

I.1 HOW TO USE THIS PREMARITAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM

The material below is intended to be used to prepare to meet with the pastor-counselor in four sessions. The Westminster Larger Catechism material should be completed in three sections. The fourth section is scheduled to discuss the appendix 1-4 sections on the wedding service and their wedding vow preparations/selection, and the topics of the love-making cycle, sexual problems and birth control.

SECTION ONE: PREMARITAL COUNSELING, USING WLC FOR PREMARITAL COUNSELING, GOD AND HIS PURPOSES, SIN, ITS CONSEQUENCES & REMEDIES 1.2—1.8.4

SECTION TWO: COVENANT OF GRACE, LOVING GOD 1.9—1.10.5.3

SECTION THREE: LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR 1.10.6—1.10.11.3

SECTION FOUR: APPENDICES 1-5 1.11—2.4

The engaged couple first reads the assigned sections and individually **answers the questions**. They meet together by themselves to discuss their answers to the questions. After that is completed, the couple meets with the pastor-counselor to discuss that assigned section. Thus each segment includes self study and answering the questions, a meeting of the engaged couple themselves, then a meeting with the counselor.

Please read these two books on sexual knowledge prior to meeting with your counselor for the 4th session: 親密佳偶--探索夫妻性親密的奧祕 / When Two Become One--Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage 作者：馬克士/馬瑞秋 (Christopher/Rachel McCluskey) 譯者：出版社：飛鷹 and 濃情蜜意(原書名:閨房之樂) / Intended for Pleasure 作者：艾德.惠特夫婦 (Ed Wheat, M.D. and Gaye Wheat) 譯者：出版社：校園書房出版社

SECTION ONE: PREMARITAL COUNSELING, USING WLC FOR PREMARITAL COUNSELING, GOD AND HIS PURPOSES, SIN, ITS CONSEQUENCES & REMEDIES

I.2 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PREMARITAL COUNSELING

- A. When the time is right, (parents approve, children are mature enough to handle it) dating is a way to obey the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2). Healthy dating relationships should reflect *lex Christi* qualities of his supremacy attributes. Below a series of questions as relationship-examination tests are developed to be used by dating couples, pre-marriage counselors and parents to gauge the sickness and health of the relationship. Serious sickness in any one of these tests could be a cause for a counselor or parent to recommend either waiting for signs of change toward health or separation of a dating or engaged couple. The longer the sickness factors have pre-existed in one of the persons (to the point of being habitual), the more serious the sickness would be. The more signs of habitual sickness you see, the more likely any future marriage will face proportional levels of conflicts, sorrows and difficulties beyond the normal troubles of life in a fallen world. While a Christian pre-marriage counselor or Christian parent or mature Christian friend who knows the

couple well cannot determine whether a couple should marry or not, he/she may give a measured opinion warning of the future types of problems that couple will likely face unless the couple seeks immediate help to bring specific changes into areas of greater health. One possible goal of evaluating is to develop early counseling intervention and prevention of repeated mistakes. Growing into all areas of health is possible by God's grace. One factor to look for is not so much perfect health in all areas as much as a willingness to learn, submit to the Word of God and repent of specific areas of sin that may negatively affect the relationship. Basically, is this couple "wise" in the Proverbs sense of the word? Romantically infatuated couples may need to step back and look more carefully at each other, since couples usually assume that the relationship is healthy enough to face all problems and minimize the existing problems. This kind of couple would benefit from these tests to alert to areas where emotions may have clouded a needed evaluation phase in the relationship prior to engagement or marriage. Are they living in the fear of the Lord, and seeking counsel and instruction from other mature Christians (Prov. 9:9-11; 11:14)? Are they willing to submit to the Word of God where that is made plain to them? If some important areas can be strengthened prior to engagement or marriage, moving forward cautiously might be possible. If no signs of change or improvement in the "sick" areas are evident after a period of counseling, the couple may need to consider separating, or else be prepared to face numerous marital problems.

- B. To those who agree with these health tests but feel no one fits these required qualities or passes these tests, caution against this overly zealous perspective is advised. Some extremely cautious individuals (parents or couples) may want a guarantee of a perfectly mature and compatible spouse before giving permission to marry or agreeing to date or get engaged, possibly due to a loss of optimism in the institution of marriage or in the trustworthiness of people. Maybe someone had been hurt in relationships before, perhaps someone whose parents had been divorced or separated. Such a person may be so intent on perfectionistic guarantees of marital success that he/she will be too afraid to commit to anyone or to take the risks of seeing and loving another deeply flawed sinner. This type of person may tend to use these tests as a weapon to accuse and demand changes, rather than serve the other in love with words that build up, and wait patiently for God's power to work changes (Eph. 4:15, 29-32). No relationship can survive under constant scrutiny! There are phases of scrutiny that can be helpful, but to live under the threat of instant rejection for failure is not the Christian pattern of relationships, since Christ first died for the elect while they were his enemies, brought them into a relationship of mercy and credited righteousness, then seeks their actual change in the security of that justifying covenant love. Some changes in a partner will have to wait until that human covenant of gracious acceptance is sealed by marriage and the long, slow process of daily living together that works mutual sanctification and mutual interest in satisfying the desires of the spouse. Marriage is one of God's redeeming institutions, in almost every sense of the possible areas of Christian growth! To a critical perfectionist looking for "perfect 10," wise counsel points to the need to develop more humility, patience with, acceptance of and joy in other imperfect Christians by trusting the perfecting grace of Christ. It can help to study of Paul's attitude to the imperfect Philippian church. Christ will finish the work he begins in a person (Phil. 1:3-6). The author recalls a memorable metaphor used by Pastor Tim Keller in a taped message he gave to singles without the gift of singleness: 'Marry a good piece of marble, rather than seeking a perfectly formed statue! Enter into marriage to share in the privilege of being used by God in shaping your future spouse into the image of Christ's holiness.' A solid core of maturing Christian qualities with unfinished form is sufficient to begin the adventure of marriage.

- C. Also, a word of correction to those men, especially, who refuse to pursue a woman with godly qualities just because he has no immediate attraction to her physical features. Repent and value the qualities that God values! Even if he may not feel a great emotional attraction to the physical features of a potential spouse, he can learn to value other qualities that God values now. After marriage, the nature of mutual service to one another, combined with practicing only-one sexual attraction (OOSA, Prov. 5:15-19; Job 31:1) will usually bring the emotional attractions that make for sexually satisfying delight.
- D. Finally, for parents evaluating children and their potential life partners, they should show as much support for their adult child's choices as possible. Some parents, wanting the best for their children, may try to use these tests as a wedge between their child and the one he/she loves. Parents need to be extremely careful in speaking out opinions too forcefully on the chosen partner of their child. Parents should try to work constructively with children for the improvement of the existing relationship in a more Christian-oriented direction, if possible, rather than seeking a separation. Parents should permit adult child make the directional choices, treat them with respect and as much trust as possible. Parents can offer wise insights or suggest books or articles that will enable their child to better evaluate their partner choice. Counsel adult children to realize that some choices will have consequences that will limit their options. For example, a Christian marrying a non-Christian will prohibit church wedding options and disobey 1 Corinthians 7:39. Marrying without minimal financial stability may limit the couple's job-relocation, educational, housing and vehicle choices. Marrying someone who comes from a troubled family background will tend to reproduce some of the behavioral tendencies observed growing up. Make observations about observed character patterns that will not just change by getting married. If dating or engaged adult children ask for the counselor or parents' opinion of the partner, again, be cautious about what to say. Remember, if this relationship goes forward, negative comments may be recalled and create bitterness for a long time, and the romantically involved counselee or child will likely repeat comments to the partner who will want to know others' opinions. Parents should attend the wedding of a child's chosen partner, though they may need to limit active participation in any forms of idolatry, giving support for false religions or marriages that deny gender-binary (homosexual or trans marriages). Parents should keep their influencing options open for the future, realizing that the job is not done just because an adult child gets married. There may be future opportunities to evangelizing a non-Christian child or draw back a wayward child or help a faithful Christian child mature in Christ.

I.3 SUMMARY OF A TYPICAL PREMARITAL COUNSELING WORKBOOK

One of the claims of this curriculum is that Westminster's *symphonic morality* perspective is useful for reorganizing the fragmented biblical principles of practical theology topics. All biblical morality falls under the scope of the Ten Commandments. This perspective is summarized in love for God and love for neighbor (WCL 102, 122), and on these two great commandments the WLC builds its understanding of the moral law. The WLC uses the Decalogue's imperatives (eight "you shall not" and two "you shall" ["Remember," "Honor"], Exod. 20:3-17) to create ten sets of duties and prohibitions drawn from logical connections to any related biblical morality from anywhere in Scripture (WLC 102-149).

Premarital counseling workbooks primarily focus on the biblical morality of marriage and ask self-evaluative questions of the engaged couple in light of those principles. However, in all the curricula I've ever seen, none use the moral law to organize its various essential topics. In this section, we will examine the structuring model used to organize one biblical premarital counseling workbook and critique it using *symphonic morality* perspective. In a later section (1.9.1) I will reorganize this author's marriage morality topics under the rubric of the moral law. This reorganization will also help to discern weaknesses in the model when specific commandments are neglected in the total spiritual and relational health check-up that is intended by the premarital counseling process.

Wayne Mack is a trusted name in Reformed biblical counseling circles, having served in various ministries associated with the conservative biblical counseling movement, teaching for most of his career at The Master's College and Seminary in California and after 2006 at a church in Pretoria, South Africa, now directing Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) in South Africa. He has published more than 25 books on topics related to biblical counseling, marriage and family and personal sanctification. As a Reformed BC author and teacher, the reader is assured in the "Preface" that the topics covered are based on years of Mack's own counseling experience and testing this material with hundreds of couples. However, no topical structuring rationale is provided, other than that the principles are biblical and that the topics covered survey the most common problems and their conflict-resolving attitudes and solutions (internal, relational, financial, spiritual and extended family) that arise in marriage.¹ Mack (1986)² suggest in the "Foreword" that *Preparing for Marriage God's Way* can be used as a self-assessment by individual couples, with a counselor who guides the premarital couple to discuss any problem areas and encourage strengths, or with a small group class led by a teacher. The workbook topics to be explored, in order, are the following using questionnaires, inventories, checklists and fill-in-the-blank style for sets of questions and for Bible verse lists.

Session 1 (1986:1-5): **The history of the relationship** (memories, physical contact and God's role, how much to share about own's own past), evaluation of current health and weakness, and personal goals and expectations for getting married.

Session 2 (1986:7-17): **Knowing each other.** Reasons for marriage (compare with biblical purposes), character traits inventory, personality (ranking opposites) inventory, desirable traits (based on fruits of Spirit, 1 Peter 3:1-7; and Proverbs 31:10-31) inventory, love languages (self-expression and desired to receive, fears, enjoyments) inventory, common interests inventory (each inventory has a self-ranking and rank your partner sections, meant to be used for discussion and comparison of perceptions of self and each other).

Session 3 (1986:19-28): **Defining love biblically.** Introduces a broad cross-section of love texts, but focused on the specific traits of 1 Corinthians 13 with writing purpose statements to apply each phrase to the relationship, followed by inventory using each phrase for self-ranking, the comparison with how to pro-

¹ Some BC models of sanctification are organized around the moral law. The problem-solution structure used to develop practical theology topics is not adequate to represent biblical righteousness in light of Westminster's *symphonic morality* and *symphonic commandments* perspectives.

² The same title has been republished by P&R in 2013 with different pagination and slightly modified content. This thesis used the 1986 printed edition.

actively love in areas of partner's needs (physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, financial, recreational, other).

Session 4 (1986:29-37): **God's definition of marriage** as leaving father and mother, cleaving to spouse and becoming one new independent social unit. Analyze family background stories about parents' model, rules, beliefs, finances, roles, in-laws, church, politics, work and recreation, secrets, problem management, boundaries, and compare with each other. Expectations and goals for in-law relationships. Write a letter to parents expressing appreciation and that this new marriage means leaving their authority to serve under biblical authority, with their good advice when asked (Gen 2:24). In-law inventory #1 (how partners relate to each other when parents are involved). In-law inventory #2 (how both sets of parents relate to couple). Write a personal statement of commitment to the partner based on the biblical texts studied so far (similar to an extended marriage vow).

Session 5 (1986:39-48): **Priority of a good relationship to God** to have a healthy marriage. Spiritual convictions questionnaire (self-evaluation of beliefs, purpose of the Bible, personal sins and guilt, how sin is dealt with, prayer, role of church and fellowship, how each intends to spiritually grow and support each other in that process). Prayer Life (self-evaluation of its health and practice compared with several keys texts on prayer, goal setting for prayer). Bible reading and study (self-evaluation of its health and practice compared with several keys texts on Bible reading or study, goal setting for Bible reading and study).

Session 6 (1986:49-63): The foundational importance of **good communication skills (part 1)** as the key to all other aspects of a healthy marriage. Quality/quantity of communication inventory (rank self and partner on ability to talk about various subjects, ideas for improvements, items of frequent disagreement, and communication hindrances). Non-verbal communication (study a selection of Bible texts on non-verbal communication, seeing body posture and facial expressions, practice trying to read emotions on each other's faces, discuss a self-created list of non-verbals that enhance or hinder communication). Types of communication inventory. Communication hindrances (list of text in Proverbs) compared with typical negative communication one-liners, with self and partner analysis.

Session 7 (1986:65-76): **Good communication skills (part 2)**. Biblical texts that define good communication with self-comparison. Knowing your partner's joys disappointments, goals, dislikes, interests, concerns, planning to do things together that partner enjoys. 12 principles for good communication with self and partner evaluation. Listening inventory (self-ranking), biblical texts related to listening, personal goals to improve. The thirty-eight principles of communication inventory also mentions communication (listening, speaking) with God (self & partner ranking).

