For most people this remains a dream. They accept that they are living in the time after the fall of man, and have to accept that they live in an imperfect world. We have good news for you; the Bible tells us that in Christ, God has opened a new access to fellowship with Him, and with one another.

### **God's Word is the way**

In Matthew 22:29 Jesus says: *"You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God."* It becomes important to study the Word of God to discover what we can do. Is there really a hope of a better life in this world?

At all times, revival has been characterised by people going back to the Word of God. We find this type of revival in 2.Chronicles 34:15. They found the book of the law during the reparation of the temple, and because the king gained an interest in what it said, he influenced the whole nation into repentance.

*"Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, 'I have found The Book of the Law in the temple of the LORD' He gave it to Shaphan.....*

*Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, 'Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.' And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king. When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes. He gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam, son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant 'Go and enquire of the Lord for me and the remnant in Israel and Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord's anger that is poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book.' He went up to the temple of the Lord. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found on the temple of the Lord. The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord – to follow the Lord and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book. Then he made everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the territory belonging to the Israelites, and he made all who were present in Israel serve the Lord their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the Lord, the God of their fathers."*

*(2.Chronicles 34).*

It is left to the reader to read the rest and discover what the result of this revival led to for the people, through a leader taking responsibility.

For my wife and me it has become important to study God's principles for man before the fall. Some of the most basic principles for marriage are given in the first two chapters of the Bible. It is important to also understand that God's word describes "spiritual laws" that has an actual effect regardless of whether you believe in them or not. It is like the law of gravity. You will still be crushed if you jumped from a tall

building, whether you believe in it or not. John 7:17 says that they who do after God's word gains the experiences.

### God's goal for marriage

Genesis 1:26 says that God wanted man and woman to be a living image of God on earth. The objective was that every generation should have their parents as a model of



God's nature. The image of God should be expressed in the interaction between mother and father. In Hebrew man and woman are ISH and ISHA.

During one of our marriage encounter weekends a Jew explained the figure (read from right to left); it illustrates that if you take the divine element from the words "man" and "woman", it becomes the expression for God (Jahve). What is left is ESH (fire). The expression "in our image" is written as a combination of Jahve and Fire.

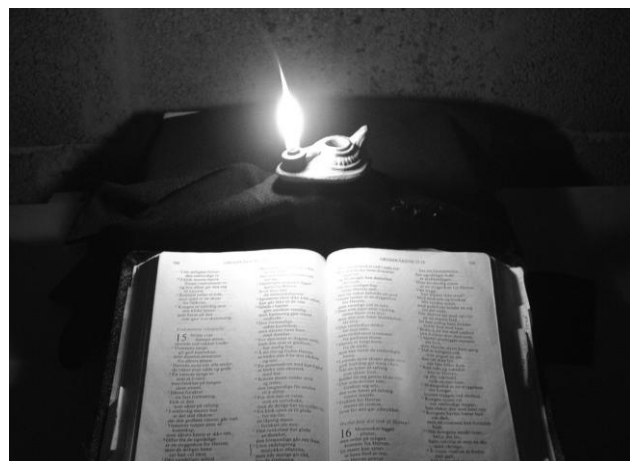
Throughout the Bible the theme is that the best way to learn is through close relations with good models. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says that it is *while* we are going about our daily lives we should teach our children by using practical examples and illustrations from it. God points out in Genesis 1 the special condition for creative forces existing in the interaction between man and woman.

We are called to be a light making God visible on earth, through the relations we have to one another. Matthew 5:16: *"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"*. The model shows that it is when we stand together as man and woman we have the possibility to mirror some of God's image in our daily lives. This is the basic model. All relationships between men should carry this principle on.

An illustration can of course not be as the original, but it can in a way show the main features from the original. A Hebrew explanation of the original is that we are called to be God's "shadow" on earth.

### Illustration of Genesis1:26.

The illustration shows an oil lamp as it was used 2000 years ago. The lamp is an illustration of us. The fire transforms the energy in the oil (The Holy Spirit) to light and warmth. The flame, an illustration of our free will, illuminates the word of God, by us practising what the word teaches us; *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have*



*looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life”. 1 John 1:1*

God’s word is also likened with water. Without water no life can come forth. Genesis 2: 4-6: *“This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth, and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground”.*

It was not God’s intention or plan to control man in every minute detail, but that man should be guided by Him by thinking like Him and act like Him. Jesus says that our lives should be as salt in our daily lives. In the same way salt stop food from being destroyed, our lives should influence our surroundings to live together in harmony. The image should be made visible in the midst of the practical every day life, while we do the near and necessary tasks. Intellectual messages, which quickly become empty theory, will be lost with the generation giving the message, but a message, which is lived by living role models, will be inherited and kept from generation to generation.

### **Which image should we portray?**

If the objective or goal is to portray God’s image on earth, it becomes vital to study the original. As in all valuable images it has a frame, and content. It is the content that is the valuable element, but the frame is necessary to keep the image in place. In the same way it is with the image of God:

### **The frame**

God has a nature consisting of a frame of truth, absolutes, firmness and order. The frame we know best is the 10 commandments. (see page14).

If God’s image only becomes rules and regulations, we will easily end up where the Pharisees and scribes ended: in dead religion. The frame is there to protect us, but it is the content that gives life. Marriage is the best frame for a life in harmony together, and it is this unit, which influences us most. If this frame is missing, or is only a shell with the wrong content, it will lead to destruction for our nation. The budget for social welfare is a proof of this. We understand then, why the enemy wants to destroy marriages. His goal is to murder and destroy (John 10:10)

### **The content**

The most known and sought for expression of God’s character is love.

This is expressed as in:

- “A bruised reed he will not break”, Isaiah 42:3
- “Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world”? James 2:5
- “For I know the plans I have for you declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”. Jeremiah 29:11
- God forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin. Gen 34:6-7
- Jesus’ proclamation in Isaiah 61 bears witness that God’s desire is life and restoration for man.

The relationship between the frame and the content can be explained as:

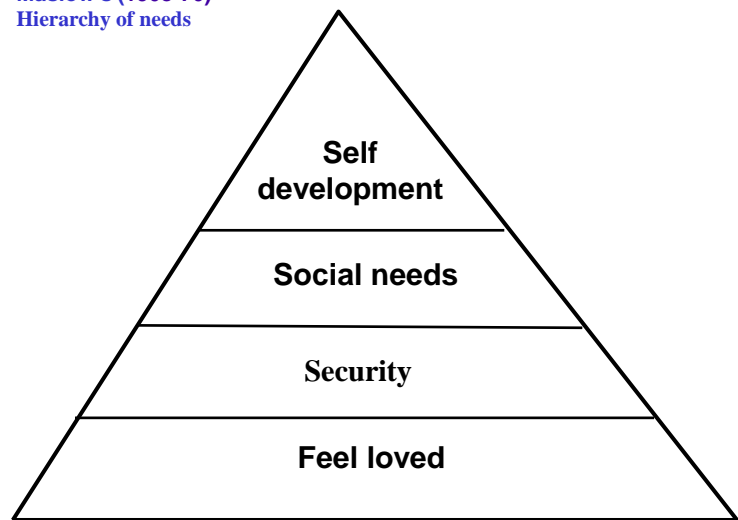
Love without truth (frame) = sentimentality

Truth without love (content) = brutality

God's desire for man is that man shall feel loved by Him.

Maslow's (1908-70)  
Hierarchy of needs

If we are to live out God's qualities, we must feel loved by him. That is the enabler for loving ourselves. The Bible shows us that we cannot love anybody more than we love ourselves. In Mark 12:31 Jesus says: The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these". God's love is the enabler for us being gracious.



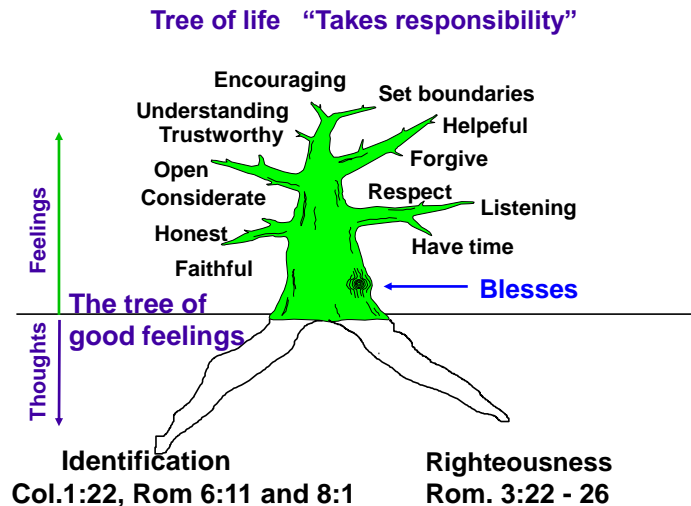
It is interesting that the psychologist Maslow arrived at the conclusion that man's most basic needs are those described in the illustration above. Firstly the need to feel or experience oneself loved. Next is the need for security. Security is obtained by an existence of predictability represented by norms, rules and a framework. We will deprive our children the possibility to get the most basic needs satisfied, if we no longer raise them within the framework given by God's word.

It is only when the need for security and the social need represented by stable relationships in harmonised marriages are satisfied, that people can develop what Maslow calls ego. This can be translated as self-development, personality, character, and abilities and gifting. A report from a local council in Norway in 1997 stated that 10 % of the schoolchildren in primary school came from so un-secure homes/families that the children were unable to receive any teaching. This only shows that we have to start with the families if we want to change society.

### **The tree of life (and the tree of knowledge).**

To remind man of what man's main purpose is, God planted two trees in the Garden of Eden. Let us now examine which fruits these trees gave. The fruit from the tree of life should give man life and is simultaneously a picture (image) of God's character. We are very close to God's image if we imagine the characteristics of a good friend.

The illustration shows the tree of life (The tree of knowledge will be discussed in chapter 2).



The trunk shows that we are called to bless our fellow man through the fruit we bear. These are fruits we expect to find as characteristics of a true and good friend. The very core of this tree's fruit is represented by forgiveness. This is the tree of good feelings. Good feelings are generated by what goes on in our mind. Feelings are a product of our thoughts. We cannot influence our feelings directly, however we can choose what thoughts we think (this will be discussed further in Chapter 5).

Through the roots: identification and righteousness, the tree gets nourishment and ability to grow. Thoughts are concentrated on the future – what we can do and the good memories of what we have achieved or done.

The illustration tells us how important it is to let our mind be influenced by God's word:

### Identification

Colossians 1:22: *"But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation"*

Romans 6:11: *"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus"*.

Romans 8:1-2: *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death"*.

### Righteousness

Romans 3: 22-26: *"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus"*.

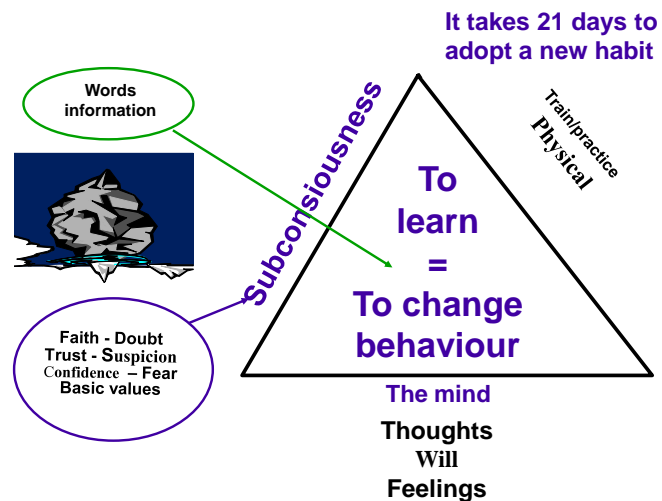


### Exercise and training makes us strong.

If we are to get a strong body, we need to train and exercise. Muscles grow when they meet resistance. The illustration below shows the connection between our sub-consciousness, our mind and the necessity of training new skills.

Few think about that if we are to reflect God's image, we have to practice it. When we meet difficult people, we should not despair. This gives us a perfect opportunity to live out God's character in us in an atmosphere of resistance. In this kind of situation God's character in us will meet resistance and grow, in the same way muscles grow when meeting resistance.

God's character in us will be most visible in these kinds of situations. Our experience is that when a Christian life is lived in truth and honesty by ordinary people, it is so trustworthy and attractive that other people feel a desire to try as well. It is the interaction between truthful teaching and a truthful life that spurs people to choose God. The illustration shows the interaction between our sub-consciousness (Christians



referred to it as our spirit), our mind or soul and the physical – the body. Knowledge must first pass our sub-consciousness before our minds can treat/review the information. If our sub-consciousness warns us against the information about to enter our mind, we will reject it. That is why the Bible requests us to preserve our heart (spirit), because our lives originate from it. In our mind we can make decisions for or against something, but still nothing visible has taken place. Something becomes visible when we start practising our decisions.

To many this recognition/acknowledgment will be encouraging. How many times have we not been disappointed after somebody has prayed for us, and then we experience that no change has occurred. But when we know that learning is to change behaviour, we can take the time to go through the process of de-learning wrong behaviour and learn new and good habits. Quick fixes can seem attractive, but our experience is that hard work towards concrete objectives gives the best results.

### Attitudes.

To have the right attitudes towards one another is fundamental and decisive for personal growth in a Christian life. Jesus witnesses clearly that God's attitude to life is different than the attitudes of this world:

- For whosoever wants to save his life will lose it.. Luke 9,24
- Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. Mark 10,43
- God hates the sin but loves the sinner. Ezekiel 33, 14-16.

These attitudes are an integral part of the creation God has put into us. When we consciously are working to acquire these attitudes, marriage gets the content God intended. Opposite, if these attitudes are not acquired, marriage will only be an empty

existence of unfulfilled needs and loneliness. During a long life we have experienced that when we were preoccupied with influence and career, life became tedious and meagre, but when we realised that our purpose in life was to serve, life got a richer dimension. The rich are those who can give to others. Jesus said that we are more blessed giving than receiving.

### Biblical Models

It is not as much what we say, but more what we do, that either makes the children follow us or to distance themselves from us, and also distance themselves from the lives we lead. The expression; “I cannot hear what you are saying because your actions are so loud”, speaks for itself.

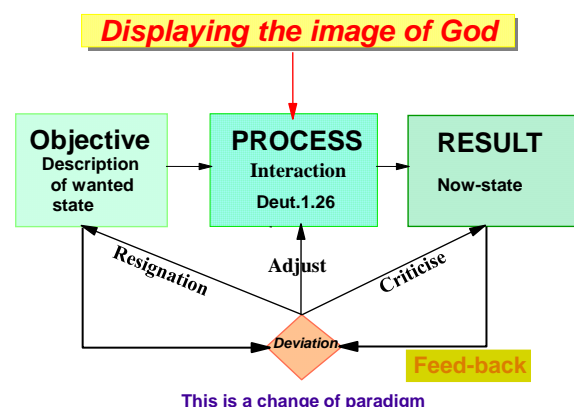
God’s character will be most visible in the relationship we have with our spouse and children. If we lead a life in God’s image and character in the practical ways in the family, by taking time for each other and show helpfulness and understanding, it will become a natural way of behaviour when we meet other people outside the family home.

Deuteronomy 6: 6-8 says: *“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads”*. This instruction to Israel confirms that God’s word should be lived in every day life, if it is to have any effect for the coming generation(s).

### Carefully observe the process.

In Proverbs 4: 20-22 the wise man asks his son not to deviate from the righteous path: “Pay attention to what I say.... Do not let them out of sight” (see also Psalm 1) “..for they are life to those who find them and health to a man’s whole body”. When an athlete was asked what the secret behind his victory on the 10,000m in the Olympic games was, he answered that: “ I concentrated on that each step should be correct”. Life consists of all the single opportunities given. It is now reality becomes reality. The past cannot be changed. We can improve on the future and plan for it, but it is now, today I can realise the vision, while not forgetting the objective, goal and the dream. Deviation from the goal must be used to correct the process rather than criticising the result. The illustration shows the connection between setting an objective and achieving it. It has to be a process between setting an objective and achieving the desired result. It is in this process God’s image can be made visible.

Many are tempted to criticise the result, or to give up if the objective seems difficult to achieve. Permanent results are achieved if we together are able to correct the way we interact in marriage, and in that way adjust the process.



In the middle ages people stopped believing that the earth was flat, and started believing it was round. This is called a change in paradigm. The old way of thinking needs to be replaced by a new way. It will therefore likewise, be a change of paradigm to realise that we have to concentrate on the process to achieve the desired result. To achieve this, we need to spend time to discuss and talk about how we want our lives to be. Many of us come from families where this kind of discussion never took place. Therefore this skill needs to be obtained, and it may take time and a lot of practise to do so. It will prove to be a profitable investment. It is this way we build trust and permanent relationships.

### **Diversity**

The bible shows that God wants diversity to develop. It was not given to any man alone to (re)present perfection. Only by standing together and complement each other, can we approach/approximate paradise like conditions. In business it is called synergy – under given conditions 1+1 can give a result greater than 2. The Bible uses parables like:

- From single-mindedness to diversity
- From grain to bread
- Limbs on a body gives the whole body

Please note how God has put in us a desire to find a spouse, complementing oneself. If one is visionary and full of ideas, the other will probably be careful and evaluative. It is like a sailboat: the sail catches the wind, but the keel prevents the boat to drift in any direction the wind or current may otherwise force it. The keel enables the boat to even sail against the wind. Married couples living in this kind of diversity would be able to contribute to secure leadership in both church and society. Newspapers are unfortunately filled with examples of the consequences of single-minded leaders.

### **The Husband's and Wife's main purposes.**

A husband shall live his life in such a way that wife and children feel loved by him (God is our role model). Therefore the man's main purpose is to take responsibility to ensure the model is realised. He is instrumental in providing security through encouragement and acceptance. Also, he is to acknowledge the positive sides he recognises from wife and children. During many years of counselling it is apparent how important these qualities are shown/practised by a husband and father. If the father is not conscious in exercising these qualities, it will create insecurity and low self-esteem both for his wife and children.

The wife's main purpose is the same as the husband's. Her husband and children should feel loved by her. The wife's main purpose is therefore to help her husband in practise to realise these principles, where she takes responsibility together with her husband. Many women react negatively to the term "helper for the husband". Her every day life tells her that she is alone with the responsibility for home, children and cooking. If she plans to go out an evening, she has to organise the babysitter if the husband is out. However, the husband takes it for granted that his wife stays at home if he goes out in the evening. She would claim that she is the one needing a helper.

We need to change this kind of culture. It is a result of the husband not taking responsibility for his own family and his own home. When he accepts his responsibility and practise the God given principles, he will experience that it is not

good for the man to be alone, and be grateful to God for giving him a helper. However, it is not easy for the man to break with such a lifestyle. Many men lack good role models from the previous generation.

God will be visible in every day life when:

1. I esteem my partner higher than myself
2. We accept each others diversity
3. We show each other respect
4. We forgive each other readily
5. We encourage each other
6. We are open and honest
7. We pray together

Therefore husband and wife need to start by planning how their every day life should be formed to enable God's image to be visible in the practical every day tasks.

