

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Marriage-Family 8-12.doc

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I. A LIFE PRINCIPLE

Taken from the book entitled: **UNCONDITIONAL LOVE** by John Powell, S.J.
Outlined by Rev. Dick Christensen

Col. 3:14 "Above all these things (put on) love ... (KJ)

Col. 3:14 "Most of all, let love guide your life ... (Living Bible)

A. What is life for?

1. Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living.
Paul said that we should "examine yourselves..." (II Cor.13:5).
2. What are you doing with your life? Is your life a series of deadlines, meetings, clearing your desk, answering phones, moving from one crisis to another?
 - a. Most often when our responsibilities get to be too much, we consider moving or changing jobs or our situation.

- b. Most likely it is something within ourselves that is in need of change -- we need to examine our attitudes and see what needs to be revised.
- 3. A life principle is a generalized, accepted intention of purpose that is applied to specific choices and circumstances. For example, if one of my life principles is that Good must be done and Evil avoided, I will choose Good when faced with a choice between Good and Evil.
- 4. **The dominant life principle** - It may be difficult for us to determine and remain totally honest with our inner being. We may not wish to face our deeper feelings and motives. There is in each of us a set of needs, goals, and values with which we are psychologically preoccupied. The dominant theme will motivate our actions and responses and reoccur consistently throughout our life. Some dominant life principles might be: safety, duty, recognition, money, fame, meeting needs, success, fun, relationships, power, and perhaps the most common -self.
- 5. The life principle becomes a habit, and with each repetition the habit is deepened. What we are at 60 years of age will be determined by the life principles we choose now.

B. The Life Principles of Jesus

- 1. The devil, in Luke 4:1-13, presented to Jesus three life principles, each of which Jesus rejected.
 - a. Pleasure - The devil promised satisfaction from physical hunger.
 - b. Power - Satan next offered him power over all the kingdoms of the earth.
 - c. No responsibility - (escape) Satan tempted Christ to not accept the responsibility of His life and actions.
- 2. Jesus, in clarifying His own life principles made clear that: He would not live for pleasure, power, nor would He surrender responsibility for His life and actions.

C. Personal evaluation

- 1. "Each of us has the ability to choose, to clarify our own values, to act on chosen motives."
- 2. The choices we have made in the past have brought us to where we are. What life principle presently dominates my life?

D. Love as a life principle

1. Almost immediately after Jesus gives His disciples the bread of His body and the cup of His blood, a dispute arises over "who of them will be the greatest" (Luke 22:24).
2. After 3 years of His teaching they are still motivated by petty, competitive, self-centeredness.
3. So Jesus again demonstrated His life principle of Love by humbling Himself and giving service to them despite their own self-centeredness (John 14:4-9). He was showing them that they must serve one another and so fulfill the Law and life principle of Christ. "... That you love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:35).
4. Peter rejected - Jesus was firm. "Peter, if you can not accept this you can not be mine."
5. The real power in the Kingdom is the power of a life principle of love.
6. Jesus also said that in so accepting this as our life principle and practicing it we would be very happy, (John 13:12-17). Do you really believe that the only way to a true abiding happiness is by a life principle of love?

II. THE MEANING OF LOVE

A. Love is not a feeling. Love should be supported by favorable feelings but it is not itself a feeling. Rather, it is a decision and a commitment. So often in teenagers there is the mistaken perception that sexual attraction to someone is the same as loving someone. The commitment to love someone does not have to depend on my feelings or sexual attraction. Love can grow without sexual interaction. However, in the confines of a marriage situation the state of sexual relationship is often a good indication of the general condition of the marriage.

B. How do I know I'm in love? If there is any person in my life whose growth and happiness is as real or more real to me than my own, then love has truly entered my life. If I truly love you, love will drive me to want to promote whatever is for your happiness, security, and well being. It may also involve "tough love" when the course you wish to choose does not promote good. I will be firm, yet tender and caring, supporting you when you fail.

C. No third possibility

1. Love is either conditional or unconditional; there is no third possibility.

2. If I attach conditions to my love, this would only be an exchange, not a gift. True love is, and must always be, a free gift.

D. God's love

1. Deuteronomy 7 teaches us that God's love is not based on anything we are or have. 7:6-10 We are objects of his love. also: I John 3:1, 16; 4:19

- a. God indicates his love for Israel. This love was not based on anything special in them. They did nothing special to merit this love.
 - b. His love was based on his decision to make them an object of his love.
 - c. This shows us that love is a choice, an exercise of our will.
 - d. This is especially true of Christians as we have the life and love of God dwelling inside of us in the presence of the Holy Spirit.
 - e. We have the ability to allow the agape love of God to flow through us. This love does not have as it's source our human nature. It's source is in God.
2. Some characteristics of God's love:
 - a. So strong is the love of God that he will not forget us even when a mother would forget her own child.

Isaiah 49:15 - "Even if a mother should forget the child of her womb, I will never forget you."

- b. God's love is everlasting. God's love endures over time. His love is there for us as we walk through every situation of life.

Jeremiah 31:3 - "The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: `I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.'"

- c. It does not change when circumstances in our lives change. God still loves us. He is consistent in his love for us. Even if our feelings toward him were to change, his love for us would remain. Jer.31:3.

We saw in Deut. 7 that his love is not dependent on anything within us. We do not earn or somehow merit his love.

E. The gift of love means:

1. I want to share with you whatever I have that is good.

2. You did not win a contest to prove yourself worthy of this gift. It is not a question of deserving my love.
3. I have no delusions that either of us is the best person in the world. We may not even be the most compatible. In fact, I am sure that somewhere there is someone who would be "better" for you or for me.
4. The point is, I have chosen to give you my gift of love and you have chosen to love me. This is the only soil on which love can possibly grow.
5. We may not always agree, but we should be open and honest. You can feel free to be yourself and know that I will not go back on my commitment. I will not reject you, but rather, will remain committed to your growth and happiness.

F. Loving means to:

1. Break fixation with self and give up your self-centeredness.
2. Learn how to care about and be sincerely dedicated to the satisfaction of another.
3. Become a sensitive listener, who hears what is said and some things that are not said.
4. Postpone personal gratification to meet the needs of another.
5. Get in touch with your feelings so you can relate feelings and understand another's feelings.
6. To be willing to receive honest criticism from someone who you knows cares about you.
7. Give up your practice of exchanged kindnesses and be prepared to give 100 percent.
8. Take on the added responsibility of "we."
9. Work at the delicate art of dialogue and shared decision-making.

G. Remember - "Love cures. It cures those who give it and it cures those who receive it." Weathering the storms of the love process is the only way to find the rainbows of life.

