



**The status of women and men in the marriage by John Chrysostom (c. 349-407)**

**El status de la mujer y del hombre en el matrimonio según San Juan Crisóstomo (c. 349-407)**

**O *status* da mulher e do homem no matrimônio de acordo com São João Crisóstomo (c. 349-407)**

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**Abstract:** Saint John Chrysostom refers to the obligations of spouses in a marriage. He addresses mainly his advice in men, because the male selfishness hardly is tamed and he sometimes behaves with cruelty. Chrysostom condemns the practice of physical violence and abuse of women by men. On the contrary he requires the sacrificial spirit from man, great forgiveness and not threats and intimidation. With grace and meekness, the deep peace of the family will be ensured and the discontent will be removed and also the devotion of one spouse to the other will increase. Chrysostom says: “There is nothing, nothing more precious than to anyone be loved so much from his wife or from her husband”. St. John Chrysostom refers to a cohesive element, the foundation of conjugation, communication between spouses. It is the daily interaction of both spouses. The most important element of communication is discussion. The debate should be about intimacy, mutual respect in an atmosphere of freedom, equality and love. Then you may find the solution in case of disagreement or conflict. St. John Chrysostom thinks that the husband and the wife must try together to have a happy marriage.

**Resumo:** San Juan Crisóstomo se refiere a las obligaciones de los cónyuges en el matrimonio. Dirige principalmente su consejo a los hombres, porque el egoísmo masculino casi no se domestica y se comporta a veces con crueldad. Crisóstomo condena la práctica de la violencia física y el abuso de las mujeres por los hombres. Por el contrario, el exige al hombre espíritu de sacrificio, gran perdón y no amenazas e intimidación. Con gracia y mansedumbre se garantizará la paz profunda de la familia y el descontento será eliminado, y

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también se incrementará la devoción de uno de los cónyuges hacia el otro. Crisóstomo dice: “No hay nada, nada más precioso que no se ame a nadie tanto como a su esposa o a su esposo.” San Juan Crisóstomo se refiere a un elemento de cohesión, la base de la cohesión, la comunicación entre los cónyuges. Es la interacción diaria de ambos cónyuges. El elemento más importante de la comunicación es la discusión. El debate debería ser sobre la intimidad, el respeto mutuo en un ambiente de libertad, de igualdad y de amor. Entonces se puede encontrar la solución en caso de desacuerdo o conflicto. San Juan Crisóstomo piensa que el esposo y la esposa deben conjuntamente tratar de tener un matrimonio feliz.

**Keywords:** Marriage – Family – Spouses – Mutual respect – Love.

**Palabras-chave:** Matrimonio – La familia – Los cónyuges – El respeto mutuo – El amor.

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## The marriage as a holy sacrament

Through the ages many people, besides Christians, thought that marriage was something sinful and only the monastic life and the virginity have a high position in God’s eye. A saint of Christian Church, John Chrysostom takes the burden of supporting the marriage. He talks about the sanctity and beauty of the sacrament of marriage, using arguments based on passages of the Holy Scriptures. His aim is to “restore marriage to its due nobility and to silence those heretics<sup>2</sup> who call it evil. Some of people call his words immodest because he speaks of the nature of marriage, which is honorable. By calling his words immodest, Chrysostom answers, they condemn God, the author of marriage.<sup>3</sup>

According to St. John Chrysostom, Marriage is “a great compensation for man's mortality”<sup>4</sup>, because through marriage the “succession of offspring”<sup>5</sup> is accomplished. With the gift of Marriage God sought to “soothe”<sup>6</sup> the

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<sup>2</sup> Such sects were the Marcionites, Encratitae, Apotactitae, Saccophori, Manichaeans, etc.

<sup>3</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, 12, PG 62, 386B.

<sup>4</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Genesim*, 38, PG 53, 353C.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

harshness of the penalty of death and “to remove the fierce mask of death”<sup>7</sup>, and thus prefigure the victory over death, i.e. the resurrection.<sup>8</sup>