In a Bible school the students were challenged to come up with some points they thought would make God visible in leadership:

- If the man should have any possibility to take his position as head in the family, it will be difficult unless he has a wife believing in him, helps him, and also corrects him if he deviates from his calling of headship.
- The two need to have chosen a common goal, already from the start
- The husband must be willing to listen to his helper, when she is raising concerns if the image they want to portray is not working.
- It is the husbands responsibility to ask for feedback from his wife
- It is his responsibility to take her feedback seriously
- If we are to rebuild the family and make God's image visible we need to be lenient towards each other's weaknesses in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Missing respect can be breaking sign for a marriage.

### **“Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”**

New role models must be raised for every generation. Otherwise true life will die or worse, a wrong role model will replace the right one. We should stop and think when people do not want to have anything to do with God, because the image of God is seen as evil and frightening.

Every year we are counselling hundreds of couples. Very few have given the issues raised here much thought. Just imagine how firm couples would stand, if the young entered marriage with the clear objective: “We want to stand together to fulfil God's intention for our lives”. A lot of questions would find simple answers if we asked: What would God have done in this situation?

Think how far we would be able to go if the children very early on got the correct image of God through their parents practising God's principles for life and marriage. God wants all parents to be able to pray: “Dear God let our children inherit the relations we as mother and father have with each other”. The truth is that most children becomes like us, even though we do not pray for it to happen. That only shows the parental responsibility we have to live our lives as good role models for our children. Many will feel guilt when they measure their lives against the standard described in this chapter. You should then know that God's word to the apostle Paul is

definitely valid also for you: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness”*. It is never too late to start afresh. We can decide today to steer our lives on the right course, and if we have done wrong, we can ask each other and God for forgiveness. Especially the children are receptive and open when we as parents repent and confess that we have failed. They are more than willing to forgive when we are honest, and through forgiveness both they and we, will experience an inner healing.

After a meeting a woman told us about her father. He used to call and ask the grandchildren to come over and help him remove the leaves from the lawn. He would of course pay them decent wages. The children came and proudly told their parents that they had to go to Grandfather and help him. The work surely took longer time that way, but Grandfather took the time necessary to instruct and guide the work. When the evening came the children were paid properly, money in an envelope and all. These hours with Grandfather gave them memories for life and show how simple God’s image can be made visible in every day life.

One of our grandchildren came to Grandfather while we were watching television: “I think it is boring to watch T.V, why can’t we go in to your study and then you can tell me what it was like when mummy was a child”. Such moments are valuable opportunities to give security and value from an adult taking the time to do so.

## Worksheet

1. God's goal for us is that we should live together with others in such a way that they feel loved.

In which area of your life together with your spouse, children or other people do you need to improve?

Express them in writing:

2. Choose the area you want to start with and note some bullet points on how you will practise this work.

3. Share your thoughts from point two with your spouse. He/she will be able to give open and honest feedback and it could also inspire him/her to find his/her own improvement areas.

If you are not married, you could share your thoughts with your children.

Note down feedback and good hints

NB! Feedback should not be given as critique, but as encouragement.

## **The Ten Commandments**

Exodus 20: 1-17

And God spoke all these words:

0. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
1. You shall not have any other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of their fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
5. Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

The Bible does not use the term commandments, but rather “words”.

Luther took the first “word” away as one of the commandments, we have given it no.0 God introduces the framework for man by pointing out that he is our God, who cares for us and sets us free from slavery. It is because he wants us to experience this care that he gave us the “traffic rules”, as they are expressed in 1-10. We want to stress the danger of taking away God's caring nature, leaving only the law without His caring grace.

## **2. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother....”**

### **Genesis 2:24**

The Bible says that the Kingdom of Heaven is so easy to understand that: “Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray.” (Isaiah 35:8,NKJV). When receiving counselling is difficult and complicated, it is often because we are not aware of this fact, and therefore try to cure or address the symptoms rather than the cause. From medicine we know that sickness can only be cured when we know the cause of the sickness.

During our yearlong experience counselling people in crisis, we have found that 90% of the problems originate in breaking one of the four ground rules from Genesis 2:24. Ground rule number one, discussed in this chapter, is maybe the one leading to the most painful consequences, when not followed. Considering that the rule was given to Adam and Eve, who themselves did not have parents, is food for thoughts. This is therefore a rule to be observed by parents in relation to their children and by children in relation to their parents.

### **The fruit of the fall of man – Satan’s two weapons**

By studying Satan’s attack plan, we can learn what we need to observe in order to stay in Paradise. We need to be aware that he, before he was cast out of heaven, was close to God and knew God’s nature and characteristics. The two weapons the enemy is using are:

#### **1. Casts doubt on the credibility of the word of God.**

Genesis 3:1 ... he said to the woman, “Did God really say ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” Pay attention to the wording; It is designed to make the word of God unreasonable. At the same time we see that Satan implies some truth in such a way that Eve would recognise the statement. God had said that they should not eat of the tree, because if they did they would die.

This day and age is characterised that God’s personality is perceived as unreasonable, demanding and directing. At the same time it is said that God, being love, is not a punishing God! When we in our meetings ask people to express what they associate with God, it is mostly those characteristic connected with love which is described; care, mildness, faithfulness, forgiveness, gentleness etc.

Seldom is God’s Holiness in terms of framework and rules, order, discipline, obedience, firmness, perseverance etc expressed in the context of God’s love. But these characteristics are also expressions of love, because they describe the inherent orderliness used by God to protect us from chaos and destruction. We easily accept inherent orderliness when it comes to space, the stars and the universe. Few will have any objections against rules and regulations in traffic, or follow a manual to get a piece of machinery to work. However, if we take the aspect of Holiness away from the image of God, we are frighteningly close to New Age.

#### **2. Questions the mercy and goodness of God.**

The next weapon Satan uses against us is to question God’s mercy and goodness. Genesis 3:1: “*Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?*”

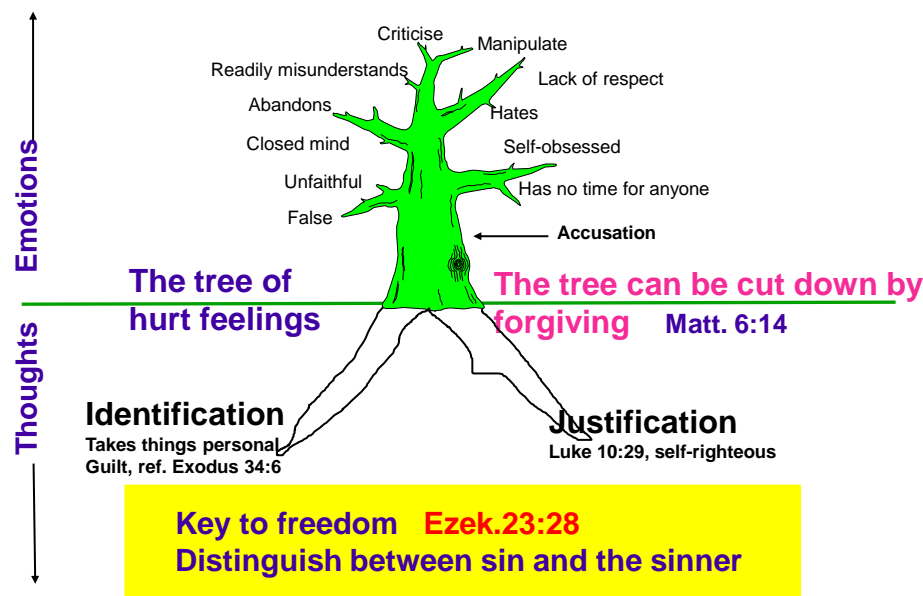


If we allow our thoughts to slide in the direction of perceiving the inherent orderliness only as commands and constraints, the next thought is very close; God loves me conditionally. He does not give me everything unconditionally. There is more I need to do to please God.

Genesis 3:5 “...For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

This is half a truth, because what Satan did not say was that the day they ate of the fruit they would die. His plan was to lure man into death.

### Tree of knowledge: “I am suffering because of you!”



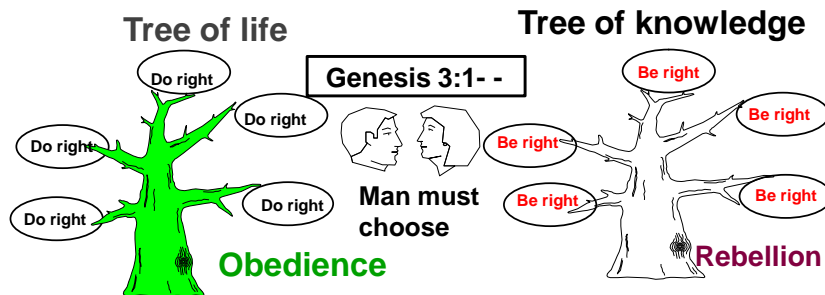
The illustration shows that the tree of knowledge is a tree of accusation; “It is your fault I am in pain”. It is true in a sense, but if this statement is used as alibi for bitterness and therefore allowing oneself to live out all the fruits on the tree, it will destroy one. I will then become like the person that sinned against me. Satan has then succeeded in his plan. But God’s plan is better. I can become free by forgiving the person that has sinned against me. We can choose the tree of life, where we bless rather than curse. The will of God is that we should turn our backs to the tree of knowledge and live by the tree of life. To live by the tree of knowledge is to sin according to the Bible. From this we then understand that what Christians traditionally has labelled as sin, is unwarranted in the Bible.

Let us study the some of the fruits of the tree of knowledge:

The fruit is reproach, and get it’s nourishment from the root of **Justification**. This is where we find our justification to accuse one another. The reason Adam and Eve was banished from the Garden of Eden, was not because they had sinned. God wants to forgive sin. But he cannot tolerate that they put themselves in God’s place and judged each other. The judgement belongs to God!

The other root is **Identification**. This is when we are identifying ourselves with painful situations and accepting the guilt these are creating. The person living by this

tree lives in the past. We cannot change what has happened; the past is the reason why we are feeling pain. Through forgiveness the wounds from the past will be healed, and we can put the past behind us. Please note that the painful feelings have their origin in us thinking of the hurting situations from the past. We cannot just say to ourselves that we want good feelings. The illustrations of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge shown in the illustration below, show that the whole thing starts in our mind. We can control our thoughts and our will. We can decide to think what we know is right, even though our feelings are protesting. John 7:17 says that anyone



choosing to do the will of God will find out... .

The illustration shows that the fall of man was not that he sinned, God forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin (Exodus 34:7).

The fall of man was that Adam and Eve chose to free themselves from sin by accusing each

**They did not have to leave the garden because they sinned, but because they choose to get rid of guilt by blaming each other, instead of confessing their sin to God and each other.**

**Blaming each other is blasphemy! You make yourself as God – the snake said: You will be as God.**

**Rom.12:19 Do not take revenge, but leave the punishment to God (ref The Lord's prayer...)**

other for what had happened, rather than accepting responsibility for what they had done. To judge is to make oneself as God. The desperation today is that people seek to solve the problem of guilt by accusing others, rather than taking responsibility for their own actions. By not taking responsibility for own actions, people put themselves outside the kingdom of God. If we have sinned against other people, we must admit it, repent and ask for forgiveness. If not, we are saying no to God's forgiveness.

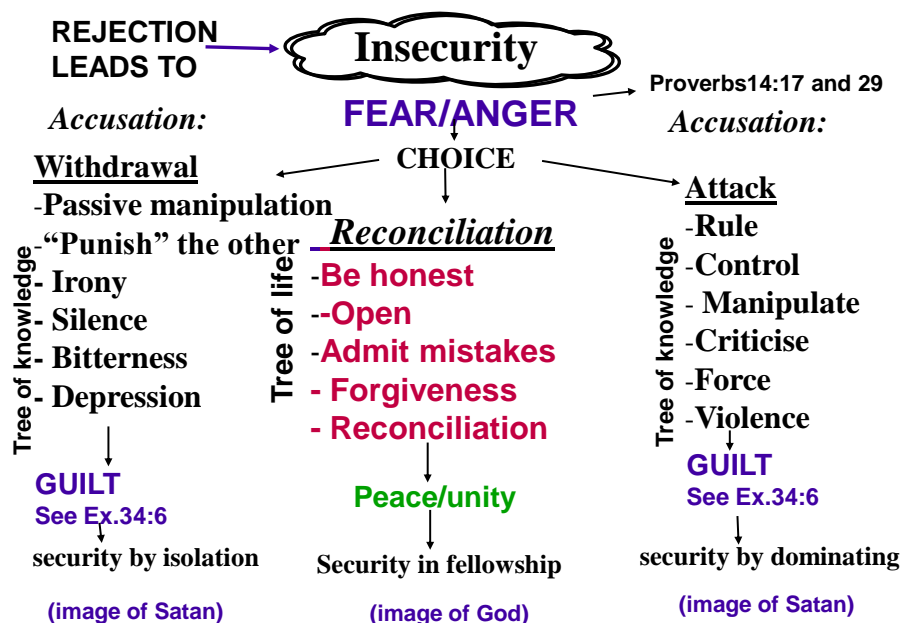
This principle is clearly explained in Ezekiel 18:20-24;

*"The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him. 'But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the offences he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live. Do I take pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commit sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die'".*

Because of this we know that Jesus said: “No one comes to the Father except through me.” Nobody can come to the Father without accepting Jesus as atonement for his or her sin.

### **What if somebody has sinned against you and does not ask for forgiveness?**

Do you have to suffer and have pain until the sinner repents? Are you to suffer the consequences of injustice and rejection for the rest of your life, without having the opportunity to do anything about it? Satan tries to make it look like this is the case, but it isn't. The sinner will die for his own sin if he does not repent, but you will be free by forgiving him/her and live the judgement to God. But you should continue to hate the sin. It is important to stress that you will be free, acquitted so to speak, by God if you leave the judgement to God.



The illustration shows the options we have when we are subject to sin and rejection. Sin and rejection create fear and anger, and the reaction is easily to accuse the person hurting us. This can happen by withdrawal or acting aggressively. Both reactions are defence mechanisms to protect against further rejection. Then Satan's image is made visible, and he got us where he wants us to be. The result is that we are being destroyed by hatred and bitterness. The letter to the Hebrews shows us the consequences of this (Hebrews 12:14-15); “*Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no-one will see the Lord. See to it that no-one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many*”. If we let bitterness dominate, we are letting the grace of God go, and the bitterness will also affect others like some sicknesses are contagious. 1 John 3: 4-10 shows clearly that it is not a right life if our lives do not bear the fruit of the child of God.

### **The sins of the fathers are inherited.**

Have you ever wondered how God can allow the sins of the fathers to be inherited by the third and fourth generation (Exodus 34:7)? God has made a dependency relation, which makes children become as their parents. This was intended to make it easy and quite natural to raise children. If the role models are wrong and parents incur anger

and rebellion in their children, the same mechanisms would affect the children becoming like their parents. Satan knows how to exploit this.

We think we can ascertain that a **dominating father** can lead to:

- daughters suppressing their feelings
- daughters not daring to be honest with their husbands
- daughters being in opposition to their husbands due to fear of being controlled (oversensitive)
- sons withdrawing and becomes passive
- sons being rebellious and becoming violent

This can be a basis for developing psychopathic traits.

In the same way a **dominating mother** can lead to:

- daughters in bitterness renouncing their mother's behaviour, and therefore inheriting it.
- sons developing irresponsibility and dependence
- sons having difficulties in prioritising their wife before parents

We have especially noticed how important it is for fathers to bless their children. More people have deep wounds and defects in their spirit and soul due to their father's unfortunate influence, than due to their mother's. Often we have seen that mother's ties and control of the children can be traced back to protection mechanisms caused by a father that did not exercise his protector responsibility correctly. This can have its cause in that he, in bitterness, has broken the connection to his own roots (see the illustration on page 22). Negative influence can be anything from mental terror and anger to sexual and physical abuse. This is an interesting observation when we know that mothers have more contact with the children than fathers. We are constantly counselling people from Christian families, where the father can be a renowned leader and preacher, and at the same time have abused his children.

### **Passive fathers**

The most known negative influence from father is after all not abuse, but passivity. "Dad was there, somehow...." is something we hear from many. That creates insecure children, who then easily get the same insecure relationship with God. Missing information is easily replaced by lies. If we do not get feedback from somebody we look up to, we will be left with an impression that what we did was not good enough. The clear message to fathers is therefore:

***Use your God given opportunity to influence your children, by being close to them. Give them feedback by involving yourself in their lives and give active encouragement and support by confirming their value. Then the children will become secure and want to become like you!***

### **Responsibility for own attitudes**

God can heal our spirit now. And He wants us to be healed. But when we are hurt, we are often hurting back. If we are not willing to take responsibility for our own unacceptable and sinful behaviour, but blaming other people or the circumstances, we can never be free. Wrong attitudes to other people are sin, regardless of whether they "deserve" it. It does not portray the right image of God to have such attitudes. Jesus reminds us that those who judges, will themselves be judged. Our ministry of inner healing got a breakthrough when we, by experience, understood how to teach people

to take responsibility for their own wrong attitudes and confess them as sin. God cannot forgive other people than those who confess their sin. We have seen separated couples become in love again after this “cure”.

During the first Family Summer Camp Judith and I attended, God showed me that my mother unknowingly had manipulated me using her tears. This had led me to get a feeling of guilt when I saw tears, becoming hard and rejecting towards Judith. By being ministered to through intercession, I was able to lay this before God and ask him to cleanse me for my wrong attitudes towards my mother. The change was tangible. If Judith now should cry, it will produce warmth and tenderness from me.

### **Healing from wounds from the past.**

Paul requests us in his letter to the Ephesians 4:17 to not live as Gentiles. The statements below suggest how far into our minds paganism has reached:

#### **Inheritance from paganism.**

In AD 315 Constantine II broke the connection with the Jews. They had for a very long time pointed out that he let himself be controlled by his mother Helena, who brought heathen influence into the church. We can think of our Christmas tradition of having a Christmas tree as such an influence. This has its root from the ancient Babylonia, where they burnt trees at the winter solstice as a sacrifice to pagan gods. Likewise is the use of bunnies and eggs at Easter, continuance from a roman fertility cult.

The church has accepted especially Hellenistic (Greek) thinking, after the conciliatory in Nikea in AD 325. This influence has done irreparable damage to the church, and the church has not ever renounced this influence. The heathen influence and heritage is especially notable within;

1. Value system  
Hellenistic: I do (we have all something we are not good at, therefore everybody is a loser)  
Hebrew : I AM (confer God’s answer to Moses at the burning bush)
2. Orientation  
Hellenistic: Focus on the individual  
Hebrew : Focus on fellowship and the process (synergy and diversity)
3. Teaching philosophy  
Hellenistic: I can when I can cite/quote/repeat. (e.g. our western exam system)  
Hebrew : I can when I have shown I can do it (theory is shown in practise)
4. Life philosophy  
Hellenistic: Aristotle, Socrates and Plato introduced the “critical methodology”  
Hebrew : We create by words and relations. We are head, not tail.

### **Bitterness, the root cause of self-destruction.**

Wounds in our spirit can be caused by the following:

- Manipulation through tears, dead Christendom (religiousness), money or sex
- Negative or hurting words (Proverbs 18:21), and unfair/unjust accusations
- Traumatic experiences as accidents, loss of loved ones, sickness, loneliness, being tormented or being let down by friends.
- Evil actions like violence, rape, incest or other abuse.
- Images from violent movies, pornographic magazines.
- Non confessed sins (confer the 10 commandments); abortion, foul language, swearing
- Things we are dependent of like smoking, alcohol, drugs, sex, masturbation, fantasies etc.
- Divorce lead to deep wounds with the mother and father and insecurity with the children
- Occultism through séances, films, jewellery/amulets/idols, or artefacts dedicated to Satan.

