

# Meeting the Ups and Downs of Life – Week 18

## Lesson 6.2 – When Our Children Marry

### Goals

- Understand the respect God demands between children and parents.
- Grow in the understanding of God’s will for marriage.
- Learn how to use God’s Word as we talk with one another in our family relationships.

Last time, we met Charlotte and Timothy. Charlotte’s mother had a difficult time letting Charlotte and Timothy do things that went against her advice. She was rather manipulative. We touched on what potential issues that creates for Charlotte, her mother, and her husband. Today, we are discussing a few other directions such a scenario could go, starting with Samuel and Joann.

### Life Example

When Samuel and Joann married, they decided to make a clean break from both sets of parents. They live in the same part of town as their parents, but seldom see them. Whenever their parents invite them over, they claim to have a previous commitment. They say that they are extremely happy in their new marriage.

*Some other details that are worth noting in this hypothetical situation—Samuel and Joann do not yet have children; they’ve been married for three years; they both work full time and have a good network of friends and associates with whom they go out; there was nothing necessarily wrong with their family life growing up—no emotional or physical abuse; no bitter feelings attached to childhood. They go to a different church than their parents—let’s say this is in Watertown, where there are plenty of WELS churches to choose from.*

1. Samuel and Joann are certainly “leaving father and mother,” as Genesis 2 says should happen when a couple marries. However, what would you say is lacking in their relationship?

### Light from the Word

The words of **Proverbs 23:22** come to mind in this situation: “Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” Notice, these words are not age-sensitive. As we said last week, they take on a different form in different stages of life. Discuss what Proverbs 23:22 means...

- ...to a young child.
- ...to a young adult living at home.
- ...to an adult child who is married.

2. Put yourself in the place of either Samuel’s or Joann’s parents. How do you use this passage to request their respect while also avoiding pushing them further away?

### **Life Example**

Mark and Amanda have had many issues in their marriage. They were not well off, which was a constant stressor; they had gotten pregnant while they were dating and felt like marriage was the only next step; they could never seem to agree on much. Over time, they grew apart. Amanda she got a job and opened her own bank account; they never checked schedules; she refused to go to church with Mark; out of shame, he eventually stopped attending, too. They agreed to stay married until their last child left home. One month after their youngest's wedding, Amanda filed for a no-fault divorce. She said it was time for them to get on with their lives. "We did our duty," she said. "God wants us to be happy now."

3. If you were one of the children (you are married and have a strong Christian family), what might your reaction be to the news of your parents' divorce?
  
4. As their Christian child, what would you say to them?
  
5. The idea of "one flesh" is a big one—not just from a sexual perspective, but from emotional, spiritual, financial, and mental outlooks, as well. When brought into the "one flesh" commitment, you cannot do anything without it having an effect on your spouse. For better or for worse, on your wedding day, that is what you publicly promise will happen. When couples struggle or refuse to live as one flesh, things can go like they did for Mark and Amanda. Looking through their scenario, what details show the struggle/refusal to live as one flesh, even in their decades of marriage?

### **Light from the Word**

6. This would not be a proper marriage Bible study without looking at **Ephesians 5:22-33**. Rewind five years with Mark and Amanda. They are already talking about their impending divorce after their youngest marries, whenever that may be. Which of these words or phrases would you use to help Mark and Amanda?
  
7. Still five years earlier, what are some proactive and practical steps that Mark and Amanda could take to save their marriage, even in the midst of all their turmoil?

**Closing Prayer** 764 Gracious Savior, Grant Your Blessing v. 2

**Lord, if you are not the builder, then the house is built in vain,  
for a home without your presence shall without true love remain.  
Yet when you within a marriage come and dwell with grace divine,  
there you fill the empty vessels, changing water into wine. Amen.**