**Unit 4**

**Family Relationships**

This contract needs to be viewed with great flexibility by the teacher. The diversity of family backgrounds will require that you carefully personalize this contract to the needs of each student.

* If the student is married, then the primary focus of this contract can deal with this husband-wife relationship.
* If the student is a teenager and living at home, or may be living there again in the future, then the primary focus could be on developing clear lines of communication between this teen and the parents.
* If the student comes from a fine family background, with no major conflicts affecting their relationships, then you may want to focus the contract on how this student can create a solid Christian family in the future when he or she marries.
* If the student comes from a background of physical or sexual abuse, or some other serious family problem, you will need to exercise great care in designing this contract. It is extremely important that you maintain confidentiality with the information this student shares with you.

Don't try to solve all the problems of the past with this one contract. Try to determine what problems from the past are affecting the student today. Strive to lay a solid foundation on how Christ can build a new family life for this person. They do not have to be a slave to their past. Healing will come, but for now, focus on discovering what is God's plan for a loving Christian family. We cannot change the past, but we can choose the future.

Do not push for a quick restoration of family relationships with the one who was abusing the student. Let the Holy Spirit be the one to direct the student in that difficult area. This may be the time for restoration, but with others, you may have to help the student become more deeply established in their relationship with God before full healing and restoration will come. For others, their family relationships may be so toxic and broken that it would be dangerous to seek to reconnect with those family members.

Before you begin writing the Student Learning Contract for this unit, you may want to have the student complete PSNC Project 305, *"Biography of My Family."* Have the student identify the areas of his or her family life that are strong and those areas where there are weaknesses. Have them finish the statement, "If there was one thing I would like to change in my family, it would be. . ."

This contract is not just for learning facts about the Christian family. When you choose the different learning activities for this contract, try to include special projects that will require the students to use some of the information they are learning about family relationships. Try to design projects they can use when they have visits, phone calls, or letters from their family.

Lesson 109, *“God’s Plan for the Family,”* can provide helpful insights as the student works on this contract. The student may have completed Lesson 109 in Unit 1 or Unit 2, rather than waiting until Unit 4. The content of Lesson 109 is very basic. It also helps to introduce very early to the new Christian some of the basic principles of the Christian family. Too often this issue is left in the background for several months after the person becomes a Christian. By the time students get to Unit 4 on Family Relationships, they have already formed some clear opinions regarding their family and what they intend to do in their future relationships with these people. Lesson 109 is one attempt to get their thinking directed towards God's plan for their family.

If the student has not completed Lesson 109, then make it one of the first lessons they work on in this contract.

If the student has already completed Lesson 109 before they start this contract, then take time to review their answers, especially the ones which deal with their own family members. You may want to require the student to read over this lesson again before you sit down to decide what materials to include in this contract.

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