Session 8 (1986:77-90): **Conflict resolution**. Series of biblical texts related to conflict and fighting with self-analysis and journaling about conflict. Conflict resolution guidelines related to attitudes of humility, listening, patience, self-control, positive focus and avoiding bitterness (self and partner analysis). Topics of conflict checklist (couples evaluate). Problem solving worksheet (choose five problems and define the problem, compare with Bible and consider practical steps to solve it). Allocating household responsibilities checklist (consider who will take the lead in doing various jobs and compare with partner and discuss)

Session 9 (1986:91-96): **The husband's role.** First write a brief article defining the ideal husband. A list of general duties of husband as authority, with general topics related to being a likeable, encouraging, supportive person (self and partner analysis)

Session 10 (1986:97-101): **The wife's role.** First write a brief article defining the ideal wife. A list of general duties of wife as helper, with general topics related to being a likeable, encouraging, supportive person (self and partner analysis).

Session 11 (1986:103-111): **Family finances.** Checklist of financial topics for self and partner to express views, original family views about money, a series of Bible texts about money (look up and fill in the blank). Complete a personal finances sheet of assets and debts. Make a projected budget for the first year of marriage and estimate your needed income to reach that budget.

Session 12 (1986:113-119) **Sex.** A series of Bible texts on sex or loving sacrifice, consideration of 20+ common cultural or spiritual attitudes towards sex (answer true or false). A cross section of general fill-in-the-blank questions about personal attitudes toward sex, original family modeling, childhood experiences and any guilt or shame associations, sex education information, contraception issues, expectations about having children (answer privately and discuss).

Sessions 13-16 (1986:121-152) **Review and plan for wedding** (if observing enough strengths). Follow-up after wedding (at various intervals up to 1 year) on issues learned with several comprehensive surveys combining themes from all 12 sessions; self and spouse evaluation for using similar communication and conflict resolution principles on children.

I.3.1 EVALUATION OF MACK'S PREMARITAL COUNSELING WORKBOOK

First the book is only suitable for very obedient and eager couples with lots of time and energy to look up Bible verses and do lots of self and partner analysis in every session. The sheer magnitude of separate (fragmented) principles and inventories is rather overwhelming. Additionally, in the experience of this author conducting over 30 premarital counseling cases and officiating their weddings, most premarital counseling is not actually very problem-oriented in the self-analysis and sharing of the couples and the couple usually doesn't see the need for such thorough analysis. They are still optimistically geared to the "our love will not experience the problems of other marriages" type of infatuation.

Second, the scope of sessions and biblical texts and principles within each are all very rich and well-thought out to cover several the fundamental issues needed for a healthy marriage. The breadth of analysis issues covered in the questionnaires and inventories and checklists shows that Mack has a very perceptive counselor's awareness of the types of issues that married couples face. Yet these session details are probably better placed in the resource files of counselors for marriage counseling cases with related problems.

Third, the overall impression of each chapter lacks a grace-based, union with Christ emphasis on personal sanctification. Mack mostly focuses on duties and prohibitions, with self and partner evaluation, likely to

create a premarital counseling atmosphere of guilt and condemnation for failure. Even session 5 on relationship to God focused on methods of Bible study and prayer rather than any new covenant related teaching. Here the counselor or teacher would need to augment each session with more emphasis on grace, seeing that all we are to become in Christ has derivative functions of the character of God, starting with saving faith that unites believers to Christ for justification and sanctification. Reduction of the excessive self and partner analysis in each session checklist is needed to streamline the material and keep focused on positive principles using the 6R's method.

Fourth, and most relevant to this premarital study, a restructuring of the entire curriculum around the *lex Christi* would utilize Westminster's *symphonic morality* perspectives on the Christian life, while developing specific applications to marriage. This reorganization would prevent the couple from seeing this material as some sort of distinct and separate (perhaps fragmented) study of obedience for one sector of life, and enable the other themes of WLC's union-with-Christ structure to integrate more easily to the premarital preparation content. Also, there is a pedagogical reason why *lex Christi* works: it is much simpler to remember and it applies to all of life, not just premarital counseling. Premarital counseling sessions are an opportunity for pastors and counselors to disciple couples in basic Westminster doctrinal structure and application, or Reformed faith and life. Helping couples grasp both the simplicity and scalable complexity of the model is part of the genius of the Westminster's Larger Catechism. Teaching them to evaluate themselves in relation to its moral law definitions will potentially aid them in much more than marriage preparation, but will extend to parenting, work and other relationships with family and friends. Below (1.9.1), the workbook sessions are restructured using the *symphonic morality* outline of the Ten Commandments, also revealing omissions in the overall structure of the material that this thesis would seek to remedy.

Using the Westminster Larger Catechism for Premarital Counseling

I.4 SYMPHONIC PEDAGOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIAGE (OR ANY OTHER RELATIONSHIP)

- A. Who is God and what has he done? Descriptive presuppositions for all of life (WLC 1-90)
- B. What is man's duty to God? Prescriptive presuppositions for all of life (WLC 91-196)

This overarching WLC perspective sets forth God and man in relation to each other. The WLC organizes its discussion under two headings: what the Scriptures principally teach us to believe concerning God and what the Scriptures principally require as the duty of man (WLC 91, 5). I call this the *symphonic pedagogical* perspective.³ The Westminster catechisms use Exodus 20:2-17 as the organizing text for this framework that defines the Christian religion. The preface to the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20:2, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt," is adapted by WLC 101 as a summary of what to believe concerning God. Thus, WLC 101 concisely summarizes WLC 1-90 into one terse sentence. The whole duty of man is reorganized under the headings of the moral law (WLC 91-151), followed by specific expansions

³ For the detailed explanation of this perspective, see Yates, *Westminster Foundations*, 101-110; "Adapting Westminster's Moral Law Motif," 57-58, both available online at www.bethoumyvision.net

of the meaning of the second and third commandments defining the means of grace (WLC 152–196, explaining the word sacraments and prayer).

Within the overarching *symphonic pedagogical* framework, five subsets of perspectives can serve as counselor tools to integrate and apply a mature systematic-practical theology: the **descriptive presuppositions** of (1) the *symphonic attributes* perspective, (2) the *symphonic persons* perspective, and (3) the *symphonic lex Christi* perspective and the **prescriptive presuppositions** of the decalogue as an outline for (4) the *symphonic morality* perspective, and its irreducible prescriptive complexity in (5) the *symphonic commandments* perspective.

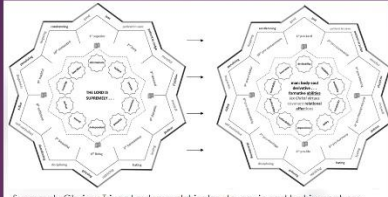
Lex Christi-DRL (Dominion of the Righteous Lord)

Symphonic pedagogical perspective

WLC 1-90 "what the Scriptures principally teach us to believe concerning God" (heading before WLC 91; WLC 5)

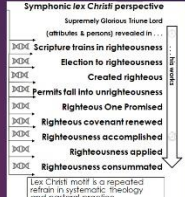
EXODUS 20:1-17 IS WLC'S MICRO-SCALABLE TEACHING MODEL: THE ENTIRE WLC CAN BE ORGANIZED UNDER EXODUS 20:1-17 OUTLINE.

Symphonic attributes & persons perspectives: God's attributes and Triune persons are revealed in God's works



Supremely Glorious Triune Lord reveals his glory to, on, in and by his creatures

Symphonic lex Christi perspective: lex Christi integrates what we believe concerning God's works



Supremely Glorious Triune Lord (attributes & persons) revealed in ...
 Scripture trains in righteousness
 Election to righteousness
 Created righteousness
 Permits fall into unrighteousness
 Righteous One Promised
 Righteous covenant renewed
 Righteousness accomplished
 Righteousness applied
 Righteousness consummated

Lex Christi motif is a repeated refrain in systematic theology and pastoral practice

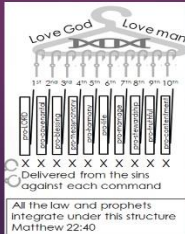
What we believe concerning God and his work in creation and providence to effectually call and unite the elect to Christ for communion with him in grace and glory ... (WLC 1-90)

WLC 91-196 "what the Scriptures principally ... require as the duty of man" (heading before WLC 91; WLC 5)

Exodus 20:2 Preface to Ten Commandments

"I am the Lord who brought you out of Egypt ... " WLC 101 summarizes WLC 1-90, the symphonic *lex Christi* perspective

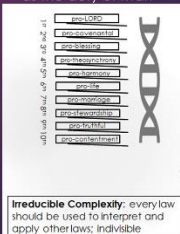
Symphonic morality perspective: lex Christi provides the organizing outline for what Scripture requires as the duty of man



Delivered from the sins against each command

All the law and prophets integrate under this structure Matthew 22:40

Symphonic commandments perspective: lex Christi inseparably holds together what Scripture requires as the duty of man



Irreducible Complexity: every law should be used to interpret and apply other laws; indivisible

Renews them to fulfill their moral duty and receive its blessings while delivering them from moral evil and its curses (WLC 91-196)

This premarital study combines WLC's descriptive and prescriptive presuppositions to give a wholistic understanding of the covenant-of-grace foundations for the duties of marriage. Further, these six perspectives can be used as analytical tools for a counseling method using six "R" words: *research* a counselee's life in order to *reckon* strengths and weaknesses compared to any or all six perspectives, and choose counseling responses of *reassure*, *reform*, or *remove*, together with regular evaluation of counseling *results*. This definition below will help us structure the premarital counseling curriculum.

Q. What do you believe about practical theology (biblical counseling, preaching, evangelism, apologetics, Christian education, worship)?

A. That all last days practical theology is the Father-decreed ministry of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to Spirit-indwell and send his linguistically and culturally adapted ambassadors to exemplify, mercifully proclaim, boldly intercede and skillfully administrate the past, present and promised dominion of the

Righteous Lord by the six *symphonic perspectives* (*morality, commandments, attributes, persons, lex Christi* and *pedagogical*) in their realms (heavenly & earthly) and places (assembly, creation, diaspora) to their subjects using six “R” methods (6Rs) of redemptive engagement: research to accurately reckon, choosing appropriate ways to build up the subject (reassure, reform and remove) with evaluation of the results.

1.5 PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE CAN BE STRUCTURED UNDER THESE FOUR TOPICS:

1. RESEARCH the descriptive and prescriptive presuppositions of WLC for all of life.
2. RECKON CULTURAL views of marriage.
3. RECKON yourselves and your original families using those presuppositions and discuss strengths and weaknesses.
4. REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS using the methods God has designed to develop maturity within the saving power of the covenant of grace, individually, together as an engaged couple and in assemblies of two or more gathered in Jesus’ name (Matthew 18:20; with friends, Christian parents, visible church groups, organizations, schools, seminaries, businesses, government entities).

1.6 GOD & HIS PURPOSES

1.6.1 RESEARCH GOD’S PURPOSES FOR CREATION AND PROVIDENCE TO SHOW TO HIS CREATURES THE GLORY OF HIS ATTRIBUTES THAT THESE MIGHT BE REFLECTED ON THEM, IN THEM AND BY THEM

WCF 2:1 There is but one only, living, and true God: who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, **working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory**; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

WCF 2:2 God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, **but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them**: He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleaseth. In His sight all things are open and manifest; His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

The *symphonic attributes* perspective is defined as the glory of God revealed in his attributes and Triune persons (WCF 2:1–3) throughout the topics of Westminster’s systematic and practical theology *to, on, in,*

and *by* his creatures (WCF 2:2).⁴ These four prepositions are key to Westminster’s integrative systematic-practical theology and the reason why this *symphonic attributes* perspective must be creatively adapted for biblical counselor training. This perspective is key to knowing what it means to honor and bless the name of the LORD (the I AM), our third-commandment duty, and to properly witness to who man becomes in union with Christ, our ninth-commandment duty.

We can adapt and augment the WCF 2:1 list of God’s attributes, unify the vocabulary with modern English, and arrange them into three attribute sets (totaling forty interdependent attributes), as below, where they are termed the ten *supra-actuating* attributes of essential being, the ten *supra-righteousness* attributes defined by moral law, and the twenty *supra-familial* attributes (one subset of ten pertaining to those in the covenant and another, contrasting, subset of ten pertaining to those outside the covenant) attributes.⁵ These three sets are revealed in symphonically repeating motifs throughout Scripture and have integrated connections with all subsections of systematic and practical theology. All three sets of attributes are noted to situate the creatively developed set of ten *lex Christi* attributes within the WCF 2 attribute list and highlight that the origin of the *lex Christi* motif is from God’s own attributes. In addition, I suggest that *all* Westminster’s divine attributes have derivative reflections in man.

The first set, called *supra-actuating* attributes, are as follows. “I am the Lord your God”: the I AM is supremely perfect, boundless, present, consistent, eternal, exalted, powerful, knowing, independent, determinate. These ten are respectively reflected in man’s body and soul as *formative abilities*: the “I am” (self-consciousness) with qualities of perfectability, luxuriance, availability, reliability, endurance, complexity, ability, teachability, dependency, and decidability,

The second set, called *supra-righteousness* attributes, is developed by the creation of ten names to represent God’s likeness in each of the commandments, below in the order of the decalogue, respectively: the Lord is superior, holy, blessed, dynamic, harmonious, living, beautiful, sufficient, truthful, and contented. These ten are respectively reflected in man’s *lex Christi virtues* to represent each commandment’s renewal in man: pro-Lord, pro-covenantal (meaning the elect can only approach his holiness through his covenants), pro-blessing, pro-theosynchrony, pro-harmony, pro-life, pro-marriage, pro-stewardship, pro-truth, and pro-contentment.

