

LESSON 8

. . . MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE A BIBLE STUDY ON MARRIAGE

I. MARRIAGE INSTITUTED BY GOD

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this BIBLE STUDY is to give us a Biblical perspective of marriage and marriage relationships as instituted by our Father God.

God ordained and instituted marriage as a life long union between a man and a woman. He made woman to complete and complement man, 1 Corinthians 11:9

Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

One man to one woman and one woman to one man. Genesis 2:24 is absolutely clear:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave (*adhere/glue/ bond/ fuse himself*) unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Our Lord Jesus Christ confirmed this Old Testament verse and stated it to be His concept of marriage.

Matthew 19:5 "And (Jesus) said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain (the two of them) shall be one flesh."

In the Old Testament we read that many kings took to themselves many wives, but this was not with the consent of God, but rather in spite of His prohibition.

Deuteronomy 17:17, "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away"

A. WHY DID GOD INSTITUTE MARRIAGE?

We see the answer in the following Scriptures.

1. Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Conclusions: The pro-creation of children is the first reason given by God for the institution of marriage. Not one man with just any woman or women, but one man with one woman, his wife. The union of a man and his wife is the only divinely approved context for pro-creation.

Any sexual relationship outside of the marriage of a man and woman is SIN. Paul says 1 Corinthians 7:2:

"to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife. and let every woman have her own husband."

2. Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

Conclusions: The second function of marriage as instituted by God is seen in that God put man and women together to provide each other with a unique companionship.

Question: Is this a companionship between two equals?

Yes No Yes & No

(NOTE - unequal does not mean inferior)

Refer to the following Scriptures for conclusions:

Galatians 3:26-29, For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Ephesians 5:22-23, Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

1 Peter 3:7, Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

1 Corinthians 11:9-11, Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head (*covering*) because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man (*anything*) without the woman, neither the woman (*anything*) without the man, in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the man and woman are equal as far as their position/place in the Kingdom of God and in their importance to the marriage relationship. However, in the creation, God in His wisdom did not create man and woman equal [no man is equal to any woman, nor is any woman equal to any man]. God made/created them different, with each having a specific role in life and work. In the marriage union they are not to be regarded as co-equal partners. The one complements and completes the other simply because they are not equal.

Man and woman are created to fully complement and complete each other. This means that in the Lord a man needs a woman just as much as a woman needs a man. This unique relationship where the man and women complete each other is found only in marriage.

B. UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATES DIFFERENCES

As we discussed: "Men and women were not created by God equal BUT different." Understanding how uniquely different from you, God in His wisdom created your mate, will give you a more positive attitude and perspective of your role and your mates role in the marriage relationship.

IN WHAT WAYS DID GOD CREATE WOMEN DIFFERENT FROM MEN?

(The following material was taken verbatim from a Human Relationship Workshop Paper. I assume the information is correct for the most part, although I have not verified it. However, assuming that the material is accurate, it does have value in that it shows how men and women in marriage complete and complement each other. *Those portions of the text which are italicized typify the approach of psychology toward marriage and marriage relationships and are not Biblically correct.* These conclusions I will comment on at the end of this study.)

Women are different from men in more ways than you may know. Women's entire body structure is different from a man's; from the lesser number of blood cells to muscle and bone structure. She averages approximately 4/5 of a gallon of blood to men's 1-1/2 gallons. Her bone structure is smaller, her skin thinner, her skull thinner, her chromosomes and internal structures are different. She is smaller, prettier, and very attractive to the male species. But all that is not where the misunderstanding lies.

The biggest difference between male and female begins 18 to 24 weeks after conception. What happens there in the womb *causes all the problem**, and the greatest completeness for both men and women. Understanding what happens there, and what we do about it can lift us to greater heights of bliss or plunge us into deepest despair. Here's what happens. Some years back scientists noticed that a change appeared to take place in the male baby between the 18th and 24th week. They monitored the baby and mother to see what happened. What they found out was that the mother's body put out a wash of hormones that bathed the baby's brain. They were unable to determine what, if any difference it had on the girl baby, but the male child changed dramatically when the hormones hit the chromosomes of the male, it caused three notable things.

