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CE 628 Discipleship Development in the Home

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Discipleship Development in the Home (3 hours credit)
CE 628, PM 628, YM 628, CM 628

A study of the relationship of the church to the home in the joint enterprise of strengthening the family, nurturing children, and bringing them to mature Christian discipleship. Systemic reflection on the doctrine of Creation, the relation of human sexuality to the image of God, and the summons to “new men and women” of faith as representatives of the divine image to infants, children, and to the entire human community. Special attention is given to the contemporary threats to the family and to examining the effects of divorce and father absence.

Instructor:
Chris Kiesling  B.G.St., M.Div., Ph. D.(candidate)
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Textbooks:


(If any of these texts are already familiar to you or seem irrelevant to your future ministry directions, please see me regarding possible alternatives.)

Course Objectives
The student showing competence in this class will be able to:

1. Connect the origins of the family, family roles, and relationships to a Trinitarian perspective from the intent of the Creation account.
2. Recognize the effects of the fall, the disintegration of family life, and the yet unshakable confidence of God to utilize families in His redemptive plan.
3. Describe sociological and developmental trends that are changing the definition, structure, and outcomes of the contemporary family.
4. Deepen an understanding of parent-child attachment and deprivation and their developmental effects on individuals.
5. Identify systems of families and the common roles and effects they create in members of those systems.
6. Image what healthy family life and marriage look like and the components which encourage it to happen.
7. Recognize the power and potential of congregational communities to intercept, surround, heal, and empower those suffering from family loss, tragedy, and pain.
8. Identify gender differences in identify development and self-functioning, and the uniqueness each gender tends to bring to the family equation.
9. Create congregational strategies for ministering to families.

Attendance and Participation

Many loan-granting institutions are now requiring attendance records on students for accounting purposes. Therefore, the faculty has a new obligation to take daily attendance records in every class and report any repetitive absences. Therefore, although attendance is not figured numerically into your grade, it is highly valued and can be taken into consideration in determining a borderline grade. Classroom experiences will be designed to yield instructional outcomes that are not reproducible outside the classroom.

Contract Grade

The letter grade the student receives for this course will depend largely upon the amount of work the student chooses to perform. Evaluate your semester and the significance of this class for your anticipated ministry and select one of the following options.

For a grade of “C”
- Complete all readings
- Complete the required book reviews
- Report on your exercise in essential living

For a grade of “B”
- Complete all the requirements for a grade of “C” plus
- Turn in a personal reflection journey

For a grade of “A”
Complete the assignments for a grade of “B” plus
Develop a paper/project related to the subject matter in this class
There are no exams for this course. However, with a contract grade it is expected that the student’s work reveals appropriate competence and mastery. In cases where less than adequate work is turned in or a student shows exceptionally insightful or thorough work; a plus, minus, or even a change to a non-negotiated letter grade may be exercised by the professor.

**Book Reviews**

**Three** book reviews are required for all students in the class: Crabb, Joy, and Wangerin. For each book write a two full page reflection paper using approximately one page for each of the following responses:

- **Page One** - Report the concrete experiences and reflective observations that you recalled being stirred up from reading this book. These may be personal anecdotes, ideas that you wrestled with, questions that you felt the book answered or failed to address, connections you made to other topics presented in class.
- **Page Two** – Detail the commitments/changes you want to make personally, in your family, or in ministry resulting from the reading of this book. Examples may include such things as repairing a broken relationship, deepening a commitment in marriage or to children, practicing a deeper level of relationship integrity, planning to utilize this material in ministry, or future study areas that you need to pursue. Be as specific as possible in this section at aim at practical action steps.

(Evaluation of the book reviews will consist primarily of how thoroughly you allowed the material to impact you and to inform future ministry commitments).

**The “Exercise in Essential Living”**

This phrase comes from Henry David Thoreau’s experiential accounting of *Walden* in which he attempted to determine the bare bones of the necessity of life. Although we would not want to give Thoreau too much authority, his endeavor toward the simplicity of what’s essential seems especially pertinent for families today. Thus on a smaller scale this assignment asks you to take one full day, or if you can afford it, one full weekend and conduct your own “exercise in essential living.” It asks you to consider what really are the essentials of living fully? what really replenishes your soul?, what gladdens your heart?, what puts the fizz back in your doctor pepper? Or, to be even more Christlike, aim these questions not at yourself, but at your family and/or spouse? What kind of a day could you create for them that at the end of it they would say “Ahhhhh, today was the most “essential” experience I’ve had in years!!” Then take as many pages as there is energy in the experience for you to communicate what you have learned and come to discover about how to live a soulful, essential life and/or how you give it to others. Don’t be afraid to report as well on any frustration you may have had in the experience, these too may be rich sources of enlightenment for you, revealing why so many of us “live lives of quiet desperation.”

**Journals of Personal Reflections**

I fully anticipate that in almost every class session and/or reading assignment you will find rich material for personal reflection and meaning making. Though some of these probes may be irritating, I believe them to be the “stuff” the Holy Spirit would desire for us to rub and polish into the pearls of our soul. I find journaling to be a rich way to be intentionally involved in this refinishing work. (If you have another method, for example, assembling life’s experiences through a collection of music or if you paint or write poetry – whatever helps you move through