

Christian Marriage and Family life

Jesus replied: *at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'.. and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate"*

(MAT19:4-6) In the wisdom and plan of Almighty God had created the earth and prepared it in every way to be suitable to man. Adam was incomplete so that God could complete him with Eve. Eve was created to fill a unique and special role in creation. She was to be "a helper suitable for him," who could be his companion, receive his love and share his dominion over the earth. God brought her to him and they were placed them in the Garden of Eden. *And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. .. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and be united unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*(GEN2:22-24) In Gen 1: 26 we see that God created mankind first of all to be like Him, to reflect His image in creation. The second purpose we see listed here is to rule over creation. Man is positioned as the pinnacle of creation, and is given authority over all the earth.

In verse 27 we see that it takes both male and female to fulfill God's purposes. Then in verse 28 we see the third purpose: They are to reproduce--to be fruitful and multiply (raise children who will also reflect God's image), and "fill" the earth. *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply,*(GEN1:27,28) Some practical principles about relationships we find here are: 1) God created one, Adam, and provided him with one, Eve. that is, there is one woman for one man. 2) that God brought Eve to Adam (it wasn't his job to find a mate); 3) that their relationship necessitated him "leaving" father and mother 4) marriage requires "cleaving" (to be joined by commitment); to each other but also with Creator, striving to fulfill the God given purpose. 5) marriage should result in oneness ("*one flesh*" points to the physical body, but in principle would include all that a person is---mind, emotions, will, etc.) *And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet(suitable) for him.*(GEN2:18)

Eve was created to help Adam fulfill God's purpose for mankind. But all did not end well in the Garden of Eden. Through attacking Eve's contentment, Satan was able to incite rebellion in mankind and sin entered into the world. Eve led her husband into direct violation of God's revealed will to them, and as a result, mankind was banished from paradise. That sin of Adam had forever after changed (as it were) the "plan of God" The Scriptures explain us that *"Wherefore, as by one man[i.e., Adam] sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"*(ROM5:12) So what has God planned for us instead? He gave us "the second Adam", which is Christ, that we might have life everlasting in Him.(JOH3:16) The Second Adam, which is Christ, has paid the price, bought with His own Blood, our freedom from the wages of sin which is death. *"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam[which is Christ] was made a quickening spirit"*(1CO15:45-47) The first Adam brought death by his sin. The second Adam, which is Christ, brought life by His righteousness. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man is the Lord from Heaven. In Rom 8:1 We are to walk in the Spirit and not according to the flesh, we are certainly not to follow after the example of the first Adam (who was of the flesh), but after the second Adam (who is of the Spirit), which is Christ. We look to Christ as the example set for us in the true and current "plan of God for marriage" And the Marriage is to conform to the model of Christ and the Church. Eph 5:22-25 exhorts profound love with which a husband, following as after the model of Christ Himself, is to so love his wives, as selflessly and sacrificially as Christ Jesus loved for the benefit of His bride, the Church. And wives are therein spiritually called to be in their marriages as though they are the church being unto Christ, joyfully and willfully submissive to their husband, as their husband is supposed to be walking as though he is being as Christ Himself being married to wife. Apostle Paul explained, *"I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ"*(2CO11:2) Marriages are dissolved only when Satan gains control over the life of one or both marriage partners. As long as both partners are committed to the will of God, problems which arise can be resolved.

Marriage is ordained and established by God before sin entered into the world. God implanted the divine design for the home. The home is the basic and most important institution of society. If the home degenerates, the Church and nation will degenerate. The home must be protected and its high standard maintained. "As goes the home so goes the entire social order" The Church is not to be influenced by the world/society but to sacrifice in influencing the world. The family belongs to God who made them; He has designed its nature, determined its purposes and appointed its responsibilities. We are always accountable to God. Homes are to be dedicated to the raising of children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, instructs in righteousness and fear of the Lord and is responsible to serve Him.(EPH6:4)