The Bible begins with a wedding of Adam and Eve and ends with a wedding<sup>9</sup>: the marriage supper of the Lamb. And in between, God, speaking through the prophets, repeatedly invokes marriage as the pre-eminent symbol of his covenant<sup>10</sup>. John Chrysostom explains that marriage is both an image of baptism, where the believer is wed to Christ, and an image of the Eucharist, which makes “one flesh”<sup>11</sup> of the believer and Christ. He tells the new Christians to “keep the marriage robe in its integrity, that with it you may enter forever into this spiritual marriage”<sup>12</sup>. And Chrysostom clarifies that through baptism and the Eucharist, we become “partakers of the divine nature”<sup>13</sup>. John advises every woman and every man to live their marriages purely, as Christ lives his. Indeed, this *hieros gamos* is the substance of the Christian mystery. Christ’s death is a sacred is a sacred marriage<sup>14</sup>, and the Eucharist is the marriage feast, celebrating the successful nuptials of the Lamb and his bride.<sup>15</sup>

A marriage as a sacrament is sacred and holy act. It bases on the natural bond, which is generated by the mutual consent of those, men and women, who

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, PG 51, 229A.

<sup>10</sup> M. Aquilina, “One flesh of purest gold. *John Chrysostom’s Discovery of the Blessings & Mysteries of Marriage*”, *Touchstone, A journal of mere Christianity*, vol. 21, issue 1 (2008), 3-15, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, 12, 5, PG 62, 388B. Cf. Matt. 19,5. Gen. 2, 24. John Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum*, PG 58, 597A, C.

<sup>12</sup> John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions 6, 24- 25*. "And how become they one flesh? As if you should take the purest part of gold, and mingle it with the other gold; so in truth here also the women as it were receiving the richest part fused by pleasure, nourishes it and cherishes it, and throughout contributing her own share, restores it back to the man. And the child is a sort of bridge so that the three become on flesh, the child connecting, on either side, each to each... What then? When there is not child, will they not be two? Not so, for their coming together has this effect; it diffuse and commingles the bodies of both. And as one who has poured ointment into oil has made the whole one; so in truth is it also here".

<sup>13</sup> 2 Pet. 1,4.

<sup>14</sup> John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions 6, 23- 25*. K. P. Wesche, “Reflections on the priesthood on Eastern Orthodoxy”, *The Theology of Priesthood*, D. J. Goergen, A., Garrido (eds), New York 2000, p. 182.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

come into communion marriage. This natural bond is proved sacred and spiritual relation, when it is sanctified and exalted in the value of mystery with church ceremony and prayers of Christ's Church. The mystery of the marriage<sup>16</sup> is great according the apostle Paul, because it is parallel to the union of Christ with the Church<sup>17</sup>. For this reason, the Apostle of Nations, Paul, commands husbands, "love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her"<sup>18</sup> (Eph 5:25).

If necessary a husband should surrender his life for his wife. But even then, a husband will never do anything equal to what Christ has already done for us. A husband is called to sacrifice himself for the person to whom he willingly joined, but Jesus gives himself up for us who turned our backs on him in the hatred of sin. One's partner for life, the mother of one's children, the source of one's every joy, should never endure fear and threats, but love and kindness. "What kind of marriage can there be when the wife is afraid of her husband on in dread that he does not love her?", Saint Chrysostom wonders and adds, "the husband who does not make his wife the loved one in the family has failed as a husband and as a man"<sup>19</sup>. As we can summarize Chrysostom refers to Ephesians 5:22-24 by focusing on the blessing of agreement or harmony between husband and wife.

The bond between man and woman in marriage must be so tight as the bond of Christ with Church. As Eve came from Adam's rib while he was sleeping<sup>20</sup>, so the Church came from Christ, who was dead on the cross. From the pierced side of Christ came "blood and water" of which became the Church. St. John Chrysostom notes that Moses does not use the verb "create" (ἐπλασεν) when he speaks of Eve, but rather the verb, "build" (ωκοδόμησεν) wanting to show that she came from the same substance as Adam, not from some other substance. So the woman is not inferior or lacking in something, in relation to Adam. She is a perfect human being, and equal in value to him.

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<sup>16</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, 12, PG 62, 387B. *Encomium ad Maximom*, PG 51, 230C.

<sup>17</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, PG 62, 225AB. Eph. 5, 31-32: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and two shall become one flesh. This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church".

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 5,25.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, PG 62, 139A.

Knowing beforehand that the first-created ones would fall, God invented marriage and their need for mutual consolation.