The members of the third set, called *supra-familial attributes*, originate in the love of the Father for the Son in the bond of the Spirit, but are expressed in creation and providence in the ways God relates to man outside or within his covenants.⁶ These are divided into two subsets of ten. The first subset is called God’s *covenant-reconciliation* attributes. God is loving, gracious, merciful, patient to save, good, forgiving, rewarding, slow to anger, disciplining, and rejoicing to those in covenant. The second, contrasting, subset is called God’s *covenant-enmity* attributes. God is hating, jealous, wrathful, patient to judge, just,

⁴ For the details on attributes, see Yates, *Westminster Foundations*, 39-80, and “Adapting Westminster’s Moral Law Motif,” 61–105. For the meaning of *symphonic*, see Vern S. Poythress, *Symphonic Theology: The Validity of Multiple Perspectives in Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), ch. 7, <https://frame-poythress.org/ebooks/symphonic-theology-by-vern-poythress/#ch7>.

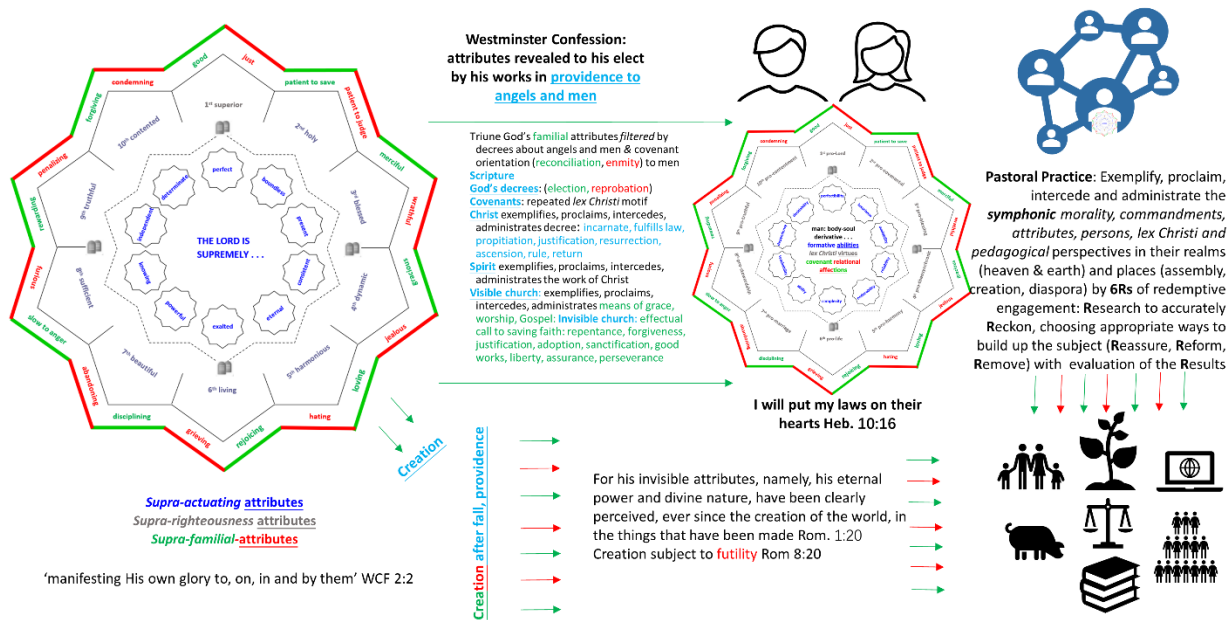
⁵ Three sets of ten are suggested to create a motific illustration using nested ten point stars; see “2023 lex Christi–DRL Illustrations PDF,” <http://bethoumyvision.net>

⁶ The list is not exhaustive but suggestive of many other relational words in Scripture.

condemning, penalizing, furious, abandoning, and grieving to those outside the covenant. The derivative set reflected in man's body and soul are called *covenant-relational (reconciliation or enmity) affections* and use identical words.

When we notice that the focus of redemption is the renewal of the *lex Christi virtues*,⁷ how shall we relate these *virtues* to the other two sets of *formative abilities* and *covenant-relational affections* describing man's soul by the instrument of man's body? These *abilities* and *affections* are meant to be used to please God and promote human flourishing, but they are only properly redirected when the core *lex Christi virtues* are renewed. For example, *lex Christi virtues* command duties of love for all men within the details of the second table of the moral law. When nuanced with *covenant-relational affections*, counselors can distinguish between the duties of love to those in the covenant and those outside the covenant. While imitating God's display of patient common grace love to all, there should be a special display of *covenant-relational reconciliation affections* to "one another" in the visible church (Matt 5:44-45; Rom 9:22-23; Gal 6:9-10; Eph 4:1-6:4). Since God loves the saints as new creatures in Christ and shows them his *covenant-relational reconciliation* attributes, all the assemblies of believers need to show these same affections to one another, whether in the context of marriage, family, schools, businesses, or churches.

Symphonic attributes perspective on the *lex Christi*-DRL^{6Rs}



1.6.2 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE.

- A. Sickness: the purpose of marriage is personal fulfillment and happiness, unrelated to God revealing his glory to, on, in and by his elect people.

⁷ Ephesians 4:24 motivates us to research how Ephesians covers every commandment's renewal in union with the resurrected Christ.

- B. Health: Marriage is designed by God to reveal his glorious attributes. What attributes do you see in Ephesians 5:23-33 related to marriage?

I.6.3 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILIES⁸

- A. *Do you understand this perspective on the world, that God reveals His own glory to us, on us, in us and by us?*
B. *Do you exemplify this perspective in your relationships, that God reveals His own glory to us, on us, in us and by us?*
C. *Did your original family agree with and exemplify this perspective on the world and everything that happens in it?*

I.6.4 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS

- A. *What are your personal strengths to reassure, meaning in what ways you reveal God's attributes to each other? What are your weaknesses to reform or remove, meaning, in what ways do you fail to reveal God's attributes to each other? How can you improve results for growth related to this topic?*
B. *What are the strengths, weaknesses and results of growth in your fiancée's self-assessment?*
C. *What are the results of your assessment of family member's strengths and weaknesses?*

I.7 SIN WITH ITS COMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

I.7.1 RESEARCH WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS WORLD, IDENTIFY WHAT TYPES OF PROBLEMS WILL DEVELOP IN OUR MARRIAGE

Question 22: Did all mankind fall in that first transgression ?

Answer: The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.

Question 23: Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

Answer: The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Question 24: What is sin?

Answer: Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

Question 25: Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

Answer: The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

⁸ This section is written as an evaluative framework for Christian couples, thus the first-person plural (we, our, us) will be used throughout the section.

Question 26: How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?

Answer: Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.

Question 27: What misery did the fall bring upon mankind?

Answer: The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.

Question 28: What are the punishments of sin in this world?

Answer: The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments; together with death itself.

Question 151: What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others?

Answer: Sins receive their aggravations, From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others. From the parties offended: if immediately against God, his attributes, and worship; against Christ, and his grace; the Holy Spirit, his witness, and workings; against superiors, men of eminency, and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto; against any of the saints, particularly weak brethren, the souls of them, or any other, and the common good of all or many. From the nature and quality of the offense: if it be against the express letter of the law, break many commandments, contain in it many sins: if not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth in words and actions, scandalize others, and admit of no reparation: if against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of conscience, public or private admonition, censures of the church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men: if done deliberately, wilfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with delight, continuance, or relapsing after repentance. From circumstances of time and place: if on the Lord's day, or other times of divine worship; or immediately before or after these, or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages: if in public, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.

Question 152: What does every sin deserve at the hands of God?

Answer: Every sin, even the least, being against the sovereignty, goodness, and holiness of God, and against his righteous law, deserves his wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come; and cannot be expiated but by the blood of Christ.

1.7.2 THE PROHIBITIONS OF THE MORAL LAW

Question 105: What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the first commandment are, atheism, in denying or not having a God; idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God; the not having and avouching him for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of anything due to him, required in this commandment; ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and wicked thoughts of him; bold and curious searching into his secrets; all profaneness, hatred of God; self-love, self-

seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, and insensibleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God; using unlawful means, and trusting in lawful means; carnal delights and joys; corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal; lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God; estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God; praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures; all compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions; making men the lords of our faith and conscience; slighting and despising God and his commands; resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us; and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

Question 109: What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature: Whatsoever; all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense: Whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God has appointed.

Question 113: What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning, or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or anywise opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by unconformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.

Question 119: What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful; and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.

Fifth Commandment Sins

Question 128: What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?

Answer: The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.

Question 130: What are the sins of superiors?

Answer: The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

Question 132: What are the sins of equals?

Answer: The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement of prosperity one of another; and usurping preeminence one over another.

Question 136: What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and: Whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.

Question 139: What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.

Question 142: What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, theft, robbery, manstealing, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing land marks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and depopulations; engrossing commodities to enhance the price; unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor: What belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness; inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God has given us.

Question 145: What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calls for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vainglorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt, fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering: What we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.

Question 148: What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment?

Answer: The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate; envying and grieving at the good of our neighbor, together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

1.7.3 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness:* We have a fantasy that marriage will make our lives easier together. We have a romanticized, fairy tale view of relationships that love will overcome all problems and we will live happily ever after.
- B. *Health:* We hope for some joys, but also are prepared to face troubles together: troubles from the physical lack of health or resources, troubles from enemies of the gospel, troubles in culture and society, troubles from our own sinful nature, our sins, the sins in our families and sin in the church. We are able to give and receive empathetic concern and lead toward faith in God during difficulties. We accept sickness and learn to trust God and rely on others through sickness and death in this fallen world. We know that finding a spouse to marry can be filled with frustrations, fears, conflict, disappointments, sorrow, temptations, no available prospective partners, failures, and loneliness. We also learn to live as strangers and pilgrims in the non-Christian world seeking the indestructible kingdom. We do not accept the modern immoral dating and sex-enslaved culture. We prepare for some forms of rejection by those in this immoral culture.

1.7.4 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILIES USING THOSE PRESUPPOSITIONS AND DISCUSS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

- A. *What sins do we struggle with individually and as an engaged couple (1.6.2 above)?*

- B. *In what ways have we already experienced the punishments of sin in this world, either by our own sins, other family member's sins against us, or just living in this world under God's curse? (WLC 28)*
- C. *In what situations (yourselves or original families) have you seen sin's complicating factors, the aggravations of sins committed against multiple commandments all at once? (WLC 151)*

I.7.5 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *Give some examples of how you are resisting your sins, the sin's of our families and all these worldly troubles, both realistically understanding your sinful self and putting of the old sin nature (Eph. 4:22)*
- B. *Gove some examples of how you are trusting God's sovereign providence over your experience of suffering the punishments of sin in this world?*

I.8 SIN'S REMEDY

I.8.1 RESEARCH THE WORK OF CHRIST AS MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT

Question 31: With whom was the covenant of grace made?

Answer: The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed.

Question 32: How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?

Answer: The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provides and offers to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promises and gives his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he has appointed them to salvation.

Question 33: Was the covenant of grace always administered after one and the same manner?

Answer: The covenant of grace was not always administered after the same manner, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New.

Question 34: How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament?

Answer: The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all foreshadow Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.

Question 35: How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?

Answer: Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; **in which grace and salvation are held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations.**

Question 36: Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace?

Answer: The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the **Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.**

Question 37: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

Answer: Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

Question 38: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?

Answer: It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice, procure his favor, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.

Question 39: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be man?

Answer: It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.

Question 40: Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and man in one person ?

Answer: It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and man, and this in one person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person.

Question 41: Why was our Mediator called Jesus?

Answer: Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins.

Question 42: Why was our Mediator called Christ?

Answer: Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

1.8.2 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness: Jesus as mediator of the covenant of grace is not necessary to a healthy marriage. We just try hard to be loving without daily dependence on his mediation.*
- B. *Health: united to Christ in the covenant of grace, he forgives our sins, credits moral law righteousness and imparts moral law righteousness to live in obedience to the moral law.*

1.8.3 RECKON YOURSELF, YOUR FIANCÉ AND YOUR FAMILY USING THOSE PRESUPPOSITIONS AND DISCUSS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- A. *In what ways have we already experienced the benefits of Christ as mediator?*
- B. *In what ways have your family members already experienced the benefits of Christ as mediator? Are any family members rejecting Christ as mediator? Why?*

1.8.4 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *For reassurance, give some examples of how you are growing to apply Christ as mediator, for yourself, your fiancé and your families. What are some weaknesses you can identify that need to be reformed or removed?*
- B. *How is the assembly of God's people helping you to know Christ as mediator? How could they give you more help than you are currently receiving?*

SECTION TWO:

COVENANT OF GRACE, LOVING GOD

I.9 BENEFITS OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE

I.9.1 RESEARCH THE BENEFITS OF UNION WITH CHRIST

Question 64: What is the invisible church?

Answer: The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head.

Question 65: What special benefits do the members of the invisible church enjoy by Christ?

Answer: The members of the invisible church by Christ enjoy union and communion with him in grace and glory.

Question 66: What is that union which the elect have with Christ?

Answer: The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; which is done in their effectual calling.

Question 67: What is effectual calling?

Answer: Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace, whereby (out of his free and special love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto) he does, in his accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by his Word and Spirit; savingly enlightening their minds, renewing and powerfully determining their wills, so as they (although in themselves dead in sin) are hereby made willing and able freely to

Answer: his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein.

Question 68: Are the elect only effectually called?

Answer: All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the Word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who, for their willful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ.

Question 69: What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?

Answer: The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and: Whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.

Question 70: What is justification?

Answer: Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardons all their sins, accepts and accounts their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

Question 71: How is justification an act of God's free grace?

Answer: Although Christ, by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified; yet inasmuch as God accepts the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have demanded of them, and did provide this surety, his own only Son, imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, which also is his gift, their justification is to them of free grace.

Question 72: What is justifying faith?

Answer: Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.

Question 73: How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

Answer: Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receives and applies Christ and his righteousness.