Now there is an exception to this principle that, "it is not good that the man should be alone" The exception is with the man who has the gift of eunuchs, which is the state of remaining single or unmarried, especially in obedience to religious vows. Some are called by God to renounce marriage and family life, to a life of service in the mission, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven as responsible to God.(MAT19:12) Paul was an example, where this exception exists through the gift of God and of His grace, abstain from marriage cheerfully, consecrate themselves to Christ's work. (1CO7:6-8) And in eternity after the resurrection of the body men will "*neither marry, nor be given in marriage*(MAR12:25)

Planning for and raising children

Homes should have children! The most intimate & wonderful experience of true love is associated with the conception of children. A primary purpose of marriage is to provide homes into which children can be born and nurtured. Parents share in their children's joys as well as in their disappointments. They sacrifice in providing for their children and thus demonstrate unselfish love. The arrival of the first child requires significant adjustments within the home.

Without obedience, the entire plan for the child's training is ineffective. *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.* (COL3:20) A child learns obedience in the home and extends that attitude to relationships outside the home. Children should be taught that God holds the parents responsible for their obedience. If parents fail to teach their children to respect and obey them, the children will likely have little respect for God & His authority. Obedience must be taught. Instruction in obedience requires discipline. It refers to controlling, educating and correcting. Parents are responsible for directing the activities of children-not only telling them what to do but seeing to it that they carry the instructions. Failure to discipline children leads to misbehavior which starts with falsehood and disobedience and progress to petty stealing or other serious crimes. Parental discipline is necessary if the home is to be preserved & the nation is to be given stability. Every parent must face his child's stubborn determination to have his own way. Some parents become frustrated and give up trying to teach their children to obey. Eli, who was the priest of Israel, restrained not his sons and they were in turn a disgrace onto him and an abomination unto God. God's word warns: *He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.* (PRO13:24;23:13-14) Proverb implies that the failure to correct will result in the loss of the son to hell. Parents must set the boundaries of right conduct for their children. Every aspect of life must operate within limits. No one can do as he chooses. There must be rules and regulations. These give children knowledge of what is expected of them and a certain security. When they commit wrong, they expect punishment. They would prefer to be made to do right than to be punished. In setting up rules, children should understand why they are necessary. It should be pointed out to them that when people have no limits they do not always do what is right. (ISA53:6) Consistency is necessary in teaching obedience. Some parents only enforce the rules when they are emotionally disturbed and they may at that time become extreme in the punishment. The father and mother must work together in teaching children to obey and they must agree to rules given. Children must be guided and controlled by parents because children do not have the experience or maturity to know and do what is right. Parents should attempt to channel their determination in the right direction by challenging them rather than threatening them. Teaching a child to be thoughtful and considerate is not easy and requires persistence. Child has to learn responsibility should come with maturity. As the child grows older, he is expected to take task and do them well. He must learn to do things for himself and must experience a feeling of satisfaction and acceptance when he has done a job well. Children are taught to do right and avoid wrong through a systems of rewards & punishment. A child who is denied a privilege because of disobedience will learn that there are consequences for his misdeeds. A parent should look for positive ways of motivating by appreciate them when they do well. A certain amount of fear is necessary to motivate right actions. To avoid punishment, some parents become too permissive. This practice is as dangerous as the other extreme of being overly strict and unreasonable. Punishment that is unfair causes resentment and does not motivate a child to do right. Criticism does not have much value in motivating a child to act. On other hand, a child must understand when he has done wrong. Parents should be prepared to guide them in understanding how to confess their sins and to invite Christ to save them. A child who has come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit will show disturbance during visitation. Parents should pray for their children and be especially aware of opportunities to guide them. The greatest contribution of a parent to a child is to teach him fear, respect, love and submission to God who has revealed Himself in Christ. *"all your children shall be taught by the Lord and obedient to His will, and great shall be the peace of your children.* (ISA54:13-14a, DEUT4:10) When parents neglect their divine commission to teach their children about God and the hearts of many are broken when their children go astray.