- 1. The right side of his brain receded slightly.**
- 2. Then part of the path connecting the right and left side of the brain disintegrated.**
- 3. The male brain began to produce the male sex hormone testosterone.**

These changes set him on a course dramatically different from the female. The important difference is that from this time on he would be primarily left-brain oriented.

We will go into the changes in more detail later in this study. For now let's sum up where the male and female differ.

The male became lateral brained; that is, they think primarily with the left side of their brain. They become more factual, logical, and goal conquering directed. *They can, by conscious effort and training, use the right side of the brain also,** but primarily they are directed by the left brain. They generally learn things like accounting, engineering, and other things involving logical thinking. On the other hand, women are bilateral brained. This means they can use, and do use both sides of their brain, ; however, the right side tends to dominate because this is the seat of emotions; a very powerful force. Women generally like songs, hugs, poems relationships, and much communication.

The summation of all this is: Men are left brain dominate - *cold**, factual, logical, goal setting and conquering directed, and less communicative. Women - right brain dominant - feelings more prominent, cries easily, know how they feel about things, emotional, and they relate in a more tender and loving way. Women communicate more - approximately 25,000 words per day compared to men of 12,000 words per day. Women have a greater awareness and ability to communicate. This is a very important tendency. Women are less aggressive - men start more fights. Women have more romantic thoughts and dreams; men, more violent dreams. There are 100 million romance books purchased annually. 99% by women because they are more relationship minded; *especially if their own relationship isn't fulfilling**. Men are harder to teach, more boastful, more argumentative, have more stuttering and reading problems and are more prone to sickness.

All these differences have a tremendous impact on the home and relationships. When men and women are in harmony, each draws from the other's unique abilities and nullify or minimize the negative areas. These things hold true in 90% of men and women. We make allowances for some differences. **Let's look at five significant differences and the affects which each have on our relationships.**

1. Men tend to want to discover and express facts (left brain) while women want to express emotions and intuition. (right brain).

Gary Smalley quotes a study done on children between the ages of 2-4. They were wired for sound and what they found was that little girls sounds were 100% conversation with themselves or others. Little boys sounds were 60% conversation and 40% noise. This same thing can carry over into a marriage. Women want to talk. Men ask what facts women want to discuss. She says, "Nothing special, let's just talk." When men run out of facts, they have finished talking. Women are just getting warmed up It's very difficult for men to discuss feelings. Women ask about details regarding the day's work. Men consider the details unimportant. i.e. "How did your day go? Fine. If women press men for

details, men feel interrogated and do not understand. Women usually have difficulty with maps. They can choose to learn maps but there must be a need. There is no relationship there. Women have more difficulty driving; especially at night. She may feel like everything is coming at her at one time. (right brain) Men tend to calculate distance of objects in relation to themselves and to be more confident (left brain). **** Remember each of us can choose to be different. We may be oriented in one direction but we are not fixed into a mold.**

2. Men seek solutions. They want to conquer. On a trip men want to conquer the road because they are goal-oriented. Women want to give sympathy and express their feelings and emotions.

Children come to Mom for sympathy, usually, rather than coming to Dad. Women want to feel the excitement of change and new things. Men like to hunt. Women sympathize with Bambi and Thumper. Women like to hold hands, be romantic, or window shop.

Pastor Cho tells about his experience as a young evangelist. He was gone except one or two days a week and very busy in preparation for the following week. His wife became despondent. She did nothing around the house, was withdrawn and moped around. Finally, his mother-in-law came to him and told him his wife was going to leave him if things didn't change. He did not understand. He did tell her though, "Monday of each week will be your day, we will do anything you wish. Guess what? On Mondays for the next three months Cho and his wife held hands and window shopped until he nearly went out of his mind.

She snapped out of her depression and became an excellent wife and partner. Why? Because he honored her; he made her a part of his life.

Men can make a decision to hold hands or to window shop. He can do it because it is important to her. Men can be very attentive, talkative, or romantic during courtship, but all that can end after marriage if he does not make a conscious decision to continue to do so. If he is not careful he may feel he has conquered and he can go back to being left-brained. The strong point of men is that they can make a decision to do those things that please their mate. Love is something we choose to do whether we feel it or not. Men can make that kind of decision. Women feel and do, while men do and then feel.