Question 74: What is adoption?

Answer: Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow heirs with Christ in glory.

Question 75: What is sanctification?

Answer: Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby they whom God has, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life.

Question 76: What is repentance unto life?

Answer: Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.

Question 77: Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?

Answer: Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputes the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuses grace, and enables to the exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued: the one does equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into

condemnation; the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.

Question 78: Whence arises the imperfection of sanctification in believers?

Answer: The imperfection of sanctification in believers arises from the remnants of sin abiding in every part of them, and the perpetual lustings of the flesh against the spirit; whereby they are often foiled with temptations, and fall into many sins, are hindered in all their spiritual services, and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.

Question 79: May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections, and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the state of grace ?

Answer: True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God, and his decree and covenant to give them perseverance, their inseparable union with Christ, his continual intercession for them, and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Question 80: Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation?

Answer: Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

Question 81: Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved?

Answer: Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.

Question 82: What is the communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?

Answer: The communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.

Question 83: What is the communion in glory with Christ which the members of the invisible church enjoy in this life?

Answer: The members of the invisible church have communicated to them in this life the firstfruits of glory with Christ, as they are members of him their head, and so in him are interested in that glory which he is fully possessed of; and, as an earnest thereof, enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of glory; as, on the contrary, sense of God's revenging wrath, horror of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment, are to the wicked the beginning of their torments which they shall endure after death.

Added catechism question developed by Pastor Yates

Q: What are the blessings of *lex Christi* (moral law) obedience in this life?

A: In this world still under the creational-providential post-fall curses, all blessings⁹ related to restoration of Christ's *lex Christi* rule in us and in the entire creation are sourced from the Father and come to us through mediate representatives. Exact representatives are Christ, the Spirit and God's Word, approximate representatives are creation order, angels, man, creatures. These blessings are inward, in the soul, such as mutually synergistic peace of conscience toward God and his law in union with Christ, adoption to sonship, spiritual discernment, renewed holy affections and hope of glory (1st-3rd Cs).¹⁰ These blessings are outward, in the multi-sensory body, experiencing material-relational blessings in time-space synchronies (4th C), physical bodies (6th C), material resources on a portion of this earth (8th C), relationships (5th authority-submission; 7th C marriage, family) and reputations (9th C). We respond to these inward and outward glory-blessings revealed *to* us, *on* us, and *in* us with a legitimate derivative happiness that must be disciplined with thankful contentment (10th C). These all combine to nurture our chief and highest purposes to glorify and enjoy God (1st-3rd Cs; WLC 1). Further, these blessings must be reflected *by* us to others, while awaiting their eternal perfection in the new heavens and new earth and the removal of the punishments of sin in this world.

1.9.2 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness*: trusting in self-help methods of psychology and humanism to change and grow in marriage. Failing to appropriate the freedom and joy of these salvation realities by living in self-pity, guilt, depression, self-condemnation for sins and mistakes (Rom. 8:1). Holding on to bitterness and condemnation of others whom Christ has forgiven (Rom. 8:1).
- B. *Health*: The only method for real inward and outward change into the likeness of Christ in obedience to the duties of the moral law in by union and communion with Christ in grace and glory in the visible church. You daily experience freedom from sin's guilt and sin's power, living into the blessed experiential joy of moral law obedience. You reflect mercy to each other and others whom Christ has forgiven (*covenant-reconciliation affections*).

1.9.3 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *In your own words, briefly state the benefits you have received in union and communion with Christ.*
- B. *Are these truths the daily source of your energy and vitality for the Christian life?*
- C. *In what ways have you experienced the blessings of moral law obedience?*
- D. *Have these truths been exemplified by your families?*

⁹ WCF 19:6 captures this nuance exactly by identifying 'what blessings we may expect from moral law obedience under the covenant of grace,' as stated explicitly in the Decalogue: "showing steadfast love to [us]" (2nd C), and "that [our] days may be long, and that it may go well with [us] in the land that the LORD [our] God is giving [us]," (5th C to honor father and mother) (Deut. 5:10, 16; Eph. 6:1-3), also citing spiritual, relational and material blessings in Leviticus 26:1-13.

¹⁰ WLC 83 explanation of 'communion with Christ in glory in this life' has some parallels with the inward blessings noted above: "The members of the invisible church . . . enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy [Spirit], and hope of glory . . ."

E. *In what ways have your families experienced the blessings of moral law obedience?*

I.9.4 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *For reassurance, give some examples of how you are growing to apply union with Christ in grace and glory, for yourself, your fiancé and your families. What are some weaknesses you can identify that need to be reformed or removed?*
- B. *How does experiencing the blessed joys of moral law obedience further motivate you to delight in his law (Psalm 1)?*
- C. *How is the assembly of God's people helping you to know Christ as mediator? How could they give you more help than you are currently receiving?*

I.10 OUR MORAL LAW DUTIES IN RESPONSE TO CHRIST'S MEDIATION

Question 92: What did God at first reveal unto man as the rule of his obedience?

Answer: The rule of obedience revealed to Adam in the estate of innocence, and to all mankind in him, besides a special command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was the moral law.

Question 93: What is the moral law?

Answer: The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he owes to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.

Question 94: Is there any use of the moral law to man since the fall?

Answer: Although no man, since the fall, can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law; yet there is great use thereof, as well common to all men, as peculiar either to the unregenerate, or the regenerate.

Question 95: Of what use is the moral law to all men?

Answer: The moral law is of use to all men, to inform them of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly; to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives; to humble them in the sense of their sin and misery, and thereby help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience.

Question 96: What particular use is there of the moral law to unregenerate men?

Answer: The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to flee from wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ; or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable, and under the curse thereof.

Question 97: What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate?

Answer: Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet, besides the general uses

thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use, to show them: How much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.

1.10.1 REORDERING A PREMARITAL COUNSELING BOOK UNDER THE RUBRIC OF THE MORAL LAW

1st-4tha Cs Relationship to God: Here Wayne Mack's curriculum (*Preparing for Marriage God's Way*, summarized above on pages 1-3) needs some major improvements, and this thesis would begin the study with the *symphonic pedagogical* structure of the Westminster Larger Catechism, including the symphonic attributes perspective (section 1.2.3 above), showing that all the patterns for healthy marriage derive from the character of God and are linked to the duties and prohibitions of the moral law. It would include reference to the pro-Lord, pro-covenant, pro-blessing and pro-theosynchrony duties derived from the supremacy of the Lord's superiority, holiness, blessedness and dynamic nature, respectively. Essentially the opening sessions would be an abbreviated summary of this thesis chapters 2-3 and show the relevance of the preface to the Ten Commandments as the organizing summary of WLC 1-90 (the supra-pedagogical perspective).

4thb-10th Cs Defining love biblically: Here we can use the good content of Mack's material but change the title to represent a summary of the moral law, the second great commandment, to love our neighbor, and additionally, make a summary list of the details of the duties of the second table of the law that leads into the details of the following sessions.

5th C Husband & wife roles: Here we can use some of the good content of Mack's material but change the title to represent the 5th C and integrate WLC material as the standard of comparison.

6th C Conflict resolution Here we can use some of the good content of Mack's material but change the title to represent the 6th C and integrate WLC material as the standard of comparison.

7th C God's definition of marriage, combined with his session on sex: Here we can use some of the good content of Mack's material but change the title to represent the 7th C and integrate WLC material as the standard of comparison.

8th C Family finances Here we can use some of the good content of Mack's material but change the title to represent the 8th C and integrate WLC material as the standard of comparison.

9th C Communication skills (part 1 & 2): Here we can use some of the good content of Mack's material but change the title to represent the 9th C and integrate WLC material as the standard of comparison.

6R's History of the relationship, knowing each other: here Mack's overuse of fragmented and complicated inventories, questionnaires and checklists could be eliminated using the much simpler 6R's organizing structure for original family, self and partner analysis in relation to each chapter.

Also this *lex Christi* restructuring reveals that the 10th C is not explicit in the Wayne Mack curriculum, another serious omission related to the heart attitudes of contentment, joy and thankfulness for God's providences which are necessary for facing all the morally difficult issues in marriage. The unified morality perspective alerts the premarital counselor to use the entire moral law as an inseparable, interdependent unit.

Overall, the new outline gives the entire curriculum a more logical and memorable structure that coheres with the Westminster's well-organized doctrinal system. Below, we consider Westminster Larger Catechism's moral law duties for each of the commandments.

1.10.2 RESEARCH FIRST COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREME LORD RECREATES PRO-LORD COUPLES

Question 103: Which is the first commandment?

Answer: The first commandment is, Thou shall have no other gods before me.

Question 104: What are the duties required in the first commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him; believing him; trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him; being zealous for him; calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole man; being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in anything he is offended; and walking humbly with him.

Question 1: What is the chief and highest end of man?

Answer: Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.

Question 153: What does God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us by reason of the transgression of the law?

Answer: That we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us by reason of the transgression of the law, he requires of us repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and the diligent use of the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation.

Question 154: What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation?

Answer: The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation, are all his ordinances; especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.

1.10.2.1 RESEARCH THE MEANING OF DELIGHTING IN GOD: CREATION MEDIATELY REPRESENTS THE LORD'S BLESSINGS

- A. The rule of the LORD-King causes the flourishing establishment of the world. "Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved" (Ps. 96:10). By

this blessing,¹¹ the LORD limits the curse factors that cause pain, sorrow, suffering, groaning of creation and its creatures.¹² Instead the created universe (non-sentient environments of habitation: heavens, earth, seas, fields) conforms to its blessed purposes for the good of its inhabitants, including everything that the Lord created to fill those environments: all forms of vegetation and all creatures in water, air and land (Gen. 1:12, 20-28).

- B. Since God made a covenant with the earth, and with man and all its living creatures,¹³ God is still reflecting his *lex Christi* attributes, his supremely dynamic (4th C), living (6th C), sufficient (8th C) related blessings on the lands of the entire world, fixing the seasons and the stars, sending rain and sun and filling men's hearts with joy from abundant harvests.¹⁴ God fixed the boundaries of earth and water, scattered the peoples across the whole earth, confused their languages, and appointed the rise and fall of their families, clans, nations and land boundaries.¹⁵ From God's national apportioning, we, being born in his appointed time and place, ask for our daily bread, "we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means, may, of his free gift, and as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy *a competent portion* of them; and have the same continued and blessed unto us in our holy and comfortable use of them, and contentment in them; and be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort." (WLC 193). We ask for the Lord to provide any resources of land, housing, food and clothing that enables our life to continue, either directly or mediately through representatives.¹⁶
- C. Christians should not become spiritualizing ascetics. We affirm the new covenant enjoyment of any physical blessings within their *lex Christi* uses, whether sex within marriage, children, families with social-economic stability, land, houses, food or clothing.¹⁷ Though indeed, some are Christian refugees, fleeing their country of origin due to war, social-economic chaos and religious persecution, they are still praying for and seeking ways to obtain a competent portion of the Lord's earthly blessings.
- D. This petition for daily bread comes after the primary petitions. First, we address the heavenly Father, knowing him and his works. We pray that we would learn to honor His name as living sacrifices united to Christ by the Spirit.¹⁸ We pray for his kingdom to come and his will to be done, which is the application of the entire *lex Christi* in the world in response to His name and works (*symphonic pedagogical* perspective). Thus, we first pray for the coming of his kingdom and his righteousness, then ask for a competent portion of material blessings to use in exemplifying, proclaiming, interceding and administrating the King, his kingdom and righteousness.¹⁹ God

¹¹ Deut. 28:1-14

¹² Gen. 3:14-19; Deut. 28:15-68; Rom. 8:19-22

¹³ Gen. 9:9-17

¹⁴ Gen. 1:14; Ps. 104:19; Jer. 31:35-36; 33:25; Matt. 5:44-45; Acts 14:17

¹⁵ Gen. 11:6-9; Deut. 32:8; Ps. 46:5-11; 74:17; 104:5-9; Prov. 15:25; Isa. 10:5-19; Dan. 2:21; Acts 17:24-26

¹⁶ Eccles. 5:18-20

¹⁷ 1 Tim. 4:3-5

¹⁸ 1st-3rd Cs; Eph. 2:18; Rom. 12:1

¹⁹ Matt. 6:33

promises to provide any inward-spiritual or outward-creaturely thing from among “all things” that he deems needed for our adopted bodified-souls to conform to the Son.²⁰

- E. However, this ‘enjoyment of a competent portion’ of this world’s material goods is not simply a means to the end of giving us resources to enable us to do kingdom work. They also serve as mediate representatives of the Triune LORD’s *symphonic persons* revealing his *symphonic attributes*. To “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8) requires more than physical senses. It requires that our bodified-souls have glory-senses, the ability to perceive the symphonic attributes in the creation. Thus, we need to explore how the symphonic attributes perspective is derivatively revealed in the creation.
- F. As we enjoy and partake of the entire creation, by faith receiving their mediate representation of God’s glory, our bodified joys synergize with the six perspectives, uniting our soul’s in Christ by the Spirit to the ultimate enjoyment of God himself, which is our chief and highest end (WLC 1).

I.10.2.2 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness*: Speech, behavior and schedule filled with busyness about the world’s cares and worries, choking out fruitfulness for God.
- B. *Health*: Both are Christians: each person shows a solid commitment to Christ, preferably a faith that is independent of the wish to marry this person, meaning each will follow Christ whether or not they get married (1 Cor. 7:39). God is your treasure and your joy, and he is your delight to worship and praise. You maintain a commitment to regular worship with God’s people on the Lord’s Day as well as personal devotion in praise and worship, Bible reading and prayer.

