

The Art of Marriage

The Fellowship's 2003 Summer Study Session
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The following is a summary of material presented at the Summer Study Session

The Universe Pattern for Marriage:

The Creator Son and Universe Mother Spirit of Nebadon issued their “Proclamation of Equality” (p. 368-69). She acknowledges subordination to Him, and He acknowledges His eternal dependence on Her. The Creator Son contributes the pattern for their creations and the Universe Mother Spirit transforms these patterns into physical substance. They have equality in all endowments of personality, attributes of divine character, and authority, and are co-creators, co-rulers, co-operative, co-ordinate, and co-directors.

(p.938) “Male and female are, practically regarded, two distinct varieties of the same species ... Complete understanding between the sexes is not attainable.”

(p. 939) “...always will these two basic variations of humankind continue to intrigue, stimulate, encourage, and assist each other; always will they be mutually dependent on cooperation in the solution of perplexing universe problems...”

Awareness of some of the differences is necessary. Again, look to the Creator Son and Universe Mother Spirit as we seek for unity, rather than uniformity. Of special interest was the Son as the deliverer in the face of evil, insurrection, and rebellion. He is also able to transcend time, but not space. The Universe Mother Spirit is active in ministry for the welfare of mortals, and can transcend space, but not time.

3 Stages of an Evolving Relationship:

The first stage of an evolving relationship is the Romance Stage. Here the feeling of love is present, and you view your spouse as perfect. The second stage of disillusionment is when we react negatively to each others imperfections, differences, changes, and stressors, and separation occurs. The third stage is the Renewal of Love. This requires the work of love, the decisions to love. The beatitudes in the Urantia Book (p.1573-1575) are a guide to love in action. Action is necessary based on the decisions to build, or rebuild the trust and respect.

Conflict Resolution:

When an argument becomes emotionally charged begins agree to first separate. During this time relax and ask for spiritual guidance. Clarify your own feelings and issues and recognize your need to forgive. Next, seek to understand the other persons motive using active listening. When sharing use “I” language and feedback. Finally, do non-judgmental brainstorming, and make an agreed-upon decision (win-win) solution that is “Our Way.”

(p. 941) “Marriage with children and consequent family life is stimulative of the highest potential in human nature...patience, tolerance, forbearance...The Brotherhood of Man.”

Family Meetings:

The workshop began with stressing the all-importance of having regular Family Meetings as a way to make family-related decisions, and used the quote on page 941 in The Urantia Book: “Human society would be greatly improved if the civilized races would more generally return to the family-council practice of the Andites.”

The necessity of both parents being committed for the long-term experience and the manifold purposes of having weekly Family Meetings were discussed. This was followed by the many “do’s” (consensus decision-making being on top of the list) and “don’ts” (decisions not upheld was primary) for conducting meetings. Anticipating the sabotaging by the children of the meetings is countered by parental consistency, and many examples failures and success of participants were reviewed.

How Family Meeting evolve over time was helpful to many; starting with conducting meetings “by the book”, and as family members learn each others “games” and hidden agendas, before consensus decision-making is made with ease.

This part of the presentation concluded with a quote from Bob Slagle’s “Democratic Parenting: The Importance of Family and the Family Council.”

A Method of Disciplining:

The Authoritative (Respect) Method of Discipline was introduced. A comparison was made between the authoritarian (to tell) verses the laissez-faire (noninterference) methods of disciplining, using the “to teach” definition for discipline.

Jesus was authoritative in his methods of teaching, and used the positive approach. A parent doesn’t have to agree with or like the decisions made by children, but it is important to respect and foster the free-will of a child – after the age of 5. Crucial to good disciplining is for parents to have a well-developed self-discipline first. Quoting Jesus: “Wise fathers do not punish in anger.” on page 2017.

The workshop concluded with the 4-step method of Authoritative (Respect) Method of Discipline:

1. Having a child first agree they did something wrong.
2. Soliciting from that child what they believe the consequences need to be for the misbehavior.
3. The parent then proposes what they think the consequences should be.
4. The parent and child then negotiate an agreed-upon choice.

Both the Family Meetings and Respect Method of discipline offer a “win-win” situation for parents and children.
