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CD 615 Discipleship Development in the Home

Chris Kiesling

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Department of Christian Education
Course Prospectus

CD 615 -Discipleship Development in the Home (3 hours)

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)
Meeting Room:	1:00-2:15 TTH, M103
Office:	FM108 (the "womb" of the bookstore)
Phone:	858-2382 (If I am unavailable you may access my voice mail)
E-Mail:	c_kiesling@asburyseminary.edu
Office Hours:	Thursdays 2:15-3:15 or by appointment

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 and communities of faith 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 family systems and the consequent roles they create for members in those systems.
6. Image the components of healthy families and marriages and how to encourage their growth.
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 identity development and self-functioning, and the uniqueness each gender tends to bring to the family equation.
9. Create congregational strategies for ministering to families.

Textbooks:

Norman Cohen, *Self, Struggle & Change: Family Conflict Stories in Genesis and Their Healing Insights for Our Lives*. Woodstock VT: Jewish Lights Press, 1995.

Larry Crabb, *Connecting: A Radical New Vision*. Nashville: Word, 1997.

Donald Joy, *Empower Your Kids to be Adults*. Napanee: Indiana, 2000.

Walter Wangerin, Jr. *As For Me and My House: Crafting Your Marriage to Last*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987.

Freudenburg, Ben and Lawrence, Rick, *The Family Friendly Church*. Vital Ministry, 1998.

If you have read one of these texts and/or have reason that you want to focus on a particular topic not covered by these texts I will allow some substitutions. The following are possibilities. Please submit any proposed substitutions to me in writing.

Archibald Hart, *The Sexual Man: Masculinity Without Guilt*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1994.

(A landmark study of religious men and their thoughts, desires, temptations, and sexual practices)

Blake Neff & Donald Ratcliffe (Eds.), *Handbook of Family Religious Education*. Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1995.

(Originally a text book for this class before learning that only a selected number of copies are available. Class presentations will draw from this text as it research based and focused on the religious education of the family).

Don Joy, *Risk-proofing Your Family*.

(A family systems look at understanding the dynamics of different families. Offers hope especially to parents faced with raising teens during the years of being thrown into the sexual crucible.)

Lee N. June (ed.), *The Black Family: Past, Present, & Future*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

(Sixteen writers address fifteen issues prominent in the African American communities.)

James E. Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

(A lifespan approach that brings together the work of Freud, Erikson, Piaget with Kierkegaard, Barth, and Pannenberg)

Mike Mason, *The Mystery of Marriage*.

(A deeply spiritual view of marriage written by an author who in contemplating the celibate priesthood struggled with the competing need he felt for solitude and for companionship)

Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia*.

(A penetrating look at the societal expectations and judgments placed on adolescent females and the difficult emotional journey that accompanies it)

Sheldon Vanauken, *A Severe Mercy*. San Francisco: Harper, 1980.

(A love story of a couple who tasted the heights and the depths of love in their search for faith and meaning. Included in their journey are eighteen letters written by C.S. Lewis who leads them to Christian Faith and through the redefinition of their love.)

Attendance and Participation

Loan-granting institutions are now requiring attendance records on students for accounting purposes. Therefore, the faculty has an obligation to take daily attendance records in every class and report any repetitive absences. A small percentage of your grade for this class depends on attendance and includes what you bring to the “festival of sharing” on the final class days. Especially in the case of borderline grades, being remembered by the professor for your comments in class and creativity in the final project can be determinative

The festival of sharing is your opportunity to share personal truth that has come home to you this semester as a result of this class. Draw deeply from your creative side in what you want to present and really add value to this closure experience for your colleagues. If you work in a form of art, create something related to the family and bring it to show; If you are from another culture introduce us to some customs that can broaden our understanding of family life in your home (e.g. wedding videos, rites of passage, stories that your tribe tells or national myths that reveal the values of your culture); If your family has a particularly profound way of teaching faith at home or you as a couple have a great way to bless each other, demonstrate for us how it is done (no ethos violations please); If you realized something about yourself you have never seen before, bring your best journal entry in which you wrote about it; If your grade is suffering, bring food. Unfortunately in a class this size the presentation must be kept short, no longer than three minutes. (If there is ample reason to need a bit longer see me ahead of time.)

Personal Reflection Papers (Required for the five assigned texts)

For each text type a three page, double spaced reflection paper using approximately one page for each of the following responses. Please note this is both a cognitive exercise designed to assess whether or not you are obtaining the objectives for this course and an attempt for you to look personally at your own journey. I encourage you as you write to invite the Holy Spirit to probe places of pain, to name and give understanding to what has shaped you from the past, to point toward greater wholeness, and to envision strategic points for ministry.

Page One - What did the author desire to accomplish in the writing of this text and was he (unfortunately they are all male authors) successful? Consider the objectives for this course. How does this text help you address these objectives? Demonstrate in your first page how reading this text has helped you think about these objectives.

Page Two - Report the concrete experiences and reflective observations that this material stirred for you while reading this book. These may be personal anecdotes, experiences and observations about your family and others you have encountered, ideas that you wrestled with or felt convicted by, questions the book failed to address, etc.

Page Three – 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 and aim at practical personal steps and proposed uses.

(Evaluation of the book reviews will consist primarily of how thoroughly you answered each of these areas).

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 at least four hours of one full day (even better if you could commit a full sabbath to it) 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 how you could bless your family, spouse, and/or significant other? What kind of a day could you create for them that at the end of it they would say “Ahhhh, today was the most “essential” experience I’ve had in years!! Today I was really loved!! Today we really connected.”

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,” disconnected from those we purport to love most.