3. Men tend to be more objective. Women tend to be more personal.

Men identify with the objective or goal. Women identify with the people involved. Women are generally uninterested in sports unless their child or someone they know is involved. They identify more if this is the case. Women may not care to watch football, but when their son is playing they suddenly want to attend every high school game. Her child, his friends, his school; these things she could identify with. She is the loudest fan there! She knows these people.

4. Men can separate who they are from their surroundings at home, work, or wherever they are. When they are at one place the others are essentially forgotten. Women find it much more difficult to separate themselves from their home, children, job etc. ****All these become a part of her identity. Men's**

identity comes from what they do. Women get their identity from who they know. Men cut loose from home and pour themselves into their work while women want to keep those relationships even while they work. The implication of this is when women have dirty dishes, they feel uncomfortable leaving them undone. Men say, "Oh, let them go" but women feel undone. If the fence is broken or the garbage is not out, she feels broken. All these things are a part of her, yet men never give these things a thought. To a man home is a place to rest from his pursuits. A woman feels uncomfortable and tends to look for things for him to do; things that are essentially unimportant to him. The average woman doesn't trust a man to take care of the children. What do you mean down at the lake!?

5. Men tend to generalize while women are more detailed.

Women tend to remember longer because they experience things with both sides of the brain. This touches their feelings. When emotions are felt, memory lingers. Women are capable of remembering when they were wronged 20 years ago and what you were wearing when you offended them. She is also capable of remembering the good things equally vivid. When women want to talk about something, it's hard for men to hang in there if they don't know where the conversation is leading. Men want to know what fact you want to discuss. Men want to have a point of logic. What's the bottom line? Men should at this point ask, Where is this leading? if they don't know where they are going, they feel time pressure. They don't know how long this will take. There's no objective, no goal. Being goal oriented without a goal, a man's mind goes out to lunch and he becomes very impatient. If women understand this, they can tell him what the bottom line is and how they feel about it. Then a man can relax and continue to follow the woman's thinking. Men are into conquering the conversation and testosterone plays a big part.

Women have a natural desire to have and recognize or define a good relationship. Men have the ability to make a decision to have a good relationship, as soon as he learns what it is. A man can find out a woman's feelings about marriage by asking the following questions:

- (1) what kind of marriage do we want on a scale of 1-10?,**
- (2) where is our marriage now on a scale of 1-10?,**
- (3) what would it take to move our relationship to 10?**

If two people are honest and sincere in answering the above questions, a marriage can be dramatically improved in an hours time.

Now let's talk about how some of these differences affect our relationships.

1. Often we raise our children the way we were raised even though we may disagree with the method. We find ourselves doing the things our Mom or Dad did.
2. Communication between husband and wife is mainly non-verbal. Phrases like, I don't want to talk about it really mean, talk about it; convince me. Communication is essential between husband and wife, not just talk but listening and understanding each other. When she says I don't want to talk about it, she

means she wants to talk, but in a special way without confrontation or anger. She wants you to convince her you are sincere.

3. *Security is very important. Your mate must be made to know they are more important to you than anyone or anything else. You must communicate this, "No matter what happens, I will be here for you."**

4. Make a decision to honor your mates unique differences. See them as a valuable, awesome person. That's AGAPAO. That's a command of God. HONOR IS ATTACHING HIGH VALUE TO SOMEONE *Remember dishonor lowers your mates self esteem and life value**. Negative statements are a curse. *When self esteem is lowered, we don't like ourselves. We close our spirit and are unable to love others.**

*It's interesting to note that God requires us only to love others as we love ourselves. if we have a low self image we go through life provoking others to treat us as we think we should be treated. Most of this takes place in the sub conscious and emotional level. (right brain) When we realize how valuable we are as a person our whole attitude changes. We begin to live up to others highest expectation. when we build up the others self esteem they respond to us in love and support. When we dishonor them, we crush their beauty and drive them away from us.** To honor someone is to feel we are in the presence of someone very valuable. AGAPAO - God kind of love is a decision to see the great value of people This is God's command, and it works to our own advantage.