I.10.2.3 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Have you both escaped God’s wrath by repentance, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and diligent use the outward means of grace whereby Christ communicates the benefits of his mediation (the Word, sacraments, prayer)? Share some evidences of this experience in your lives.*
- B. *Have your parents and siblings escaped God’s wrath by repentance, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and diligent use the outward means of grace whereby Christ communicates the benefits of his mediation (the Word, sacraments, prayer)? Share some evidences of their experiences.*
- C. *Do all our words and behaviors show a delight in God and a desire to love and worship him above all other things? Remember this delight is experienced through created things pointing us to our ultimate source of delight in God*

I.10.2.4 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE,

²⁰ Rom. 8:32, in context of 8:23-30

INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *What strengths can you reassure related to 1st commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- B. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 1st commandment disobedience?*
- C. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

I.10.3 RESEARCH SECOND COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREME HOLY LORD RECREATES PRO-COVENANTAL COUPLES

Question 107: Which is the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Question 108: What are the duties required in the second commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has instituted in his Word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him: as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.

Question 3: What is the Word of God?

Answer: The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.

Question 4: How does it appear that the Scriptures are the Word of God?

Answer: The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation: but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God.

Question 5: What do the Scriptures principally teach?

Answer: The Scriptures principally teach;: What man is to believe concerning God, and: What duty God requires of man.

Question 157: How is the Word of God to be read?

Answer: The holy Scriptures are to be read with an high and reverent esteem of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the very Word of God, and that he only can enable us to understand them; with desire to know, believe, and obey the will of God revealed in them; with diligence, and attention to the matter and scope of them; with meditation, application, self-denial, and prayer.

Question 160: What is required of those that hear the Word preached?

Answer: It is required of those that hear the Word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine: What they hear by the Scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.

Question 192: What do we pray for in the third petition?

Answer: In the third petition (which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven), acknowledging, that by nature we and all men are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God, but prone to rebel against his Word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray, that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart; and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy, as the angels do in heaven.

I.10.3.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness*: Guided by tradition, parents' opinions, cultural expectations, false religious superstitions about luck and prosperity. Only an earthly view of marriage.
- B. *Health*: Everything in the relationship and in the wedding plans and the life after marriage show that we observe all that Jesus commanded. He is Lord of our relationship and our daily decisions. We seek advice from mature Christians who know the Bible better than we do. Seek things which are above, not things which are on earth (Col. 3:1-2). Earthly dating relationships and earthly marriage are shadows of the eternal relationship of Christ as bridegroom and the church as the bride (Eph. 5:25-33), so we won't make an idol out of the earthly shadow (Rom. 1:20-25).

I.10.3.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Are all our important decisions guided by the Bible and wise Christian counselors?*
- B. *Have all the important decisions of my original family been guided by the Bible and wise Christian counselors?*
- C. *Do we see marriage as a temporary earthly institution reflecting the eternal wedding of Christ to the church?*

I.10.3.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE,

INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- D. *What strengths can you reassure related to 2nd commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- E. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 2nd commandment disobedience?*
- F. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

LI.0.4 THIRD COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREMELY BLESSED LORD RECREATES PRO-BLESSING COUPLES

Question 111: Which is the third commandment?

Answer: The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.

Question 112: What is required in the third commandment?

Answer: The third commandment requires, That the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the Word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and: Whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others.

Question 174: What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it?

Answer: It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

Question 178: What is prayer?

Answer: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Question 179: Are we to pray unto God only?

Answer: God only being able to search the hearts, hear the requests, pardon the sins, and fulfil the desires of all; and only to be believed in, and worshiped with religious worship; prayer, which is a special part thereof, is to be made by all to him alone, and to none other.

Question 180: What is it to pray in the name of Christ?

Answer: To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to his command, and in confidence on his promises, to ask mercy for his sake; not by bare mentioning of his name, but by drawing our

encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation.

Question 181: Why are we to pray in the name of Christ?

Answer: The sinfulness of man, and his distance from God by reason thereof, being so great, as that we can have no access into his presence without a mediator; and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.

Question 182: How does the Spirit help us to pray?

Answer: We not knowing: What to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helps our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom, and: What, and: How prayer is to be made; and by working and quickening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure) those apprehensions, affections, and graces which are requisite for the right performance of that duty.

Question 183: For whom are we to pray?

Answer: We are to pray for the whole church of Christ upon earth; for magistrates, and ministers; for ourselves, our brethren, yea, our enemies; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death.

Question 184: For what things are we to pray?

Answer: We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God, the welfare of the church, our own or others good; but not for anything that is unlawful.

Question 185: How are we to pray.?

Answer: We are to pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, and deep sense of our own unworthiness, necessities, and sins; with penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts; with understanding, faith, sincerity, fervency, love, and perseverance, waiting upon him, with humble submission to his will.

Question 186: What rule has God given for our direction in the duty of prayer?

Answer: The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our Savior Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

Question 187: How is the Lord's Prayer to be used?

Answer: The Lord's Prayer is not only for direction, as a pattern, according to which we are to make other prayers; but may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.

Question 188: Of how many parts does the Lord's Prayer consist?

Answer: The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts; a preface, petitions, and a conclusion.

Question 189: What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer: The preface of the Lord's Prayer (contained in these words, Our Father which art in heaven), teaches us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest

therein; with reverence, and all other childlike dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also, to pray with and for others.

Question 190: What do we pray for in the first petition?

Answer: In the first petition (which is, Hallowed be thy name), acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, works, and: Whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed: that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and: Whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and, by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

Question 191: What do we pray for in the second petition.?

Answer: In the second petition (which is, Thy kingdom come), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; the church furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him forever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

Question 192: What do we pray for in the third petition?

Answer: In the third petition (which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven), acknowledging, that by nature we and all men are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God, but prone to rebel against his Word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray, that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart; and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy, as the angels do in heaven.

Question 193: What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

Answer: In the fourth petition (which is, Give us this day our daily bread), acknowledging, that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them; but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully: we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means, may, of his free gift, and as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy a competent portion of them; and have the same continued and blessed unto us in our holy and comfortable use of them, and contentment in them; and be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort.

Question 194: What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

Answer: In the fifth petition (which is, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors), acknowledging,

that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt: we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved; continue his favor and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offenses.

Question 195: What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

Answer: In the sixth petition (which is, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil), acknowledging, that the most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for divers holy and just ends, may so order things, that we may be assaulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations; that Satan, the world, and the flesh, are ready powerfully to draw us aside, and ensnare us; and that we, even after the pardon of our sins, by reason of our corruption, weakness, and want of watchfulness, are not only subject to be tempted, and forward to expose ourselves unto temptations, but also of ourselves unable and unwilling to resist them, to recover out of them, and to improve them; and worthy to be left under the power of them: we pray, that God would so overrule the world and all in it, subdue the flesh, and restrain Satan, order all things, bestow and bless all means of grace, and quicken us to watchfulness in the use of them, that we and all his people may by his providence be kept from being tempted to sin; or, if tempted, that by his Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation: or when fallen, raised again and recovered out of it, and have a sanctified use and improvement thereof: that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected, Satan trodden under our feet, and we fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.

Question 196: What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer: The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (which is, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.), teaches us to enforce our petitions with arguments, which are to be taken, not from any worthiness in ourselves, or in any other creature, but from God; and with our prayers to join praises, ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty, omnipotency, and glorious excellency; in regard whereof, as he is able and willing to help us, so we by faith are emboldened to plead with him that he would, and quietly to rely upon him, that he will fulfil our requests. And, to testify this our desire and assurance, we say, Amen.

1.10.4.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness*: Misuse Scripture, sacraments and prayer to destructively criticize, point out faults, attack and accuse each other or others with no purpose to build other's up. Neglect Scripture, sacraments and prayer, giving the devil a foothold in attacking our faith (1 Pet. 5:8-9; Luke 22:31-32; Eph. 4:26-27). One partner makes demands (about non-crisis desires that relate to his/her own preferences or cultural standards) that are coupled with threats to end the relationship if the demands are not met.
- B. *Health*: We know Scripture, historical context, laws, logic, culture, language, themselves, and each other in order to biblically describe what we see and constructively define how change needs to take place. We use these three means of grace to bless and build up ourselves and

others. We have biblical theological skill and gracious gentle wisdom to apply various Bible texts to the challenges of encouraging each other to grow in the Lord. We have regular godly participation in the Lord's Supper and properly use prayer and use the Lord's Prayer for structuring prayer. There is evidence of mutual "as is" acceptance of the partner (with a real knowledge of sin areas) with a patient, long-term view of the potential to be used by God to influence the future spouse toward godly change in Christ. Each can maintain thankful joy (guards against presumptive negative interpretations of behavior, will ask about/check for facts) for the power of God seen at work in the partner's life. Areas of personal preference are not imposed on the partner as requirements for change but are given as requests that seek "win-win" solutions. We know and apply the Gospel to ourselves and others. We know we are both saved and changed by grace alone, through Christ alone, by faith alone. The fruits of the Spirit are evident by practicing constructive conflict & emotion management. We give grace that ministers to hearer when feeling offended, ignored or sinned against. We learn how to speak constructively using this pattern: "It would be better next time if you did it this way . . ." (Phil. 1:3-6).

I.10.4.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Do we honor God's name by faithful and reverent use of his Word, sacraments and prayer in the contexts that we live?*
- B. *Do faithfully represent God's name by demonstrating God's grace to each other, his supra-familial attributes displayed in covenant-reconciliation affections (loving, gracious, merciful, patient to save, good, forgiving, rewarding, slow to anger, disciplining, rejoicing) ?*

I.10.4.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *What strengths can you reassure related to 3rd commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- B. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 3rd commandment disobedience?*
- C. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

I.10.5 FOURTH COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREMELY DYNAMIC LORD RECREATES PRO-THEOSYNCHRONOUS COUPLES

Question 115: Which is the fourth commandment?

Answer: The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Question 116: What is required in the fourth commandment?

Answer: The fourth commandment requires of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath, and in the New Testament called the Lord's day.

Question 117: How is the sabbath or the Lord's day to be sanctified?

Answer: The sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.

Question 118: Why is the charge of keeping the sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors?

Answer: The charge of keeping the sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.

1.10.5.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness*: Chronos-chaos is the normal pattern, with little time set aside for each other, little flexibility to adapt to other's times and needs, no consideration of God's interpretation of their own histories, memories and futures. Proud boasting about future plans as if they would surely come true. Disorders patterns of 6 days labor and 1 day rest. Unable to enjoy leisure time.
- B. *Health*: Boy-girlfriend relationships sacrificially synchronize significant portions of their daily and weekly schedules to be together to bless each other. The memories of both boy-girlfriend are shaped by God's providential involvement with their past, present and joyful hope in his promises for the future. We both are alert shepherds with historical and social awareness to be alert to and flexible enough to respond at appropriate times to moods, teachable moments of conflict, disobedience, and life challenges to each other. We make plans with humility. We make wise use of time and live within the six days of labor, one day of rest cycle that God has established for our own refreshment. We enjoy leisure time together having fun in God's created world.

1.10.5.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Do we make a conscious effort to think, speak and live under God's determinations of our times?*
- B. *Have we adjusted our schedules to engage constructively with each other?*
- C. *Did our families synchronize life with God's structure for weekly work and rest, and with His interpretation of life, history and the future?*

I.10.5.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *What strengths can you reassure related to 4th commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- B. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 4th commandment disobedience?*
- C. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

SECTION THREE:

LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR

**L10.6 FIFTH COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREMELY HARMONIOUS LORD RECREATES
PRO-HARMONY COUPLES**

Question 123: Which is the fifth commandment?

Answer: The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee.

Question 124: Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?

Answer: By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.

Question 125: Why are superiors styled father and mother?

Answer: Superiors are styled father and mother, both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.

Question 126: What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?

Answer: The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.

Question 127: What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors.?

Answer: The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defense and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.

Question 128: What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?

Answer: The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.

Question 129: What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?

Answer: It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reproving, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God has put upon them.

Question 130: What are the sins of superiors?

Answer: The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

Question 131: What are the duties of equals?

Answer: The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go one before another; and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement, as their own.

Question 132: What are the sins of equals?

Answer: The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement of prosperity one of another; and usurping preeminence one over another.

Question 133: What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment, the more to enforce it?

Answer: The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, in these words, That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee, is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment.

1.10.6.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

A. *Sickness:*

1. Make initial meetings too serious as to try to determine whether to marry or start courtship on the first meeting. Josh Harris' *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* is too strict in advising total avoidance of dating.
2. Parents and youth leaders panic or create lots of new rules if the teenager starts to show interest in the opposite sex or gets asked out on a date.
3. Avoid pushing the relationship too fast with you own agenda if the partner is not showing much interest. Pushing becomes manipulative. Emphasis on "I want" shows selfishness. Talking about marriage immediately will usually scare off the partner, thinking you are desperate or mentally unstable.
4. Unsubstantiated, personal "spiritual" convictions about "God's will for the relationship" without verifiable relational compatibilities are usually a sign of mental instability and desperation to move the relationship to a deeper level rather than a mutually shared interest in moving forward.
5. One person dumps all the history of past troubles, abuse or sexual sins early on in the relationship in hopes of developing honesty and connection, scaring the other person away.
6. Ignorance of the other's preferences and inability to understand and communicate one's own preferences, creating many painful experiences.
7. Egalitarian view the believes in submission to each other, or the woman dominates the man, or man dominates the woman.