Guidance of younger teens: Teens need a different type discipline from that of children. The authoritarian approach of parents over children must give way to reasonable guidance for what they are expected to do during teenage years in order for the young person to mature into an adult who can make his own decisions. Since teenagers must gain some independence, they rebel too strict parental authority. Parents must allow some degree of liberty while continuing to give guidance. Teenager is in the process of remarking his personality in order to fit into a larger society as he moves from the family circle into the larger world. In this transition, he must establish his own identity and autonomy. As the young teens begin to gain independence and develop greater self-reliance in other areas, he questions religious beliefs of childhood. When he begins to compare his beliefs with those of his friends, he may become confused when they differ. Next, he may begin to doubt, if the religious and moral structures of childhood are weak, they may break under the strain of peer influence. Values must be learned at home and are based on religion but information can be given by experts through textbooks. They should also be taught that to abuse or misuse the sexual nature will bring guilt, shame, fear and anxiety. One of the key principles of successful training in obedience is for fathers to avoid provoking their children to wrath. The parents must demonstrate their religious convictions by consistent Christian life.

The Preparation for the Marriage

The high divorce rate indicates that many young people do not make adequate preparation for marriage. The only claim some young people have to maturity at their marriage is physical maturity. What difficulties many married couples have suffered because they were unprepared for marriage! Since marriage is ordained by God, the Christian home and the church are responsible for preparing young people for marriage. Marriages are not automatically successful. People who achieve success in marriage must work for it as any other endeavor. A person will not be a skilled carpenter unless he is trained. Part of this training comes from the example of parents. In preparation for marriage, young people should have correct view of God's plan and purpose for the home. Young people should understand the realistic and enduring purposes of marriage. They should recognize that mutual benefits require giving on the part of both. First, marriage should provide an intimate and affectionate companionship. Companionship in marriage gives emotional security in addition to sympathetic understanding. Marriage enables each partner to be loved and appreciated. Second, marriage partners complement one another in meeting personal, physical & psychological needs. While the wife plans and prepares the right kind of meal(food), the husband contributes to the comfort of their home life by doing repairs about the house and making improvements(shelter). Consideration, sensitivity and co-operation is a key to developing strong emotional relationships. Third, marriage should provide for the needs of the physical impulses of both. Marriage provides the social, legal and moral sanctions for a wholesome physical relationship. It is holy and right when it is expressed in God's will and purpose. Attitudes of love and happiness between husband and wife promote successful physical relations. Fourth, marriage should add to the happiness fulfillment, and development of each as a result of overcoming hindrances to successful marriage. A successful marriage is a lifetime process and requires many choices and many adjustments before the partners develop a unity of personalities. Each one brings unique qualities which will enrich the life of the other. A successful marriage relationship involves three kinds of Love. Marital love includes physical attraction and affection, but it also involves a commitment to one's partner, daily consideration and service of the companion express agape love. Love that becomes the foundation stone of marriage must be enduring and stable. Persons who have emotional disturbances(inferior or self-centered) have difficulty developing healthy love. Inferiority is not caused by actual limitation of skills and knowledge but rather from an attitude that one allows to develop. Each person is a unique individual with a specific, divinely appointed purpose. Recognizing that one's abilities come from God excludes pride and an attitude of superiority. A mature person is able to analyze a situation objectively rather than responding on the basis of subjective emotional desires. A person who is ruled by his desires reveals immaturity and is not ready for marriage. One who is prepared for marriage should be able to evaluate himself and his partner with some aspect of objectivity. He has learned how to deal with his problems constructively. Otherwise the immature person will be able to see only his side of the issue when conflict arises. Confusion, discouragement, despair are indications of lack of maturity. Failing to face up to problems by running from them indicates immaturity. A good relationship in marriage depends on each partner's accepting himself as he is and accepting his companion for what he or she is. But efforts should be made to overcome weakness and personality and performance. Relationships deteriorate when attitudes are negative and each finds fault with the other because other fails to be like someone else or thinks he ought to be. Accepting one another requires adjustments. Personal preparation for marriage requires that a person be able to see and deal with the difficult experiences in life without blaming his partner. Developing the deepest relationships in marriage requires integrity and trust on the part of each partner. Religious training and a happy family environment are the primary influences in maintaining moral standards. The transgression of God's law brings destruction to the home, heartache to the companions, and wrongdoing to the children. One who heeds the commandment to love his neighbor will apply the same principles to home relationships. A daily devotional life and regular church attendance is essential for satisfactory spiritual growth and personality development. A young person who has found benefit in reading the Bible daily and spending time in prayer will likely continue these activities after marriage. A well-cliché states "that families who pray together stay together". Young people who have established the habit of prayer before marriage will likely bring their problems of adjustment before God. Since young people have not had experience in making marital adjustments and in solving conflicts, they often develop fantasies regarding marriage. Their fantasies leave them disillusioned when their marriages do not progress smoothly. When conflicts intensify, the only alternative they know is separation and divorce. Stubbornness(refusal to communicate & compromise) and selfishness are two of the most common causes for the breakdown of marriage relationship. Beware of marrying in haste. Marriage is for life!