Proverbs 4:23 request us to guard our heart (Spirit), for it is the wellspring of life. Our experience is that counselling and intercession will heal wounds in our spirit, caused by one or more of these reasons. The key is to be willing to forgive, ask for forgiveness for own sins and deal properly with wrong attitudes. This is what we call inner healing. However it requires an active involvement from the person needing help. God does not force himself on anybody, but the one hungering and thirsting for justice will be filled. Another key is to start living actively being something for others. This is the best way to counter selfishness, and has great reward: Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into you lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you”.

### **Forgiving cuts the tree of knowledge.**

When we forgive those who have hurt us, we are becoming free to live by the tree of life. This is a tree where we are focus on blessing others. Our identification is the righteousness of Christ, and we are identifying ourselves with the Biblical statement that we are holy in Christ. (see also the description in Chapter 1 page 7). We are not “preoccupied with what has been”, but see the opportunities in the future. It is no coincidence that our eyes are in the front of the head.

### **What is forgiveness?**

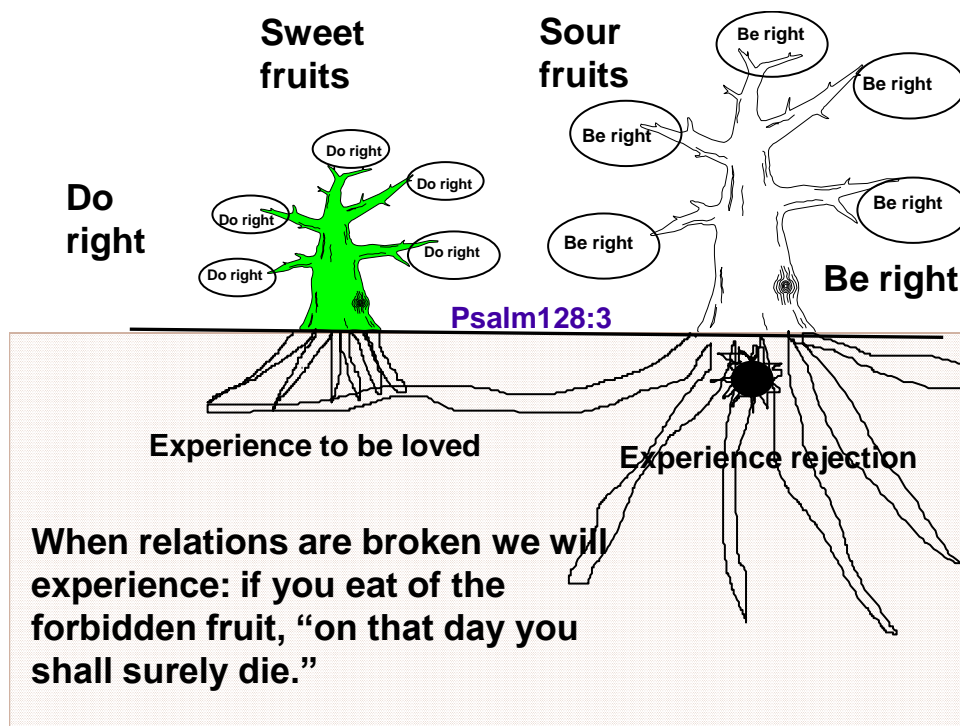
There seem to be a lot of confusion around the term forgiveness that it is necessary to emphasise what forgiveness is and not is. The bible teaches us that we should hate sin, but love the sinner.

- Forgiveness is not permission to sin. We must not contribute to hide or cover sin. Breaking the law should be reported to the proper authorities.
- Forgiveness is to hate sin, but love the sinner and leave the judgement to God
- Forgiveness is to bless; 2 Peter 3:9 and Matthew 5:43-48. The consequence of not forgiving is that God will not forgive us our sins. Matthew 6:14-15 “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”
- Forgiveness is a process - it takes time. Job 42:10

- Forgiveness is a choice I make with my will and sense, even though my feelings are objecting and tell me “he does not deserve it”.
- “Forgive me” are two words which do wonders. (Matthew 6:14). Answer; “yes, I forgive you”! Then we are loosening the person sinning against us from guilt. Jesus said that whatever you loose on earth would be loosed in heaven.
- Forgiveness is a source to life and health
- Forgiveness stops other people to control your life by negative feelings, and thus is a self-preserving action setting you free.

**Without good roots, the tree will be sick.**

One will not have read a lot in the Bible until one realises how important the blessings are. When God had created man, the Bible says he blessed them. God blessed Abraham, when he called him to a new ministry, and Isaac got his parents blessing. Isaac must have told his sons about this, because Jacob was willing to use deceit to get his father’s blessing. Psalm 128:3 says that “your sons will be like olive shoots round your table”. The following illustration is trying to illustrate this.



If you take an olive and plant it, after a while an olive tree will grow. The fruits from this tree will be sour. If on the other hand a shoot from the roots grows up, taking nourishment/energy from the original tree, the fruit will be sweet. If we renounce our roots, we are deemed to bear sour fruits in our lives. The fifth commandment states the condition that to live long in the land, we must honour our mother and father.

During an encounter weekend we noticed a young mother persistently chasing her three year old son. “Don’t touch, sit still, come here...” was said all the time. We saw that her husband was uncomfortable with this, but he dare not do anything about it. During a conversation with her we said something along the lines of: “isn’t it strange how we become like those who have hurt us?” She exploded and said: “That is not true! You should have known how my life has been controlled by my mother, and I have decided that I will not become like that”. This only shows that we are becoming

like the one we have strong negative feelings towards. We have no choice if we want to be free. We must choose to deal with it and forgive.

**Honour your father and your mother.**

None of us had the perfect parents in the same way none of us will ever be one. From creation and in the fifth commandment, God found it necessary to emphasise the connection to our roots. We must leave our father and mother also in the sense of forgiving them. Otherwise we will be like them. There is no way back to Paradise without forgiving our parents. In a lot of cases it can be very difficult. Especially in those cases where somebody has experienced abuse, forgiveness is difficult. In this context it is important to stress that *forgiveness is not acceptance of sin*. We forgive the sinner, but we should hate the sin as God hates it. To forgive an abuser will normally be a long process, comparable with a process of grieving; It can take years. But from the moment we start praying for him/her and speak well of them, God will bless our own lives. This does not necessarily mean that our parents will stop their negative influence. That is their choice, and therefore it will be necessary to set definite boundaries. God says that in circumstances like this the husband should break negative ties to his mother and father and support his wife.

**Prioritisation.**

The answer is God's priorities for our lives:

1. The relationship with God
2. Your spouse
3. The children
4. Work
5. The social network (including the church)

When the husband gives his wife 1<sup>st</sup> priority (after God), things fall into place. Jesus said that when we were one unity, we could ask for anything and our prayers would be answered.

Unity gives an enormous strength against evil. When parents do not stand together, very often one of them "feels the need to interfere" when he/she thinks that the other is not treating the children the way he/she should. This creates discordance and insecure children. To get a good result it is important that parents are united and agree the boundaries, and also how to practise them. The objective should always be to create good relations, even if it takes time. When families are happy they will be able to relax. Abnormal control from parents must cease.

**Preserve your mind in cleanliness.**

In Romans 12:2 Paul requests us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. It is sad to see many fill their mind with negative and wrong impressions/images. As parents we must actively influence the atmosphere in the home, so the children obtain the good heritage. It can be easy to use TV and DVDs as a babysitter. The price will be paid when the children reach the teens, and they no longer respect the values we want them to have. We will reap the finest fruits if we are engaged in the life of the children using the time to train them in observing positive values. "Teach the child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6.

Our five year old grand-child has learned all the songs on a worship tape. She sings, her daddy plays the music – again and again. This heritage can be given to the next



generation. You probably have examples of your own to give. It is important to be conscious and encourage recurrence. This is what the Bible means by binding the word of God on our foreheads (Deuteronomy 6:8).

**A double portion of the blessing was intended for you.**

Many may think that Elisha was “lucky”, when they read about the double blessing he received. The truth is that the double portion is part of God’s plan for Paradise. All of us were intended to get our parents blessing in addition to God’s blessing. We notice that people, who have been given blessings from their homes, are stronger in the fight against evil and have a certain authority in their lives.

Sadly we have numerous examples of children hosting bitterness against their parents, experiencing the truth from Proverbs 20:20 which says; “If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness”.

**Break wrong ties from the past.**

Many have experienced a negative heritage, some of the things that were done at home, actions and practices that has followed the family for generations. Such a heritage can be spiritually broken through intercession. We should not forget that even if God heals momentarily, it still remains to build a new character over time. It takes conscious effort to train new habits. Given the word of God in Proverbs 4: 23 which says that that the heart is the wellspring of life, we have now the opportunity to victory if we wholeheartedly want it. The two of you agree to ask for, will be given to you. If you have reason to believe such negative bondage exist in your family, the following prayer for deliverance for you and your family has proven to be effective:

Dear Father.

I stand before you on behalf of myself, and my family. I have sinned against you and my family. Forgive me my sin, and free me from the bondage of sin. I stand in the gap for my family who has sinned against you, whether it is father or mother, their parents – so far back as the roots of sin may go.

*[Think about what the negative heritage may be (silence, criticism, manipulation, violence, divorce, abortion, hatred or bitterness....speak it out) and confess this to God.]*

Forgive me, God and free me from the bondages of sin. I go against you Satan, all your nature and all your actions. Depart from me, and my family. We have no part in you. I stand here as a receiver of God’s forgiveness, and proclaim;

*Jesus is Lord in my life and in my whole family, in Jesus’ name. Amen*

If you are alone, you can with great boldness and candour, pray this prayer, or you may want to pray it together with your spouse.

**Worksheet.**

1. Note down the names of the people you have a strained relationship to. Note down what you have against each of them, Share this with your spouse and/or someone you have confidence in. In this context this is not to accuse. NOTE: Secrecy!
2. Decide to forgive by reading what you feel hurt for, and speak out aloud, preferably with someone as a witness, that you will forgive. Keep on praying and bless those who have hurt you. See Matthew 5: 43-48. (Love your enemies)

### 3. “...and be united to his wife...” Genesis 2,24

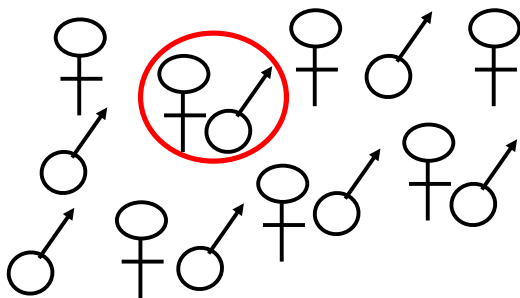
All the four ground rules described in Genesis 2:24 are expressions of the nature of God. By the quote above, God is inviting man to take part in the quality people appreciate most: faithfulness. The term faithful (ness) is used as an expression of the nature of God several hundred places in the Bible. Often we can understand how important the qualities of God are, by noticing what Satan tries to destroy. It is no other area under attack and where people are suffering so many defeats as this. Deceit from people close to us will always cause deep negative consequences for our development. It is those negative consequences, which leads to fathers' sins being inherited from generation to generation, if the curse is not broken.

Exodus 34:7 “Maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation”.

#### **The one you choose is the right one for you!**

One of the objectives of raising children is to enable them to make their own choices and decisions. When choosing a spouse, a lot of factors influence our choice. It can be emotional and practical factors.

#### **Am I married to the right one?**



The illustration shows that there are many choices we can make in the river of life. The symbols are the biological symbols of woman and man. The question “did I choose the right one?” may often appear. ***It is important then, to remember that it is the one you said yes to who is the right one.***

The ring circling the pair in the illustration is symbolising our marriage and the sign we gave each other in the form of a wedding ring.

The ritual we use during the wedding ceremony is ingenious as psychology, and very much according to the spirit of the Bible. Both groom and bride are asked: “Will you take the person standing at your side as your spouse?” And it is the answers they both give that constitute the marriage. This is what gives the marriage the right security and enables the couple to give themselves to each other without restrictions.

In our culture it is not “in” to allow practical factors to influence the choice of a spouse. However, you should not have lived a very long time together with someone before you realise that the practical factors do matter in every-day life. We are not only marrying our spouse, but are also led into a number of relations to a whole family, maybe with other norms and values. The feeling of being in love subsides after some time. Then it is important to remember that our feelings have their origin in what we are thinking. That is why the marriage ritual is ingenious as psychology, and follows the Biblical pattern. In it both people are given the opportunity to state that they are choosing each other and the security to unconditionally give oneself to the other.

Many young couples get an oblique/distorted start, due to making the wrong priorities. We often see that mother prioritise the children before her husband. It is natural when the first child arrives that the mother spends a lot of time looking after and feeding the little baby. Emotionally the husband might think that the baby has taken his place. The wife has not a lot of energy for intimacy and sex and the husband will quite easily feel rejected. This will make the husband insecure and he will prioritise work and other activities outside the home. That is where he feels needed and then he will also feel secure. If this happens the image and concept of God is lost, and the children will become insecure. It is important that the couple can discuss the situation thoroughly and be honest with each other. She must help her husband to take responsibility for the child together with her. When this does not happen, she will be tired of being alone, and her “nag” for him to help her will be perceived as criticism, with the possible result that the husband will withdraw from her.

We often say that the best upbringing we can give our children is to love each other. Then we will give them a secure foundation to build on. It also gives us authority. Whatever two of you agree to ask for, will be given.. .

When mother and father stand together as united, it will give them a natural authority that results in obedient children. Especially women we have counselled point out the importance for the woman to have the feeling that they are prioritised before children, family, hobbies, work and ministry. When we prioritise the spouse first and spend time to work out how we together should meet the various challenges, we will grow together and avoid becoming lonely, tired and dispirited.

### **Mutual trust is a condition for growing together.**

Trust must be mutual. Faithfulness gives security, bonding us together and gives strength. I do not have to compete but I know which place and position I have in relation to my spouse. I can use my energy to build friendship and unity, instead of defending and protecting myself. This means we can trust each other also when we are not together – e.g. while travelling etc.

The vow given during the wedding is an anchorage in life. To confess publicly to each other and the family present, that the two has made a decision for life, does something to them. That is why we see how damaging it is for the marriage when people are saying: “I can’t take anymore”, and start toying with the idea of breaking away. The security is destroyed and is leading to divorce. The way we think, and what we think is decisive on how we act. Therefore, we are required to take wrong thoughts captive as it is stated in 2. Corinthians 10:4-5: *“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

Proverbs 5:8-13 give a concise recipe for faithfulness, and also the consequences for unfaithfulness: *“Keep to a path from her, do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man’s house. At the end of your life you will groan when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, ‘How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors’”*.

During a sermon I emphasised that we must not hide anything from each other. A man approached me and said: "I have been unfaithful to my wife, and if she finds out she will leave me. Are you saying that I should tell her?" I persisted that if he did not, he would use so much spiritual energy to hide his sin that she sooner or later would find out anyway. We were able to help them through the painful experience such a confession is. When she was told the truth she exclaimed: "I suspected this was the case!" Some time later we received a letter from them, sharing with us how happy they were together, especially sexually. To avoid falling into this trap, it is important to have an open and honest relationship. Unspoken expectations of the sex life can easily create wrong attitudes, and are unfair towards your partner. Be aware that sinful thoughts destructive for the fellowship, affects both of you. It is a sin to keep such thoughts hidden. Our experience is that women want such openness, when it is honest and not used to accuse her for not fulfilling his needs. Those we have spoken to are waiting for an invitation from their husbands to stand together to protect the fellowship and the unity. Again we are hearing the voice from Eden: "Adam, where are you...?"

### **What does it mean to be faithful?**

During a conference we got the audience to work in groups on the subject: "What does it mean to be faithful?" Women and men were in separate groups.

The women said: "He is faithful to me when";

- I feel valued and loved
- I am accepted for who I am.
- He prioritises me, and our fellowship.
- I can trust him
- He shares his problems with me.

The men said: "She is faithful to me when":

- She defends me in front of others
- She is predictable (does not manipulate)
- I experience being valuable and loved.
- She shows that she trusts me.
- She is honest and open.

When we were to answer the question: "What is unfaithfulness?" many were surprised by the conclusion; If the needs listed above are not met, the temptation to be unfaithful could be stronger than necessary if one meets a person that "understands" one. In other words: *Unfaithfulness is not meeting the needs described above.* No one wants to leave a person one feels loved by. Therefore it is important for spouses to give each other honest feedback whether one is successful in meeting each other's needs.

Even though sexual infidelity very often has its root cause in a feeling of not being loved, the statements above must not be used as an alibi for what the Bible calls adultery. Jesus makes it very clear that this commandment was not only something that was applicable under the Law of Moses:

Matthew 19:9 *"I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."*

Jesus clearly states that the only acceptable reason for divorce is marital unfaithfulness, adultery.

We have often met people that have fallen in this area. It may have happened before marriage or in marriage. Our experience is that when people confess, repent and ask and receive forgiveness, the couple can experience an even deeper intimacy and respect. When we see what deep pain unfaithfulness causes, not only with the spouse that has been let down, but also with the person that has committed adultery, we understand that this is some of the most hurting thing that can happen to a marriage.

We also feel necessary to mention that there are circumstances that can be so devastating and degrading that they can give legitimate reasons for divorce. When one of the spouses experience physical or psychological abuse, serious drug/alcohol abuse, total financial irresponsibility from his/her spouse, when of them are physically or sexually abusing the children or other serious crimes; a divorce may then be the only solution.

We do see from time to time that the crisis created by a separation or divorce may lead to people to wake up and take responsibility for their actions.

### **Crises are opportunities to grow.**

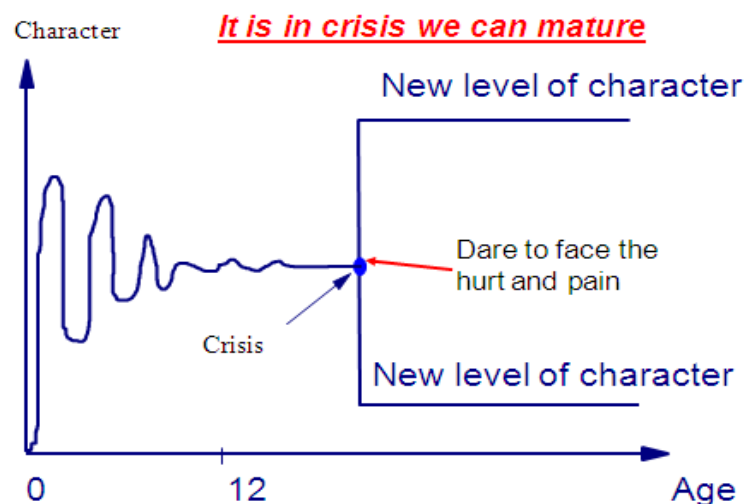
The illustration below shows how our level of character develops. After 12 years of age, there is little development, unless a crisis occurs. This is an experience we all have. When everything is fine and dandy, we are generally not motivated to change lifestyle or behaviour. But when we end up in a crisis in life, we are forced to face reality. In that situation we can be honest with each other in a new way. As the illustration shows,

we are not the same after a crisis. If one however chose to escape from the problem, one loses.