III. FIVE TYPES OF LOVE

A. The Greek word "EPITHUMIA" - meaning a strong desire of any kind, sometimes good, sometimes bad. It means to set the heart on; to long for, rightfully or otherwise; or it can mean to covet. When used in the Bible in a negative way, it is translated as lust. When used in a positive way, it is translated as desire. In marriage, husband and wife should have a strong physical desire for each other that expresses itself in pleasurable sexual lovemaking. Sex is not the most important aspect of your relationship, but it is a definite indicator of the health of your marriage.

B. The Greek word "EROS" - meaning a love that, more than any other kind carries with it the idea of romance. Most often the word "Eros" is thought of as being that which is fleshly because of the English word "erotic." However, this is not the case. Eros is not always sensual, but it includes the idea of yearning to unite with, and the desire to possess the beloved. Eros is romantic, passionate, and sentimental. It is often the starting point for marriage, being the kind of love that lovers fall into. Eros has a problem, however. It needs help because it is changeable and can not last a lifetime all by itself. Eros wants to promise that the relationship will last forever, but Eros can not keep that promise alone. The Eros kind of love is wholly emotional and cannot be summoned at will, but it appears as a sure response when all the other loves of marriage are set in motion. More than any other kind of love, Eros transforms a mundane black and white existence into glorious living technicolor.

C. The Greek work "STORGE"- meaning a comfortable, "old shoe" type of relationship comprised of natural affection and a sense of belonging to each other. Storge love in marriage meets the need that we all have to belong. When the world shows itself as a cold, hard place, Storge offers emotional refuge. But when present, Storge provides an atmosphere of security in which the other loves of marriage can safely dwell and flourish.

D. The Greek word "PHILEO" - meaning to cherish and have a tender affection for the beloved, that always expects a response. It is a love relationship - comradeship, sharing, communication, friendship. While Eros makes lovers, Phileo makes dear friends who enjoy closeness and companionship. They share each others thoughts, feelings, attitudes, plans, and dreams - the most important intimate things they would share with no one else.

E. The Greek work "AGAPE" - meaning the totally unselfish love that has the capacity to give and keep on giving without expecting in return. Agape values and serves in contrast to Phileo, which cherishes and enjoys. Agape is the one you can bring into your

marriage immediately, because it is exercised as a choice of your will and has no dependence on feelings. It is a love of action, not emotion. It focuses on what you do and say rather than how you feel. Agape love is knowledgeable and skillful love, always concerned with doing what is best for the beloved. It is so important that we all realize that even the strongest of natural loves will eventually end where there is no response to feed it. But Agape is different. Agape love is plugged into an external power source, and it can go on operating when every other kind of love fails. Not only that, Agape love loves no matter what. Agape is the unconditional love that God provides. Remember that Agape is a mental attitude based on a deliberate choice of your will.

IV. WHAT TRUE BIBLE LOVE IS:

A. True love distinguishes between a person and a body.

A relationship based on the physical is on a very thin foundation as there will always be someone who is better physically.

B. True love always generates respect.

1. Love does not put the other person down. It "vaunteth not itself"
I Cor.13:4-5. True love does not behave unseemingly; it is not unkind.

2. Love is built on faith (see II Peter 1:5-7). Faith is the foundation. Everything else is built on it and added one at a time finally arriving at LOVE.

3. I Cor.8:1 "Love edifieth." It builds up, not tears down.

C. True love is self giving.

1. The world teaches that, if you love, you get. "if you love me - give ___ and if you don't give, you don't love me."

2. Jesus himself said "Great among you is he that ministereth, not he that is ministered to." It's not what can I get out of it, but what can I give.

3. If you sow love, you will reap love.

D. True love can grow and increase without physical expression or gratification.

1. Gal. 5:22 says: "The fruit of the spirit is love ..." Gal. 5:24 says: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with affections and lusts."

2. True love is not based on a flesh affection or it's lust. It can grow without it.

3. Gen. 29:18 - Jacob loved Rachel - served seven years to gain her - without sex and the scripture says, "It seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

E. True love builds a relationship.

1. You can't harvest love if you haven't labored to produce it. Gal. 5:22
2. Take good inventory of your intended before marriage - what are their bad traits, how do they handle finances, etc. Observe them in every situation of life that you can.
3. If you're already married, then begin with faith and build a relationship. Remember, love is a fruit.

F. True love embraces responsibility.

1. John 14:15 "If ye love me keep my commandments." Talking of our responsibility.
2. We have mutual responsibilities in marriage. It's not 'this is your work' and 'that is mine.' "Love embraces responsibility."

G. True love is commitment.

1. Ruth 1:16 Ruth speaks to Naomi. This was commitment.
2. Commit yourselves to one another in everything.

V. HOW FAR IS TO FAR?

Scriptural Limitations on sex & dating by Rev. Scott Mills

A. PART I: UNDERSTANDING TERMS

In the United States it seems that almost everything is sold with the use of sex. It is hard to find anything that is advertised by way of TV, magazines, billboards, and posters that do not try to induce you to purchase the item without the use of some scantily dressed woman or smashingly handsome young man. It is all around us. Thus it is critical to address the issue of "How far is to far?"

Often teenagers do not realize that the bible does tell us how far is to far. Most young people have heard or been told they should avoid sexual intercourse before marriage, but when you are in the throws of passion what one has heard and what one does may have little to do with each other. Therefore we need to examine carefully what the bible does say about sex.

There are two key areas we need to understand. The first is that of scriptural terminology and the second understands the progression of sexual arousal. In this first study we will examine 5 words that the bible uses as it relates to sex:

B. Adultery, Fornication, Lust, Lasciviousness, and to Defraud

Today we will quickly look at the first two and then examine in greater detail the topic of “Lust.”

- 1. Adultery** - sexual physical relationship with someone other than your marriage partner. It is use in the bible in two ways:
 - a.** Figuratively – as seen in Israel’s worship of idols. Jer. 3:8-9; Ezek. 23:43. They committed adultery against God in that they were unfaithful to Him and went after other gods - idols. James 4:4 it indicates that you can be a Christian and love the world more than you love God. These are examples of figurative uses of adultery meaning – unfaithfulness to God.
 - b.** The second use is literal – sexual relationship with someone other than you marriage partner. Lev. 20:10; Heb. 13:4

- 2. Fornication** – used 47 times in the KJ New Testament. It is unlawful sexual intercourse. This is having sexual relationship with someone who is not your marital partner. It can be used in two ways:
 - a.** The first is the same as adultery. Matt. 5:32, 19:9
 - b.** Most often when it is used in scripture it does not refer to adultery. It is set apart from adultery. Gal. 5:19, Mark 7:21 Mat. 15:19 Fornication is sex between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. In other words it is premarital sex. The bible says it is wrong because it is not in the boundaries of marriage. God calls it sin and don’t fool yourself there is a stinger, a price paid for sin. Perhaps you know someone who is involved this way and they seem to be doing ok. Keep in mind that you haven’t seen the last chapter.

