

An aerial, black and white photograph of a rural landscape. The image shows a patchwork of fields, some with rows of crops, and scattered trees. A winding road or path is visible. The overall tone is dark and moody. A vertical red line is positioned on the left side of the image, separating the subtitle text from the main title text.

FAMILY COUNSELING  
STRUCTURES WITHIN FIRST  
AND SECOND CENTURY  
CHRISTIANITY

# PASTORAL CARE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

# GRECO-ROMAN BACKGROUND

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- Greco-Roman Background
  - Various Terms of Importance
    - Oikos, familia, domus
  - Primacy of the Paterfamilias
    - Patria Potestas
  - Familial Pietas & Paideia
  - Relational & Sexual Norms
    - παιδοφθόρος

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- “Let us set our wives on the straight path, toward the good. Let them demonstrate the habit of purity worthy of love. Let them display the innocent will of their gentleness. Let them make evident the gentleness of their speech by their silence. Let them give their love devoutly, not according to partiality but equally to all who fear God.” (*1 Clement* 21.6b-7)
  - *1 Clement*, 21.6b-7, trans. Rick Brannan.

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- “Do not remove your hand from [*Or: Do not refrain from disciplining; or Do not shirk your responsibility towards*] your son or daughter, but from their youth teach them the reverential fear of God. Do not give orders to your male slave or female servant—who hope in the same God—out of bitterness, lest they stop fearing the God who is over you both. For he does not come to call those of high status, but those whom the Spirit has prepared. And you who are slaves must be subject to your masters as to a replica of God, with respect and referential fear.” (Didache 4.9-11)
  - *Didache* 4.9-11 ed. and trans. Bart Ehrman.

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- “Tell my sisters to love the Lord and to be content with their husbands in flesh and in spirit. In the same way, also command my brothers in the name of Jesus Christ to love their wives like the Lord loved the church.” (Ignatius, *To Polycarp* 5.1)
  - Ignatius, *To Polycarp* 5.1, trans. Rick Brannan.



## “WE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT”

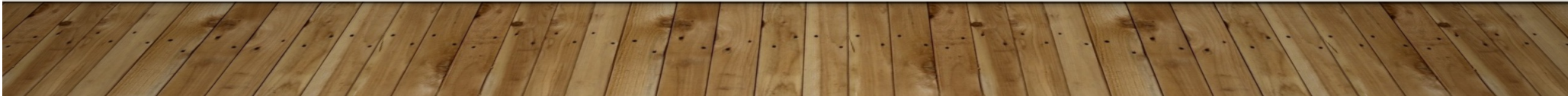
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- Justin Martyr- “But as for us, we have been taught that to expose newly-born children is the part of wicked men; and this we have been taught lest we should do any one an injury, and lest we should sin against God, first, because we see that almost all so exposed (not only the girls, but also the males) are brought up to prostitution” (*First Apology*, XXVII)
- Justin, *First Apology*, taken from: *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, Vol. 1 Eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Rev. A. Cleveland Coxe (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 172.

# FOCUS ON THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY VS. CULTURE

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- “Do not treat male or female slaves arrogantly, but do not puff them up either; instead let them serve even more to the glory of God, that they may experience a better freedom from God. Let them desire not to be set free at the church’s expense, that they not be disclosed as slaves of lust.” (Ignatius, *To Polycarp* 4.3)
- “Do not command your male slave or female slave who are hoping in the same God in your bitterness, lest they cease to fear the God over you both, for he does not come to call with partiality but to whom the spirit prepares. And slaves, you shall be subject to your master as to a copy of God, in modesty and fear.” (Didache 4.10-11)
- Ignatius, *To Polycarp* 4.3, trans. Rick Brannan.
- *Didache* 4.10-11 trans. Rick Brannan.



## THEMES OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY COUNSEL

- Pastoral care of the early catholic Christian family in the first and second century was a part of the larger paraenetic-psychagogic enterprise, at least in the stated vision of the primary source authors, and its content contained the following sub points: *it had a theocentric trajectory which dominated the paraenesis and in which the paraenesis was founded; it had a telos shaped by an eschatological reality versus the temporal aspects of human relationships, and as such it was given within the typical relational structures of the culture and focused on the character of the Christian family without a call to change those larger relational structures.*