Unfortunately a lot of people chose this option. We recommend people close to someone in a crisis to care. Contact them. Offer help. People in

crisis need someone to talk to. That is mental hygiene. If we take responsibility for own behaviour and are willing to deal with it, a crisis can be the best that ever happened to us. On page 9 in chapter 1 we show how important feedback is to correct the process. Without

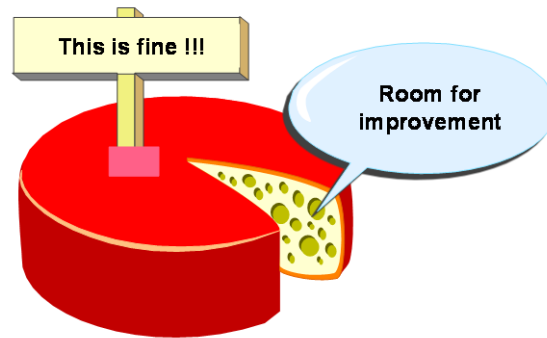
feedback we cannot achieve the objective.



During an encounter week-end we asked the participant to describe how to avoid feedback becoming criticism. The answers were:

**How can we avoid that feedback is read as criticism?**

1. Chose a good time for feedback.
2. Use “I” messages – take responsibility for your own feelings.
3. Don’t demand change – you can only change your own behaviour
4. Be composed, but do not suppress your feelings.
5. Be honest and specific. Do not generalise. Admit you are hurt.
6. Give continuous feedback.
7. Give the positive feedback first.
8. Receive the other’s feelings without being defensive.
9. Ask for feedback on your own behaviour. Reality is often better than you think. Often only sectors need improvement, refer to the illustration.
10. Give feedback lovingly. You want to give the other the opportunity to grow!



**When sin is not repented of, it leads to a hardened heart.**

There are unfortunately marriages that are so degrading that divorce is the only solution. Violence and oppression in marriage must be confronted and stopped. As fellow human beings we have a responsibility to intervene and bring degrading relationships to an end. Many unhappy marriages could have been avoided if people had received qualified guidance and counselling before marriage.

**Security is a condition for fellowship.**

Only a person that feels secure can give security. As mentioned in chapter two, people’s deepest need is the need to feel loved. The second most important need is the need for security. Security is there as a foundation to be able to give both love and intimacy. Often we see that people seek together and get married to satisfy their need for security. But minus and minus does not give plus in this context as in mathematics. On the contrary, it will only lead to problems. Jesus taught the disciples in the Sermon on the Mount that it was by giving one would receive, or as Matthew 13:12 says: *“Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him”*. The meaning in the original Greek text is – that he who says he does not have will lose what he has. This is not a prophecy of punishment, but an objective description of spiritual principles, which we all have experienced in life. It is all about which expectations we have of life. Negative expectations are self-fulfilling, because they direct us towards what we are afraid will happen. It is like riding a bicycle. We concentrate hard on not hitting the hole in the ground, and ends up in it. The following quote from the Bible illustrates this principle, which is also known among psychologists, Proverbs 4:25:

*“let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you”, and 10:24: “What the wicked dreads will overtake him; what the righteous desire will be granted”.*

It can be necessary with a radical change of life style taking charge over wrong ways of thinking, and confess negative focus as sin. If this is planted in our sub consciousness through wrong inheritance or negative influence from childhood, we should ask God to heal our spirit. From John 8, verse 32 *“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”*, and verse 36: *“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”*, we can indeed allow ourselves to have the boldness to deal with these things from the past, and ask God to intervene in people’s sub consciousness or spirit, and bring healing. We have a lot of examples that this can bring a fresh start in life. If the negative influence, whatever it may be, is suppressed, the negative inheritance will be passed on.

### **The consequences of broken relations.**

Broken relations lead to insecurity. The fear of being rejected sneaks in when we feel insecure. We then often react with anger and reproach; *“you are the reason I am feeling hurt.”* The evil nature in us is surfacing. We want to be right, and start to judge each other, instead of choosing to deal with it and reconcile by forgiveness. The illustration on page 18 shows two incorrect reactions. Some would choose an attitude of passive withdrawal, which easily lead to manipulation and punishment by showing that they “suffer”, giving the other a feeling of guilt. Others choose the active accusing way, by directing and controlling to force their rights through.

### **The daily choices.**

It is important to be aware that the daily choices we make are accumulated into the basis for the big decisions in life. That is one of the reasons the Bible says that we shall not let the sun go down while we are still angry. Our mind is not made for handling accumulated emotional strain, and they are damaging to our health. The Proverbs witness strongly on this, for example 16:24 which speaks about pleasant words having a healing effect and being soothing to our soul. This is supported by research within psychosomatic sicknesses. It is an interesting aspect that God has given us men a helper who instinctively knows that the image of God only can be achieved by teamwork.

No other person of the opposite sex should be closer to us nor have our intimate confidence, than our own spouse. In our ministry we often see that couples are trapped on this point. When problems come, it is easy to confide in someone understanding us. Satan ensures that some “understanding” person is available when one is most vulnerable. The wrong ties are established. Faithfulness has great reward. The joy I experience by giving myself to no other than my spouse is a heritage not only belonging to me, but will also be passed on to my children.

### **Broken relationships can easily lead to hostility towards the opposite sex.**

A large part of the force behind the women’s liberation movement has been hurt feelings created by being deserted by the man. Those hurt feelings are not limited to the part represented by a husband, but are reflected in the view a lot of women have of men in general. We men have therefore a rebuilding job to do. Mr. Bean is a symbol of men we no longer can take seriously. It will take time and perseverance to erase an



image of men not taking responsibility, men being selfish and only absorbed by their own needs instead of being there when wife and children need support. There is a lot of talk of abortion, but if all men took responsibility for their behaviour, and desist from exploiting women they did not want to share their lives with, we would not need an abortion law. Sexual exploitation is an effective means for Satan to destroy women's self respect and image of self. As men created in God's image we must renounce such behaviour.

### **What is love?**

A famous American actress with a dozen failed marriages behind her explained that: "one may fall in love, and one may fall out of love". This view on love is in direct contradiction to how the Bible describes love. Paul says in 1. Corinthians 13 that love is patient, kind and rejoices in truth (openness). We understand then, that it is all about building a character by conscious work, not about something we inherently have or not have. Individually we are responsible for giving each other this type of love, or choose to build our lives on emotions. By giving each other care and intimacy, showing that we need each other, the good feelings will come. The Bible requests us to have respect for each other and receive everything in good faith. These are choices that need to be controlled by our will and in obedience to the word of God.

### **Sex life is a gauge.**

The sex life is a gauge showing the accordance between how we live and what we say. Women not feeling loved and secure will have difficulties giving themselves to their husbands. When the sex life is not good, our advice to the husband is to ask his wife: "Do you feel I love you?" Here are some points we use when we are teaching young people on the topic.

### **The young years are a preparatory time for marriage.**

The sexual instinct is God's gift to marriage. It makes us longing for each other. The goal is to make God visible in the fellowship between the two.

Why are we then so different?

- Boys/men and girls/women have very different needs.

### **Women/girls seek security and understanding.**

- Is he serious?
- Would he make a good father for our children?
- Does he need more than my body?
- Does he want me to be a helper?
- Will he be considerate to my thoughts and needs?

### **Men/Boys feel the basic need for physical intimacy strongest.**

Men's instincts can seem primitive and selfish. Our culture has destroyed the good image of a man. Our experience is that:

- Men are specially made to take responsibility.
- The man is the key for a woman to feel loved.
- The sexual instinct must be tamed and be lead on the right track Abstaining is not harmful, as many believe. On the contrary, it is strengthening for the

- character to be trained in abstaining. It will always be necessary to abstain from sex at times like sickness, pregnancies, menstruation, travel etc.
- The objective with a relationship should be to develop friendship which includes spiritual fellowship and fellowship in communication. Are these things in place, the sexual fit will be there!

**Making the relationship public gives social support and blessing.**

Living together before marriage is testing with the attitude “If it works, it works”. To keep the option to walk away from each other open all the time, will never give the right foundation of security. The support and blessing of making a relationship public will also be missing. Research shows that the “divorce rate” among couples living together is higher, than among married couples. We have ministered to many couples, young and old, which have tried both. All of them agree that the security offered by marriage cannot be obtained in other forms of relationship.

**Homosexuality is faithfulness gone astray.**

When people are sufficiently hurt, the mind and emotional life is opened up for the wrong ties. It is evident that most homosexuals have hurt relations to one or both parents, and have by wrong upbringing gained a wrong relation to their own sex. Many have been the victim of sexual abuse, and been threatened on their life if the abuse was exposed. We have helped many out of this darkness, by word of knowledge speaking directly into the situations. Homosexual friends influence others. In an attempt to sort out their confused emotions men tries to find their identity as a man by tying themselves to another man. Women attempt to find their identity by tying themselves to another woman.

The Bible says specifically that homosexual relationships are sin, and in addition it is contagious by hurt people in those environments easily are led astray. During puberty the sexuality is labile, and easily influenced by the environment. In reality one can say that the temptation to homosexual fornication and heterosexual fornication is present, and it becomes a question whether to follow God’s principle to abstain totally when not married. The word of God is very clear:

Leviticus 18:22: *“Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable”*.  
Leviticus 18:29: *“Everyone who does any of these detestable things-such person must be cut off from their people”*.

Leviticus 20:13: *If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them has done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads”*.

Corinthians 6: 9-11 shows that homosexuality was widespread in Corinth, but they became free by Paul’s ministry.

We should not be deluded to mix close and good feelings for a person of the same sex, with sexuality. This is the way Satan seduces us by mixing a lot of truth with some untruth for the total to look like truth. Everything then becomes a delusion.

The best medicine for deviating attitudes, are good role models capable of bringing forgiveness and reconciliation to coming generations. We have trough counselling

and intercession helped some 20 homosexuals to have normal sexual emotions. God can set free from sin and ties, and after that it becomes a rebuilding effort to train the right thoughts and attitudes. This is the same process when breaking with any sin. God heals our spirit, but we are responsible for our soul. In this process a supportive environment and close friends can be decisive for the outcome. Problems in relationships have their origin in that what we are thinking is wrong. There is however a good Biblical foundation for how to live together. During the years we have collected some statements that correct the current humanistic view:

### **Principles for marriages:**

1. Everybody is created for fellowship. Genesis 1:31. God has made the conditions for us to be able to function together in harmonic relationships.
2. No one fits together to start with. It is an illusion to believe that one can find “the right one” in the sense that people just like that will function together. It can happen that people have received training in their families to function together with other people, and therefore be able to release the synergy in the relationship.
3. Living together is an art, and must be taught – it is hard and conscious work.
4. Only you can change you. Romans 12:2. It is a waste of time and effort to try to change others behaviour against their will. All change must be motivated from within.
5. You decide who the right one is, and do so by your own choice. To have each other for a testing period destroys the conditions for starting a committed relationship towards a common goal.
6. Don’t tell yourself that you do not have anything, then you will loose even what you have, Matthew 13:12. Negative confession will take away the ability to see the opportunities in your life together, Proverbs 10:24: The wicked will be overtaken what he dreads.
7. The things you focus on, you will give power to in your life.
8. No one can substitute you! You have the possibilities no one else has. No one can substitute you as father, mother, sister, friend... .
9. Confess your weaknesses and faults, and you will get fellowship. To confess other’s weaknesses gives the opposite result. 1 John 1:7.

## **WORKSHEET**

Study the illustration on page 18.

Find out which side you chose in a conflict. Talk about how you can overcome that choice by consciously chose the reconciliation path.

When you now know where you go wrong, a good rule is to start the conversation by praying together. Otherwise the bad feelings overcome you, and the conversation might end up in mutual blame and accusation.

It could be an idea to have the illustration in front of you as a reminder of the traps.

Note down the qualities you appreciate about your spouse. Tell them to him/her. Remember that missing information about your love will be replaced by insecurity and suspicions. Many relationships have been destroyed because people were not aware of this.

You are.....

Be conscious of getting out the hidden positive qualities from your spouse and children, especially those complementing you. Train yourself in pleasing your spouse, and compliment her/him when children/friends are present.

God bless you to be a true expression of faithfulness.

## 4. “.... and they will become one flesh....”

Genesis 2:24

### **We are created for diversity.**

The expression: “...become one flesh”, is the same as is used to describe being woven together. It is consequently not describing two people giving up and erasing their own personality to merge into a common whole like single potatoes into mashed potatoes. No, it is the diversity, which mirrors the image of God. It is only when the different treads in a woven picture is colour proof and maintain their distinctive qualities the picture can be full of expression and beautiful. In the whole creation we can see how God puts together the diverse to a co-ordinated interaction in nature and between people. God’s plan with our lives is that we in marriage should be woven together in spirit, soul and body (sexually). We can, in that way, mirror some of God’s glory (trinity and yet one).

Especially women would confirm that it is difficult to get sexual satisfaction in a relationship in which she does not feel spiritual and mental fellowship. To be woven together like that will not happen by itself. It is only possible by conscious effort and a clear plan. Within physics the second law of heat says: “.... nothing is free”. The same is valid in the interaction between people. You receive by giving. This is an art, and only conscious work according to the creator’s principles will give good results. It gives a vast benefit when people have been given an upbringing in a family where the parents have been good role models. In any case we must all choose this lifestyle. We must believe that fellowship is a richer way of living, than individualism. It can only be achieved by loosing your life. Jesus said: *“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me (lives for others) will find it.”* Matthew 16:25.

### **Diversity - a resource.**

Diversity can establish an atmosphere of creativity. When the poles on a battery have the same current, energy to start the car will not be released. When two people of the same sex are living together they will not produce offspring, and this is one of Satan’s plans to eradicate man. In the same way we see that when individuals get the power to carry through their unilateral ways it can lead to eradication of whole nations. History is full of examples. We need each other’s diversity to develop new life; we need each other’s diversity as a correction, not to be one-sided, and not to be outside the multiplicity. Typically we see that in conflicts the diversity and the difference are viewed threatening, and which we want to get rid of first.

Some of the economic crises in recent years have shown managers that they have got rid of employees that could have offered a correction to their actions. Most couples that come to us to get help in their conflicts complain that they are so different. They have not learnt that this is their most valuable resource. But they have to learn to use the difference in a positive way. By looking at things in a different way, new nuances can be discovered or one can avoid walking into traps one would not discover alone. This is what we call synergy. Those who have understood this will welcome difference and diversity.

### **The husband’s responsibility (also refer to page 10)**

The man is created to ensure that the word of God is adhered to, not the least by model behaviour. In the family everybody should be taught God’s law and principles. The members of the family should be trained to an interaction where they are

developing their personality together with others in a multiplicity promoting the attitudes Jesus taught us.

Further the man is called to take responsibility. He was to cultivate and watch over the garden. We need a change in attitude enabling men to take practical responsibility. This is about keeping the home tidy, together with his wife develop and maintain the home to be a good and secure place to be in. This does not mean that the man should be perfect. Then the task would be too difficult. No, the Bible says in 1. Corinthians 1: 27; "God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong".

Many men think they must behave strong and wise, and are afraid of showing their weakness. The Bible calls this pride, and says that God defies the proud. Those admitting their faults, humbling themselves and confess their helplessness and dependency of their wife, get respect and support. This seems backwards for people thinking like the world. One needs to be converted to understand how the principles of the Kingdom of God work. We see time and time again that when men have this humble attitude towards his wife, she will love him and become a helper believing in him and complements him. When he defends his errors and faults, behaving strong, she becomes his opponent. Zechariah 4:6 says; " 'not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit' says the LORD Almighty". This is the way the man is called to lead and satisfy his wife's emotional needs.

A woman has the need to express her emotions and frustrations to her husband. She is the one first noticing that the "the mirror reflecting the image of God" has cracks. She then needs that her husband takes time to listen to her. For a man this is a challenge because he will very quickly take it as criticism, and that he is not good enough. But because a woman often has bigger emotional fluctuations than her husband, she has a need to express her emotions, without being told that her thoughts are silly.

The husband being able to listen to her expression of her hurt feelings, and than be compassionate, "I understand you are hurt, and I want to be there for you", will win his wife's heart. Men are often action orientated. They are quick to offer solutions or explanations. A typical statement from a man is: "If you only had done it like I would have, everything would be fine". He does not understand what he really says is: "You are stupid not being like me". Those kinds of statements do not create good feelings. A wife wants to be a part of the corrective process, and not be served the final solution. Where is her place then? He does not really need a helper!

### **The wife's responsibility (also refer to page 10)**

The woman is the man's helper suitable for him, but also his peer. Genesis 2:18: "The LORD God said: 'It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him' ". The term "helper" is one of God's qualities we appreciate most. The Bible refers to God as a helper numerous times (e.g. Psalms 27:9, Psalm 118:7). The person who is the helper has in a way reached another level than the person needing help, or has something the other person needs. To have the ability to support and help are among the most important qualities needed to create fellowship. A discussion about women as leaders will involuntarily become a bit comical, as God himself describes women with outstanding leader qualities. The error occurs when we are deceived to think either or, rather than understanding that "the best leader" is a husband and wife standing together.

A competition of strength between a man and a woman is senseless!  
She is co- responsible, and has a right to contribute and responsibility for contributing into the relationship everything God has given her, in order for them to fulfil their common purpose: To mirror God's image on earth!

As a helper the woman will be focused on giving her husband feedback on how they are succeeding in the interaction.

**She will see:**

1. If things are not right
2. The practical and spiritual needs.
3. All the areas the husband does not take responsibility for.

At this point we would point out that many conflicts have their cause due to women and men are using different "language", and therefore understands the meaning of what is said differently. That is why it is very important to learn how to communicate. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

When a woman feels secure and included, she will be a support and helper. Women are as the instruments on an airplane: they register what is going on. When everything is in order they ensure the pilot of this fact, but if something is wrong they will inform of this. The most important functions have the most sensitive instruments.

In marriage the woman is especially sensitive if the husband is not following his calling, and when something is hurting the fellowship. We often see that when something goes wrong, her loyalty will transpose from her husband to the children. A woman feeling that she is not allowed to be a helper because the husband goes his own way is a master in exposing the husband's faults and weaknesses. That is why the husband in a lot of conflicts feels that his wife is an opponent rather than a helper. Ephesians 5:33 says that "*the wife must respect her husband*". Missing respect for the husband causes him to withdraw, and many women feel lonely and abandoned, unable to develop what God has given them. During one of our encounter week-ends it came to light that a lot of women had taken upon themselves the purpose of The Holy Spirit in the husband's life; to convince of sin. John 16:8 says: "*When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement*". This was one of the causes for the husband not developing as he would like to. When this was confessed as sin, the man took his responsibility.

It is vital that the two together creates an atmosphere of respect for each other, at the same time as they openly can talk about unacceptable behaviour and wrong attitudes. This can be painful, but it is important not to give up until the cause of the problem have been exposed and dealt with. During painful experiences something will happen with us. In this situation the husband has a responsibility to guide his family in what is right according to the word of God. In most cases this means to take responsibility for his part of what caused the difficulties, and ask his wife and children for forgiveness. Then he will be head, and a good role model.

The husband will be secure when he feels supported. He can then enter into his place of duty, and be loyal and faithful. The woman has from God been given special

qualities to create unity and fellowship between people. At the same time as we are different we are also alike. We have both a need for understanding and intimacy. We both need encouragement and support. We both need to develop our own characteristics, and we should be open to that we sometimes just need to be alone. The couples being able to give each other freedom to all this, will experience that freedom ties together.

