# Bringing the Life Model to LIFE

# The LIFE Model Study Guide for Individuals and Small Groups

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#### Based on the book:

The Life Model: Living From the Heart Jesus Gave You By James G. Friesen, Ph.D., E. James Wilder, Ph.D., Anne M. Bierling, M.A., Rick Koepcke, M.A., and Maribeth Poole, M.A. Copyright 1999, 2000 by Shepherd's House Inc.

## Essential Needs & Tasks For Maturity

NOTE: Each stage builds on the previous stage: therefore each stage includes the needs and tasks of the previous stage. The 'ideal age' is the earliest age at which new tasks can be attempted. The end of that stage expects some degree of mastery. In no way does our maturity determine our value, but it does determine the level of responsibility we can handle.

Ideal Age: Birth > Age 4

Ideal Age: Ages 4 > 13

#### THE INFANT STAGE

#### Needs

Joy bonds with both parents that are strong, loving, caring, secure Important needs are met without asking Quiet together time Help regulating distress and emotions Be seen through the "eyes of heaven" Receive and give life Have others synchronize with him/her first

#### Tasks

Receive with joy
Learn to synchronize with others
Organize self into a person through imitation
Learn to regulate emotions
Learn to return to joy from every emotion
Learn to be the same person over time
Learn self-care skills
Learn to rest

### THE CHILD STAGE

#### Needs

Weaning
Help to do what he does not feel like doing
Help sorting feelings, imaginations and reality
Feedback on guesses, attempts and failures
Be taught the family history
Be taught the history of God's family
Be taught the "big picture" of life

# THE CHILD STAGE (Continued)

See self through the "eyes of heaven"

#### **Tasks**

Take care of self (one is enough right now)
Learn to ask for what he/she needs
Learn self-expression
Develop personal resources and talents
Learn to make himself/herself understandable to others
Learn to do hard things
Learn what satisfies

#### THE ADULT STAGE

#### Needs

A rite of passage
Time to bond with peers and form a group identity
Inclusion by the same-sex community
Observing the same sex using their power fairly
Being given important tasks by his/her community
Guidance for the personal imprint they will make on history
Opportunities to share life in partnership

Ideal Age: Age 13 > first child

#### Tasks

Take care of two or more at the same time
Discover the main characteristics of his/her heart
Proclaim and defend personal and community (group) identity
Bring self and others back to joy simultaneously
Develop a personal style that reflects his/her heart
Learn to protect others from himself/herself
Learn to diversify and blend roles
Life-giving sexuality
Mutual satisfaction in a relationship
Partnership

# **THE PARENT STAGE** Ideal Age: From first child until youngest child becomes an adult at 13

#### Needs

To give life

An encouraging partner

Guidance from elders

Peer review from other fathers or mothers

A secure and orderly environment

#### Tasks

Giving without needing to receive in return

Building a home

Protecting his/her family

Serving his/her family

Enjoying his/her family

Helping his/her children reach maturity

Synchronizing with the developing needs of: children, spouse, family, work, & church

Ideal Age: Youngest child is an adult

# THE ELDER STAGE

#### Needs

A community to call his/her own

Recognition by his/her community

A proper place in the community structure

Have others trust them

#### Tasks

Hospitality

Giving life to those without families

Parent and mature his/her community

Build and maintain a community identity

Act like himself/herself in the midst of difficulty

Enjoy what God puts in each person in the community

(Seeing each of them through 'eyes of heaven')

Building the trust of others through the elder's own transparency and spontaneity