Journals from Class Sessions

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 - e.g. assembling life’s experiences through a collection of music, painting, writing poetry, or if you process best by talking it out with a significant other - whatever helps you move through life’s experiences and deepen your understanding, propose it as an alternative). Throughout the semester make at least one weekly journal entry in which you address something that captured your attention or follow the suggestions that I make in class. (Plan on a total of ten entries; you can have two weeks of grace and can skip a week when you do the exercise in essential living). Typed journal entries are easiest to read, but if script is more personal and at least legible feel free to compose it how you would like. You can use whatever container you desire, but be aware that in order to facilitate my remarks there may be occasion where I have the journals for a week or two.

Journal entries are held strictly confidential and will be returned directly to you in class, so feel free to be raw, honest and vulnerable. Nothing is counted against you for the language you choose to use in your journals. Indeed, I find that I tend to meet students in my feedback at whatever level they choose to expose me to (I trust that that is how the Holy Spirit works with us and between us). However, I also think it is best that I not enter into a formal therapeutic relationship with you while also serving as professor. If you uncover issues in which I think there might be benefit to seek further counseling, I will suggest it to you and with your permission we can work through student services to get an appointment with one of my respected colleagues or refer you to someone specializing in a particular area.

On the next page is a list of the kinds of questions I would like for you to consider and from which I will make suggestions from time to time. However, make this a sacred time and follow the Spirits’ lead in what you write and think about.

- What was my dominant childhood feeling? How do I live today as an attempt to maintain or to avoid that feeling?
- Being made in the “image of God” implies that I have the ability to create. I feel most creatively alive when I _____?
- What is my “attachment style”? How did it form and how does it affect me today? How has it affected how I perceive the way God relates to me and views me?
- Does the family systems typology offer me any insight into my family. If so how? or is my experience something no one has really helped me to understand?
- What might my family or spouse be learning by observing me what grace and holiness feel like and how godliness manifests itself in a persons’ life? How will they learn to pray? What in my life is teaching them to experience life as gift and to gain a heart of gratitude?
- In popular media, whose story is being told about sexuality? How has this story affected/distorted my desires and perceptions? How do I feel about being a man or a woman?
- How might the church develop a wholistic approach to healthy sexuality?
- What would it be like to be married to someone like me?
- What would I experience and feel at church if I were a single person, thirty to forty years old attending a Sunday school class and a worship service?
- How can I help myself and others honor the midlife journey?
- How do I feel about divorce and divorcees? On what basis will I perform second marriages?
- What vision can the church carry that will curb the baby boomers tendency to spend retirement in narcissistically?
- How can the church honor and deploy the wisdom/gifts for ministry of the elderly?
- What question do I most hope that nobody will ever ask me while I am in seminary?

The “I want an ‘A’ for this class” paper/project

This assignment is the more academic one in this course and asks you to study a family, ministry, or personal issue in which you feel like you or the church needs more insight. Examples might include: characteristics of families from another ethnic background, exploring your sexual identity and/or how the church forms and deforms people sexually, family devotionals, working out a theology of divorce, ministering to infertile couples, outlining a family oriented course for a church setting, starting a twelve-step ministry, etc. Although I hope you will aim for excellence, I don’t insist that this be a thoroughly researched paper. Rather, I’d like for you to approach it as you might if you had a few weeks to research a burning issue that your church needed you to address next month in a seminar, from the pulpit, etc., or one that you needed to personally explore. (See the recommended supplemental texts as starters).

My expectation would be that you peruse the library for the six best books on the subject and/or the internet for related topics and/or ask experts. Write about three to five pages with references according to what you’ve found. Whereas I expect you to read the assigned textbooks thoroughly, this assignment pushes you to broadly overview the stuff available on a given topic and start a habit of quickly perusing it to find what might be helpful for a particular situation.

Grading Scale

1. Response papers to the five texts - 50 points total (10 points each)
2. Exercise in Essential Living 15 points
3. Journal Entries 20 points
4. Attendance and Participation 5 points
5. "I want an A" final Project 10 points

(Note: If time or energy constraints are an issue for you this semester it is possible to choose to eliminate the paper/project for a solid grade of B or C)

The following descriptions from the Asbury catalogue will provide the guidelines for grades based on a ten point scale.

A = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

D = Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Planned Spring Agenda

<u>DATE</u>	<u>Assignments/Class Focus</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Feb 12 & 14	Intro, Df family The classroom as community	Cohen 1 Crabb 1-4
Feb 19 & 21	Creation – God’s intent	Crabb 5-8
Feb 26	The Fall	Cohen 2, Crabb 9-12 (Turn in two journal entries)
Feb 28	Crabb discussion	Crabb 13-17 (PRP on Crabb is due)
Mar 5 & Mar 7	Sociological/Developmental Foci on the family	Handout(s) – Popenoe
Mar 12 & 14	Children’s faith formation and early attachment	Cohen 4,5, 6
Mar 19 & 21	Family Systems	Joy - Intro, 1-4 (Journals due)
Mar 26 & 28	Adolescent faith development Sexuality and Media	Joy - 5-9 (PRP on Joy is due)
April 2 & 4	Reading week	
April 9 & 11 April 16 & 18	Young adulthood Gender differences Marriage Singles have families too	Wangerin 1-8 Wangerin 9-17 (PRP on Wangerin due)
April 23 & 25	Mid life Step and blended families Divorce/Remarriage	Cohen 3 (PRP on Cohen due)
April 30 & May 2	Later life	Read in selected book

	Grandparenting Death and dying	(Journals due –final set)
May 7 & 9	Family focused ministry Miscellaneous topic(s)	Freudenburg (entire book) (PRP on Freudenburg due)
May 14 & 16	Festival of sharing Evaluations	(“I want an ‘A’” papers due)
Thursday, May 23 8:00-10:00a.m. if needed	Festival of sharing	