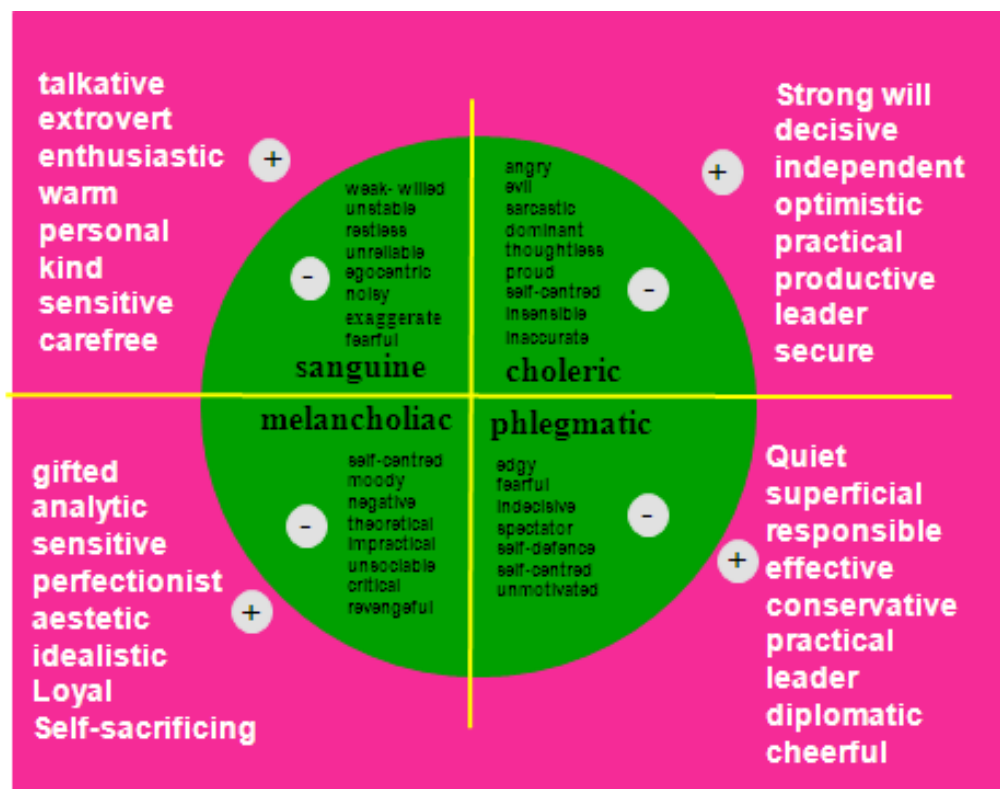
### **The woman is a part of the husband:**

- bone of my bones - Genesis 2:23
- flesh of my flesh
- her qualities are my qualities
- her weaknesses are my weaknesses

Just recently it has occurred to us what this implies. Previously we struggled to get the communication between us two as individuals going. We became good in theory, but when things went wrong between us, we used energy to defend ourselves. The understanding that we are each other's limbs makes it senseless to fight each other.

### **Difference is challenging.**

God has created us different so that we should complement each other. The characteristics of God will be shown best in the interaction between different personalities. Because we have different nature and different gender, we need to entice the beautiful tones from each other in the same way we are learning how to play the piano. People with different temperament like melancholic, sanguine, choleric and phlegmatic must learn how to utilise the differences if they are to avoid having conflicts.



The illustration above shows how these four personalities generally behave when they are secure (outside the circle), and when they are insecure (inside the circle). Most of



us have a combination of several characteristics even if one of them is the most distinctive. Often one will perceive the situation based in his/her sanguine nature, while the other spouse mirrors her/his choleric nature in her/his perception of what is going on. Both are part of the wholeness.

Often men and women have different perception. We have a different number of “channels” we are able to listen into at the same time. Very often we see that men are mono, while women are stereo in their ability to understand. It may however, also be the other way around!

The fact that we have different backgrounds with different values and norms is contributing to complicate the picture. The life together as man and woman then becomes a life long challenge, with lots of suspense and possibilities to grow together.

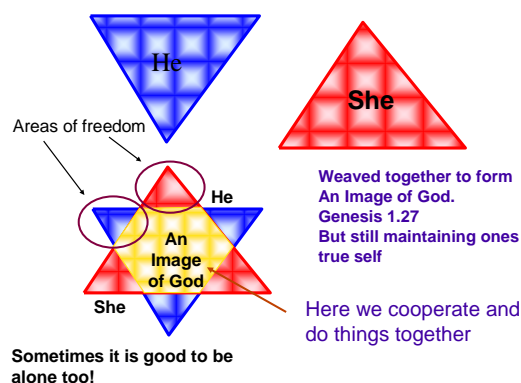
The challenge of living together is to learn to utilise the fact that we are so different and allow each other space to contribute. A mosaic is more valuable than a one coloured area. On the American cent it says: “E pluribus unum”. From many - to one. This motto created the new world to a union of states, later to become the strongest nation in the world.

### **Weaving together is an art.**

The illustration on page 40 shows a traditional way of illustrating four different personality types. Inside the circle there are some negative traits connected to the different personality types that can surface when we are hurt, or when we have not learnt to stand together with someone that can neutralise these negative traits. Outside the circle are the positive traits characterising the personality. Most people will be a combination of two or more of the personality types, but one will be the most domineering. The art of being woven together means that we learn to know each other so well, that we are able to entice the positive characteristics in each other. By learning to know each other, we will discover how we need each other. God has made us different so we together will be able to portray a picture that is better than what each can do on his/her own. In John 17 Jesus says that the world will understand that He has sent us when we are one. Unity is only possible between people that need each other. The more we realise the possibilities we have when we stand united. The more we will be able to make God visible in our everyday life.

Most people cover their weaknesses and use energy to compensate for them. Instead we should stand together complementing us. If we are to succeed in doing so, the condition is that we are honest and open. Refer to 1. John 1:7. Seemingly strong sides

can often be an over compensation for weaker sides, and behind weak sides hidden talents can lie. This gives a challenge in “exploring” each other. From our own experience we can testify that life is more exiting now than in the beginning of our marriage.



The illustration is an attempt to show the process where strong sides from him are complemented by strong sides from her to a unit having better quality, than they

had, each on their own. This is also called synergy. Two number 1s beside each other is read 11, or as the Bible says in 1. Samuel 29:5, "...Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands", because he stood together with his men.

### **Develop each other's abilities.**

We have all been in situations where we admire people playing or singing, and have the candidness to perform. We also admire people skilled with their hands or have creative abilities.

The family should be a place where we develop our abilities and ministry in a secure environment. Unfortunately not many consciously do this. Many leave the upbringing of the children to others, and loose the possibility to develop winners by the model example only parents can be. Deuteronomy 28:13: *"The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD God That I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom"*.

Bringing up children is primarily a parental responsibility. Therefore is this admonition to Moses also a word to us parents. Utilise therefore your position as mother or father to train the children to obedience to the word of God. Train the children in how to live together. Discover the children's abilities early on, so they can be secure in whom they are, and can choose their trade/job on that basis. The home is the best place to train perseverance, and learn the joy in taking responsibility in the fellowship. Remember that it is in the age 2-6 that most of the character is developed. Refer also to the illustration on page 29 in chapter 3.

### **Preserve the creativity in your life together.**

All marriages are facing the danger of stifling, where all days are the same in the same treadmill. This is destructive for the marriage. God says that he has future and hope for us. We also need something to look forward to, something we can watch develop and grow. We need to work to get away from focusing on problems to focusing on opportunities. It is a fact that what we focus on we also spend energy on. This is known from psychology. The Bible says that the ungodly receive what he fears. (Job3:25). We want to point out some of the areas beneficial to focus on:

### **The home, a place where one can develop.**

Marriage should be a place where one mutually were developing each other to become independent and secure people focused on giving, not demanding from each other. Unfortunately it is widespread to express one's expectations to one's surroundings by being a "martyr", "look at how I am suffering because you do not take care of me". This form of manipulation is especially damaging when children is exposed to it from the parents. It creates guilt and bitterness. A lot of this "grumpiness" is because couples do not take the time to develop a plan for the things that need to be done in a home, and share the things that need to be done according to abilities. Proverbs 15:22: *"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed"*.

It requires work and effort to keep a home tidy and in order. It is not a one-man job. Everybody living in the home should participate. This gives enormous potential for

character building and personal development. In the home one can learn to take responsibility. In the home one can learn teamwork, and the joy of work. Before the fall of man work was a gift. After the fall it became a chore. Many find it easier to work out at the health club for hours or jogging for miles, rather than mowing the lawn or vacuum clean the living room. The opportunity to utilise work as training is absolutely present. We can get back to paradise-like conditions when we discover the pleasure of working together. But without planning, constructive interaction and co-operation between people, this will not be achieved. Co-operation is only achieved when everybody knows what to do, and how to do it. Everybody needs to know who is responsible for what. Do not however, forget that it is a “spice” in life when we unexpectedly can encourage and offer help. Without this spontaneity life can easily become boring.

### **We should raise the children to become independent people.**

Every new generation should grow up as free and independent people with the possibilities to develop their own personality. This should be in the forefront of parents’ minds so they do not fall for the temptation to own and form the children according to their own patterns or ambitions. As good parents we should as God’s deputies on earth lovingly develop the child’s abilities by encouragement and friendly guidance. The worst thing we can do to our children is to destroy their self- image by using destroying criticism. But the child also needs to learn to respect boundaries. The worst form of tyranny is anarchy. In this context it is important to understand that the children easily respect the boundaries we respect ourselves, but a double set of morals in this area will create contempt and disgust.

### **Leadership.**

Many have a mistaken picture of God from their parents and guardians, and the form of leadership they experienced at home. It is a common accepted belief that God’s model for leadership is set as the hierarchical Jethro-model described in Exodus 18:18-20 where one should manage five in the top layer. In the next layer one should manage 10 and so on. This is however the way the pagans at that time organised themselves, and is a heritage from Moses’ father in law who himself was a pagan. The fact that the model did not work in practise is clearly stated in Numbers 11:14. In this scripture Moses wants to die, because he could not carry the burden of leading the people.

### **These structures of power is known in our own culture**

God had a better way for Moses: He gives the recipe for what today is called *team-leadership* or *serving leadership*, refer to Matthew 23:11. Team leadership means that a leader has received an assignment. The assignment can only be realised by utilising the resources each member of the team represents. In the same way God gave Adam the assignment to cultivate the garden. But God saw that Adam could not do it on his own. Therefore he created Eve and led her to Adam. It is touching and beautiful when Adam looks at the woman God gave him as a helper and says: “*this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh*” – in other words; she is a part of me. God created the woman to have this position in her husband’s life. God out rightly made the man dependent of the woman, in the same way the woman is dependant of her husband to be able to realise the picture.

This union does not imply any order of rank or difference in value. God himself introduced the first law of equality by saying: *"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him"*. Genesis 2:18.

To be a helper is in this day and age near enough frowned upon as a derogatory term and expression of suppression of women. But when God himself chooses an expression for his nature he says that he is a helper. A helper is someone that *has something*, or *can do* something the other does not have or cannot do, and therefore needs help. It is a tragedy in our society that the role of the helper represented by housewives has been so downgraded that few want to have this role. The development of this view started with the man taking it for granted that the wife would take care of the house and the children, without getting involved himself. Only by taking an active part in the upbringing of the children and the housework can the man show that he thinks this work is important, and by this attitude value this kind of work. In Christian leadership we often see how the man sits in the congregation maintaining the "religious" activities, while their women alone are struggling to keep their children in order.

Paul, by many perceived to be an oppressor of women because what he says in Ephesians 5 about the relationship between husband and wife, states clearly that the man not taking responsibility for his own is worse than an infidel. 1 Timothy 5:8. He is supported by his friend Peter who writes: *"Husbands in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers"*, 1 Peter 3: 7. God does not answer pious prayers from a man not having the right relationship with his wife. This interaction should as said before, be shown in serving.

Matthew 23:11-12 states: *"The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted"*. Jesus said that the children of the world are wiser than the children of the kingdom of God. It is apt that it is business and sport implementing these thoughts. A famous Norwegian athletics coach, Johan Kaggestad, demands the following attitude from his athletes: *"you are a part of the team to make the others better"*. God had intended parents to be such coaches in the home.

The following is our view on which elements are important in Christian leadership.

### **Develop diversity.**

Life is recognised by diversity. The nature is a witness of it. If children are allowed to develop in a natural course, diversity will emerge. It is however, important to know how to respect what is different from us. Parents should be good role models by not talking about others in a derogatory manner, especially when they are not present.

When different people work together towards a common goal, and utilise each other's distinctive characters, synergy will be achieved (one beats a thousand, two beats ten thousand). Ecclesiastes says: *"Though one may be overpowered. Two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken"*. Ecclesiastes 4:12. Our culture has unfortunately developed an attitude of either or. If something is right, something else must be wrong. But life itself is a witness that it can be nuances in

opinions that are different from our own, and can cover other aspects of a situation. We need to learn to respect other's thoughts. Abraham Lincoln said: "I have never met another person that did not have something to teach me".

### Seek/Find a common ministry

Some of the most enriching in our marriage is that we have been led together in a common ministry to help other people. This does not mean that we need to do it together all the time. Judith has a special gift in connecting with people. I have the strength to teach and formulate our thoughts in writing. A common ministry for us is that we desire to give to others what we have experienced and learnt. When we are preparing a message together, we are together in giving it even though I am the one speaking. Especially when we are counselling others, we experience that we complement each other. We want, by the way, strongly advice against counselling one of the opposite sex alone. We could give along list of what could go wrong.

You as readers should find the areas in which you can work together. We have only used the above to illustrate a principle.

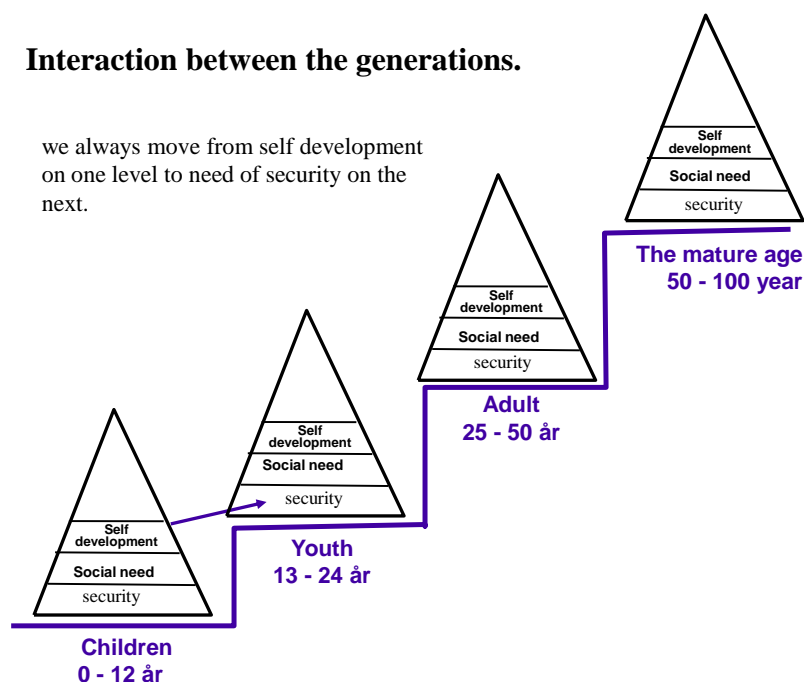
### Plan to have fun together.

The first sign of having problems in marriage is that you no longer have a laugh together, but focus on the negative, and lose the sight of the common goal. Not to wonder that Satan has tried to rob us of the song and dance, and tried to make it dirty and impure. God *instructed* his people to have a party. Many of them should last for a whole week! We are created for feast and joy. *It is something we can choose consciously*. In Israel the Sabbath eve is still a sacred family evening. The whole family is gathered for communion, a feast, and where one sings worship songs. When the Sabbath is over Saturday night, people are gathering in the streets for a party and dancing. Families that are able to create feasts together will be stronger. They will easier see the opportunities when the heavy days come.

### Interactions between the generations

#### Interaction between the generations.

we always move from self development on one level to need of security on the next.



The illustration above shows the interaction between the generations. The different phases in life should interact and complement each other. If we take the time to study the different characteristics of these four phases we will find the following:

**Children** are characterised by being:

Spontaneous, trustful, open and honest, full of fantasy and expectations, natural and willing to learn. They are also completely dependent of the adults.

**Youth** are characterised by being:

Strong and bold, brave but insecure and vulnerable, optimistic and searching. Their sense of justice triggers quickly an opposition to what they perceive as unreasonable and false. During this age most of the important, decisive choices are made, like choice of belief, job and spouse.

**Adults** are characterised by:

Having more responsibility. The adult must learn to interact with other adults and wife/husband, bring up children, find the meaning of life and make a living. In this phase one meets the reality of life and the conflicts of life, and nobody else would come and sort things out for you.

**The mature age** is characterised by being established with a house and family and a sense of social belonging. One has gained experience, is attached to the place one lives, and has resources like time and money. One has gained wisdom and knowledge, and has authority in the family and in society.

What is it that creates conflicts between mature generation and the adult generation?

A typical trait of children is that they are looking forward to be youth. Likewise it is typical of the youth to dream of becoming adults and get a house, get married, and make a career. How often do we hear of people in the adult generation longing to become the mature generation, where they can step aside and rejoice in seeing those coming after growing and reach further than themselves? We have met very few. That is because they have very few role models to testify that this is the most enriching part of life. A time where one can experience Jesus' word that it is better to give than receive. This is the generation that should agree with Paul: "we are of those enriching others". This will not come by itself. It is a conscious decision. It struck us when our parents died that we no longer could go to them to get security. We made a conscious decision: We wanted to use the rest of our life to make the coming generations secure by being a wall they could lean on.

It will be difficult to leave the first insecure phase in this age without making such a conscious decision. That is why this phase is one of the most important in life. During an encounter week-end with couples over 50 years of age, we asked how many could testify that they had active support from the older generation when they went from youth to adult. Less than 10% could confirm they had. However 100% said that they believed they could have reached farther with the support.

When Moses sent the scouts into Canaan he choose two youths, Joshua and Caleb. The others came from the older generation. When they came back they all testified that the land flowed of milk and honey, but only the young ones had the bravery to seize it. Then God said to Moses that they could not seize the country without the mature generation. The people will be beaten. That is why God choose to let the people wander in the desert for 40 years until a new generation of mature people believing in God had grown up.

This story shows us that the mature generation is the most important to develop further. The tragic fact is that this generation is the symbol of stagnation and resistance to change. When they repent and take responsibility for their most important assignment in life, being a secure wall for those that comes after, we will again be equipped to “seize the land”.

Malachi 4:6 states: *“He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse”*. This scripture has been there as a challenge to all in the mature generation through all times. We believe that we live in an age where we will see this scripture being fulfilled. The challenge is that this is the only way we can avoid letting our land/country to be stricken with a curse. We have a lot of touching examples that when the mature generation repent it brings healing to all four generations. During an encounter week-end we asked all the participants to describe what made the life together good. The table below shows the result. Those who wants to work consciously for and with their marriage can give a score from 1-10, where 10 is the higher score. It is recommended to fill in the table individually for the first time then compare the results. If you have very different score on the same line, you have something to talk about. Where you have a low score gives an indication of where you need to plan to train for 21 days. After that you can do a new assessment. This will give an indication of where you have improved your skills, and where you need to do more work.