In the sacrament of marriage Christ is present. With the “water” of baptism we are born again “*anagennometha*” and we are nourished spiritually with the “blood” of Christ through the Eucharist. Therefore, the spouses are members of Christ's body. Hence the command of the apostle Paul that men have an obligation to love their wives, “even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”<sup>21</sup> and Paul adds that “Even so it is right for husbands to have love for their wives as for their bodies. He who has love for his wife has love for himself”.<sup>22</sup>

In support of what Paul said, John Chrysostom emphasizes that not only the husbands must cherish their women, because the latter are part of them and are created by men, but because God appointed law about this great thing, the marriage, saying the following “every man will leave his father and mother and be closely linked to the wife, and the two of them become one flesh. For this very reason and Paul reads us this law, to motivate the spouses to love each other”.<sup>23</sup>

Marriage is a mystery of love. Only in a virtuous marriage is true love found, peace, and true happiness, which accompanies temperance. When the husband sees the spiritual gifts of his wife, his love and desire for her increase and other women do not draw him away. The spouses’ love will make the marriage as the safe port.<sup>24</sup> There, the spouses can find a lee and they must protect it from the storms. The abstention from the carnal knowledge of the spouses should be decided by both the parties. The unification of them is similar with the perfume that is mixed with ointment.<sup>25</sup> Chrysostom underlines: “Christ ordered with the mouth of Paul not to deprive one another, but some women were removed from their men with supposedly desire continence for the sake of piety, and she pushed him in adultery and gulch loss”.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, PG 62, 218A. Cf. Eph. 5, 25.

<sup>22</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, PG 62, 218AB. Cf. Eph. 5, 28.

<sup>23</sup> John Chrysostom, *Encomium ad Maximom*, PG 51, 235C.

<sup>24</sup> Περὶ παρθενίας, ΕΠΕ, τ. 29, σ. 472.

<sup>25</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, 12, PG 62, 393B.

<sup>26</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Matthaeum*, PG 58, 768A-C.

One spouse will not be deprived from other without agreement and he explains with clear words that nor does a woman stay away from the wedding bed if her husband disagrees, neither does a man, if his woman does not want the same.<sup>27</sup> By this kind of temperance, great evils are born, such as adulteries, fornications and families breakdown. The inability of one spouse to respond to the marital duties with the other causes constant temptations, frustrations and conflicts. So the calm, the harmony and peaceful coexistence into marriage are lost. If this happens, the love between the spouses is ruined and the piety is useless because it banishes love: “What is the profit of fasting and abstinence when the love breaks? None”.

Here, according to St. John Chrysostom, conjugal communion does not have as its purpose only the bringing of children into the world, but also the combatting of the temptation of the Devil<sup>28</sup>. According to this, the couple of married should not think the sexual life between them is a sin. Paul Evdokimof explains: “Under the grace of the sacrament the sexual life is lived without causing the slightest decline of the inner life”<sup>29</sup>. So the marriage preserves purity, chastity, and even virginity. Marriage as a unity of persons is not restricted to the level of matter and material sense; contrarily, matter and material sense serve the communion of the person and in this way, they acquire a spiritual content. The prayers of the marriage service clearly address this pastoral issue; the priest prays for the bed of the couple to remain “undefiled”.<sup>30</sup>

### **The spouses' behavior in their marriage**

There is no relations between strange humans as close as that of a husband and wife, if they are united in love as they ought to be. This bond is so strong that it is the force that binds society together. Man will take up arms and even sacrifice their lives of the sake of this love<sup>31</sup>. The spouses must have the prayer as pillar on their union. The husband and wife must be sure to pray

<sup>27</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad 1<sup>a</sup> Corinthios*, 19, PG 61, 152C.

<sup>28</sup> A. Alevisopoulos, *The Orthodox Church. Its faith, its worship, its life*, trans. St. Avramides, *Antiairetiko egolpion*, Athens 2010, <http://www.egolpion.com/Marriage.en.aspx>.

<sup>29</sup> P. Evdokimof, *The Sacrament of Love*, trans. By Anthony P. Gythiel and Victoria Steadman, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood 1985, p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> St John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad 1<sup>a</sup> Corinthios*, 19, PG 61, 155C.

<sup>31</sup> M. Shivanandan, *Original Solitude: Its Meaning in Contemporary Marriage; a Study of John Paul II's Concept of the Person in Relation to Marriage and Family*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, 1995, 290-291.

together. Upon arising, which should be done before the sun, and before washing, one should say his prayers. For just as water washes the body, so prayers wash the soul. Following the evening meal, the family should give themselves to thanksgiving, and not to drunkenness and excess.