Choosing a partner: The father, who head of the house usually initiated the plans for marriage on behalf of his sons. (GEN24:4) When young people face the serious decision of choosing a lifetime mate, they recognize the possibility of human error. Christians should ever attempt marriage without prayer and a thorough search of the Scriptures. And should never, under any circumstances, marry an unsaved person.(2CO6:14) Young people need to know that God's plan for their lives includes the companion with whom they will serve. If God's guidance is requested, He will lead the person in this important matter of choosing a companion. Everyone needs the heavenly guidance that only God can give and doing His will brings a greater happiness than one is able to gain following his own personal desires

Families with problems - Divorce and remarriage

They asked Jesus this question: “*Can a person divorce one’s mate for any cause?*” Jesus answered: “*Haven’t you read the Scriptures?*” (MAT19:4) Jesus taught that divorce itself, is contrary to God’s will. Further, whoever divorces his wife and marries again commits adultery (unless he does it because she has been guilty of fornication) and whoever marries her who has been divorced also commits adultery. (MAR10:ROM7:2,3) Hence, the divorce itself is wrong and should be avoided. (MAT18:6,7) The vows that take on wedding day, are first to the Lord and then to our mate that we will be with this person until death do we part & we become one in God’s eyes. *For the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I hate divorce* (MAL2:14-16) Hebrew word shalach translated “putting away” (divorce) means: a separation or to separate. Marriage is a covenant between a man and his wife. God is a witness to that covenant and He holds men to it. If a man violates the covenant, he is dealing unfaithfully with his wife and God will hold him accountable. (EZE16:8) In this marriage covenant, the woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives and the right and obligation to have the physical union only with the companion. (1CO7:39) To have relations with anyone else is “fornication” or “adultery” (HEB13:4) While marriage was instituted by God, divorce was instituted by man. God only stepped in to regulate it. God doesn’t promote divorce, but rather allows it because of man’s hardness of heart (stubbornness and perversity) (MAT19:8)

Peter tells us that the husband and wife are “heirs together of the grace of life” (IPE3:7) The word grace suggests the idea of a gift. The term “heirs together” tells us that God has given the privilege of sharing together their precious gift. Each is God’s gift to the other as the new partnership is formed. Marriage is to be the closest, most intimate of all human relationships (1CO6:16-17) This relationship results in mutual fellowship, whether in joy or in sorrow. In this God-planned partnership there must be mutual trust and respect between both partners. *A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband* (PRO12:4) Children as the desired result of the marriage union. (PS127:3-5) The husband is called to be the spiritual leader /priest of his home, which requires that he take the initiative in family prayer and worship, leading, directing, helping families to glorify God and further the sanctification of his wife and children. Therefore, they must acknowledge God as Supreme in their lives, dedicated to living a life pleasing to God and according to God’s ways—living a life in Christ. *If anyone does not provide for his own family, .. is worse than an unbeliever.* (1TI5:8) The wife must be satisfied with what her husband can provide. “*Be content with such things as ye have*” (HEB13:5) The purpose of Christian marriage is to make men and women sanctify/holy; if they achieve that they will certainly be happy. Any interference with a Christian marriage, any troubles within the marriage is caused by satan and no human has the right to break that bond.