<b>The marriage is good when:</b>	<b>Score 1-10</b>
We can talk things through and forgive each other	
We take time to be together (listen to each other)	
We do things together	
We laugh together	
We speak well of one another and encourage each other	
We show consideration and care for each others feelings and needs	
We trust each other and show it	
We give each other freedom	
We have and show mutual respect	
I experience to have first priority in his/her life	
He/she expresses love for me and is faithful	
He/she confirms my value	
He/she gives something up for me	
We have clear communication	
We can have physical intimacy	
We can be spontaneous and impulsive	
He/she is in a good mood	
We give each other freedom to pursue an interest on our own	
We can work through the difficulties together without exposing each other to other people	
We share the work in our home	
We talk about the things that need to be done and plan together. A plan we can share with the children	
Agree in how to manage our money	
Agree in the upbringing of the children	
We keep appointments	



## Worksheet

Talk about what your spouse strengths are.

(If you are not married, think about someone you are close to)

Note them down in the table below.

Within which areas do you complement each other? Why don't you draw some lines in the table?

Share with your spouse in which area you think you do not succeed. Which areas can you work consciously on? Individually? Together? These are areas where you can grow together in a good dependency.

1 John 1:7 says that when you share your weaknesses with someone you achieve fellowship. Develop a work plan on how you want to approach it. Use the same table to develop the children. Share the plan with them, and use them as a reference point to measure progression. Take one thing at a time.

NO	His strengths	His development areas
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
NO	Her strengths	Her development areas
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

God bless you to make this work an exiting game where you compete to honour each other, and both experience the joy of growing together.

## 10 rules for parents

1. You shall love your child of all your heart, with all your soul, with all you strength, but also with all your wisdom.
2. You shall look upon your child as a person, not something that belongs to you.
3. You shall look upon your child's love and respect for you as something valuable you can receive, not something you can demand.
4. Every time you are annoyed over your child's thoughtlessness and foolishness, remember your own foolishness at the same age. It is by making mistakes we learn, and you are responsible for loosing your child from guilt by forgiving it.
5. Remember that your child have the right to look up to you as its hero, therefore you must do what you can to live up to the picture.

6. Remember that your behaviour works better than your moralising words. (The child becomes the way you are, not what you say it should become)
7. You shall strive to become a road sign on the road of life, not a spanner in the works.
8. You shall teach your child to stand on its own two feet, and fight its own fight. (Take responsibility for its own life)
9. You shall help your child to see the beauty in life, to be friendly and good, to love the truth, and to live in friendship with their fellow man.
10. You shall make your home to a happy and safe haven for your self, for your children and your children's friends (Isaiah 32,18)

(These points are taken from "The School of Porsgrunn", and are assumed to be from early 20<sup>th</sup> century).

## 5. “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” Genesis 2:25.

Adam and Eve should live in full openness in spirit, soul and body. The fall of man started with the unity between Adam and Eve being broken. We do not know what the reasons might be, but the most common reason today is that Adam is concerned about his own things without involving Eve. She is no longer a part of him, but becomes someone who is on the outside of his world. With that Eve has to seek other places to satisfy her need for fellowship. In the insecurity that emerged when Adam understood that he stood on his own he became afraid and hid from God. He blamed the fall on his helper and on God, instead of standing fast and taking the responsibility. This can teach us two things:

- The man is especially called to *take responsibility* (God held Adam responsible)
- The tactic Satan foremost uses is to get man to hide his falls and defeats, and live in darkness so God’s forgiveness cannot find its rightful address in people’s life.

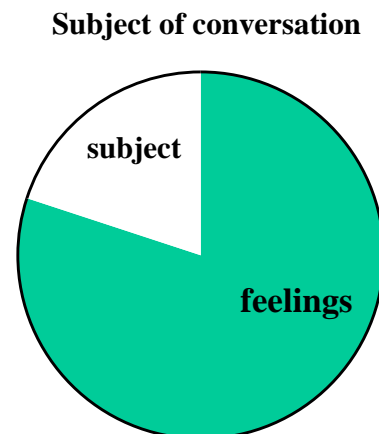
We can see that when God made a covenant with Abraham as described in Genesis 15:18 *“On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, ‘ To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates ’”*, the covenant was precisely that Abraham should live in the light with his life. See also Genesis 17:1 *“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless’ ”*. It means that Abraham should not hide anything before God. That became the foundation for the covenant God made with Abraham and all people after him.

### **Emotions and matter.**

Hurting things are often emotional. Especially men easily hurt women by offering solutions in a situation where she is longing for understanding and compassion. When solutions are offered it is easily perceived as; “If you only were as skilled or good as me you would have avoided this”. It is important that emotions are met with emotions. Nobody is able to be matter-of-factly when the emotions are in turmoil. Emotions are a true expression of how we are inside, and must be taken seriously. They help us in keeping in touch with reality, and are important for us to not live a superficial life.

When we loose contact with each other on the emotional level we will end up in loneliness. In loneliness misunderstanding, wrong assumptions and wrong attitudes grow. It is proven that 50 % of all miscommunication is due to people talking past each other.

It is therefore important that the man learn to understand the woman’s emotional ups and downs. The monthly cycle will also influence on her mood. During such times when the moods swings, the woman needs



reassurance that she is loved and that the husband shows her understanding when she is struggling with her emotions. It weighs heavily on our hearts to stress this point, as a lot of men do not have insight in this area. A lot of emotional conflicts can be traced back to a time when the woman felt let down and alone. When she later tries to share this hurt and pain with her husband, he will easily perceive this as criticism. But my dear husband; try to understand that she wants to let you into a vulnerable area in her mind so that you together can process the grief she is experiencing and become stronger together. Our experience is that it is through “mourning processes” like these we can be close and our love will be reenergised and given new life.

The book “Women are from Venus and Men are from Mars” gives a good insight in how different we are. It is recommended. Further we recommend the book “The five love languages” by Gary Chapman. The author describes how we receive love in the following 5 ways:

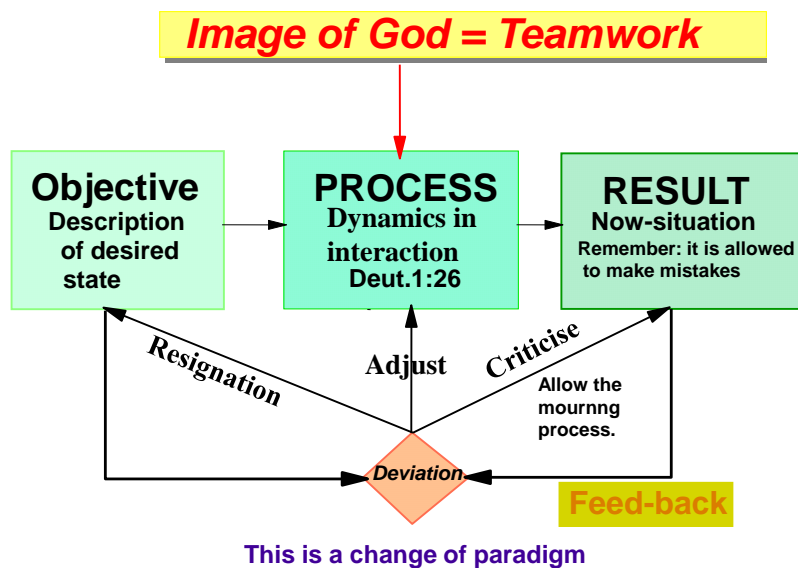
1. Encouraging words
2. Time for each other
3. Receive gifts
4. Favours
5. Physical touch.

If we do not know the language of our spouse we can risk giving love in our own language. This can be quite different from the one preferred by our spouse, and therefore he/she might not feel loved despite all our effort. The book is a practical tool for those who want to learn how to communicate love to their spouse in such a way that he/she feels loved.

### **Security, a condition for good communication.**

When we got the understanding that Judith’s emotions in reality were “mine”, because she is a part of the picture we want to portray, it gave her security to show them. They gave us valuable information about our life together, and the security she feels by being seen and respected for who she is, enables her to wholeheartedly to be my helper and support. This again makes me secure in receiving her feedback and suggestions to correct things. On the other hand the insecurity that emerges when one feels rejected will lead to a vicious circle of bad feelings where everything is taken in the worst meaning. Lately it has been recognised that if people are not allowed to talk about experiences that have caused hurt and pain their emotions would easily be blocked, which in its turn can lead to serious disturbances in people’s mind.

It took a relatively long time before Judith and I understood that this is also important in our marriage. I felt strongly that if we were through a crisis, and had asked and received forgiveness, then the case was closed. It would be wrong to discuss the matter again. We have however, come to understand that if one of the spouses feels the need to talk about what caused the pain as part of the healing process of the hurt feelings, then this would not be an accusation towards the other. On the contrary, it can be a good help to facilitate that both of them can put the episode behind them for good.



The illustration shows that it is allowed to discuss things to allow psychiatric help, or to allow the mourning process to come to a natural end.

### Be true and real.

The most important element in communication is truth. In Ephesians 5:1 Paul requests us to have God as a role model. God said about himself to Moses: “I am the one I say I am”. In Greek, a play is “Hypocrites”. We know that Jesus attacked hypocrites when he was on earth. The serpent that got Eve to sin had a split tongue. It spoke some truth and used the word of God, but at the same time it sowed lie. This is double communication. That kind of communication creates fear and insecurity.

If we say something we do not mean, so that our spirit says something else, the receiver will regardless perceive what we really mean by our body language and tone of voice. Attitudes cannot be hidden. “We know more about each other than we know that we know”. We must emphasise to be the one we are. Then we can be loved for who we are.

### The active listener.

Co-operation is best achieved by attentively listening to what others say, and ask constructive clarifying questions. Remember that you are about to get to know something you don’t know. Not the least about yourself. Jesus’ parable about the speck of dust and the plank shows how easy it is to notice faults with others, and at the same time be blind to the same faults on a bigger scale in one self.

Luke 6: 41-42 *“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye’ when you fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye”.*

It is only by active listening you can gain new insight and an opportunity to understand the one talking, and also through active listening improve the co-operation and interaction. Interrupting with statements like: “you should have done it this way” or “I would not have done it like that”, only makes the other to feel silly and helpless. It also shows that you are not interested to work with yourself. When your spouse is

sharing painful and difficult things, it is vital to show participation and understanding for the situation. Later you can discuss and together find the solution on how to avoid such situations again.

### **Direct communication.**

When you say what you mean and share by putting words to your feelings and thoughts, you are creating security. The other knows where you stand. When you suppress your feelings to avoid “trouble” two things will happen:

Firstly you take away the opportunity for the other to get information on how you see and perceive the situation. Such silence is fatal for the fellowship, and is sin against the commandment of living in the light. Secondly unspoken expectations and encased anger lead to wrong and sinful attitudes. This will lead to bitterness. Hebrews 12:15 warns us against letting a bitter root grow up so that we miss the grace of God. If we allow that to happen, we will become merciless to each other.

Many psychosomatic illnesses can track their cause back to a root of bitterness. To avoid this we are setting aside 30 minutes each evening to talk about our day. Others can find the time to do this during the evening meal or while having a cup of coffee at night. We are very conscious to clear all misunderstandings and hurt feelings so we do not let the sun go down while we are still angry. Such a time is the best investment we can make in each other's life. Besides, these times are times for both friendship and romance. They are times to speak good and friendly words that encourage and create good warm feelings. The long journeys in the car to and from encounter week-ends are good opportunities for that kind of communication. The challenge for the readers is to find the times that suit you!

Proverbs speak of how influential our words are:

- Good words bring life and health – Proverbs 4:22
- Life springs out from our spirit – Proverbs 4:23
- He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed – Proverbs 11:25
- Reckless words pierce like a sword – Proverbs 12:18
- Pleasant words are like honey – Proverbs 16:24
- A cheerful heart gives good health – Proverbs 17:22
- The tongue has the power of life and death – Proverbs 18:22

The speech centre directs the whole body,

- James 3: 5-9 – The tongue is a small part of the body and corrupts the whole person.

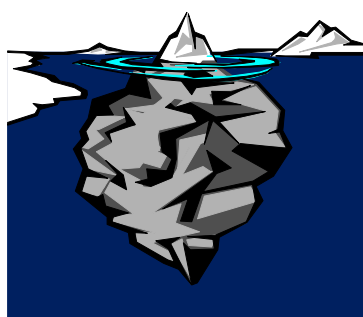
We are all a product of those words spoken over us from childhood to this very day. Experiments show that the speech centre in the brain directs the level of endorphin in the blood. It increases when we are positive and bless, and the level of adrenaline increases when we are negative and speak ill of others. When we know this we understand that the scripture “always rejoice” is a recipe of health for both body and mind.

## We can learn communication.

Good communication is a skill we can learn. If one has grown up in an environment where damaging communication was used, this must be “off-taught” at the same time, as good communication must be learnt. A lot of the suffering we are enduring is self-inflicted because we guide ourselves into it by our words and thoughts. What we give attention to, we also give power to in our lives. Our mind can be compared with an

iceberg as shown in the illustration.

## “The way you act when nobody sees you shows your true character”



### Behaviour (visible)

#### Attitude

Wrong attitudes and ties must be confessed as sin

**Idea** see faithfulness chapter 3

### Thoughts 2.Cor.10,3-6

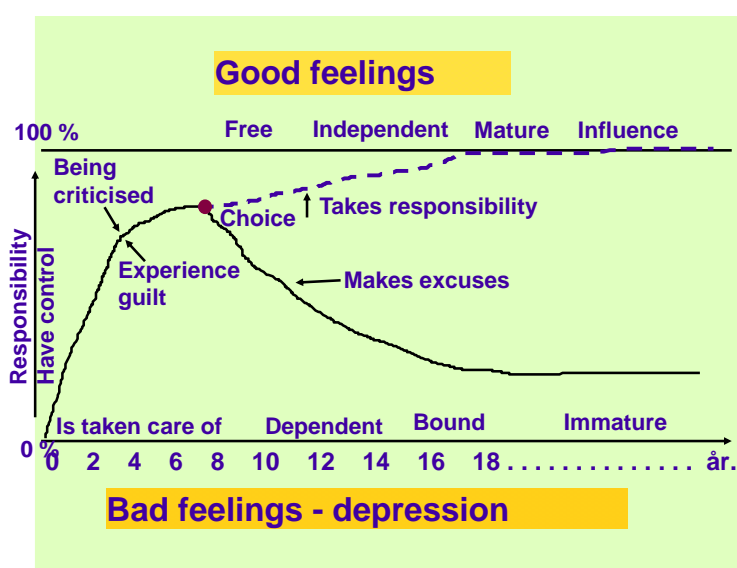
Concealed anger is dangerous! (give anger a language.)

It will have no impact to try to change what is above the surface. The word of God says in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 that the opportunity for victory is to take the battle of our mind and thoughts. We must therefore take our thoughts captive to make them obedient to Christ. If we are not taking negative thoughts captive, they

will quickly develop to attitudes. While we can reject and bind a wrong thought, a wrong attitude is something it will take conscious effort and work to get rid off. Often wrong thoughts can be a home for demonic powers.

One of the most usual thoughts, which must be broken down is the trained habit of thinking that others are to blame for one self having pain or being hurt. This is really a sign that one has not taken responsibility for one's own life (see to chapter 1 – the tree of knowledge).

The illustration shows how children quite naturally take responsibility when given the opportunity. Negative criticism and accusation/blame from the parents can cause them to develop an irresponsible attitude to life. If we are to get rid of this condition there is no other way than to forgive those who have hurt us, and choose to take responsibility for



our own life. The illustration shows this difficult, but very important process. It ought to be clear that you cannot make this decision in several steps. Then you will end up in the valley of excuses and blame!

### **We have the authority to loose and bind.**

We frequently meet people who are bound. Then we have authority to loose and bind in the name of Jesus. We have yet to experience that the enemy will not yield when people actively co-operates in a deliverance process. That has caused us to have a healthy fear for the evil getting entrance into our lives. To let wrong thoughts remain in our mind is like playing with fire. One day a fire we cannot extinguish can erupt. This kind of conscious disobedience is sin against The Holy Spirit. We have unfortunately examples of people that by continuous disobedience against the word of God have ended up as psychopathic. At this point it is important to be reminded that I am the only one responsible for changing me, and that it is wasted effort to try to change others against their will. At the same time it is important to understand that maturity is best achieved in close interaction with other people, especially with our spouse. Proverbs 27:17 says that iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the other.

### **Make time for communication.**

Communication is a means to obtain intimacy and understanding. If you only are trying to talk when you are in the middle of a conflict, it will not work. From time to time it can be wise to plan a weekend alone with your spouse. It will be a good investment. It is however wise to train in communication at home first. Many want eternal life, but do not know how to pass the time during a weekend with their loved one. Make time for an intimate conversation. This can be developed to situations where the vision gets to grow and common plans about the future take shape. This is necessary if you are to avoid living isolated lives.

All life needs nourishment. Fellowship with your spouse is also something you must want to do and actively seek to do. If we are not nourishing the fellowship in the form of good words and encouragement, the relationship will cool off and sooner or later die. Peter writes in 1 Peter 4, 10-11 *“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God must be praised through Jesus Christ”*.

### **Sex in marriage**

Many have asked us if we are going to say something about sex in this chapter. After all, the chapter is about being naked (“The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame”).

Our experience is that couples living by the principles presented in this book, or rather more correctly; the principles given by God to Adam and Eve in paradise will have a most harmonic sex life.

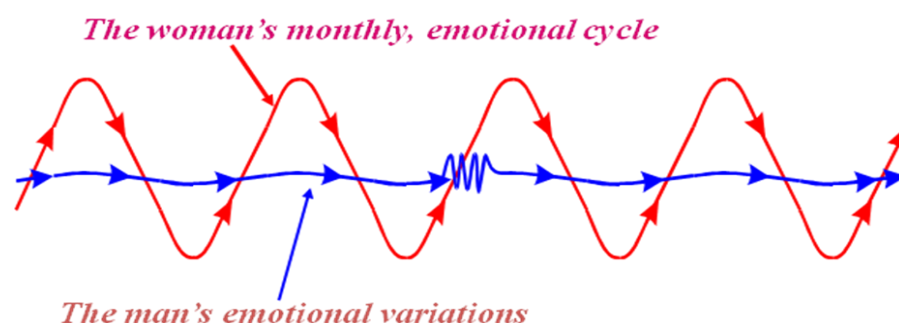
In chapter three we wrote that: “The sex life is a gauge showing the accordance between how we live and how we say we live.” Women who do not feel safe and



loved will have difficulties giving themselves to their husband. If the sex life is on a low, we would advise the couple to ask each other: “Do you feel loved by me?”

The foundation for communication is that one’s emotions are met and understood. The objective is that the other should feel loved. The sex life then, becomes much more than sexual intercourse. It will be moments where we will come close in intimacy and openness with each other. It is no coincidence that the human lovemaking, where the couple can look into each others eye while making love, is quite different from the animals’ mating. We do, however, need to know one or two things about each other in order to not hurt each other in this arena.

A woman in her fertile age will be influenced emotionally by her monthly cycle. Before her period starts she will start on an emotional downward trend, where she easily can become hurt and irate. We have tried to illustrate this in the figure below.