Comments on Italicized text

1. To say that the changes which take place in the male baby while still in the womb is the problem, is to say that God made a mistake in creating men and women different. The problem is a lack of understanding as to these differences and a reluctance to accept these differences as God ordained and therefore GOOD. The result being a confusion of identity. Men are being feminized (effeminated) while women are becoming masculinized (producing male characteristics), in-order to overcome these "faults, weaknesses".

2. Secular psychology, which has had a tremendous influence on Christian psychologists and on the Christian psychologist's approach to marriage counseling, is one of making the husband and wife responsible for the feelings, happiness and self esteem of their mate; rather than each being responsible for their own feelings and happiness and finding their worth and value in who they are as redeemed children of God. When the husband and wife find their identity in Christ, they are freed up to be who and what God made them to be in their relationship with their mate. Then, they can truly complete and complement the other.

Galatians 3:26-27, For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Acts 17:28, For in him (*in Christ*) we live, and move, and have our being...

3. (a) We want to understand that man's role in the marriage relationship is defined according to his physical, mental and emotional make-up. God made him the way he is (different) so that he could complete his wife. For the man to re-orientate his being (mind, will and emotions) to be more in line with the feminine orientation, he would not be able to fulfill God's intended role for him in the marriage relationship.

(b) Likewise, the woman's role in the marriage relationship is defined according to her physical, mental, and emotional make-up. God made her the way she is (different) so that she could complete her husband. For the woman to re-orientate her being (mind, will, and emotions) to be more masculine will keep her from fulfilling her God created role in the marriage relationship as a helpmate (*responder*) to her husband, putting her in competition with him rather than completing and complementing him, responding to him.

Ephesians 5:22, Wives, submit (*respond to*) yourselves unto your own husbands .

Genesis 2:18, And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

1 Corinthians 11:9, Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

4. Therefore let us thank and praise God that He has instituted marriage, that He has created man and woman different, with different roles and work within the bonds of marriage and then let us accept, fully appreciate and thank God for who we are, asking Him to work in us His good pleasure, in-order that, we might be in every sense of the word, everything to our spouse, we are intended to be.

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

5. Don't expect your spouse/mate to be or act in a manner which is contrary to who he/she is according to God's blueprint. Remember, God is the Author and Creator of man and woman, of marriage and the relationship of the man and the woman to each other in marriage.

Genesis 1:31, And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good.* And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

II. DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIVES IN MARRIAGE

A. Old Testament:

The duties of the husband in the Old Testament were generally recognized to include all that is involved in the support of the home. Exodus 21:10 enumerates as the minimum obligation the provision of food, clothing and co-habitation.

If he take him another *wife*; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.

The practice of sexual morality for men fell far short of the standard of equality of treatment. The chastity of the wife was jealously guarded by the heaviest penalties, but custom and law recognized no parallel obligation of faithfulness as resting on the husband - provided he respected the rights of other men. However, the prophetic conscience was possessed by a deep sense of the abomination of whoredome; and finally, a principle which was included in the Six Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery", claiming absolute marital fidelity, was spelled out in Malachi 2:14,15.

Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously (*been unfaithful*): yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously (*be unfaithful*) against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously (*be not unfaithful*).

The duties of the wife were not so specifically stated. The fundamental ones were chastity and submission - Genesis 3:16, with devotion to the husband's family and interests. And by general consent, the standard maintained by Hebrew wives was high.

Genesis 3:16, Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

B. New Testament (Marriage in Christianity)

Christianity began a new chapter in the history of marriage. The changes which it introduced were due primarily to the obvious implications of the fundamental Christian principles, which are seen in the following Scriptures.

Matthew 19:4-6, And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Matthew 20:25-28, But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (*servant*); And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant (*slave*): Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Galatians 5:13, For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

1. Duties/responsibilities of the Husband toward his Wife which meets her needs (completes her).

According to the following Scriptures, what is the husband's area of responsibility in the marriage relationship?