During the past several years, the number of divorces has been increasing. Crumbling marriages/broken homes should be signs of alarm to any nation. The mental, emotional and spiritual health of every society depends on the stability of the home for the future generation of each society gains its training and values primarily from the home. Divorce is the result not the cause of failure. It is caused by a breakdown in character and the failure of a couple to make necessary adjustment for experiencing a satisfactory degree of happiness in life. Divorce often involves couples who did not receive adequate pre-marriage counseling, who have failed to develop compatible interest & values for their marriage. Without common interests & values a couple tends to go in opposite directions. Pastors are often called upon to counsel couples who are experiencing conflict and are contemplating divorce. The church must take a proactive approach, offering counsel to couples in trouble, helping them understand the biblical teaching and the consequences for not following biblical principles. Church must find ways to minister to those with broken lives. To seek divorce is to withhold forgiveness. Christians are commanded to forgive; we are expected to reconcile relationships with those who will repent. Repentance is more than admitting guilt. It is turning from the wrong and taking steps to insure that it doesn’t happen again. Reconciliation requires the rebuilding of trust. The goal of marriage counseling is to help the partners work out solution to their problems for the mutual benefit and happiness of each. The most effective solutions for the divorce problem are sufficient preparation for marriage, realism in facing the need for making adjustments in marriage and commitment to God’s will in relationship and expresses Christian attitudes. Church must maintain a position which includes both Gods’ demands for righteous living and His willingness to forgive.

Couples experiencing conflict often think only of being released from their unhappy marriage. Certain psychological effects begin working before divorce is completed, but the full impact of these effects is not evident until after divorce. Persons who divorce feel guilty for having failed and accuse themselves of things which they might have done. In addition to guilt, the divorcee experiences grief. In death, the surviving partner recognizes that the departure of the loved one is enduring experience, but the divorcee has lost a significant person who is still in existence and many live in the same community. The divorcee experiences loneliness and the loss of self-esteem. The couple probably began life together with plans for building a nice home, having and educating their children and experiencing social acceptance. Divorce completely alters their plans. Children of divorcees are usually caught in the middle, they may love both parents but must be separated from one. Divorce always brings painful consequences, set the stage for future pain for yourself, children feel abandoned and bring disgrace upon the name of Christ. *They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord* (JUD4)