Remember also that it is not that God is an ogre who doesn’t want us to have any fun. He is the one who created sex. Thus He does mean for us to enjoy ourselves with our spouse. However, keep in mind also that God gives us laws not to restrict our freedom but to ensure our health, protection, and happiness.

3. Lusts – Matt. 5:28 the word for lust in this passage is the same Greek word that is used in Heb. 6:11 for “desire”. It means a great yearning or longing for and can be used in both a good or bad way depending on the context in which it is being used. Generally in the scripture when we see the word “desire” it is used in a positive context and when we see “lusts” it is used in a negative way but both come from the same Greek word. In 2 Tim. 2:22 and James 4:3 both usages involved selfish desires. It also uses lust specifically as it relates to sexual sin. Lets look at two examples:

a. 1 Thess. 4:3-5

1 Thess. 4:3-5 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4:4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 4:5 Not in the lust of **concupiscence (passionate lust)**, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

Therefore “lust of concupiscence” is uncontrolled sexual desire. A desire is not an act it is a thought. Therefore “lust of concupiscence: is uncontrolled sexual thoughts or desire. Not controlling your thoughts in the area of sexual desire.

b. Matt. 5:28

Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Jesus is not saying that thinking the thought is a bad as doing the act. But He is saying that though you may not do the act, your thought of it is still sin. It is like the Pharisees who had all the outward displays of spirituality but inwardly had none. They wanted to kill Jesus all because He healed on the Sabbath. People who looked religious on the outside but inside were full of wicked thoughts.

What does Jesus mean here? He is speaking of looking at a woman to lust. It has to do with what we focus our attention on. If we focus our attention on her body then we are lusting after her physically. In so doing we have committed adultery in our heart. Adultery is sexual intercourse with someone who is not your wife. So what is sexual lust? It is the uncontrolled sexual thoughts concerning intercourse with a woman who is not our wife. You have gone to far and this is where it all starts.

Is thinking about sex therefore sin? A leading sociologist said that the average teenage boy has a sexual thought every 29 seconds. Dr. Ed Wheat in his book, “Intended for Pleasure” says that the teen years are the peak years in sexual development especially for the male and are the years when his sexual drive is the strongest.” The answer to our question is, NO. The sexual thought will come, like fiery darts that are thrown at us. But it is what we do with those thoughts that make the difference. If we entertain

them and don't fight them off by thinking on pure things as listed in Phil. 4, it is then that we are getting into trouble.

James 1:13-15 says when we allow them to drag us away and entice us that we get into trouble. Thus we have to be very careful what we allow to be put into our minds. Garbage in will mean garbage out. The battle for sexual purity is won or lost in our minds. To sow a thought will reap an action. 2 Cor. 10:5

2 Cor 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Paul was saying, "look we are going to have thoughts come, but we need to learn how to control them."

This is probably the greatest problem men deal with in their Christian walk. Whether you are a man or woman you are not abnormal if you struggle with this. God does not want us to be discouraged, but know He is on our side and will help us.

How far is to far? You have gone to far when you do not control your sexual thoughts.

C. PART II: UNDERSTANDING TERMS (Part 2)

Our society says, "If it feels good, do it!" But what does God say? What is His standard? We are looking at scriptural terminology and want to continue with our next topic: Lasciviousness.

1. Lasciviousness – it is mentioned 8 times in the KJV and is translated twice as wantonness. It means **to lack legal or moral restraint especially in the area of sexual actions**. In the Bible it is defined in two ways:

a. Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into **lasciviousness**, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wuest Word Studies – says it means: to acknowledge no restraints, shamelessness, to do whatever, contempt for public opinion.

It is general immorality and is listed among the sexual sins along with adultery and fornication in Galatians 5:19 and Mark 7:21-22. It is listed with "uncleanness" (which mean not pure, impurity, covering a wide range of immorality) in 2 Cor. 12:21. It is listed with "lust" in 1 Peter 4:3 so it is not the same thing as the things it is listed with.

So what is Lasciviousness when talking about the sexual area? The “Pulpit Commentary” says, “it is reckless shamelessness in unclean indulgences, unabashed open indulgence in impurity.” The “Expositors Bible Commentary” says, “it is open and reckless contempt for propriety.” It has to do with actions. Lust had to do with thoughts, where lasciviousness has to do with actions. It is improper actions in the physical area. It is not necessarily going all the way sexually, but is going farther than you should physically. It is not controlling your actions in the physical relationship. In general it means lack of sexual restraint.

Rom 13:13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness (lasciviousness), not in strife and envying.

Paul is describing here the conduct of ungodly living especially during the night. The word, “Chambering” is only used here and means to “co-habit asked to conceive.” This is the old King James word for intercourse.

Why in this verse does it not mention, “chambering” with adultery or fornication? To commit fornication or adultery you would have to “chamber” (i.e. have intercourse). Chambering is mentioned here with wantonness or lasciviousness because it indicates that those actions, which lead you to have or want to have intercourse, are also wrong.

How far is to far? The scriptures are clear. The uncontrolled actions that arouse within us the desire to go all the way, sexually, are to far. They are wrong and are called lasciviousness.

2. To defraud – to wrong, to take advantage of, to exploit

2 Cor 7:2 Receive us; we have **wronged** (defrauded) no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

2 Cor 2:11 Lest Satan should **get an advantage** (same word as defraud) of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

It also can be used in the area of sexual sin.

1 Th 4:3-6 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4:4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 4:5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 4:6 That no man go beyond and **defraud** his brother in **any matter** (also translated “**the matter**”): because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

The “matter” it is talking about is found in verse 5, sexual lusts. Bill Gothard says to defraud in the sexual sense means, “to arouse sexual desire in another which cannot be righteously satisfied because you are not married.”

To intentionally excite someone physically to sexual arousal when you’re not married, you have gone to far.

3. Lets examine the differences between male and female sexual response and stimulation. The male:

a. His interest in sex is constant. He is always ready to go. Car, canoe, or kitchen table he is ready.

b. The woman’s sexual drive is just as strong, but is deeper and fluctuates with her mood depending on her feelings, and therefore is not aroused as easily.

c. The point here is that males and females are “turned on” or aroused differently. Men can find satisfaction in a “one night stand” where women look for and need relationship for them to experience lasting satisfaction.