Ephesians 5:23, For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

1 Corinthians 11:9-10, Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power (*authority*) on *her* head, (covering over her) because of the angels.

1 Peter 3:7, Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Ephesians 5:25, Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Ephesians 5:28-31, So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

Ephesians 5:31, Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband.

Colossians 3:19, Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5, Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

1 Timothy 5:8, But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Conclusions: The duties/responsibilities of the husband to his wife are irrevocably (that is to say, that cannot be revoked, recalled, undone or altered) bound up the Greek word translated love, agapao. A love which is a selfless, self-sacrificing love, which meets the needs of the wife (love, companionship, cohabitation, head-ship, covering, protection, security, honor/respect, food, clothing and etc.), when exercised by the husband as God created him so to do.

The Duties of Wives under Christianity

Even though Christianity brought improvement in to the status of women. however, the duties of the wife continued to be developed from the presupposition of her subordination to her husband and were summed up, not in love, but in what according to the following Scriptures:

Genesis 2:18, And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

1 Corinthians 11:9, Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

Ephesians 5:22, Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Colossians 3:18, Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

1 Peter 3:1, Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

Ephesians 5:33, ...and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband.

Conclusions: The duties/responsibilities of the wife as seen in the above Scriptures are summed up in submission to* (*to respond, to answer to, a help-mate*) and reverence for** her husband (see second note below).

***Note:** The Greek word in the above Scriptures for "submit yourselves" is hupotasses which has the meaning of "find your proper place (category) under."

****Note:** The Greek word for reverence is "phobeo" fear/reverential fear or fear of dis respecting/displeasing her husband because of who he is, as her head and covering. Reverence/submission as unto the Lord.,

*****Note:** Husbands! (Although submission on the part of the husband and the wife to their respective responsibilities in the marriage relationship is not contingent upon their spouse submitting to and fulfilling their role in relationship), REMEMBER AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT that your wife was created by God to respond to you, therefore, if your wife is having a problem with submission to and reverence for you as her husband, you need to examine your relationship with her. Are you loving her by providing her headship, covering and honor (love, companionship, respect, consideration for her physical needs, food, clothing, etc.)?

As these basic needs of your wife are provided, she will respond to you with love, companionship, tenderness, respect, honor, and reverence as your true help-mate; and she will then in return receive your response of love, tenderness, companionship, attention, honor, respect and etc.

III. WHAT MARRIAGES NEED TO SUCCEED AND BLOSSOM

Let us now talk about some of the things that bring a marriage into full bloom. I want to stress that for a marriage to bloom, depends upon our willingness to pursue a good relationship. Anyone can accomplish this if they have the desire, but it's a lot easier if you are a Christian. As children of God we can draw God's strength and help, through prayer. Seven things husbands and wives can do that will greatly help in making their marriage beautiful. They are:

1. You must make a decision to have a good relationship. To do those things which pleases your mate. As head of the household you husbands have the primary responsibility of promoting a good relationship. You can do it. One of the strengths of the man is to make decisions and follow through with what it takes to carry out that decision.

However, you wives, even though you desire and consciously want a blossoming marriage relationship, you must not hold back but help your husband in promoting a beautiful relationship. You can do this by reminding him in a gentle, loving way of the special days(anniversaries, birthdays, etc.), other special occasions and of the things which please you, etc.

1 Corinthians 7:33-34, But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife. There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.

2. You must HONOR your spouse, to have a good relationship. To honor your spouse is to give her/him the respect which she/he deserves because of who she/he is. Honor/respect for your spouse is NOT contingent upon what they do or don't do, BUT rather, on who they are.

1 Peter 3:7, Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Ephesians 5:33, . . . and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband.

Honoring your spouse does not mean for you to overlook the faults and weaknesses in him/her, but rather involves forgiveness and showing mercy. We as individuals are sometimes blind to faults before we get married. Then as the stars fade we begin to see the faults. However, we must not focus on their faults. Understanding forgiveness and mercy are a necessity. Jesus said, if you don't forgive, your Heavenly Father won't forgive you. Matthew 6: 15-16.