Sanctification and Submission

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.(EPH5:25-27) Husbands are to be involved in their wives' sanctification. The example they are to follow is Christ and the church. *will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*(HEB10:10) Sanctification is changing toward holiness. It is a course of events that produces a purer level of living. Sanctification is effected by the blood of Jesus (HEB13:12) by the Word of God(JOH17:17) by the Holy Spirit(ROM15:16) *It is God's will that you should be sanctified.* (1TH4:3) This is God's desire for us as His children, His purpose, that we be involved in this change that is sanctification, in our lives/inner man. Since this the desire of our Father in heaven, it is my desire, too. I must pursue sanctification. The Lord has taken the responsibility of completing the work of sanctification wholly of body, soul and Spirit.(1TH5:23) In Rom 12.2, the verse that describes transformation toward holiness as "metamorphosis" caterpillar to butterfly. Sanctification is evidence of fruit of the Spirit in the believer's life. The root of the Greek word translated "sanctification" (hagiasmos) is the word translated "Holy"(hagios) 1Th 4:3-7, "sanctification" refers to the completion of the process overcoming a particular sin (sexual immorality). In Heb10:10 and 14, "sanctified" communicates the passing into the Christian life through faith in Christ. There, it means entering the process of changing toward holiness. All the forms of "sanctification" identify, part of the ongoing transformation toward Christlikeness while on earth. Sanctification is a process; it is a work in progress. For us as Christians it is our vocation, our purpose, and our calling. To be pursuing sanctification is to submit our will to the Lord's. Sanctification accurately gives Christians a practical understanding of how to put off sin and put on righteousness.(EPH4:31-32) Our union with Christ has three phases: At justification, sanctification, glorification. We were set apart to be God's through Christ. We stand by grace in our union with Christ. We put the Word into practice to become more like Christ. "*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth*"(JOH17:17) This, "progressive sanctification" is our occupation until the return of Christ. *Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit,*(1PE1:2) Our union with Christ is complete at the resurrection and their body will be as glorious as that of Jesus. *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything* (EPH5:22-33) Submission is an act of love "speaking the truth in love" And begins with our submission to the Lordship of Christ. We are to be subject to God's authority above all else because He is the Lord. He has also created other authorities to be responsible for us and to rule over us. Each one presents us with an opportunity to honor our Lord by our submission. How are you doing in these aspects of your life? Scripture describe God's will for you in submitting to authority or in exercising it in a godly manner. *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men:*1PE2:13- 3:7) Peter has instructed believers to submit themselves not only to the governing authorities of the day and to one another, but even to submit to all men. *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*(EPH5:21) Every Christian is to submit to others on a variety of levels in a broad range of circumstances and settings. Further, Peter speaks of submission to others should particularly be practiced in times of innocent suffering. Christ brought our submission through His own sacrifice on the cross; we should seek to bring others to submission by faithfully serving them, by God's power and grace. Submission is the key to unity and harmony in human relationships. In the Godhead, in the church, in marriage, and in any relationship, submission is the basis for unity.(PHI2:1-4) "*Obey your leaders and submit to them*(HEB13:17) to teaching of the word preached by them, and hearkening to it; by receiving it with faith and love, And the guidance of the leader in holiness/truth. Satan's fall and his on-going rebellion is a manifestation of his refusal to submit to God; he likewise tempts men to follow in his footsteps. This same spirit of rebellion is evident in Satan's spokesmen, the false prophets, even to this day:(2PE2:9b-11) Satan abused his power and position, acting independently of God. When Satan tempted Adam & Eve, he sought to get them to act independently of God, seeking what appeared to be their own self-interest in disobedience to God's command(GEN3:1-7) Submission is at the core of man's relationship with God. Man's refusal to submit to God brought about the fall of man, so man's submission to God brings about salvation.(ROM10:9-10) Submission is also at the heart of discipleship. A disciple is a learner and a follower, a student who has submitted himself to his teacher. It is the good which God requires of Christians to imitate and follow Christ and to silence some of the accusations of foolish men.(1PE2:15) Submission is the will and command of God. *You must submit for discipline; God is treating you as sons. ...but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.*(HEB12:5-11) The highest authority is God. And so when political or religious authorities seek to compel us to act contrary to the Word of God, we like Peter must say, "*We must obey God, rather than men*"(ACT4:18-20) Submission is a fundamental ingredient of the believer's spiritual life. Submission is the attitude with which men and women turn to God in faith for eternal salvation. It is also the attitude which underlies servanthood. And may we, by God's grace, practice true submission from the heart to His glory. *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*(JAM4:7)

Christian Character – Compassion

Put on therefore, as God's chosen people, holy & beloved, with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. (COL3:12) *So be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.* (LUK6:36) Compassion, what is it and what does it mean in your life? What are the characteristics in us that true compassion do we see in our daily lives? Have you felt someone being compassionate towards you? Do you feel compassionate towards others? Finally did your Christian life have anything to do with your feelings of compassion towards others? The word compassion means: (1) a deep awareness and sympathy of the sufferings of another. It has a second definition: (2) the humane quality of understanding the suffering of others & wanting to do something about it. In addition to having the sorrow that is felt for the suffering of others, it is a willingness and an urge to assist them. The word actually means to do something about feeling sorry, to be affected by their situation. It is to enter into one's sorrow and pain. When we feel true compassion, we will be moved inwardly. Having empathy; to have one's heart reach out toward the needs of others. To be compassionate, to pity; to be tender mercy. It means to be tenderhearted; to be sensitive and affectionate, to be moved with tender feelings over the pain and sufferings of others. In Job 6:1-30 we are told how compassion can go beyond words. Job said that his friend Eliphaz's advice was like eating the tasteless white of an egg. This shows us how ill- advised counsel is distasteful when someone is going through a severe trial. Many times they often need compassion more than they need advice. In Mark 2:1-12 we read of the paralytic's need and how it moved his friends to action. The action they took was to bring their friend to Jesus. There are many people who have both physical and spiritual needs you can meet. This can be done by yourself or with others who also are concerned to an action that is compassionate. Pray to become a person of Compassionate love. Seek to be a Good Samaritan: Loving Father, thank you for the compassion which you have shown us. Help us to love others by showing them compassion. Let us not be blind to the needs of others. Move us for those who suffer. Move us to action. Set the captives free. In Jesus' name Amen.

