

## 17. LEARNING PERIOD

### Marriage and Harmful Traditions



**Ge 1:27** *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*

**Ge 1:31** *"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."*

**Ps 119: 73** *"Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands."*

**Ps 139: 13-14** *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."*

**1 Co 6: 19-20:** *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body."*

There are many troubles or obstacles that can harm or destroy marriage. There are some matters that we simply have to bear and learn how to cope with. But there are other dangers that we have to be aware of and intentionally oppose. Some of the dangers are based on local cultures and this presents us with a deep and many-sided problem. As Christians we quite naturally need to support and protect our culture as long as it is constructive and helpful. **HOWEVER**, we must also have courage to object to any destructive phenomena in any culture!

During this Learning Period we concentrate in recognizing which practices in the local culture might be harmful or anyhow something we should reject in our own areas. Now we think especially practices which are related to marriage and family life.

In another topic of the material (Learning Period 18 in this book) we'll talk more about Domestic Violence. It is good to realize that there we have one example of "Harmful Tradition", even a very severe one. There might be some features in our social life which are generally accepted by the society, but which are clearly harmful - and maybe also definitely against the Word of God.

Traditionally, violence in the family has been silenced, overlooked, and in some communities, even accepted as a way of keeping women disciplined and under the men's control. In some communities it is even considered to be a sign of expressing love to the wife! In such a way of thinking the woman belongs to her husband who can do anything to her. For example, how is it in the local culture, is the husband allowed to force his wife for sex? In some communities a husband may beat his wife or in other ways mistreat her.

There are cultures where young girls are married at very early age, before they are really bodily and mentally ready for married life. There are areas where the arranged marriages are practically forced marriages especially for the girl. The male dominance has harmful expressions in very many cultures around the world.

Some harmful traditions are related to the ways how to raise children. Are our local cultures at this point on the same line with the Word of God?



**Eph. 6:1-4** *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."*

**What are the “Harmful Traditions” related to Marriage and Family in our culture or society?**

Make your own list of practices you consider as “Harmful” in your own society:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



**Group Work:**

Discuss the points below:

- a) What are our harmful traditions?
- b) What is behind these traditions?
- c) Why should such traditions be opposed?
- d) What can we do to change them?