4. How can a man defraud a woman? Let me give you two examples:

a. Girls have a strong need to be loved and accepted. Thus guys can turn girls on by the things they say to them. Many will say things they don’t truly feel in order to arouse her interest.

b. Women are sensitive to and respond to touch. Paul said in **1 Cor 7:1** “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to **touch** a woman.” The word “touch” in the Greek means to touch in a manner to excite, light on fire, or to kindle. Men may begin with holding hands but will soon graduate to caressing, and touching in a manner that is to familiar in hopes of opening a door to more arousal.

5. How can a girl defraud a guy? The number one thing that turns on a guy is sight.

a. A girl can defraud a man by her dress and appearance.

Prov 7:10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart.

The dress of a prostitute is any kind of dress that calls attention to the “tools of the trade.” That is any part of the physical anatomy that stimulates sexual arousal. When a girl dresses in a manner that leaves little to the imagination she has gone to far.

b. If as a girl you try to win a guy by enticing him with the way you dress then you will soon be performing sexual favors to keep him, and if that is the basis of your relationship when something new and more interesting comes along you will be history. Sex is not enough to maintain a lasting relationship. Sex is at best like desert, it taste great at first but when that is all you have to eat you soon get sick. So how should a woman dress?

(I) 1 Tim 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

This means that you should not be dressed in a manner where the guy can't keep his eyes above your neck. You should dress in a manner not to arouse or cause your brother in Christ to stumble. You can dress sharp, take care of yourself, but show some modesty and wisdom. God gave us clothing to prevent lust, not to create it.

(II) 1 Cor 11:15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

The glory of a woman is her hair. The reason is that it is the picture frame of your face. Don't wear any clothes that detract from your face.

c. By seductive flirting.

(I) You can do it with the walk.

(II) You can do it with the talk. "Hi handsome"

(III) You can do it with the look. Gen. 39:7 She took notice of Joseph. It was in the way she looked at him.

Gen 39:7 NIV and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

Flirting can mean to make insincere advances to play at love without serious intentions, and this is wrong it is defrauding. It also can mean:

Prov 7:21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

Here more than insincere love playing motivated her flirting; she was intent on sexual relations.

d. Quote about seductive flirting from Barry Wood's book, "Questions teenagers ask about dating and sex." "Younger teenage girls are often naive about flirting. One may make it known to the boy that she likes him in many obvious ways. She uses body language, a look, smile or wink, whatever it takes. She writes him notes, calls him on the phone, and tells a girl friend to tell him she likes him, all this is done very innocently and it is part of growing up. I don't attack such behavior except to say that we need to outgrow it as a means of communication. Mainly because flirting is cute in early teens but becomes improper behavior in maturing young women later on. To me flirting is defined as using sexual language to attract attention. It is saying to a person of the opposite sex, "I'm attracted to you and I like you so I am baiting the hook with sexual advances." When a girl uses her physical attributes to bait a guy she has already established the relationship on a sexual physical level. She is giving off strong vibes. Far too often girls do this to turn a guy on only to find that she can't turn him off. She throws her meat to the hungry male lion and now he has come to eat her up. Don't be naïve girls. When you flirt with guys they are getting the message loud and clear. Is it the message you want them to hear from you, only you can decide. Mr. Wood goes on to say that he has had young men say, "What is with these girls, they flirt, tease, urge you on and then when you start to make-out they say, 'what kind of girl do you think I am?' Girls if you're not prepared to cook, don't light the fire."

e. When have you gone too far? When you intentionally arouse sexual desires in another person and those desires cannot be righteously satisfied because you're not married, you have gone too far!

6. So what is God's terminology for how far is too far?

a. Adultery - sexual physical relationship with someone other than your marriage partner.

b. Fornication - sex between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. In other words, "premarital sex."

c. Lust - You have gone too far when you do not control your sexual thoughts.

d. Lasciviousness - The uncontrolled actions that arouse within us the desire to go all the way, sexually, are too far.

e. Defrauding - When you intentionally arouse sexual desires in another person and those desires cannot be righteously satisfied because you are not married, you have gone too far!

D. PART III: HOW SEXUAL OVERDRIVE OVERCOMES THE IGNORANT

In counseling teens one hears confessions from couples who have gotten caught up in a night's passion which ended with intercourse, and now they come for counseling because of the guilt and bad feelings they are experiencing. Some will say it was an "accident" that they never intended to go that far. However, an objective examination of the situation will tell you that this was no accident:

1. They did not accidentally decide to meet alone in a secluded place
2. They did not accidentally decide to undress
3. They did not accidentally decide to become sexually active

Where they failed was in thinking they could maintain control of their emotions in the midst of passion. They were ignorant about what they were doing and lost control of the situation.

4. There is a normal progression of physical or sexual arousal. We are looking at the progression of physical expression between a man and woman.
 - a. Holding hands
 - b. The good night kiss
 - c. Embracing
 - d. Casual kissing
 - e. Bear hugging – sustained hugging
 - f. Prolonged kiss
 - g. Heavy duty necking – anything above the neck
 - h. Petting of which there are levels
 - (I) Over the clothes
 - (II) Under the clothes
 - (III) No clothes
 - i. Intercourse

Our bodies are programmed for sex – God would not have put the plumbing in if He did not intend for us to use it – within the confines of marriage. God brought Eve to Adam and told them to be fruitful and multiply. He expects us to use the equipment, and has given both man and woman a sexual drive to encourage us to do so. You are not unspiritual or dirty because you feel a desire for sexual expression.

Our bodies have a built in law of diminishing returns – which means in the physical intimacies before intercourse what you do physically will have a law of diminishing return. In other words what you are putting in will not continue to yield a greater and greater return.

What you do today will not satisfy tomorrow. You will continue to look for more and more. You will desire to go further and be less satisfied with where you are. You may start holding hands but a couple dates later you will want a kiss and hug. Once you begin in any degree on any level you will want to return to that level and go on further.

5. Petting as a general definition is “anything below the neck.” It is physical contact within the sex zones between a man and woman for physical pleasure. It involves sexual stimulation that leads to loss of control or frustration. Petting is like an automatic transmission set to take you to intercourse. Biologically petting does not satisfy our emotions, but is meant to stimulate and excite us leading us to the fullest expression of sex in marriage. In the context of marriage it is called “foreplay.” People pet because it is fun and exciting, but forget that it leads directly to intercourse. Something teenagers are not ready for. Petting is fun but it is also frustrating. It is like the countdown for sending a rocket to the moon. When you get down to the last few numbers the engines fire, and the rocket begins to shake in its harness, everything is saying go go go blast off, and then you try to shut it down before it leaves the pad. How frustrating!! Remember the law of diminishing return says you will want to return to that point again and move on to the next level. Eventually you will blast off. For some reason teens often think they can paddle down stream until they get to the waterfall and then pull over before it is too late. This is stupidity in motion. You will eventually go over, it may happen the very first time or the next time but it will happen. Those who continue to pet will eventually go to completion.