Our Lord God is compassionate. A ray of hope was seen in all of the sin and sorrow surrounding him. *"Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not"* (LAM3:22) God's steadfast love and mercy are greater than any sin in your life, and the Lord promises forgiveness. We sing a song that contains words that apply here. *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end.."* Our Lord Jesus Christ used it to help illustrate the attitude that should capture the life of every believer. In the parable of the unforgiving servant, the master had compassion and forgave the servant's debt. (MAT18:27) We see where the prodigal son's father had compassion on him (LUK15:20) The parable of the Good Samaritan who had compassion on the injured traveler (LUK10:33) The Lord had compassion on the crowd. (MAR6:34) There has been so much mercy that God has had upon us. The one thing we need do is to show mercy unto others. Compassion should overflow our hearts for the poor, aged, lost, lonely, hungry, empty, orphaned, diseased, hungry, unclothed and hurting. The clothing of compassion should always be worn by the believer. The believer should reach out and try to help others through their suffering. Compassion is the seat of man's affections. It is moved within the deepest part of a person's being. In Luke 7:13 we read of the widow whose son had died *"and when the Lord saw her, he had compassion and said unto her, Weep not!"*. (1) It was "the Lord", the Sovereign Power of the universe. He saw this woman was truly heartbroken. (2) It was "the Lord" who had filled with concern and full of compassion on her who spoke and gave assurance. (3) We see that our Lord God is revealed clearly interested in our affairs. *And He went forward and touched the funeral bier,.. And Jesus gave him back to his mother.* This extends to the entire human race, which He effected eternal deliverance by giving up His own Son to the death of the cross. This was done in order to save us from sin, with its consequences. It is seen in that Jesus Christ died for the sins of all mankind, thereby gaining a new, wider people for Himself, more devoted and more filled with the expression of His own Spirit. The measure of compassionate love/Agape in your heart is the measure of the presence of God in your heart. We are commanded to have compassion. (2CO1:3-4) Your heart is like a dam that the compassionate love of God must pass through, behind you is a mighty river, the Holy Spirit of God. In front of you there is a dry riverbed, people thirsting for love and to know God. When you open one of your gates and let a river of compassion flow toward one of those people, the turbine in your heart generates life energy called Love. For each gate you open, a river flows towards another person. (JOH7:38) *But whosoever has material possessions, and sees his brother has need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?* (1JO 3:17) It is so easy to turn off the flow of compassion, a little pride, selfishness, envy, unforgiveness, fear; and the dam is closed, compassion is stopped. Compassion must flow. When you stop the river of compassion the whole dam shuts down. Don't let an offence stop the river of life from flowing through you. Therefore, all who are Christians must necessarily cultivate compassion and show mercy. True compassion will have a person deny himself so he can help others in their grim needs and sufferings. People being united can be done by compassion - when a person shows mercy - reaching out to help each other. Christians need to move into the realm of constant praying in compassion all of the time for the members of our Church. This will cause compassion to flow through the people, and God's presence will fill the people's hearts. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit will unite our hearts. When we experience compassionate, joy is a result. *Finally, be you all, live in harmony with one another; be compassionate and humble, love as brethren.* (1PE3:8)