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

3. You must examine and communicate when you are having relationship problems. To keep the marriage blooming when a problem arises, together you need to determine the cause and look for a solution. You can't, of course, undo

the past, but if something you said, or implied, or did or did not do has hurt/wounded or cause your mate a problem you must not defend yourself or try to justify yourself, or criticize/blame your mate BUT RATHER, with a contrite heart, be quick to say:

" I WAS WRONG, I AM SORRY, PLEASE FORGIVE ME, I LOVE YOU."

4. You must FREQUENTLY confirm that your commitment of LOVE is for LIFE. Knowing that someone is committed to you for life brings a sense of security and stability into the marriage relationship and keeps it blooming. Therefore we must frequently confirm that commitment. Don't deal with symptoms. Tell your mate, I'm committed to you and our union for life, whatever it takes. Every marriage goes through periods of strain, so the first thing we give is security. Say, I love you often, express your honor and commitment. Say it with touch, flowers, notes, phone calls, etc. The most destructive thing to a relationship is to cast doubt on your commitment. **NEVER, NEVER, NEVER THREATEN DIVORCE OR SAY I DON'T LOVE YOU.** Real love is a commitment to love someone whatever the conditions or situation. That's security.

5. You must have Meaningful Communications for a good relationship. Women are the communicators; men have to make a decision to communicate. Meaningful communication is sharing feelings, talking about ordinary things that happen in the home, talking about Christmas in July or the dress she saw downtown etc. Women enjoy talking about and planning things as much as doing them. Essentially, meaningful communication is talking about what interests your mate. We must give the amount of communication needed. The average home needs approximately one hour of meaningful communication daily; not necessarily at one setting. Communication skills include knowing how to open and close a conversation without leaving it hanging. Make sure conversation happens in your home. It's very rude and damaging to a relationship when one party gets offended and blocks conversation. If that's the way you feel, there is no point in discussing it Or, OK, whatever you say, spoken in a sarcastic tone says, there's no point in talking to someone as stupid as you.

6. You must have Romantic Experiences to keep a marriage relationship blossoming. A marriage needs emotional, romantic experiences on a regular basis. Whatever would be a special romantic experience for you? Try to do something that would be equally enjoyable for you both.

7. You must meet your mate's physical needs to maintain a good relationship. The main physical need in a home is touch. 80% of a woman's need is non-sexual. She needs hugs, touches, kind and reassuring words. Researcher say women need 8-12 meaningful touches per day. A woman needs to warm up to sexual experience. She needs security, conversation and romance first, then she can sexually respond. if your wife is not sexually responsive, chances are one of these is missing. Sex is very personal to a woman. It doesn't have to be for a man. A woman responds sexually to a good relationship. Get your relationship strong and watch the difference. The great strength of a woman

is her ability to develop and sense a good relationship. You husbands can draw this right out of her just by asking. A man's strength is that he can make a decision to do this. Men remember, after gratification is a time when women need tenderness such as touching and holding. This is very important to her. Let her know she is more important to you than sex. She is your friend; the very closest kind of friend in fact.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5, Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Overcoming Negative Emotions

Many people are unhappy, although they want very much to be happy, and the leading cause of unhappiness is negative emotions. Emotions such as anger, worry, fear, jealousy and hurt feelings rule their waking moments. If you are experiencing some of these emotion, and they are robbing you of joy, let me say up-front, you can do something about it. You can be happy, happiness is a choice.

Since we can be happy we must assume full responsibility for our unhappiness. The problem of negative emotions is not unique to any of us, but we can solve the problems of fear, worry, anger and the low self image they produce. We all have times of being down for one reason or another; however, when we choose and act, we can do something about it. We can correct the problem and be happy.

There was a guy who decided he wouldn't go to church anymore. He was still in bed Sunday morning when his wife came in. He told her, "I'm never going back to that church." She said, "Give me two reasons why not" His answer was, "I don't think those people down there like me and besides, I don't think I like them, so why should I go?" She answered, "Well Honey, you know how much you need to be in church, and how good it is for you and besides, you are the pastor!" So you see, we all have our down moments.