Another part of petting that teens don't realize is the psychological and physiological conditioning they are putting in their emotional and physical makeup. When you time and time again pet without completion you will begin to condition yourself (called psychological or classical conditioning) to shut down automatically. Then when you get into marriage and have the freedom to go all the way, your body will continue to shut down make completion frustrating instead of fulfilling. This is called sexual dysfunction.

Larry Richards in his book entitled, “How far I can go” said that not one kid in the 3000 surveyed said to tell others to pet. Everyone who shared their experience talked about the problems it caused. This is because petting does not bring fulfillment.

Is petting a physical action that would arouse within you the desire to go all the way. Therefore, there should be no petting below the belt before your married, absolutely none. You might ask, “Well can we pet above the belt?” Keep in mind the law of diminishing return you will always return to where you left off and want to move forward. If you open the door to fondling breasts you will eventually want to move on down. You will become frustrated with fondling breasts because your body is built for something more. If you not in a position to cook don't start rubbing sticks together to light a fire! Petting in marriage is called foreplay but outside of marriage it is lust, and lasciviousness.

You might ask, “what if you love the person or are planning to get married?” Lets even go so far as to say you are engaged. Shouldn’t that be a time of exploring one another’s hearts and goals in life instead of their body? In the United States one in every three engagements breaks up (One in three). If you have been involved physically and breakup, the hurt will be multiplied and your ability to face another person in purity is lost forever. Not to mention that true love always seeks the best for the other person, and is willing to sacrifice itself for the best in the other. Love would never ask me to sin against my heavenly Father. Selfish desire would, but not love. It is time young women realized what true love really is and stopped believing every flattering word that comes out of a boy’s mouth.

Dwight Small in his book, “Designed for Christian Marriage” says, “Petting does not stand alone, and it is the natural prelude to the intimacies of marriage the unnatural thing is that petting should not follow such intimacies. To allow petting but not its natural issue is to plunge into emotional conflict, frustration, and into a physiological state that demands relief.”

What he is saying is that if you allow petting and don’t follow through to intercourse you will end in frustration and look for relief.

He goes on to say, “Petting to climax provides that relief, but in so doing it further removes from one’s understanding the full ecstasy and the joy that is meant to consummate such arousal.”

Here he is saying that since you both have that need you end in mutual masturbation. You have orgasm, but without intercourse.

He goes on to say, “That the orgasm that results from petting is an empty hollow experience in comparison to the consummation of intercourse in the confines of love and marriage. The nervous tension that frequently results from petting is caused for resentment when one does not understand that it is not something in the other person but the incomplete process that has caused the disappointment. The resentfulness that arises may easily turn into strong hostility toward the other person and actually thwart an otherwise genuine growth of love between the two. Through fostering the very opposite of what was expected such petting might successfully end the relationship entirely. This is not infrequently a girl’s reaction to the whole thing.”

He is saying you can justify your petting thinking that it will bring you closer together, but what actually happens is the very opposite. You create enough frustration to break you up. You may have begun because you feel love, but the law of diminishing return says you will continue farther and farther with frustration on top of frustration. Eventually, the girl will question is this love or am I just being used to satisfy his selfish wants. So she says let’s stop, and he says ok and the frustration continues, bitterness develops and eventually you break up because of something you thought would bring you closer together.

David Semens in his book, “Secrets of our sexuality” says, “God has made sex so that it is progressive and ultimately leads to intercourse and its climax in orgasm. This includes a built in law of diminishing returns that demands more and more with an increasing crescendo of arousal and excitement until there is a place where the will no longer effectively functions and the emotions take over completely. Our youth need to be taught this very carefully so when they experience this progression they understand themselves as normal and not as necessarily sinful. They should realize this is actually a part of what is technically foreplay meant to lead up to sexual intercourse and is therefore to be treated seriously and sacredly.”

Petting should be saved for marriage it is sexual overdrive that will overcome you and you’ll be in trouble.

E. PART IV: HOW SEXUAL OVERDRIVE OVERCOMES THE IGNORANT (Part 2)

1. Kissing is mentioned in the KJV no less than 48 times such as:
 - a. **Rom 16:16** Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.
 - b. **1 Th 5:26** Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.
 - c. **1 Pet 5:14** Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.
 - d. **Prov 24:26** Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.

The Bible speaks favorably about kissing. To some extent it seems strange to talk about kissing when on TV in the United States alone there are some 20,000 sexual scenes each year with 80% of those being between unmarried people. When you also take in the fact that many public schools are distributing condemnments to any student who asks, it seems strange to be talking about kissing. However, the Bible says that we are a “peculiar people.” Does that mean we are strange? No, but as in Ex. 23:2 NIV it says, “Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong...” We are to be unlike the crowd, and in today’s world that is peculiar and strange behavior.

1 Pet. 4:4 Wherein **they think it strange** that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

This is what often happens, when we don’t run with the crowd there will be those who accuse us of being strange or prudish, “speaking evil of us.” Keep in mind what the next verse says:

1 Pet 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

There will come a day when we must give account before Almighty God. Knowing that we have a God who loves us and cares for us should help us determine what kind of behavior we want to present to Him. Just because everybody is doing it does not mean that that is what everybody ought to be doing.

2. General principles we should know when it comes to our actions with a member of the opposite sex while dating.
 - a. **Males and females respond differently to physical expression.** Just as there are levels or a progression, which leads to physical intimacy, there is also a progression in relationship.
 - (I) 1st level is social – friendship
 - (II) Physical – when you progress to holding hands, embracing, or kissing
 - (III) Emotional – you care for, long for, and it soon becomes exclusive

For a guy the progression is from friendship to the physical (holding hands, kissing), but for the girl the progression is from friendship to the emotional (care for me, long for me, love me, accept me). For the girl the physical does not come until after the emotional. Not understanding this creates confusion in relationships.

For example Jack and Jill are attending a week at camp together during the summer. They know each other from church and school and have been casual friends. While at camp they are working on a project together and Jack asks Jill if she would like to play some tennis when they're through with the project. She agrees and they go play tennis and have a great time and decide to visit try some shuffleboard as well. He teaches her how to play and she manages to squeak out a victory, and they both have a great time. On the way back to the dorms he says, "You know Jill I had a great time with you today," and she answers, "I did too!" With that Jack leans over and gives her a quick kiss on the cheek and says goodbye. Jill goes into the dorm all excited, "He kissed me, he kissed me, he must really like me, and maybe he will give me his class ring." Jack walks away and perhaps he is excited as well, but on the other hand he could bump into Shirley on the way to his dorm and soon be walking her down the road just as easily. Then when Jill looks for Jack the next day and sees he's walking Shirley to the auditorium she is crushed.