Married couples can imitate the self-denial of the monks by giving themselves to thanksgiving and to psalm singing in their own home. After the Savior fed the multitudes, he did not dismiss them to sleep but he taught them. To such instruction, families should also commit themselves following their meals<sup>32</sup>. Chrysostom underlines that every day the married Christian rises in his own form of monastery. He has his own brotherhood and fellow ascetics in his wife and children. There he is called by God to anoint himself for the contest each day, and to exercise himself in the home against all passions.

However, not only a man has obligations to his marriage, but his wife too. Chrysostom reminds of Paul's word: "A wife should respect her husband even when he shows her no love, and a husband should love his wife even when she shows him no respect... However, she should reverence him as the head and he should love her as his body..."<sup>33</sup>. As St. John Chrysostom underlines that the *ethos* of the married and monastic vocations are similar in that both offer opportunities for sanctification, but through the monasticism, the married couples can find the instructions on how to apply personal discipline in the world.

The relation between a married couple should have as a base the love and the respect for each other, but this love should be expressed with different ways. So a husband must always begin his day by telling his wife how much he loves her. He must try to make his wife to feel unique. Every day, he should say to her that she is the most precious thing not only for this finite life, but for the infinite life too: "Our time here is brief and fleeing, but if we are pleasing to God, we can exchange this life for the Kingdom to come. Then we will be perfectly one both with Christ and each other, and our pleasure will know no bounds"<sup>34</sup>. By this word, he emphasizes his real love and she will be able to understand that for him, she is more preferable than any other woman in earth.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> J. Trenham, "St John Chrysostom and Married Life", lecture at St. Vladimir's Seminary on 30th January 2008.

<sup>33</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, 12, PG 62, 385B.

<sup>34</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, 20, PG 62, 146D.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

For this, he never calls her merely by her name, but with terms of endearment, with honor, and with much love<sup>36</sup>. As it is obvious Chrysostom takes the passage on marriage in Ephesians 5 as an occasion to in still loving behavior into both husband and wife<sup>37</sup>. Through love, the alienation of spouses from each other is addressed, as is the death of the relationship, which usually comes with the passage of time, with fatigue, and indifference. Then we are speaking of a marriage of compromise. St. John knows that communication is necessary for dealing with disagreements. This depends on how and what one says.<sup>38</sup>

Husband is the head of a marriage, but this fact doesn't give him the right to despotic. Rather, it must be centred in self-sacrificing servanthood, flowing from abounding love: “Do not, therefore –he tells husbands–, because your wife is subject to you, act like a despot. Likewise, because your husband loves you –he tells the wives–, do not be puffed up. Let neither the husband’s love elate the wife, nor the wife’s subjection puff up the husband. For this reason, He has subjected her to you, that she may be loved the more”<sup>39</sup>. The wife's subordination to the husband is ultimately directed to the Lord, as is the case with the church, but Chrysostom explains that the husband is not the “lord” of his wife. Yet the phrase “as to the Lord” governs the meaning of “wives, be subject to your husbands”. Christ establishes the nature of the roles of the spouses and their relationship “because he is concerned for the good order which makes his body functional”.<sup>40</sup>

The husband's authority, which is ordered to the good of the union of the spouses, comes from God. For the wife to be subject to and render *phobos* (fear) to her husband is for her to be subject to and render *phobos* (fear) to Christ himself. John Chrysostom, commenting on 1 Cor.11:3 said the head metaphor does not mean that one has authority as tyranny over another or one is under subjection to another, without having any right. The Bishop of Constantinople doesn't mean that the wife is not equal to her husband and should obey him as a servant to his master: She was not subjected as soon as she was made; nor when He brought her to the man, did either she hears any such thing from God, nor did the man say any such word to her; he said

<sup>36</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, 20, PG 62, 148C.

<sup>37</sup> M. Shivanandan, “Feminism and Marriage: a Reflection on Ephesians 5: 21-33”, *Diakonia*, Vol. 29 (1), 1996.

<sup>38</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, 20, PG 62, 147B.

<sup>39</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, 10, PG 62, 366C

<sup>40</sup> Col. 2,5.



indeed that she was ‘bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh’<sup>41</sup>: “but of rule or subjection he nowhere mentions unto her”<sup>42</sup>.