B. *Health:*

1. Youth need to develop ability to comfortably relate to the opposite sex, have curiosity about others, make new friendships as equals until married.
2. Parents and youth leaders need to encourage, ask questions and develop honest rapport, listen and support and let the teenager or young adult learn.
3. A relationship that has mutual agreement and attraction develops a “win-win” desire to move the relationship forward. Speak first about common interests, shared vision, religious and family backgrounds. Both partners need to feel a calm steadiness about the forward-motion of the relationship, not being manipulated into the marriage commitment without full agreement, not overloading with past negative history.
4. Boy-girlfriend relationships discuss, compromise, and use gracious persuasion of each other. As priest-ambassadors of reconciliation, boy-girlfriend relationships pray for, counsel, and engage their gifts and relationships to seek the peace and welfare of their own relationship and home. They bring order to and submission of the creatures (pets, animals) and aspects of material creation under their authority (house, car, garden, yard, tools, toys, gadgets, and so on).
5. Boyfriend-girlfriend relationships should show healthy evidence of presence to bless, since marriage means a husband and wife leave father and mother and make covenant promises to be present with one another to bless, enjoy, protect, and maintain peace (Num. 6:24-26). Each one needs to learn how to cultivate enjoyment, protection and peace and learn the specific personal preferences that make such presence possible. In marriage only, a healthy sexual relationship is the most intimate form of blessed presence.
6. The man desires a godly exercise of authority and the woman desire a humble submission to godly authority, patterned after Christ and the church (Eph. 5:23-33; Ezek. 16; Hosea). Both share a vision for using godly authority to parent children.

I.10.6.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Have we developed a casual freedom to enjoy relationships with the opposite sex as equals?*
- B. *Are we both willing to marry? (1 Cor. 7:36-39)*
- C. *Do we know how to relate to each other in Christ as equals and express submission or authority that creates flourishing in our own areas of responsibility?*
- D. *Do we know how to knowledgeably bless others and one another according to their preferences/desires?*
- E. *Do we accept the biblical roles designed by God after marriage?*
- F. *How well did our original family model health in relationships?*

I.10.6.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- D. *What strengths can you reassure related to 5th commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- E. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 5th commandment disobedience?*

F. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

I.10.7 SIXTH COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREMEY LIVING LORD RECREATES PRO-LIFE COUPLES

Question 134: Which is the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

Question 135: What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiring good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.

I.10.7.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

A. *Sickness:*

1. A relationship that begins with or quickly moves to a focus on taking what you want (kissing, touching, sex, money, job connections, promise of visa through marriage) does not develop trust or respect. If a couple is already very physical or is having sex, as a counselor or parent, I will tell them to stop/repent of the mutual "using" and start showing mutual respect and love as Christian brother and sister. If an individual has poor relationships with others and shows little concern for others apart from the romantic partner, this is a dangerous sickness that will likely reveal the true character of the person. If an individual is too attached emotionally, without a sense of independent identity or emotional stability without the partner, unable to separate when many signs of sickness are evident, this is not a true love relationship, but emotional dependence.
2. Believe earth is overpopulated or that family size needs to be limited to "save the earth" from more resource consuming, global-warmth-producing humans. The woman has very definite career goals that she is not willing to change for the sake of raising children (and has no other medical reasons for not being able to bear children).
3. Work is all about making money to buy things like cars and homes at the expense of family dynamics (no plan for daily time together, or for one primary parent to work, one primary parent to care for children at home until they are in school).

B. *Health:*

1. A relationship that has developed based on friendship, giving, caring for the other (without a sexual relationship prior to marriage). A partner who demonstrates love, respect and patience to others outside the relationship (parents, family, friends, missions service, evangelism efforts) without obvious personal benefits, is also showing good evidence of the character fruit of love,

- not just trying to please (or possibly manipulate) the romantic preferences of the partner. Some couples may be so focused on serving others in ministry that they neglect developing their own relationship. As a counselor or parent, I would tell them to make sacrifices now to make the relationship a priority, establishing a pattern for the future. Ministry in the church should not take priority over each other, as church leaders must manage their own households well, before they are qualified for church service (1 Tim. 3:2, 4-5; Titus 1:6).
2. Men desire to marry someone who will be a good mother, who loves kids and who sees raising kids as one of life's highest callings. Of course, women are very capable of having fine careers and earning money inclusive of family and children (Prov. 31:10-31). Most governments of the world see more children as their country's greatest resource, and countries with very low birth rates see impending economic problems due to the aging of the population and the lack of an income earning population to fuel the social welfare systems for the elderly (Taiwan & Japan, somewhat in the USA).
 3. We prepare to exert active, consistent, gentle, godly rule and discipline over their families and engage with the world as king-stewards of the cultural mandate to produce wealth, goods and services that bless the family, the created world, and their social communities. We prepare to bear children to extend godly rule over the earth. We evidence stewardship of body to know and develop his/her bodily health: self-controlled in sleep, eating, exercise; no addictions to created things.

I.10.7.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Do we show sacrificial love for each other and for others outside our relationship?* (Rom. 12:9; Acts 20:35)
- B. *Do we desire children and living a family centered life?*
- C. *Do we prepare to use our authority, language, knowledge, skills, and spiritual gifts to do productive work?*

I.10.7.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *What strengths can you reassure related to 6th commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- B. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 6th commandment disobedience?*
- C. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

I.10.8 SEVENTH COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREME BEAUTIFUL LORD RECREATES PRO-MARRIAGE COUPLES

Question 137: Which is the seventh commandment?

Answer: The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Question 138: What are the duties required in the seventh commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections, words,

and behavior; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency, conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labor in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.

1.10.8.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

A. *Sickness*

1. Using the physical body of the partner in ways that exceed brother-sister fellowship.
2. Strong disagreements about the createdness of male-female gender, each with their own sexual orientation to the opposite sex in God's timing and binary gender identity (SOGI), the purposes of marriage and family, roles and leadership. Insisting on other cultural viewpoints and denying the biblical view. The Bible forbids generalized hetero *sexual* attraction (looking at any potential opposite sex person with sexual thoughts) and homosexual attraction (looking at or desiring any forms of sexual contact with same gender people). Propensity to same sex attraction (SSA, defined as desire for sexual activities with the same sex), even when not dwelling on it in the mind, is also a creation disorder and for those not united to Christ, part of the condemned sin-package. SSA for those in Christ is illegitimate and disordered, and this whole set of lusts needs to be put to death through Christ and the Gospel: the propensity to be sexually attracted, any sexual arousal of the imagination, any masturbatory practices associated with those attractions, and any sexually arousing behaviors toward people of the same sex. "Opportunities" that present as temptations are outside the individual and thus the opportunity doesn't equal sin. Disordered attractions are what make us susceptible to temptations that lead us to sin, and that disordered attraction of coveting breaks the 10th C (Jas. 1:14-15) and any *sexual* attraction to any person other than a single hetero spouse breaks the 7th commandment. Any illegitimate attraction is itself part of the sin package. If a Christian is attracted to any forbidden lust (hetero oral sex with a prostitute, bribery to get a political position, gossip to put others down), that "attraction" is also disordered, part of the old man, sinful flesh package, and needs to be renewed.
3. Defer to parents to solve all emotional and financial problems. Parents' advice is accepted as correct by wife (or husband) and undercuts the authority of the husband (or valuable input of the wife).
4. Continue to spend excessive free time with friends, family or the opposite sex (if heterosexually attracted) or the same sex (if same sex attracted).
5. Dating is more like a game or a hobby to prevent boredom and reduce feelings of loneliness, but with no desire to become attached to any permanent relationship. One or both have an alternate worldview of immoral dating and sexual hook-ups.

B. *Health*

1. Boy-girlfriend relationships consistently model and set rules based on moral-law clarity (they honor and obey the new covenant) and show how true holiness comes by heart change through the Gospel in a covenant-keeping community. True love waits until marriage, then offers a body holy to the spouse, pure from all lustful and immoral defilements.
2. Share a common understanding of the Bible's framework for male-female gender, each with their own sexual orientation to the opposite sex in God's timing and binary gender identity

(SOGI). Christian marriage is a reflection of Christ's marriage to the Church (Eph. 5:22-31). God's rule is one-hetero-spouse-sexual-attraction (OH-SSA) and permits no other sexual attractions. As part of the preparation for marriage, Scripture permits a *gradual* shift towards sexualized attraction after engagement, as intention to exclusively be set apart as holy for the other has been personally agreed on, as usually this comes with parental agreement and public announcement with a symbol of the engagement ring for the woman in many cultures. For example, premarital counseling usually includes a reading and discussion on loving sexual technique and ethical birth control methods, and the couple begins to prepare mentally and physically for the wedding and honeymoon. The couple's growing affection and closeness should start to shift to a holy sexual attraction but must still honor the fiancé(e) as a brother or sister until after the full matrimonial commitment of the wedding. "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases" (Song 2:7; 3:5; 8:4).

3. We could develop a comprehensive list of biblical SOG__'s to disenfranchise the cultural debate about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) as if it were an isolated issue:
 - 5th C : SOGR "soul orientation to godly roles"
 - 6th C : SOGL "soul orientation to godly life"
 - 8th C : SOGF "soul orientation to godly finances"
 - 9th C : SOGR "soul orientation to godly reputations"
 - 10th C : SOGC "soul orientation to godly contentment"

Each of these categories could develop its own set of specific dysphorias, showing how humanity has lost its proper orientation to the truth and moral flourishing in each category. Gender dysphoria is symptomatic of 7th C disorientation, while we can explore multiple disorienting categories to truth and proper righteousness related to other commandments. Mankind, by losing proper orientation to the fear of God (1st C) and contentment (10th C), has lost proper orientation to stewardship of roles, life-sustenance, sexuality, resources, and reputations. With this enlarged set of acronyms, Christians would be in a better position to rename the current culturally dividing SOGI with another phrase, "*soul orientation to gender interactions*" related to the 7th C.

4. Both are prepared to leave the single life of freedom, leave financial dependence on parents, emotional dependence on parents. This also assumes you are biblically free to marry, without previous relational entanglements or an unbiblical divorce. Though it has been done by some newly married couples with beneficial results, it is not normally wise to live with either sets of parents after marriage unless there are serious health problems or other emergency factors. Saving money on rent does not seem to be a good enough reason to live with parents.
5. One spouse mentality, ready to shift from seeking relationships to steadiness with one spouse. You agree that investment in the marriage relationship takes the priority over the relationship to the children and that the best example you can give your children is to love each other. In non-crisis situations, you will not habitually neglect the marriage in favor of the children's desires or preferences. You share basic agreement on major life directions and goals for lifestyle, church service, denomination, financial expectations and spending habits, home ownership, future expectations for kind of relationship with parents.
6. God as Creator and Redeemer has authority to regulate the proper expression of sexuality in his world so that people will fulfil his cultural mandate to fill the earth with godly children,

rule over the earth and its creatures for the glory of his name. God ordained marriage between one man and one woman (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25) and its preservation from all dissolution. “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate,” (Matt. 19:6) includes the God-ordained institution of marriage, not just individual marriages. This is the primary way God protects his obedient children from sexually transmitted diseases and mutually abusive relationships (1 Cor. 7:2, 9).

I.10.8.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Do we share the self-discipline to guard the brother-sister holiness of our relationships until marriage?*
- B. *Do we have a shared definition for the biblical definition of gender, marriage and family?*
- C. *Do we have a shared definition for the biblical definition of marriage as leaving parents?*
- D. *Do we have a shared definition for the biblical definition of marriage as cleaving to each other?*
- E. *By college age, assuming we don't have the gift of singleness, are we pursuing dating as part of a search for a good life partner?*

I.10.8.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *What strengths can you reassure related to 7th commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- B. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 7th commandment disobedience?*
- C. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

I.10.9 EIGHTH COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREMELY SUFFICIENT LORD RECREATES PRO-STEWARDSHIP COUPLES

Question 140: Which is the eighth commandment?

Answer: The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

Question 141: What are the duties required in the eighth commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and diligence in it; frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits and suretyship, or other like engagements; and an endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.

I.10.9.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness*: Addictions to certain types of wasteful entertainments (computer games, TV, movies, internet) or over-indulging in permissible physical pleasures (foods, alcohol, exercise, hobbies, sports) or abusing the world's resources in explicitly sinful ways (pornography, gambling, premarital sex, gang involvement; illegal polluting or intentionally destroying physical or natural resources)
- B. *Health*: Commitment to fulfil the Great Cultural Mandate to care for the world and prosper its resources, using the gifts and resources God has entrusted to us. Nurture and use your spiritual gifts to bless others in the church, wisely use money, faithful to your promises, nurture family relationships, concern for others, willing to sacrifice resources for other's benefit. Show habits of six days of labor (not lazy), one day of rest (not a work-a-holic). Show evidence of learning new useful skills for future employment. Show evidence of good financial stewardship (saving, controlled spending, no major debt). Evidence of proper use of the created world. As engaged couples they should be preparing to provide all that is materially necessary for spouse's body, well-being, and health. Furthermore, they strive to exhibit good stewardship over their resources to enable generous provision for the family, the church, and the needy, while teaching each other to model that stewardship. They use resources to enjoy recreation. They prepare to share the marriage bed and the resources of the home to nourish and cherish each other's bodies and the children God gives them through procreation (or adoption).

I.10.9.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Do we both show evidence of responsible stewardship of resources in order to fulfil the cultural mandate to rule over the earth and subdue it for the glory of Christ? (Gen. 1:28)*

I.10.9.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *What strengths can you reassure related to 8th commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- B. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 8th commandment disobedience?*
- C. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

I.10.10 NINTH COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREME TRUTHFUL LORD RECREATES PRO-TRUTHFUL COUPLES

Question 143: Which is the ninth commandment?