A rabbi in London, Shmuley Boteach, has written the book “Kosher sex”. He states that while only ten percent of European women enjoy their sex-life, eighty percent of Jewish women, living by the Mosaic Kosher rules found in Leviticus 15:19 find their sex life enjoyable. The rules in Leviticus 15:19 prescribe sexual abstinence during the menstrual period and seven days after. The objective of sexual abstinence was that the couple should use this time to deepen their friendship and to show care and understanding for each other.

A woman, receiving care and understanding in the period when she is most vulnerable, will be able to meet her husband with longing and passion when her emotional curve is on an upward trend. Shmuley Boteach also states that a period of abstinence described above, would revitalise the sex life and make it more exciting for the husband. Therefore is such a wait also beneficial for the husband’s sex life. Then we understand why it is so important for young boys to be taught that sexual abstinence in their youth prepares them better to a good sex life in marriage.

The line in the figure illustrating the man’s emotional variations, shows that he, to a greater degree, can control his emotions if he so chooses. The danger of using this kind of illustration is to over generalise. Several couples have come to us and said that: “In our marriage he is the one with the most mood swings, while she is the most stable”. If the woman has a phlegmatic personality, this will of course influence on her emotions. A man with a more sanguine personality would of course have more fluctuation in his emotional pattern.

We believe that more people would have a better sex life if they were more open with their sexual needs. While the man is easily aroused watching his wife undress or being physically touched by her, the woman needs to prepare herself more. A secret little agreement made during breakfast, can fill the whole day with excitement. Besides, it gives the opportunity to prepare by having a shower and the like. Many women have confided in us that that a lack of cleanliness from their husbands has spoilt what could have been a good and intimate time.

It is an old rabbinic tradition that a couple should not have sex if they were angry with each other or if they had hurt each other. If they had sex, the intercourse would feel like an infringement or even an assault, and could cause wounds that would take a long time to heal. We would also like to add that a man that constantly is humiliated and nagged at may become impotent.

Song of Songs shows how the intimate sexual relationship between husband and wife should be.

Song of Songs 4:7: “All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you.”

The apostle Paul uses the intimate relationship between husband and wife as an illustration of the intimate relationship between Christ and the church:

*Ephesians 5: 32 – 33: “This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”*

The following poem by Piet Hein in free translation can be something to think about.

To live now is the technique of life -  
and everybody does ones best.  
But half of us choose the now that went,  
the rest of us choose the next one

The past now and the coming now would never be the present one,  
should all the people’s lifetime be spent on waiting and remember?

The now that went pass, will always be gone,  
the next one will never be the right one.  
Make sure that the now you live in,  
once and for ever is this one.

We recommend all to read the book “Love in Marriage” by Dr. Ed Wheat. It gives very broad and good guidance and has helped a lot of people.

**Worksheet.**

Together note the areas in which your communication is good.

Together note the areas in which the communication easily breaks down.

Try to identify the reasons why the communication breaks down

Develop a plan on how to improve.

Share the plan with some good friends, and use these friends as a reference point to measure progress/improvement. Pray together that you will grow in knowledge of each other, and learn to understand each other's heart language. Have the objective of taking everything in the best meaning/context – this is a measure on how secure you are in each other. May God let your life together be an oasis, not only to yourself but also where others can drink of the source you have found.

**Below are some thoughts collected from a summer camp for people in the “mature age” – summer 1996.**

Advice to young parents:

1. Be a good and confident friend for the child.
2. Be accessible when the child needs you.
3. Express your love for the child, verbally and physical.
4. Give recognition for good behaviour, good attitudes and when work is well done.
5. Be quick to encourage.
6. Develop the child's own characteristics. Do not make them a copy of yourself.
7. Give firm and decisive correction to wrong words and behaviour. Use the opportunity to give secure and positive guidance. Be firm and decisive when it comes to set rules. Do not set rules you as parents disagree on.
8. Be an example with your own life style.
9. Encourage and guide them to have an education.
10. Encourage them to play an instrument.
11. Share your life experience with them.
12. Dare to show them your weaknesses.
13. Be patient. Give the child a chance to take responsibility for its own actions.
14. Teach the child to take responsibility for its own choices, and respect its choices as long as they do not break any of the set rules. It must be allowed to make mistakes and learn from the consequences.
15. Teach them early on to take responsibility for chores.
16. Teach the child forgiveness by asking for forgiveness.
17. Teach them to read the word of God and pray.
18. Look out for manipulating statements that will make the child feel guilty.
19. Follow the same rules regarding the grandchildren.
20. Have adult fellowship that promotes the above “rules”.

**Ground rules for newly married and their parents.**

You are responsible for your own lives and families

If we could live our lives again we would:

- Spend more time together and with our children
- Been more active in creating the environment we wanted to children to grow up in. (This will not be done by itself).
- Managed the finances to be able to let the above happen.
- Not based our income on contributions from our parents, but rather taken it as a pleasant surprise.
- Been more generous with verbal expression of our love for our children and parents.

You do not know for how long we will be here, but as long as we are here we want to be the blessing ++.

## 6. Putting words into action

As Judith and I have become older, and during the almost thirty years we have taught the art of living together, we have more and more wondered: "Why is there so much strife and conflict; in the home, at the workplace and in the church?"

Well, we do know of the fall of man, where everything that is wrong started. But we are now living after Calvary, where we were made free from the curse of the law, and are now new creations in Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:17 ("Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!")

God's first idea after creating man in His image was the family. The family should be a living expression of God on earth. This expression had to start by mother and father having such love for one another that the people around them would see God in their relationship. This seems to be automatic at the beginning of a relationship, when the couple is young and in love. Later, the children arrive and with them, the work, the struggle and the responsibilities. And after a few years, what should be paradise, where one loves and is loved in return, is gradually transformed into a treadmill and a prison. We have ministered to many upset people with tears in their eyes who have said: "I have to get out; I am suffocating. I have lost my freedom. I am being coerced and manipulated".

A lot of people that have broken out of churches and other fellowships say the same thing: they can not stand the control and the manipulation and coercion. This is happening despite the church leaders' desire to create biblical fellowships where the fruit of the Spirit according to Galatians chapter 5 thrives and dominates. Are manipulating leaders taking charge? Such leaders exist; we have met them. But the majority of church leaders are sincere people that want the best for the people around them. And yet, people become part of a system that does not work, be it a family or the leadership in a company or church.

Most people know what the word of God says. There is no lack of teaching. But the word does not become flesh and live in them in such a way that it becomes living word in living people.

What is stopping people from putting word into action?

Jesus said in Luke 16:8, when discussing the master that commended the manager for acting shrewdly, "For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light".

I worked for Norsk Hydro, in Porsgrunn for almost thirty-five years. In the middle of the eighties, the Porsgrunn division experienced a deep crisis. It ran at such huge losses that the whole division was threatened by closure. A few years later we reported significant profits. What had happened? There had not been a change in the markets or prices. Rather, the division trained the employees to work together in stopping the activities that did not produce results. It became an intense hunt to find areas that could be improved, and everyone was trained to cooperate in teams to reach the goals and objectives. As the financial figures changed from red to black, everyone became more motivated. We discovered that people are discouraged when doing things that do not work. It became fun to cooperate, and it became natural to encourage one another and be happy for each other's successes. It was an atmosphere

that encouraged feedback. Everyone had the sense of being heard and contributing in the process to reach common goals.

Over the years, we have often wondered whether there are aspects of God's word we have not yet understood that would help us in succeeding in everyday life. We have seen many people that grew up in Christian homes, only to leave home frustrated and hurt, without having learned how to embrace life by interacting and cooperating with other people.

Jesus said to his disciples, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." (Matthew 13:44)

Could it be that our family is the treasure? Is it possible that a full understanding of the resources contained in a family would make us sell everything we own to buy that treasure? How would we buy such a treasure? **The answer is clear: We would prioritise the family above everything else.**

For many years, Judith has brought with her a card that she usually reads at the start of our marriage encounter weekends. It reads, "**A home is a place where: we place our feelings, get our security, live in freedom and express our talents and interests.**" Isaiah touches on this idea in chapter 32 verse 18: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling-places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest."

When Mother Theresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, she was asked what it would take to achieve peace on earth. Her response was, "Go home and love your family!"

Many are moved when Judith reads her card, because it touches a God given desire within each of us to have a home just like the home described in the card. How tragic it is when this desire is not given room to live and develop, and instead is suppressed and eradicated by cold environments, where people, rather than experiencing warmth and care, are met with criticism and control and in extreme cases, psychological and physical abuse.

In January 2006, I held a leadership seminar at a Youth With A Mission Disciple Training School in Skien, Norway. I asked the twenty six students if they would accept a change from the usual lecture on leadership and instead would consider developing a teaching on how to lead a family. The question was whether leading a family in achieving the goal God has for them, equipped one to lead a church or a business.

This was an unique opportunity to develop ideas of what leadership is really all about. These young people had recently moved from home and thus had fresh experiences on what had been good in their families, and what should have been done differently.

They agreed to do this and so I split them into four groups. Each group was to develop a plan for the family that would enable the emergence of a true image of God. After several days work, we were all close to losing the little motivation we had left. The students felt that I had fooled them. On day three however, one of the groups suddenly shouted: "We've got it!" They had been in prayer and then suddenly they had the answer: "We have been working from the premise that mothers and fathers

should raise their children with rules and regulations to teach them obedience so they can live right. But we just realised that this is backwards. Mother and father should be role models and create an atmosphere of love and security where children can develop their full potential in a relationship with their parents and siblings”.

We agreed that we would concentrate our further work on three main points:

### 1. Vision

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.” Proverbs 29:18

“Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.” Proverbs 4:25

### 2. Planning

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” Proverbs 15:22

### 3. Focus on what we already have. Matthew 13:12

This verse is already explained in chapter 3, page 58. In the Jewish Torah, where we can also find this verse a verse Jesus must have quoted, it does not say ‘whoever has will be given more...’ but rather ‘whoever thinks in his heart that he has, will be given more, and he will have in abundance.’ All leadership is about getting the team, group or fellowship to think ahead towards a common goal. However, we need to warn against negative expectations that become self-fulfilling, and instead focus on what we have. By doing that, we can develop what we already have into something rich and diverse (ref. the law of focus).

The class started to focus on the model on page 22, the picture of God as husband and wife working together as one unit.

The model shows that if we are to develop a common goal for the marriage and family we must spend time together: dreaming and planning. As parents, our main task, as leaders of the family is to ensure that our children grow into their full potential. In the same way, husbands and wives should mutually build each other up. This is what the groups answered regarding point 1.

### 1. What are we to be known for? – Values and attitudes.

	Attributes of a family according to God’s will	Provide a score based <b>the family’s</b>
	-God is made visible by how we are living and functioning together	perception of itself
	<b>1. Values and attitudes the family should be known for</b>	Score 1-10
1	Openness	
2	Honesty	
3	Fairness – avoid comparison with others	
4	Attitude of serving	
5	Humbleness/Humility	
6	Respect	
7	Clear boundaries and agreements	
8	Gratitude	
9	Hospitality	

10	Encouragement	
11	Mutual trust	

The above form can be used to check the family's attitudes and perception. It is like feeling the pulse on the state of the family. The mother and father can talk about which attributes need the most work. It will then be natural for the whole family to discuss them. The family members can share their views on how well the particular attribute is being displayed by the family. It is important that the children participate, that the discussions are concrete and address specific incidents, without searching for scapegoats. The goal is to work on the atmosphere in the family and the family members' attitudes towards each other. The whole family should be conscious of the ways each family member can contribute. It may be useful to set a score based on consensus of the family as a whole. The score can be used to measure any progress, and can be the subject of conversations on the family's progress. Has the family improved? It is much easier to give encouragement when there is something concrete and measurable to show progress. What cannot be measured cannot be improved. We do not know whether we have made progress without measurements. When the family reaches a score of ten points for a particular attribute, there is the more reason to celebrate.

Don't let this scoring sheet become "a system" that controls the family. It is simply a tool to assist in concrete thinking. After a while, all of this will become a way of life. In fact I am sure many reading this have already come a long way in these areas. It is like driving a car: A good driver is not known primarily for an ability to follow the rules. The rules of the road are important; however, it is the consideration shown in difficult situations that makes one a good driver. This flexibility, an awareness of the traffic enabling quick reactions, and the willingness to learn from mistakes enables one to drive without accidents year after year.

Point 2, the planning, is about the activities necessary in a home.

## **2. Planning - How to get started:**

### **2.1 Take time together to talk as a couple and as a family.**

The aim of such conversations is to share our innermost thoughts and feelings in a safe atmosphere. Are there things on our minds that are painful and difficult? We need to train ourselves to be absolutely honest without risking it being used against us later. The family should be a place where openness and honesty are encouraged. 1 John 1:7 says that when we share our weaknesses (things we are not mastering) with each other, we have fellowship with one another. What an inheritance for our children to take with them in life! It is the best resource to bring into marriage.

### **2.2 Practice good communication**

Communication is a skill that everyone can learn. Even though speech may be given from birth and proof of man being created in God's image (speech is embedded in chromosome no. 9, and only in humans), we still need to learn to communicate – a lifelong learning process. The objective of all communication is to make everyone we communicate with feel loved.

### **2.3 Initiate family meetings**

In order to dream and plan, we have to be together. To think alone can be a good thing, but it is when thoughts are shared that we can plan together and adjust our ideas



to suit the family situation. Only then will we have the benefits of the synergies that give the best results.

Some families find it natural to have weekly family meetings. Others find it more natural to talk when the opportunity arises; at the table having a meal, or when doing something together. Thousands of years ago, God encouraged His people to use aids in training the family. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 gives a commandment on this: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates."



Judith and I are retired now, and we no longer have children at home. For us it is a natural to end the day by having a time together before bed to discuss and sum up the events of the day, and talk about the plans we have for the following day. Our experience is that "what is not planned will not be done." "Planning" to us means to agree to what we are to do and to put it down on our calendar. We have a calendar with six months on each side, and room for daily activities. It is easily accessed in the kitchen, and as we are talking about future activities, we update the calendar. It gives us security to know about each other all the time. The feeling of being kept out and not knowing what is going on is painful and quite unnecessary.

You may have looked at our web site and seen an "audited" copy of our calendar. That is for our friends and family to know what we are up to. We are sometimes asked to preach or teach on weekends. The calendar enables the requestor to check our web site before contacting us.

### **3. Dream and plan together, to meet the needs of the family (update as necessary)**

Dreams and plans need to start with the needs of the family. Below we have offered some advice that may be helpful.

#### **3.1 Allocate practical tasks in the home**

It may be smart to start by making a list of all the things that need to be done in the home. It is important to include everyone, and that the list can be expanded or changed while it is being worked on.

The next step is to decide who does what:

Everybody needs to contribute, but it is important that tasks are allocated based on age and ability. It should also be somewhat challenging, so that everyone can learn and grow in their given tasks. If, at all possible, two people should work together on a job. This gives them an opportunity to cooperate, making God visible. Working like that is also more fun and gets the job done more quickly. For example, one person can wash the dishes and another dry them. Or one person can vacuum clean and another person can move the furniture and put it back in its place. The only limit is our creativity and imagination.

**Identify each other's talents and giftings, and help one another in developing these.**

Parents help their children greatly by identifying their talents and giftings. When doing this, parents need to be observant, as children are different. Some are more practically gifted, while others may be more into music and arts. Every gifting is valuable and should be appreciated and developed not compared or devalued. It is a huge asset for a teenager to know what his/her strengths are when choosing a career.



**Learn how to play together**

Playing games develops everyone in the family, and it is also a good opportunity to train the family how to work together and how to respect each other. Because it is playing it is seen as something joyful and creative. It is also good practise at not taking yourself too seriously. Families that develop this quality will discover that it becomes easier to do the trivial things together as well. There will be an element of playing in everything they do. The Bible speaks about this in Judges 5:3: " ...I will sing to the Lord, I will sing; I will make music to the Lord, the God of Israel."

The times our own family has spent playing Chinese checkers has been valuable and good time spent. Even now, when our children visit us with their own families, we find ourselves playing checkers together. During one of our weekend courses, the owner of the conference facility told us that she also wanted to start teaching similar courses. We asked her what specifically she would like to teach, and she responded: "Co-creativity with a twist." She explained that the usual method of putting a team together is to take a bit from everyone and make something good out of it. She wanted to take everything from everybody and make something great. Was this a revelation on some of God's thoughts for the family? Her definition of co-creativity stayed with us for a long time after our conversation. It is healthy, sometimes, to be challenged to go further and reach longer than you first intended. Maybe this chapter will have such an effect on you?

**Learn how to play music and sing together**

Playing a musical instrument develops you and has a lot to offer. Parents should encourage their children to play instruments. Judith was the focal point when the children were young; she often played the guitar and we all sang together. Often when I hear someone who sings very well, or plays their instrument very well, I ask them how it started. Every time I ask, I get the same answer: someone encouraged them to continue. Let us therefore encourage one another to develop such gifts and use the gifts to create places and environments with joy, song and music.

**Identify and develop each individual's personalities.**

We are created with different personality types and we will discuss these in more depth under point 7: "Created for diversity."

**Identify spiritual gifts, train your children how to develop them, and use them**

The Bible challenges us to use our spiritual gifts to serve one another. 1 Peter 4:10 say: “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” It is very important that parents show the way as good role models. There is no age requirement for spiritual gifts. At a Family camp one summer, we discovered that a four-year-old girl had the gift of healing. The people she prayed for were healed. One of our children at the age of seven received the gift of knowledge and could speak healing from traumas into people’s lives. The Bible teaches that these gifts can be imparted through intercession and the laying of hands upon a person. Very early in our ministry, I asked our old vicar to lay his hands on me (Ingvar) and pray that I receive a specific spiritual gift. It was the first time he had received such a request. God heard and answered his prayer, and I often use this gift in our ministry. It can be exciting when families address this issue in a specific and concrete way. Imagine what a blessing such a family could be to the local church. Parents should boldly pray for their children to be equipped with spiritual gifts in order to serve the church. Scripture tells us that Joshua succeeded in all he did, because Moses had laid his hands on him and blessed him.

### **Train in taking responsibility at the earliest age possible.**

There is a time, when children are between three to five years, when they are most receptive to learn and to do the things older children do. At that age, it is important to give them things to do which they can learn from. A child who has been taught to tidy up the toys at night will be given an inheritance that will be useful for the rest of his/her life. As the child get older , the child should be given more challenging and demanding tasks. Everyone loves to receive acknowledgement for a task well done; it increases the child’s self esteem and work ethics.

### **Family finances**

Many homes are being broken because of untidy family finances. Parents should learn to set up a family budget. A budget will give an overview of the family’s total income and expenses. It is a choice between being controlled or being in control. Discussing and talking about how money should be spent will give us a sense of security because we will all be clear about what is happening with our money. It will also teach everybody involved to take responsibility, because a budget is an agreement that binds the agreeing parties. It is wise to elect the most “tidy” individual and the one who most likes to deal with numbers, to be the accountant. You can also get sound advice on family finances from banks. The banks I have talked to get very excited when they are challenged to help families with their finances. You can also obtain good budget models from most Internet banks. It is important however, to have a simple system understood by all, and not get lost in complicated models and spreadsheets. The children should be involved in these conversations in order for them to learn how to be good stewards of their own pocket money. Through the budget, they will understand that parents cannot just go out and buy things they want. It is a question of whether we can afford it, and the budget gives us an incentive to save money over time to buy “bigger things”. It is also important to talk about tithe, as the children should learn the joy of giving.