The marriage for the Holy Father is a heavy bondage like monasticism, in which the wife and the husband must be very careful to their attitude. For this, he underlines for wives that they must not be wicked, carping, a chatterbox, extravagant, filled with many other faults,<sup>43</sup> and he wonders, “how will that poor fellow endure this daily unpleasantness, this conceit, this impudence?”<sup>44</sup>. But father Chrysostom rushes to complete his thought, addressing to husband: “What if she is discreet and gentle, on the other hand, but he is rash, contemptuous, and irascible. What if he treats her as a slave, though she is free, and considers her no better than the maids-in-waiting? How will she endure such duress and violence?”<sup>45</sup>

Finally, Chrysostom's comments marital relations demonstrate sensitivity to the issue of spouse abuse when he writes “What kind of marriage can there be when the wife is afraid of her husband? What sort of satisfaction could a husband have, if he lives with his wife as if she were a slave, and not with a woman by her own free will? Suffer anything for her sake, but never disgrace her, for Christ never did this with the Church.”<sup>46</sup> Later in the same sermon he addresses the issue of abuse again when he states: ‘he (i.e. husband) must never exercise his authority by insulting and abusing her (i.e. his wife)’.<sup>47</sup>

St. John Chrysostom, with his emphasis on love, essentially says that spouses need to learn to forgive and to be tolerant of one another. The more mature of the two needs to take the first step. Within a marriage, it does not matter who erred or why they did something. What is important is who attempts to fix the situation in the quickest manner. “Let us be tolerant”, the Saint says, “of one another, with love. How is it possible to be tolerant if you are angry and foul-mouthed? Say the way: with love. If you can’t tolerate your neighbor,

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<sup>41</sup> Gen. 2:23. *In epistulam ad 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthios*, 19, PG 61, 167C.

<sup>42</sup> Gen. 2:23.

<sup>43</sup> John Chrysostom, *De virginitate*, 15, PG 48, 545AB

<sup>44</sup> John Chrysostom, *De virginitate*, 16, PG 48, 553D.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, PG 62, 152B.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* See K. F. Mutter, “John Chrysostom's theology of Marriage and family”, *BRT/RBT*, 6, No. 2 (Autumn, 1996), 22-32, p. 30.



how will God tolerate you? If you can't bear the person who is your co-struggler, how will the Lord tolerate you?"<sup>48</sup>

### **Parents and Children. Children's upbringing**

For John Chrysostom, everything stems from God's plan of salvation. He put marriage in very high esteem because he saw it as the arena in which most people would take up the call to holiness –and do it in a way that led their spouse and children to holiness as well. And central to that plan was the gift of married love, a gift “that no possession can equal; for nothing, nothing whatever, is more precious than to be loved by a wife and to love her”.<sup>49</sup>

Married love, according to the holy father, is not just romantic sentiment. It is filled with sacramental grace that raises a couple above the limitations of their fallen, human mindsets.

St. John Chrysostom promoted the idea that a married couple, together with their children, form a "domestic Church" in which young people are educated in faith and virtue. A married couple with children can become as the Church of Jesus Christ, if the members of a family pray to God and live according to his orders. Then, Jesus' promise will be true: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”<sup>50</sup> “And not only is Jesus present in marriage,” John supports, “but so, too, are many angels, archangels, and other heavenly powers”<sup>51</sup>.

During the Marriage Service, priest prayers for the fruit of the womb and the joy of good children for the couple. It does not say “many children” but “good children.” These may even be one or two. Indeed, several examples of holy couples are cited in the prayers; each couple had but one or two children. The exception was Jacob who, with two wives and two maids, had to sire the patriarchs of the twelve tribes. These couples increased and multiplied their virtues. Abraham and Sarah, Elizabeth and Zachariah, Joachim and Anna, Isaac and Rebecca, for example, far from “filling the earth”, did not quite

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<sup>48</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, 9, PG 62, 72BC.

<sup>49</sup> John Chrysostom, *In principium Actorum*, PG 51, 49AB.

<sup>50</sup> Matt. 18:20

<sup>51</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, PG 62, 162B.



replace their own numbers on the earth. For all couples, the Service only asks “for the fruit of the womb as is expedient for them”.<sup>52</sup>

First of all, Chrysostom says that the couple must have love, calmness and respect each to another. These sentiments are reflected to the daily life of a married couple and the children feel an inner joy. Then, the holy father’s underlines that children should be brought up according to God’s order. The naming of the children should be given from the names of saints: “So let the name of the saints enter our homes through the naming of our children, to train not only the child but the father, when he reflects that he is the father of John or Elijah or James; for, if the name be given with forethought to pay honor to those that have departed, and we grasp at our kinship with the righteous rather than with our forebears, this too will greatly help us and our children. Do not because it is a small thing, regard it as small; its purpose is to succor us”<sup>53</sup>.