Girls need to remember that a guy can enjoy a physical relationship without any emotional involvement at all. This is why when a guy and girl get involved in a sexual relationship she is generally talking marriage, and he may never have given it a thought. Remember that guys will give love to get sex and girls will give sex to get love. Girls need to be wise and realize that guys don't always mean what they say, and often will say whatever it takes to get what they want.

b. Physical expressions should reflect your commitment to the relationship.

The further you go physically the more committed you should be to the relationship. Therefore, guys need to be very careful about the physical part of any relationship knowing that the girl will take it to mean much more than you're intending. You should ask yourself, "Are my actions misleading her in thinking there is more to this than I am committed to?" When your physical expression does not reflect your level of commitment to the relationship, the Bible says you're involved in "impurity or uncleanness." Eph. 4:17-19

Eph. 4:17-19 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 4:19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

c. You must set a standard on how far you will go in this area before marriage. God does not tell us how far we should go. But what He does tell us is, "No lust, and no lasciviousness." Then God wants us to make wise decisions. What you need to ask yourself is, "What kind of physical expression do you think God would approve of for you before you're married?" Set a standard and stick to it before you're in the heat in the battle. Now is the time to decide, and certainly you're wiser to set your standard to high then to set it to low and go farther than you should.

As your relationship with someone progresses you should discuss your feelings and standards in this area so that you can both come to a commitment that each of you take responsibility to uphold. In this way the girl is not always the one who has to say stop. The guy should share this responsibility.

F. PART V: THE PRICE TEENS PAY FOR PRE-MARITAL SEX

- What does God have to say about it
- Why are teenagers doing it
- Where are the price tags

In this session we will discuss two of the major price tags for pre-marital sex: pregnancy and STD's, sexually transmitted diseases. These two are often promoted as the only two reasons not to have pre-marital sex, but they are not the only reasons by far.

1. What does God have to say about it:

1 Cor 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

Heb 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

- (I) All of Proverbs chapter 5 and half of chapter 6, and all of chapter 7 warn against pre-marital sex.
- (II) God is not against sex, as we discussed before. He is the one who created us as sexual creatures. He also wants us to be able to enjoy one another within the confines of marriage. Look at what He says:

Prov. 5:18-19 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

5:19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

Deu 24:5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

- c. Here in Deut. 24 we see that a man newly married was not to be asked to join the army or do any business for the first year of his marriage he was to stay home and "cheer up his wife." God's attitude toward sex is very positive. The Song of Solomon is another example of God's attitude toward sex, as the whole letter can be understood figuratively to be concerned with sex. God is for sex but He commands us not to engage in sex before marriage. This attitude toward sex is not meant to restrict us but to ensure our ultimate health and happiness. Like any rule or law we have to obey it is meant for our well being. Can you imagine a sporting event without a referee to make sure the rules are adhered to? If there were no rules, what be permissible and the game would not make any sense. God's laws are the same, they are meant to ensure our happiness and enjoyment of one another. When we disobey there is a consequence, not because God wants to spoil our fun but because God wants to protect us and discourage us from harming one another. God says no to premarital sex because he knows what the consequences are and doesn't want us to have to suffer them.

2. Why are teens doing it? Let's look at four reasons why guys do it, and 4 reasons why girls do it.

a. For the guys:

- (I) It's fun – guys enjoy it
- (II) It gives the guy confidence to know a girl will go all the way with him. It is an ego trip.
- (III) Peer pressure. The idea that everybody is doing it. Some feel inferior if they have not done it.
- (IV) Our society encourages it. Sex is a major selling point in almost every product.

b. For the girls:

- (I) Out of love. To please the one she supposedly loves. One psychologist said the average number of romances before marriage was "six". Therefore, very few love affairs end in marriage.
- (II) Insecurity – low self-esteem. She may do it in hope of being popular. Or she may respond out of a threat by her boyfriend to leave her if she doesn't.
- (III) It's the price to be paid for the night's entertainment. As if she believes it is expected and ok because everybody is doing it.
- (IV) It's fun.

c. One more for both:

- (I) Teenagers do not see or understand the consequences of pre-marital sex. They only see the Hollywood not the heartache.
- (II) Moral consequences don't always happen right away. They are not like the law of gravity whereby if you step off a ten-story building you will immediately fall to your death. But the consequences do exist and eventually will manifest.

3. The price tag teenagers pay for pre-marital sex.

a. PREGNANCY:

Statistics: Over 1 million teenage girls become PG each year in the USA. Approximately 800,000 are not married. For ages 15-19 one out of every 10 gets PG. Approximately 30,000 who are 14 and under get PG each year. The death rates from complications with the PG are higher in teen's than older women for both mother and baby. A girl who gets PG by the age of 16 has 90% of her life script written for her. 80% of teen mothers drop out of school, 60% go on welfare, teen mothers tend to be unemployed and if they work their income is below the

poverty level, and infants of teen parents become victims of child abuse. The children of teen children are likely to eventually drop out of school and become teen parents themselves. One study reported that 82% of teens 15 and under who gave birth were themselves daughters of teenage mothers.

Teenage girls need to realize that if you walk in the rain you will get wet. They need to ask themselves some serious questions such as: “Am I ready to take on the responsibility of a baby right now?” “Am I ready to take care of feeding, clothing, changing diapers, and all the other responsibilities of a baby while my friends are going to ball games, parties and other fun things teens do.”

b. You have to give some thought to the solutions to the difficulties of teen PG.:

(I) One is to get married, but depending on what report you read the statistics are: 1 out of every 2 teen marriages end in divorce, 3 out of 4 end in divorce, or one govt. report says that 3 out of 5 60% will be divorced within 3 years. One major reason they end in divorce when the problems of marriage come, and they will come as they do in all marriages, is the feeling that one or the other was forced into this because of the PG.

(II) The second solution is abortion. Of the 1 million teenage PG in the USA approximately 400,000 will terminate the PG by abortion. This despite the fact that the baby’s heart is beating within 3 wks., at 3 months all organ systems are functioning, it has fingerprints and eyelashes in 16 wks., it can sleep, it can wake, it can hear, make a fist and open it’s eyes, but it is just an “it” so you can abort “it.” There are other problems with abortion as well. There can be complications from the procedure such as a punctured uterus, hemorrhaging, infection and death. There are also complications such as the inability to become PG, or much greater difficulty in labor and delivery. This becomes an even greater problem when you realize the only child you will ever have had the opportunity to have, you aborted. Psychologists tell us the abortions often leave women with serious long lasting emotional problems. As a Christian we must believe that this is a human life and the option of abortion is not available.