Negative emotions are generally related to nouns, or rather our expectations of them. A noun is a person, place, or thing. These are the three areas we focus on when we look for happiness.

1. We look for happiness in a person; Mr or Mrs. Wonderful! When happiness doesn't happen, we are drained of energy. The problem is we expect someone to make us happy. When they fail to find happiness, men look for outside interests such as drinking, bowling, hunting, or anything that keeps us away from home and women look for children because they need the social enactment in the home. However, the end result is that children complicate things even more, resulting in more unhappiness. So we find that looking for happiness in people is not the answer.

2. If 1 could have just the right home, in just the right place, then I would be happy. People in the country think all they need is to be in the city where things are going on. People in the city wish for a home in the country. What we need is animals, a garden, etc. or if we had a mountain cabin, then we would be happy. Sound familiar?

All of these things would work if we could be a new and different person just by changing our environment. However, the problem is somewhat deeper than that because you see, the problem is within each of us. We always take our problems with us. To quote Pogo, "We have met the enemy, and they is us." Again, we find the answer is not in places.

3. The final place we look for happiness is in things. What I need is a better job, more money, a better car; then, I'll be happy. Perhaps a better education, then I could find happiness. The fact is most jobs don't make us happy because jobs have one thing in common; work. Money has caused more early deaths of adults than poverty. Money adds stress. God tells us that a man's life does not consist of the abundance of the things that he possesses.

The next time you have hurt feelings or are angry, fearful, jealous, envious, depressed or discouraged, ask yourself; Am I expecting something in this world to fulfill me? If this is true of you, that's; your problem. You have set yourself up to be hurt because of your expectations. The problem is, the greater your expectation of happiness to come from anything in this world, the greater your chance for disappointment and negative emotions.

We are all self-centered to some extent. We want other people to make us happy, other things, or other places. We're looking for that, but the problem is it leads to more unhappiness and more negative emotions. There is nothing inherently wrong in having a good relationship and enjoying people or in having different surroundings or having possessions. Remember the problem is how we relate to these things; what our expectations are. The difference is which way life is flowing. Which way are we directing our energies, our love, our focus on life. Whom do we serve? Is our focus on self and how we can be happy? We find a divine principle that is opposed to the idea of seeking to be loved and made happy. That is, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." and again "according to your measure it will be measured to you again and more added." This principle works today; it has never failed. if you want to be happy, fulfilled and loved, seek for the happiness and fulfillment of others and be loving. Jesus stated this principle still another way,

Luke 6:38, Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

The secret of happiness doesn't lie in how others relate to us or by means of places or things. Happiness we discover is an add-on, a by-product of something else. It can't be bought, earned or bartered. It is a by-product of giving ourselves to someone or something other than ourselves. It is least likely to occur when we

work at making it happen. Rather when we minister happiness to other, we ourselves find happiness along the way. When we make a practice of letting the energies flow out to others; what we are doing is loving others. Look around-- what can we do to uplift others; our mate, our church, neighbors, or whatever need we see around us. Then life becomes full and happy. When we cease expecting things from another person, place, or thing, then they can't manipulate us and hurt us. We are no longer vulnerable to disappointments, anger or bitterness. You are not doing things to get from them, so they aren't blocking any of your goals.

The more you help people, the more people want to help you. In so doing, you already have happiness plus you get their overflow. The people who are most hurtful to others are people who expect people to make them happy. The way we overcome the hurtful effects of people is to pray for them and love them anyway. Then, like the oyster, we take the irritant (the grain of sand) and turn it into a pearl. We become more tolerant, more loving and better people as a result. Loving your enemies really works. The more irritants you overcome, the less you are injured; the less sensitive to hurt, the more loving, the more understanding, the better husband, wife, father, mother, boss or employee you will be. This then produces happiness.

Don't stay angry. Jesus said, "don't let the sun go down on your wrath." Be forgiving. For without forgiveness, you cut yourself off from your Heavenly Father.

Finally, the secret of happiness is recognizing that happiness is a by-product of loving and serving others. When you don't look for happiness, happiness will come. THAT'S THE TRUE SECRET OF HAPPINESS!