### **Work to reach your neighbours with the gospel**

Non-Christians do not find it easy to come to our churches. It is easier for them to find the church in our homes, often through our children. Through their friends, our children may have access to homes in the neighbourhood. Consider them a resource. Talk with the children about how you can reach their friends' families. Teach the children to pray for their friends. Statistics suggest that friendship evangelisation is the most effective way to get lasting results.

### **Active participation in a church**

All families should belong to a cell-group, which in turn belongs to a church. In a cell-group people not belonging to a traditional family can find a place to belong. Not everyone gets married and have children. However, they are still a resource in God's kingdom and they have the advantage of having more time than married people. In a time when the traditional core family very often breaks up, it is very important that families reach out to offer friendship to those feeling they are outside of traditional family orientated fellowships. It should be natural for the fathers to include boys other than their own when playing.

Growing churches, churches with influence are organised in such a way that all members are included in smaller units. These units give the members opportunities to develop relationships and to use their talents and gifts in an environment that creates the necessary feedback, correction and growth. We all need to belong somewhere and be accountable to someone, as we are in the family unit. The church fellowship can be the enlarged family, where we come together enjoying fellowship and being inspired by the shared experience of reaching for the same goal.

We have intended this list as a checklist, a starting point for families. Each family, however, needs to develop its own plan based on its own situation and circumstances. Don't try to do everything at once or you will run the risk of getting tired of it all, and it may rapidly become a lifeless system. Even though we are describing a systematic approach for this work, the objective is to get an even better life together. Have fun; tell each other a few jokes; play with each other; laugh together. We want to go from religious Christianity to Christian life.

The most difficult phase is executing the plan.

## **4. Execution**

### **4.1 Identifying the need for change by analysing where you are today.**

- Plan which area in the list above you should start working on
- Agree who should do what
  - IT is best for two to solve the task. It is in the cooperation between people that God is made visible. This needs to be the core value in all we do. The list under point 1 may give you some ideas.
  - This is where talents and gifts are being used, and it is an opportunity for training for the ones that need it. Younger siblings can learn from the older. The eldest children must learn from mother and father. Remember that every task is not fun to do, but is necessary (and it provides an opportunity to train ourselves in perseverance and taking responsibility).

### **4.2 “Do the doing”**

- Parents need to supervise the tasks, to show that they care and also to encourage the children. Someone given a task should give a report in the next family council. This provides an opportunity for the whole family to discuss what happened and how it went, and also to make any suggestions for the future. The other members of the family will learn something from these kinds of discussions, and it provides an opportunity to practice communication and openness.

Below we have given some more tips:

- Be constructive in your feedback and be encouraging
- Develop a plan for future training, if necessary, and put it into action.
- Use any opportunity to celebrate when a milestone is reached. Please remember that this is not intended to be a bureaucracy and a way to force anybody to work. If that happens, we have twisted its purpose. These are simply tools to get started. The objective is for it to become a lifestyle. It should be like riding a bike, it is done from our subconscious.

## **5. Some advice to help in the execution of the plan**

It is very important that the parents are in unity when they start the process. That will give the necessary security to the children. Without that security, the authority to go through these kinds of processes will be missing. It is the parents that conceive the idea and dream of what they want the family to be in the future. Smaller children do not have the same understanding of the importance of standing together, that parents do. In the beginning, children are very immature and will want what they think is best for them in the short run. They must be trained to learn that family fellowship is the most important goal and that they will get the most out of it if they contribute to it. Great things rarely happen immediately. It takes time to build fellowship. One can remind the child that it takes a three year old a whole year to become four years.

For many this may be difficult to do, because our society is influenced by “quick fix” and “instant” solutions. This is a lifestyle contrary to nature and can be damaging. Everything valuable is developed; it takes years of training and practice to be good in a trade. The same is true for a good life. It must be worked on and developed. Look at how athletes train and practice to get on the podium. Paul reminds us to have that attitude so that we can grow into maturity

Start with a task that is fun to do and that you will want to start doing. You could start with identifying the various personality types in your family and how they relate to each other (see point 7). At the same time you could also start planning the summer holidays. Do not start with too many things at once, and be aware that we should have the relaxed attitudes mentioned under point 1 when we do this. The process should be adjusted to the age level of the children.

## **6. Follow up and correction of the process**

Weekly follow up is necessary to check your progress. These discussions should be treated as opportunities to acknowledge one another and give encouragement to each other. If you have not reached the goals you set, it is important to find the reasons why:

- is more training necessary?
- is more time needed?
- is more help needed to do the task?
- is there another way the task should be approached?

The corrected plan needs to take these things into consideration.

If you manage to do this in a family, you will be able to lead in other areas as well. The same principles that are used in a family are used in a church or business. Many crises emerge because the leaders (like parents) are not open to feedback and not in touch with the “grassroots of reality.” If such open and honest feedback cannot take place, people will soon start to talk about other people (such as leaders), rather than talk *to* people. Then cliques will develop, which can be very damaging.

## **7. We are created for diversity**

The simplest form of life is a one-cell amoeba. Highly developed organisms are characterised by many complex and specialised organs and functions. Many conflicts occur because of something as simple as different personalities, and because we have not been taught how to utilise our different personalities as a resource. Many couples come to us to get help in their marriage. One of the first reasons they give for their difficulties is that they are so different. That is the reason it does not work between them. We then respond: “Praise God for the difference.” Without that diversity, life would be dull and not enriched as much. We have to learn to deal with the fact that we are different. When Judith and I learned to appreciate that we are different, not only as man and woman, but also in personalities, the penny dropped. I (Ingvar) understood that what I had taken as criticism was her way of telling me how things looked with her “personality glasses” on. This has now become one of the elements that makes working and living together so much more exciting. We have discovered that we will reach further together, than we will do separately. We have to be honest and admit that when life “crashes” for us, it is within this area. It is work in progress for us as much as it is for everybody else.

The diversity and many facets of personality is an expression of the creativity God has placed in us. When our diversity is expressed, it is in reality an expression of the character of God. Just like in nature. This is clear in Ephesians 4:11 onwards. It is Him who gave us our gifts. He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers. He did this to equip the saints

so they could do ministry, edifying the body of Christ. These gifts may be spiritual gifts, or they maybe the personality type we are created to be. Through these, we can be gifts to each other:

- P – The prophet (The goal orientated)
- E – The evangelist (The one who sees the possibilities)
- T – The teacher (The systematic one)
- S – The shepherd (The caring one)

These personality types must not be confused with the spiritual gifts as described in Romans 12:3-8 or 1 Corinthians 12:7-27.

Let's take a closer at these personality types:

### **The Prophet (P)**

- Result orientated
- Goal orientated

Generally focused on:

- Getting started, be at use
- Being active
- Putting plans into action

Attitude: "Let's get going".

Motivation: "What will the result be?"

### **The Teacher (T)**

- Administrator
- Structured
- Systematic

Generally focussed on:

- Planning
- Analysing
- Measuring
- Reviewing
- Making rules

Attitude: "Let's follow the set rules (why reinvent the wheel)?"

Motivation: "How do we proceed from here?"

### **The Evangelist (E)**

- Visionary
- Extrovert
- Full of ideas

Generally focussed on:

- Finding new ways
- Starting up things (but loosing interest pretty quickly)
- Change and excitement

Attitude: "We are too traditional and old fashioned."

Motivation: "Why not change?"

### **The Shepherd (S)**

- Caring
- Considerate
- The gathering type

Focused on:

- Getting people to cooperate
- Coordinating (the ideas from E)
- Creating consensus (on P's objective)
- How to do it (L is concerned about this, but S is the oil in the machinery)
- Ensuring motivation in the group
- Training the team members (P, T and E prefer to go "solo")

Attitude: "Cooperation gives strength. I need the team, the team needs me."

Motivation: "Who will be doing this?"

Strong personalities make us feel guilty because we are not like them. In this respect, as parents, we should to be aware of the influence we have on our children.

### **The Apostle (A)**

Apostles may have any of the P, E, T or S as a basic personality type, but has learned to see the value in complementing others, and also has that as a vision in his or her heart. An Apostle is the serving type of leader that Jesus describes as the ideal. Apostles are not focused on themselves or their ministry, but on the total end result. Parents should eagerly desire to be apostles in their family.

## **7.1 Different personality styles**

Like minded personalities will often try to stick together. If we have one predominant personality type represented there is a risk of polarisation in the group. We need to be aware of this and we should proactively work to avoid it. If only one personality type is being heard, there is a risk that the balance of equality between P-E-T-S can change to result in the following scenarios:

Predominantly P and no or little E-T-S will result in;

- Busyness
- Preoccupation
- A lot of activities



- Few new ideas

Predominantly T and no or little P-E-S results in:

- Initiative being killed
- The system apparently working well, but with little being achieved
- Bureaucracy

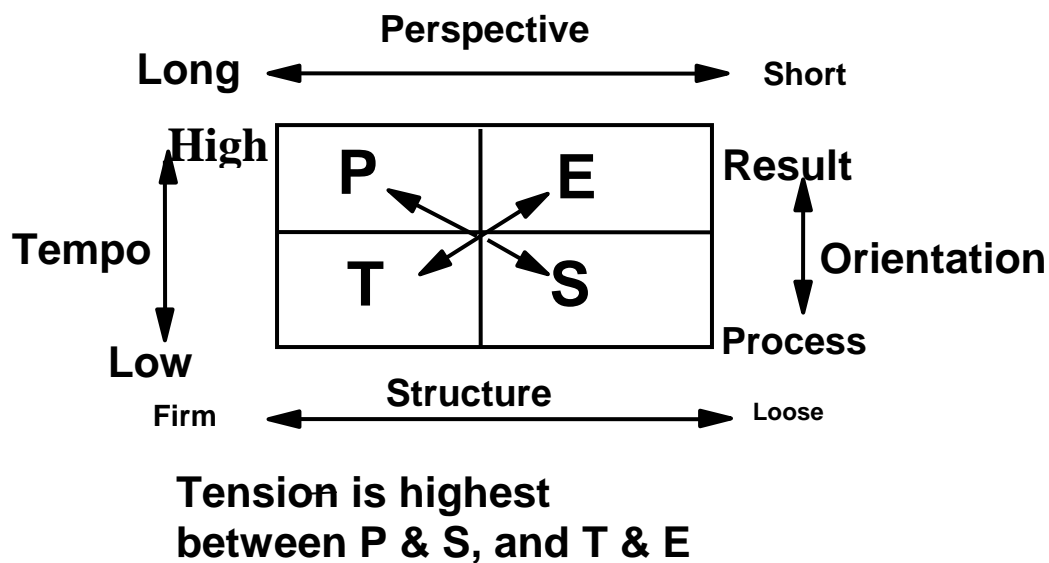
Predominantly E and no or little P-T-S results in:

- Getting lost in new ideas
- Nothing being finalised
- A lack of overview and a lack of structure

Predominantly S and no or little P-E-T will result in:

- Avoidance of conflicts
- Everything needing to be agreed upon in meetings
- Inactivity
- “Another round” of inner healing.

## Different personality styles



***Strong personalities make us feel guilty because we are not like them. Parents need to be aware of the influence they have on their children***

As the figure shows the highest tension is between the Prophet and Shepherd and between the Evangelist and Teacher. They are the ones representing the biggest differences. But the ones having the highest tension between them is also the best to correct each other. A mature leadership, appreciating this, will reach far and be trustworthy. The family is the best place to practice this kind of cooperation and team work. By being made of aware of this, one will be trained in respecting those who are different and mother and father's guidance and example will make the whole process more exciting. If we do not give our children the experience that cooperation,

teamwork and fellowship produces better results than individualism, they will not choose it later in life.

## Behaviour under stress

<b>P</b> <b>Dictates</b>	<b>E</b> <b>Attacks</b>	<b>Aggressive</b>
<b>T</b> <b>Withdraws</b>	<b>S</b> <b>Surrender</b>	
		<b>Passive</b> <b>(tactical)</b>

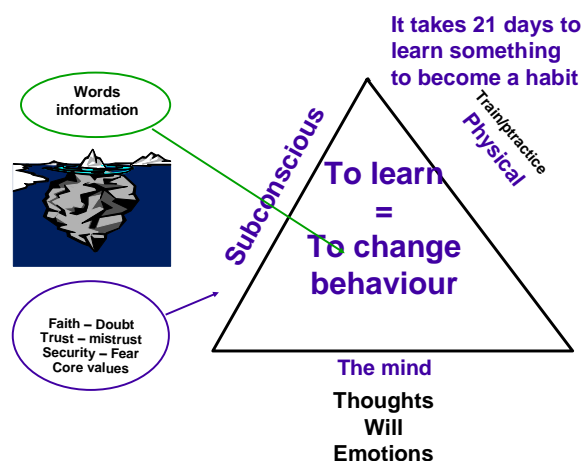
### 7.2 Reasons for conflict may include:

1. Not knowing the rules for cooperating to build a team
2. Not knowing one's self and personality type in order to adjust to others
3. Not knowing those around us
4. Lacking understanding of the value of fellowship
5. Segregation – the gathering of same personality types into the same groups
6. A lack of understanding of the value of diversity, or a lack of respect for it.
7. Hurt emotions, making the diversity threatening.

We asked some close friends to review the manuscript for this chapter. They took the task very seriously and used a whole weekend. They did not expect that wounds from the past, from the time when their children were small, would surface when they read the manuscript. The review brought up painful memories of things they felt they should have done differently. They started the process of identifying the reasons why their specific issues ended up the way they did and used the situation to talk about a lot of things that had been swept under the carpet. For many people it may be useful to read chapter 2 again: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother... By openly talking about issues and forgiving each other people can be healed and put many painful things behind them.

The figure is the same as the one on page 19 and it shows that we operate on three levels.

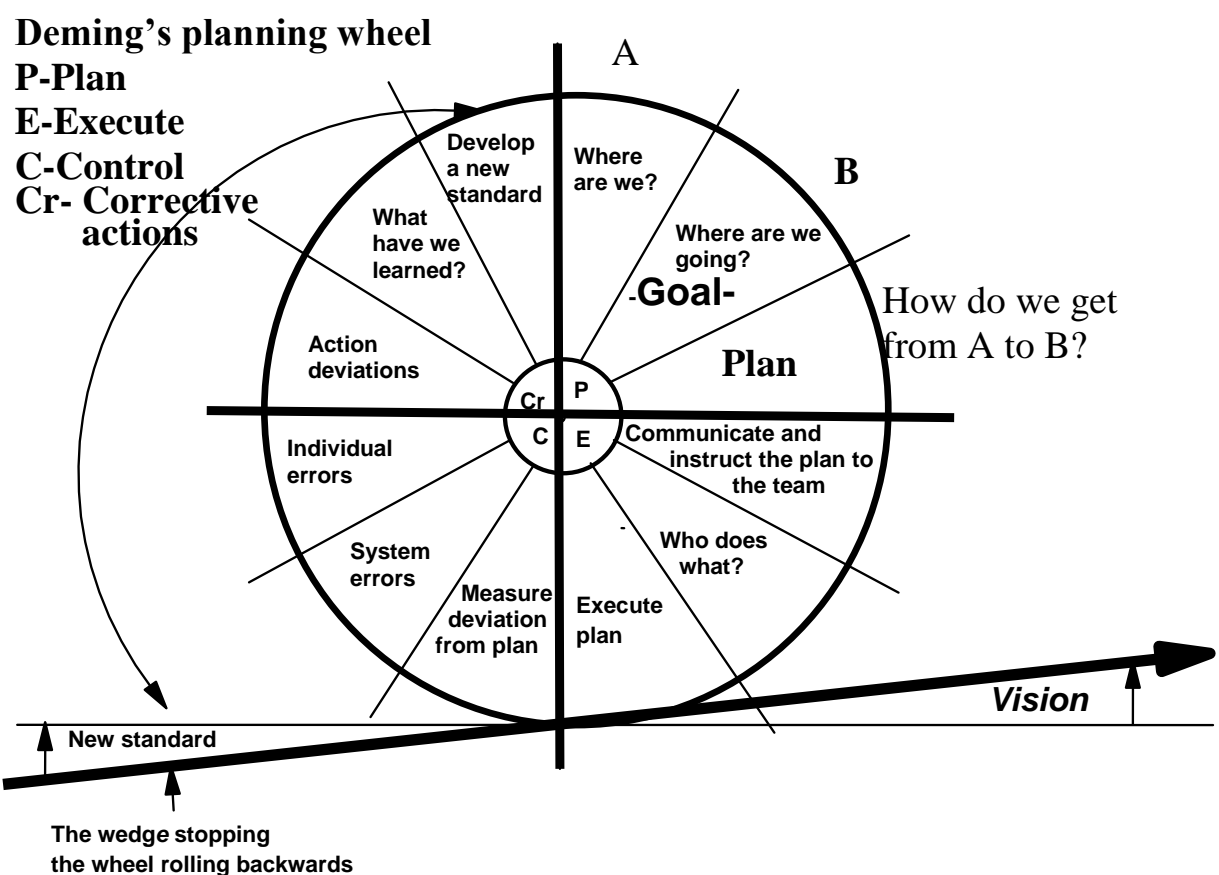
On the spiritual level, or our subconscious, it is a battle to regain the freedom we have in Christ. If we are in some kind of bondage, we would need inner healing as described in chapter two. The Bible teaches us to care and nurture our spirit, because life springs out from it. Without spiritual freedom, we will not be able to progress on the other two levels



This chapter focuses on our mind. This is where we have our thoughts, will and emotions. The Bible appeals numerous times to our will. For instance in Romans 12:2: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

This is an appeal to our will. The teaching in this chapter is mostly directed at our will and intellect. We are the ones choosing whether we want to apply this teaching. We are responsible for our own choices also when we choose not to do what we know is right.

It is, however, important to acknowledge that you cannot expect immediate results. It takes 21 days for something to become a habit, but after a few weeks of practice you should be able to see some changes in the area you are working on.



The above figure was developed by Charles Deming together with a number of high ranking Japanese industry leaders in the beginning of the 1950's. It shows that by mapping out where you are you can develop a plan to reach your goal. The next steps are communicating the plan, and choosing who will do what and start executing it. Many people would be happy with ending the process there, but Deming claims that at this point we are only half way through the process. Without a control mechanism measuring the results against the objective(s), we can easily be side-tracked and not reach our goal. The control needs to identify the causes for any deviation to the plan: wrong method, errors in the process, a lack of training, a lack of correct instructions or a lack of understanding for the task.

The last phase is to correct the process and identify what we have learned from our own and other's mistakes. Learning from our own mistakes is sensible; wisdom is to learn from other's mistakes. Experiences from the process should be used to improve the standard for the future.

These principles were taught on Japanese national television for three years. The quality of Japanese products improved drastically and by the 1960's, Japanese products started to be of superior quality to products from the West. If people today want a quality product they would buy something Japanese. A lot of the teaching in this chapter follows the principles from this figure.

### **7.3 We need feedback to improve this chapter.**

After a session with this teaching, a young couple commented: "We have three children and finally we understand what our role as parents is. We will go home and get started". We would like to have been a fly on the wall in that home and also in other homes that have been inspired to put "words into action."

Write to us, call us. Let this be a start of a movement restoring the credibility of Christians in society.

We are in the world, but not of the world. Our lives will prove that. We believe that this is the most effective way we can make our neighbours curious about what we are actually doing. Maybe they would want to become like us?

Good luck!

January, 2009

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