(III) The third option is adoption. Listen to this letter written by a teenage girl who had just delivered her baby for adoption, taken from a “Life Magazine” article entitled “Babies having Babies.” “He kept crying and crying and finally when I rocked him he stopped, opened those big eyes, and looked at me. And I went ‘Oh’, his eyes were just like my brothers, gray with long lashes, then I started crying, I said, ‘get the nurse and tell her to come and get him, I can’t take this any more.’” This second letter from the book entitled, “The stork is dead”: “When the time came to go to the hospital I didn’t want to give up my baby. But I knew I had to. It was the unhappiest feeling anybody ever had. I fell like something fell apart inside me, but that isn’t the worst. The worst is how I will always know there is a little boy somewhere that is my son, and where did he go.”

It is easy to see that this is at best a very difficult option.

(IV) The fourth option is to incorporate the new baby into the larger family unit (her parents). The lifestyle of the girl will still change to a great degree, and the child will eventually have to cope with the stigma and emotional scars of it's own illegitimacy.

(V) The fifth option is the teenage father. Listen to this letter, "I got this girl PG and I offered to marry her, but she said she did not love me that much. Now I feel that I have a terrible burden that will never be unloaded no matter how hard I try. She has gone away to have her baby and I can hardly stand to think what happened." You see the situation can be very hard on the guy as well. Should the girl decide to have an abortion, there is nothing the father can do to prevent it. He has no say!

c. SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (called STD's) also called venereal disease

There are over 20 different types of STD's circulating in the USA today. The medical health association has called VD the worst disease epidemic in our society. One doctor said, "VD follows sexual activity as night follows day." There are four that are very important:

(I) Gonorrhea with over 1 million cases reported each year. Half are people under 25. If untreated it can cause blindness, arthritis, heart, prostate, kidney, and damage to other parts of the body. It is curable but the problem is that often it shows no symptoms. This means in women that it can damage the fallopian tubes before they realize they have it and then it can leave them sterile.

(II) Syphilis – each year 30,000 new cases are reported. It goes through a long incubation period where it is virtually unnoticed. It can cause heart, skin, and central nervous system damage. It can cripple, disable, disfigure, cause paralysis, insanity, and death. Both gonorrhea, and syphilis can kill you, but both are curable.

(III) Genital herpes or herpes simplex 2 – This won't kill you, but you won't kill it either. Approx. 20 million Americans have this and once you get it you have it for life. The immediate effect is painful blisters on the genital, buttocks, and thigh areas. It causes itching, fever, and headaches. After about 3 weeks the blisters dry up, but the problem is that you never know when it will reoccur. If a newborn is infected by it's mother up to 60% die and if it does live it will likely be blind or have brain damage. A child can be protected through *syncerian* section.

(IV) AIDS – has no cure and will kill you. It attacks the white blood cells in you body breaking down the immune system exposing you to any type of illness that comes your way. There are no cures and you die from it. More people had died from aids by 1991 than all those Americans killed in

WWI, WWII, the Korean War, and Vietnam War combined, and that statistic is over 10 years old. The only way to contract the disease is by sexual contact or drug abuse.

- d. Let's turn to Isa. 61 and remember we serve a God who loves us. When we come to Him, He will bind our broken heart, comfort us, give us joy for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Isa. 61:1-3 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 61:3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

G. PART VI THE PRICE TEENS PAY FOR PRE-MARITAL SEX (Part 2)

Heb 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

1. God is saying to us that sexual relationship within the confines of marriage is a good thing, but those who involve themselves outside of marriage He will judge.

Prov. 6:26-27 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. 6:27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

2. God is making it clear that when we involve ourselves in sexual relationship outside of the boundaries He has set (marriage), we will get burned.
3. **The following is a list of some, not all, of the things that can happen to you as a result of pre-marital sex:**

a. - It produces guilt. Some will profess no guilt, but guilt is not always something we feel right away. Listen to the following letter from a mother, taken from the book, "The stork is dead." "I am writing to answer the girls who ask, 'Why is it smart to save yourself until marriage?' I thought they ought to hear the answer from someone who knows by experience. Let me ask you girls a question. What if you didn't wait and afterward you married somebody else, and have this guilty feeling that keeps eating on you and you don't know how to get

rid of it. What if you knew in heart that you should have told him before you got married, but you didn't and now you feel like you're living a lie. What if you confessed to the priest, but you keep getting these dreadful feeling of shame sometimes when you and your husband are together. What if you have friends who's husbands keep running around and you keep asking yourself, 'wouldn't it be bad if mine did that' and I really deserve it, don't I. Will I be punished for what I did wrong? What if you have a daughter who is beginning to date, and you would like to talk to her about these things, but you're tongue tied because you feel you don't have a right to say anything. What if you keep wondering if you will ever get these things straightened out in your heart, and things be right between you and your daughter, you and your husband, you and God? Do you see what I mean? The trouble with sex before marriage is that it can't be treated as casual as you think it can now. Sometimes it lives to hunt us down and haunt you growing like an octopus having many arms that reach a long way growing tighter and tighter as the years pass. They seem to be crushing part of you. What you think should be so wonderful if only you could go back and live it over again. The reason I know what could happen to you is because that I have a husband who is beginning to get ideas and I can't help but wonder if it isn't because I have never really been able to let myself go with him. I also have a daughter I can't relate to, and I know she feels bad about it like I do. That is why I know it is smart to save yourself for marriage.”

You see the guilt followed her for years afterward, and the effect of her pre-marital experience was continuing to create new problems in her life.

Sometimes guilt is immediate. Let's look at the story of Amnon and Tamar in 2 Sam. 13:

2 Sam 13:1-17 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. 13:2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her. 13:3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtle man. 13:4 And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. 13:5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand. 13:6 So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand. 13:7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat. 13:8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes. 13:9

And she took a pan, and poured them out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him. 13:10 And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. 13:11 And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. 13:12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly. 13:13 And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee. 13:14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her. 13:15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone. 13:16 And she said unto him, There is no cause: this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her. 13:17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her.