The purpose of upbringing a child in a Christian family should be to make the boy or the girl a good Christian. The parents should use the Holy Scriptures to teach him or her how he or she should behave them<sup>54</sup>. In their priorities must let everything take second place to their care of their children, their bringing them up to the discipline and instruction of the Lord. The love of true wisdom should be taught to children. Only then he is truly rich who does not desire great possessions, or surround himself with wealth, but who requires nothing. Because the children dream about to go out into the world stand in greater need of Scriptural knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

Parents must teach every child to sing those psalms which are so full of love of wisdom; as at once concerning chastity or rather, before all, of not companying with the wicked, immediately with the very beginning of the book; higher things. The Psalms and Hymns contain diviner things<sup>56</sup>. Children should be taught about eternal judgment and eternal punishment. This fear being rooted in them produces great good effects. For a soul that has learnt from its first youth to be subdued by this expectation, will not soon shake off

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<sup>52</sup> A petition of the first litany of the Marriage Service. G. S. Gabriel “you call my words immodest” On the Undefined Marital Bed, August 2012, <http://thoughtsintrusive.wordpress.com/2012/08/30/you-call-my-words-immodest>.

<sup>53</sup> John Chrysostom, *De inani gloria et de educandis liberis*, PG 48, 641D

<sup>54</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, PG 62, 162B.

<sup>55</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, PG 62, 157C.

<sup>56</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses*, 9, PG 62, 349C

this fear. Chrysostom likens the soul to a horse obedient to the bridle, having the thought of hell seated upon it, walking orderly, it will both speak and utter things profitable; and neither youth nor riches, not an orphan state, not any other thing, will be able to injure it, having its reason so firm and able to hold out against everything.<sup>57</sup>

And the holy father adds: “Youth is wild, and requires many governors, teachers, directors, attendants, and tutors; and after all these, it is a happiness if it is restrained. For as a horse not broken in, or a wild beast untamed, such is youth. But if from the beginning, from the earliest age, we fix it in good rules, much pains will not be required afterwards; for good habits formed will be to them as a law. Let us not suffer them to do anything which is agreeable, but injurious; nor let us indulge them, as forsooth but children. Especially let us train them in chastity, for there is the very bane of youth. For this many struggles, much attention will be necessary”.<sup>58</sup>

As a conclusion, parents should put as an aim of the upbringing of their children to make them true children of God. Only then, they would be really rich. Chrysostom underlines the importance for children of being obedient to God.

## Conclusions

The image and model of relations between spouses within marriage is certainly the one given by Paul, the relationship of Christ and the Church. As though this is understood as eschatological Saving relationship; a relationship that's Saving's love and obedience, where one rewards the other and together have the same ultimate logical destination. It is about the relationship of the body to the head. The fact that the woman appropriate obedience, that does not mean the man befitting the first "principle" or "power", but basically it deserves first "love".

And obedience is not associated with the principle but with love. The principle is fee of love. To him who shall have the heavier, i.e. love, appropriate and 'authority'.<sup>59</sup> It means that you obey your spouse because of

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<sup>57</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ii ad Thessalonicenses*, PG 62, 473A.

<sup>58</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Timotheum*, PG 62, 527D.

<sup>59</sup> P. Yazigi, Metr. of Aleppo-Syria, *Eschatology and Ethics*, PhD thesis, Thessaloniki 1992, p. 308-312.



love and not of authority or that he or she is the Lord and the other spouse is the slave.

Chrysostom rejects secular homage to the man and social objurgating, defamation, denigration of woman, which have nothing to do with the eschatological outlook of the Bible. The society is divisive discrimination, while those of the Bible are methods unionist. His advice of the father and eschatological distinction is the best deal and solution of the problems between spouses of a marriage.<sup>60</sup>

The relation between a man and his wife must be based on love and honor. Only then, the marriage will flourish. The love must be the main thing in a marriage but also in the children's upbringing. The latter don't need riches and generally education in human knowledge. They need to be taught to God's orders, to teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Then, they will be able to become soldiers of God and to earn the Kingdom of God.

Chrysostom's views were very modern for his era. He spoke about the love, equality and respect among the members of a family. If these things are in marriage, only then it will be a domestic church. Only then, all the members of this family will have blessing.

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*



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