Answer: The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Question 144: What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth

between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things: Whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requires; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practicing of: Whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

1.10.10.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

A. *Sickness:*

1. Intentionally hiding serious family problems, health problems, financial obligations, debts or life-damaging sin habits that will affect normal family life in the future. Sharing or dumping all past sins in such detail that the partner must unnecessarily carry the burden of them as well as you.
2. Rushed marriages due to external pressures taking priority over worship, discipleship and stewardship tests above may add lots of post-marriage shocks and stresses that could lead to divorce. External pressures could be any of the following types of things: a) living in different countries or language groups but desperate to be married, b) pressure from parents or grandparents to get married by a certain age, c) expectancy of near term separation that pushes up the wedding date to be married before the impending separation due to work, return to home country or military service, d) aging or health problems that threaten life expectancy or ability to conceive children. Rushed marriages due to internal pressures taking priority over #1-#2 above may add lots of post-marriage shocks and stresses that could lead to divorce. Internal pressures could be any of the following types of things: a) burning desires for sexual intimacy b) desire to leave a difficult home life to live “happily ever after” c) fearing that this will be the “last chance” to get married.
3. Hasty decisions to trust unknown people leads to trouble.
4. Your partner is isolated from the Christian community, unknown to people you trust. Someone you met online, through a friend, or visiting from a distance place. You may be in danger if your relationship is moving forward too fast.

B. *Health*

1. If possible, try to spend “enough time” getting to know each other’ strengths and weaknesses in a broad range of areas and a variety of different contexts and settings prior to marriage. If possible, try to observe both sets of parents in more than one setting and ask lots of questions about the parents’ personalities, character strengths and weaknesses. You should know each other long enough to have faced some arguments or disagreements to learn how each of you handled conflict. All sharing should be pro-active and honest and in talking about past, present or potential problem areas. Each partner should know who they are marrying. “Enough” has no magic minimum, but should involve several visits with parents, study and discussion based on pre-marital counseling books that examine a broad range of topics and seeing each other in a variety of different settings. They keep their word, promises, and contracts with each other.

- They model self-control over inappropriate or sinful emotions, words, and behaviors to be faithful to do what they are assigned and what they promise to do. The healthy relationship is built on trust established through faithfulness, other promises, and daily truthful communication. They are willing to learn from each other. They prepare to know each other's desires and remember intimate knowledge of what pleases the spouse on multiple levels.
2. Marriage should be agreed to because of positive reasons why it would be good and right at this time. That is, marriage should be pursued in faith, not fear.
 3. As pilgrims on the road to the heavenly city, we need to know who we are going to walk with for most of our lives! We see evidence of perseverance in Christian obedience, counting the cost of following Christ. Wise people only give important responsibilities to those who prove themselves capable after careful testing. Individuals choosing a partner to marry will be entrusting important responsibilities to one another and should also have some good evidence of maturity in their partner.
 4. You are both well known in a Christian community, school or church context and trusted by mature leaders in those contexts because of your years of faithful service to others. Paul's mature Christian testimony about Timothy's genuine faith, love and his weaknesses (fear, timidity) came from serving together and knowing Timothy's Christian family. (Phil. 2:20-23; 2 Tim. 1:5-7; 1 Tim. 3:10).

I.10.10.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Do we really know each other as fellow pilgrims?* (1 Pet. 3:7)
- B. *Have we had enough time to know each other as pilgrims on the heavenly road?* (Rom. 14:23; Matt. 6:33-34)
- C. *Have we been tested over time?* (1 Tim. 3:10; 5:22; Prov. 11:15; Phil. 2:22)
- D. *Do any other mature Christians know us well?*

I.10.10.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *What strengths can you reassure related to 9th commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- B. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 9th commandment disobedience?*
- C. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

I.10.11 TENTH COMMANDMENT DUTIES: SUPREMELY CONTENTED LORD RECREATES PRO-CONTENTMENT COUPLES

Question 146: Which is the tenth commandment?

Answer: The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

Question 147: What are the duties required in the tenth commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.

I.10.11.1 RECKON CULTURAL VIEWS OF MARRIAGE

- A. *Sickness*: We have identified many sicknesses above that show a covetous heart and an unthankful, grumbling, complaining attitude.
- B. *Health*: We pass most of the RECKON cultural views for sickness above as evidence that we have a contented heart and a thankful attitude.

I.10.11.2 RECKON YOURSELVES AND YOUR ORIGINAL FAMILY

- A. *Does our passing most of the above tests evidence that we have relational health built on a contented heart and thankful attitude?*

I.10.11.3 REASSURE, REFORM, REMOVE, TO IMPROVE RESULTS USING THE METHODS GOD HAS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP MATURITY WITHIN THE SAVING POWER OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, INDIVIDUALLY, TOGETHER AS AN ENGAGED COUPLE AND IN ASSEMBLIES OF TWO OR MORE GATHERED IN JESUS' NAME

- A. *What strengths can you reassure related to 10th commandment obedience in your lives and the experience of your original family that have produced blessings?*
- B. *What weaknesses should be reformed and what sins should be removed in relation to 10th commandment disobedience?*
- C. *How can the assemblies of God's people support you in this process?*

SECTION FOUR:

APPENDICES 1-5

I.II APPENDIX I: PLANNING THE WEDDING SERVICE

Marriage vows are the primary focus of the wedding service, together with exchange of rings as a visible symbol of those vows, with the pastor(s), parents and congregation as witnesses. For weddings officiated in the church, it typically includes elements of a formal worship service, with and invocation, hymns, songs, choirs singing, Scripture readings, sermon, prayers and expressions of thanks to the parents and the congregation and a benediction. The wedding may also include candle lighting or signing of the wedding certificates. Below are a sampling of typical service order and sample vows.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude 序樂

Processional 新郎新娘入場

Purpose of Marriage & Prayer 歡迎佳賓及禱告

Scripture Reading 讀經

Praise Song 頌讚 會眾

Sermon 勉勵

Vows & Exchange of Rings 誓約及交換信物

Pronouncement of Marriage

Lighting of Unity Candle & Signing Certificate 同心燭

Praise 讚美之歌 會眾

Benediction 祝福

Presentation of Bride & Groom 禮成

Recessional 殿樂

May also add church choir songs 也可以安排教堂合唱團的歌曲

NOTE: Any vows used must express biblical themes using promise-making language. The officiating pastor must approve your vows at least two weeks before the wedding. Statement about the history of your relationship or how you feel about your partner can be used in the reception or write that in the wedding service bulletin, but these should not be part of your vows. Based on the themes of this premarital study in the Westminster Larger Catechism, I suggest something like these vows below.

VOWS #1

I, (your name, husband), by faith-union with Christ our covenant mediator, and with the support of the church, promise before God and these witnesses, to be a faithful husband to you for all of our lives, to love you foremost among all human relationships, together with you to obey Christ's moral law, to use my authority to bless your growth in Christ, to sacrifice for your needs and the needs of any children the Lord may give us, with the goal that our marriage will exemplify the marriage of Christ to the church.

I, (your name, wife), by faith-union with Christ our covenant mediator, and with the support of the church, promise before God and these witnesses, to be a faithful wife to you for all of our lives, to honor and cherish our relationship above all human relationships, together with you to obey Christ's moral law, to respect

you and submit to your authority, to sacrifice for your needs and the needs of any children the Lord may give us, with the goal that our marriage will exemplify the marriage of the church to Christ.

VOWS # 2 (these are the vows Pastor Yates and his wife wrote for their wedding in 1984)

Man: I, _____ covenant with you _____ to love you following Christ's example in loving the church--in that he loved her absolutely, willfully, sacrificially, purposefully and realistically--to give my life for you in providing for your needs, to be the head of our household, directing according to the principles of God's Word and what is prayerfully determined to be God's will, to live with you seeking to fully know and understand you, and to honor value and respect you as a fellow heir of the grace of life.

Woman: I _____ covenant with you _____ to be subject unto you as is fitting to the Lord, to love, honor and respect you by my words and through my actions that the Word of God may not be dishonored, to go where you go and stay where you stay, may the Lord deal with me--be it ever so severely--if anything but death separates you and me.

Questions for discussion

- A. Do you plan to use one of these vows or another version of wedding vows?
- B. What order of service do you plan to use?

2.1 APPENDIX 2: PLANNING YOUR WEDDING NIGHT, MARITAL SEX

A. God recreates a people who properly enjoy the sexual ethic he designed

Developing a healthy ministry to your spouse (the ideal model) for long term intimacy

1. Learn spouse's top 5 desires through asking, marriage survey discussion, and noting what areas cause frustration, anger or disappointment when they are not met. °
 - a. Wives' typical desires: face to face conversation, affection, financial help, honesty, family presence & help.
 - b. Husbands' typical desires: sexual relationship, recreational companionship, affirmation through touch, domestic support (cooking, cleaning, washing clothes), being able to admire your wife's body/beauty. °
2. Remember spouse's top five desires
3. Respect for the legitimacy of those desires (*assuming they are not specifically immoral*) in the way you talk about them, plan ways to satisfy them and the way you express disappointment when you cannot meet them, or repent when you have neglected or sinfully failed to satisfy them by controllable competing interests. °
4. Willingness to serve and proactively initiate to meet those desires (though at times not preferred by you), as well as staying in good health, body-weight, hygiene and nice appearance to present your best to your spouse.
5. Learning to enjoy what your spouse desires (his/her pleasures become yours). These habitual practices create intimacy in the marriage and create the best atmosphere for enjoyable lovemaking.
6. If 1-4 fail in some ways, then prayerful and patiently remind spouse what your desires are or offer constructive & positive ways to meet your needs or suggest things you can do

together that will meet these desires. However, realize that the more you remind your spouse about your desires, the more likely spouse will feel unmotivated, nagged, manipulated or like a failure. Generally, the more you focus on suggesting ways your spouse can meet your desires, the more the spouse feels/experiences your selfishness. However, there are exceptions to this “reminding” principle if your spouse that lacks empathy and lacks a desire and lacks administrative foresight to plan how to serve your desires.

7. Mature couples are a combination of contentment in Christ if desires are met or not (Phil 4:11), and gently communicating desires that are not met at appropriate times so the hearer can receive benefit (Eph 4:29). Couples need to communicate respect and affirmation of the spouse’s desires and show awareness that if there is an unintended lengthening time period between satisfaction of the other’s desire, it is not intended to mean rejection or lack of love.
- B. Learning to Enjoy the Gift of Making Love**
1. Generally speaking, the husband has a more frequent desire for the physical act of sex than the wife, with or without a feeling of daily intimacy. The wife has a more frequent desire for the kind of intimacy that leads to the best sex. The wife may be happy with sex once every 4 to 7 days, while the husband may prefer sex daily. How does he communicate his desire for more sex? **BAD IDEAS:** The husband’s frequent suggestion that they should have sex, he needs more sex or critical comments that the wife doesn’t like or want sex, creates a negative atmosphere pressuring the wife to perform more responsively, often leading to less interest on the wife’s part, her arguments about his failure to meet her desires, or critical comments about her husband’s sexual desires. Generally, a husband’s sexy talk does not get his wife in the mood for sex, since this is usually perceived to be selfish. **BEST IDEA:** The husband who feels their sex life is lacking needs to focus on meeting the wife’s desires and prayerfully and patiently waiting for the wife to initiate to meet his desires.
 2. The couple needs to develop their own language & clues that indicate sexual readiness.
 3. The husband also needs to be alert to his wife’s clues (their recent emotional connectivity status, language, non-verbal communication, personal habits, family noise and interference patterns, which times of the day or week are preferred, general energy/tiredness levels, other stress factors outside the marriage) that indicate she is willing to have sex at a time when she will most enjoy it.
 4. Foreplay and pleasing sex need to be . . .
 - a. *knowledgeable* (based on understanding of sexual anatomy, physiology and erogenous zones, how orgasm is linked to 5-15 minutes of continuous clitoral stimulation in a wife, and non-judgmental communication about what feels good, and what words enhance arousal, especially the husband need to arouse his wife emotionally by tender caring and playful speech, since she usually needs more than just touch),
 - b. *private* (husband & wife alone; the primary bedroom must have a locking door if others live with the couple, closing curtains if outside visibility is possible, no children sleeping in the same bedroom, unless a nursing infant, not using pornography videos to teach the couple proper sexual technique)

- c. *opportune* (for couples with busy lives or mismatched schedules with children, time for sex may be scheduled or spontaneous within expected routines, but should generally not feel rushed, both will feel energy and both will consent to making love in their own ways of speaking/metaphors, both will anticipate and in various ways show initiative and readiness)
- d. *patient* (the process of becoming knowledgeable takes time, boldness and humility in communicating; verbal communication and sexual technique take time to discover; sexual skill takes time to learn, sex happens when specified complexities coordinate, but is hindered when they do not),
- e. *creative* (ways of talking, scheduling, locations, trying some new positions or foreplay pleasures can lead a couple to discover better sexual technique)
- f. *self-controlled* (your sexual arousal is disciplined to only be triggered by your spouse or thoughts of spouse, he/she is the definition of who sexually arouses you; mutual long-term trust that your spouse is faithful to you; not grouchy or easily angered which hinders sexual intimacy; able to forget/set aside other problems and concerns and focus on sexual intimacy, what you do during love-making is controlled by what brings pleasures to your spouse and is mutually exciting)
- g. *loving* (sex is a way of serving and pleasing your spouse's communicated desires, giving to satisfy his/her pleasures to the point of mutual climax/orgasm, though seldom simultaneous orgasm; yet husband or wife should not force any practice that is not mutually enjoyed; oral-genital contact is a personal decision that should be with consent of both partners, but *realize that God designed sexual intercourse to be the mutually enjoyable method of sexual pleasure, so couples should develop skill with genital contact and sexual intercourse as the best and most satisfying form of sexual pleasure*) ◦
- h. *doxological* (received as a gift from God to be enjoyed, seeing his glory, kindness, and pleasure reflected through the spouse in the whole process of lovemaking; sex is a way of knowing God better).

C. Cycle of lovemaking

1. General atmosphere and maintenance of marriage intimacy, both in encouraging ways of speaking and non-sexual touching, hugging, cuddling and kissing all the time
2. signals of sexual interest (including time, energy, privacy)
3. fore-play, arousal, sexual touching
4. enjoyment of sexual pleasure
5. resting with each other, appreciation, feedback/discussion for improvement & understanding verbal and non-verbal cues next time
6. Please read these two books on sexual knowledge: 親密佳偶--探索夫妻性親密的奧祕 / When Two Become One--Enhancing Sexual Intimacy in Marriage 作者：馬克士/馬瑞秋 (Christopher/Rachel McCluskey) 譯者：出版社：飛鷹 and 濃情蜜意(原書名:閨房之樂) / Intended for Pleasure 作者：艾德.惠特夫婦 (Ed Wheat, M.D. and Gaye Wheat) 譯者：出版社：校園書房出版社

Questions for discussion:

- A. *Have you read the recommended books on sexual knowledge? Why or why not?*
- B. *What are your thoughts on the best practices of love-making defined above?*
- C. *Do you understand your partner's top five desires? What are they?*
- D. *Are you already prioritizing ways to serve those desires?*

2.2 APPENDIX 3: SEXUAL PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE: GOD WANTS TO REBUILD HIS PEOPLE SO THAT THEY CAN APPROPRIATELY ENJOY THE SEXUAL ETHICS THAT HE DESIGNED.

A. Resolving Sexual Problems in marriage

1. Physical problems:

- a. **Vaginismus:** unable to penetrate due to involuntary/fearful tightening of the woman's vaginal opening (fear of pain, previous sexual abuse, physical infection, negative attitude to sex) = *couple works together to stretch vaginal opening.*
- b. **Premature ejaculation:** overly sensitive penis, so the wife does not ever or seldom reaches climax/orgasm due to quick release of husband; = *couple works together to increase husband's physical stamina*
- c. **Impotence:** husband's penis cannot sustain hardness to satisfy wife; some medications and medical conditions can cause this. = *couple works together to search for medical solutions or enjoy manual stimulation.*
- d. **Ignorance:** lack of knowledge of what kind of love-making gives the spouse sexual pleasure and leads to orgasm, painful or offensive practices/habits that negate one spouse's arousal. = *couple works together to communicate what each enjoys.*
- e. **Known STD:** should avoid sexual contact until cured; = *if no cure, perhaps permanent celibacy to avoid infecting spouse.*
- f. **Sex during menstruation:** There is no known medical reason for abstaining from sex during the menstrual cycle. = *the couple should decide whether they desire this or not and act accordingly.*
- g. **Sex during pregnancy:** unless there are problems with the pregnancy (bleeding or history of premature labor, other high risk factors), = *the couple should have normal sexual relations as long into the pregnancy as comfortably possible.* Positions & techniques may need to vary after the 5th or 6th month due to the growth of the child in the uterus. Sex during the last month of pregnancy should be with greater attention to washing before sex and avoiding pressure on the uterus or amniotic sac.
- h. **Sex during recovery from childbirth, illness or injury:** resuming sex after child-birth depends on the amount of physical healing needed, but generally this depends on what type of illness, physical capabilities, pain, or concerns about infecting the spouse if sick with something potentially contagious. = *Generally couples need to discuss the situation and make adjustments accordingly.*

- 2. Spiritual-attitude problems: = *learn healthy acceptance of each other's bodies, sexual ID, sex as God's gift to give to each other, fidelity of sex in mind & body to spouse alone, learn to talk about sex with spouse, learn cultural mandate and contraception*

- a. **Unnecessary guilt** about nakedness, refusal or discomfort in undressing for sex;
 - b. **Protectionistic**: avoid being seen naked due to body-gender identity problems, perhaps influenced by past lack of acceptance by significant others in gender or body type; possibly past sexual abuse that led to intentional avoidance of beauty as a form of self-protection from potential or actual abusers; critical attitude of your spouse to body weight or appearance
 - c. **Silence**: unwilling to talk about sexual problems due to avoidance, extreme embarrassment, past hurts, explosive anger, fear of criticism, offensive use of slang terms;
 - d. **Lack of arousal or interest in sex**: (if long term, and not related to general health, hormone levels, medication side effects or tiredness) possible abuse background, possible gender identity problems with habit of lust/fantasy toward the same sex, or toward different body type opposite sex; use of pornography pictures or videos with fantasy masturbation that make real sex unsatisfying.
 - e. **Punishment**: withdraw sexual opportunity as an expression of anger or disgust of spouse;
 - f. **Fear of pregnancy**: avoid sex from fears of getting pregnant.
 - g. **Selfishness**: insisting that the marital debt of sex be paid, and that any refusal means sinfully depriving the spouse, sex is primarily for getting, rather than giving.
 - h. **Comparison**: one spouse had sexual relations with another person and seems to put their sex life in comparison mode, feel condemned for inability to measure up.
3. Language problems: *=learn proper and comfortable ways to discuss (reading Christian book on sex together can be the solution)*
- a. **Inability to talk about sex** due to mutually understandable and non-provocative vocabulary;
 - b. **Inability to describe or instruct the spouse** in pleasurable sexual physiology in understandable ways

NOTE: These problems may surface after the marriage. Review your recommended books on sex above to discuss ways to overcome any of these problems.

2.3 APPENDIX 4: ETHICS OF BIRTH CONTROL & ABORTION

- A. Bearing children is the highest fulfillment of the creation mandate to rule over the earth and be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28), the highest blessing and fruit of married life, the best long-term investment of your time in ministry, the most important opportunity that God gives most married couples.
- B. Children are an inheritance from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is his reward, a gift from God (Ps 127:3; 128:1-4)
- C. I advise against using ethical contraception (see below) until you believe A & B above!
- D. Ethics for birth control involves two parts: ethical method + ethical motivation
- E. Possible ethical motivation for using contraception: a decision made in faith, for reasons of love for the living and their safety/well-being: example: God wants you to delay another child for

reasons of the mother's current health or known health problems for the mother during pregnancy or high probability of inherited genetic problems in a future pregnancy.

- F. Unethical motivation for using birth control: a decision made in fear or unbelief about future material prosperity, busyness, inopportune timing (Matt 6:24-34)
- G. Forms of Birth control
1. Unethical, temporary
 - a. **Abortifacient (chemical):** nearly all will thicken cervical mucus, prevent ovulation and *prevent implantation by thinning the uterine endometrium*, potentially causing expulsion/death of a fertilized ovum if it not effective on the first two functions, therefore = abortion; and some will cause damage to a woman's body (blood clot disorders, cancer, ectopic pregnancy) or uterus (IUD can cause uterine damage, infections, ectopic pregnancy, heavy bleeding & discharge), especially if smoking. Low chemical levels risk preventing implantation only=abortifacient, while higher chemical levels risk more health problems
 - a. ORAL: Plan B=one high dose of progestin, RU 486, ellaOne,
 - b. DIRECT ABSORPTION: NuvaRing, OrthoEvra patch, some intrauterine devices such as both the hormonal IUD called "Mirena" and copper IUD called "Paragard", Depo-Provera (shot), Norplant (implant under skin)
 - a. 口服避孕藥：B計畫(Plan B) = 高劑量的黃體素、RU 486、ellaOne
 - b. 直接吸收法：NuvaRing、OrthoEvra 貼片、某些子宮內避孕器，如被稱為「Mirena」的激素子宮內避孕器，以及稱為「Paragard」的含銅子宮內避孕器、Depo-Provera (注射液)、Norplant (皮下植入物)
 - b. **Abortion:** permanently takes the life of the developing child though a medical operation or chemical method, and for almost all reasons it is unethical, disobeying the 6th commandment. *Only permitted if the mother's life is in danger* (ectopic pregnancy, dangerous Rh factor problem). If the fertilized ovum does not develop normally, there may be a spontaneous miscarriage or a doctor may need to perform a dilation and evacuation (D&E) to remove the already dead child or malformed tissue, which is not an abortion.
 2. Ethical, temporary (*but not necessarily right for couples to use if decision made in fear*)
 - a. **Barrier methods:** diaphragm, condom, spermicides, sponges
 - b. **Natural planning:** abstain from sex during wife's fertile time just before or just after ovulation
 - c. **Withdrawing the penis before ejaculation:** not considered effective contraception since some sperm will be released before ejaculation; nor it is as pleasurable.
 3. Permanent, *therefore ethics are questionable*: **Sterilization:** I strongly advise against sterilization in most marriages as a form of birth control or a final decision to have no more children, not because it is abortifacient, but because it is *permanent, generally made as a way to avoid use of less pleasurable barrier methods*. On what ethical grounds should Christians make this permanent decision? If there is a known and very probable birth defect possibility, or a serious Rh factor complication from a previous pregnancy.

Questions for discussion

- A. *What are your plans for birth control?*
- B. *Are you both in agreement with these methods?*
- C. *Are your methods non-abortifacient?*
- D. *Are you willing to renegotiate these methods if you find that they are not acceptable in some way?*

2.4 APPENDIX 5: PRINCIPLES FOR PREMARITAL COUNSELORS

All the topics developed above are simply a sampling of how *lex Christi* categories can help those doing premarital counseling reorganize the relevant biblical data for training engaged couples. Using the practical theology definition above, those with teaching authority can research and reckon with engaged couples and apply the other R's. Are you, as their counselor, a linguistically, culturally competent ambassador of the dominion of the Righteous Lord (DRL), who exemplifies the *lex Christi* in the power of the risen Christ by the Spirit? Do you know how to proclaim it, pray using it and administrate your own household using it? Can you help this couple engage with the assembly, creation and diaspora contexts that they find themselves in? What aspects of the 6R's do you as counselor need to become more competent in administering? This takes engagement to understand by researching to accurately reckon, then choosing appropriate ways to build up the subject.

However, the counselor's measure of validity is the life-changing ministry of the Gospel in the power of Spirit-taught wisdom, *so that men might rest their hope on the wisdom of God, not the wisdom of men* (1 Cor. 2:1-16; 2 Cor. 7:10-11). In many ways, the fruits of a Gospel-centered counseling ministry that changes engaged couples' lives can be readily seen (2 Cor. 3:1-4; 12:12; 1 Thess. 1:3-10; 2 Pet. 1:3-11; 1 John). Indeed, such evident fruit is required for assembly leadership (1 Tim. 3:4-5; Tit. 1:6). Results are partially in the equation of whether we are/were faithful (1 Cor. 3:10-15). Yet counselors are merely servants who must skillfully plant and water the Gospel of Christ, while the validity of our counseling ministry is only confirmed by God who causes their growth (1 Cor. 3:5-11; 4:8)

The Bible affirms specific "tools" to bring about those changes toward mature Christ-likeness: ministry of the Word, prayer (and the prayer support of the believers) and sacraments to reach unity of the faith (Acts 6:4; Eph. 4:1-16; 1 Cor. 11:23-31; Phil. 2:20-23; Eph. 6:18-20; 2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19; WLC 152-196).

Counselors test themselves in their own consciences (2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 4:7-8), even submit to other mature leaders' evaluations (1 Cor. 4:1-2; 1 Tim. 3:10), so some forms of evaluation are biblically justified. Yet in the end, biblical counselors submit themselves to and answer to Christ's evaluations of whether they were faithful to do what was entrusted to them (1 Cor. 4:3-5; 2 Cor. 2:17; 10:18; Luke 17:10).

Further, dependence on scientific measures of technique validity and statistical repeatability in counseling ministry (and all pastoral ministry) is impossible to measure due to dozens of variable conditions in every relationship: Satan causes blinding of subjects, timing and style of planting-watering Word ministries may not immediately correspond with God's causing growth, false appearances of change later disappear (Luke 8:4-18; Matt. 13:24-30; 2 Cor. 4:3-4), and each counselor and counselee are unique individuals that tend to confound systematization and repeatable methods. Counselors who have tried to systematize all premarital counseling methods as "one-size-fits-all" will usually find some counselees for whom the method did not work. Through frustrations and failures, the Lord usually teaches counselors less

dependence on methods and more dependence on Him. God generally does not work by formulaic methods to bring about sanctification (see David Powlison, *How Does Sanctification Work*, Crossway, 2017).

It is proper to thank God for observed fruit from various healthy families and ministries, and to make observations about the factors that are present where good fruit has resulted from healthy families and ministries. Nielson's (*Faith that Lasts: Raising Kids that Don't Leave the Church*, CLC Publications, 2016) ministry experience and Christian family research as he observed five, interdependent parenting styles of those who raised healthy adult Christian children [*and using the symphonic morality perspective, connecting the principle to the related commandments*]: [*1st-3rd Cs*] Gospel empowered by the Spirit is the transforming force that parents seek after in their children's lives, rather than a powerless morality, [*all the following are 5th C related*] balance between control and freedom, with natural gospel-centered conversations in everyday life, *modelling* that shows the same integrity, such as tone of voice, at home and in church, welcoming and joyfully *sharing* the responsibilities of parenting and influence with the larger Christian community, rather than isolating the children to themselves as the only correct authority and *friendship* with children, enjoying spending time together, which forms a counterpoint to other times of serious spiritual guidance.

Thus, from the perspective of this thesis, Nielson's research confirms the major importance of the 5th C for counseling premarital couples: modeling integrity, knowing God and his Gospel, using authority with interdependence on the other commandments within healthy Christian assemblies, not lording over their counselees, but relating to them as wise teacher-friends in everyday life.

Nielson's research supports themes already noted in the practical theology definition developed above, adapting Westminster's moral law motif to integrate systematic theology and pastoral practice. Counselors must be faithful in "planting and watering", modeling with integrity, and trusting God while praying for increase by his power (1 Cor. 3:6-7).

This curriculum is not offering techniques and concepts that promise success but instead proposes a *manual of unified core strength and conditioning wisdom-exercises to better equip pastors and engaged couples to adapt to the complexities and nuances of marriage preparation*. As faithful followers of Christ seek to know God and trust his Spirit to guide them to be his prophets, priests and kings remade in Christ's likeness, they will experience the daily challenges of living and growing to use their unique gifts to reveal God's glory.

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