The story shows us that Amnon (vs. 13 loved Tamar) and was so in love it made him feel sick (frustrated) that he could not have her because she was a virgin. So at the advice of a friend he lays a trap for her. He pretends to be sick and request that she come and fix him food to eat. Then when they are alone he grabs her and wants her to lie with him, but she refuses and he being stronger forces her (rapes her) thinking it will be so wonderful. But immediately after he has his way with her, vs. 15-16 we see he hates her with intense hatred, not hating her more than he ever loved her. His first words afterwards were, “Get up and get out!” She pleads with him not to add to their shame but he is so adamant that he calls for his servant and orders him to throw her out and bolt the door behind her. What happened to the love that was so strong it made him sick? It looked so good, but once it raped her the guilt, regret, and disgust was right there so he threw her out. And talk about consequences, later Absalom, her brother killed him for what he had done.

b. - It causes loss of self-respect and reputation. When you allow yourself for whatever reason to go farther than you wanted it will create feelings of being used, pushed into something you didn't want, resentment, and bitterness. You will question yourself as to why you didn't have more self-control? Why did you let this happen to you? This leads to loss of self-respect.

Concerning your reputation you might be asking yourself, “will word get out?” This is a sure thing! Will guys think I'm easy? Yes! Will they want to date me for what they can get? Yes! What we also don't realize is that you will likely loose the opportunity to date someone really nice who would have wanted to date you until he learned what you were all about.

Prov 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

c. – It causes emotional problems. When we involve ourselves in something that we are not emotionally ready for, it can leave us with emotional scars that may take years to straighten out, if ever. Keep in mind once you give it away for the first time there is no getting it back. There is only one first time! The feeling of being used, not having stood up for yourself, or disappointment in yourself for having willingly participated in something that later you realize you were not ready for will hurt, and likely damage you for a long time to come.

d. – It produces fear. Fear of getting PG, fear of disease, and fear of getting caught. Let's talk about fear of getting caught for a moment. When you are having sex as a teenager the conditions are usually less than desirable, you're concerned about being discovered so you are generally rushed, tense, it is secretive, you're in a location that is less than desirable, and the overall atmosphere is less than comfortable. This brings up another fear, the fear of performance. Sex is a physical skill. Most boys simply do what comes natural not realizing that in doing so you will be wrong every time. Since there is a lack of comfort, security, and the atmosphere is awkward at best coupled with the fact that the individuals involved are not skilled, the overall experience will be less than it should be and most likely disappointing for the girl.

A report was done asking girls who had pre-marital sex to describe what their first experience was like. Here are the top words they chose:

- Afraid
- Guilty
- Worried
- Embarrassed

Consider the complications that it brings to you or your relationship if your first sexual experience is a bad one. Feelings of disappointment, disillusionment, failure, frustration, these are the things that break a relationship, and damage young people.

Prov 22:3 & 27:12 say: A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

e. – It causes communication to break down. In any healthy relationship you have to have good communication and premarital sex will cause an eventual breakdown in communication. You say, "Why is that?" It is partly because, of the guilt and lack of respect that comes in. But there is another reason we often don't realize. Once a boy has had sex with a girl he will want to continue doing so. The

law of diminishing return, you will want to return where you left off and go on from there. You will want to continue and in doing so will develop an appetite for it that soon overshadows the other parts of your relationship. You continue to look for opportunity to have sex and no longer want to spend your time developing the parts of the relationship (i.e. Communication skills) that are necessary for any long term relationship to survive.

f. – Everybody prefers to marry a virgin. Loss of virginity is a loss. Girls need to realize that when it comes time to buy a boy will want someone who has not been test driven by someone else. He will want a model that is unspoiled by other hands. One he can call his own. Keep in mind that 50% of young people are not sexually involved and are keeping themselves. Why don't you determine to be one of that 50%? Don't give away your most prized gift that you can give your spouse. Keep in mind that 50% of engagements break up, therefore, wait until your wedding night.

g. – It takes away from your honeymoon. One of the most exciting things about our honeymoon is that time when together we each give our gift of virginity to one another and together experience sexual lovemaking for the first time. If you don't have that to share, your honeymoon is not much more than a vacation.

h. – It confuses love. Often sex is called "making love." Prostitutes have sex but they don't call it making love. For them it is making money. Sex is not making love and it does not create love. Sex is an emotional rush and was intended to be that way. But what can happen is that you can fool yourself into believing you're in love when you're not. Sex will never hold a relationship together. The average American married couple spend an average of only 30 minutes a week in sexual activity. Therefore, you have to have something much more than sex to hold a relationship together.

i. – It tends to break couples up. It bonds you closer for a season, but breaks couples up outside of marriage. Generally the girl will soon begin to question whether this is love or appetite. The result is her desire to stop which is likely to bring resentment from the guy. Even if he is ok with it at first he will soon return and if thwarted he is likely to begin looking elsewhere. You see it was not really love but appetite. Or the guy may decide to break it off because he feels it is getting too serious and the mystery is over anyway. It is almost ironic that girls will give sex to keep the guy in their life, when if they had just held out he would have stayed.

1 Cor. 13:4 says....love suffereth long..." If it is really love it will stand the test of time and wait. Are you in love? One thing for sure, you will not know if you're having sex before you get married.

j. Some of the price tags you will pay after marriage for premarital sex:

(I) Sexual dysfunction due to there being some degree of fear, disappointment, guilt, shame, etc. from the past that are still part of your emotional basis. There is some area of blockage that keeps you from freedom in this area. Remember the letter of the mother, that is what she was experiencing.

(II) It contributes to marital difficulties. Dr. Frank Short in his book, “Love Sex and Infatuation” gives these facts from scientific research:

- Those who had premarital sex have less happy marriages
- Those who had premarital sex and more likely to end in divorce
- Those who had premarital sex are more likely to have an extra-marital affair
- Those who had premarital sex are more likely to be less satisfied with their sex life overall after marriage

(III) Flashbacks. Past memories will come back to haunt you. They will create doubts, insecurities, and perhaps resentment for lost innocence.

(IV) It eliminates trust. Trust is critical, and knowing each other lacked self-control before marriage will increase the level of distrust during marriage. Keep in mind that the fact is: those who had premarital relations are more likely to have extra-marital affairs. One report said that women who had premarital sex were twice as likely to cheat on their husbands. Do you really want to spend your marriage wondering if he/she is being faithful? If you wait, you probably won't have to worry.

Is it worth it? Just for the sociological reasons: is it worth it?

k. Let's consider our relationship with God and what premarital sex does to that:

(I) Drives a wedge between us and God (Isa. 59:1-2 any sin will do this), and breaks our fellowship with God.

(II) It causes us to grow cold in our relationship with God. Matt. 24:12

(III) It will damage our spiritual potential. 2 Tim. 2:20-22 If Satan can't destroy your faith he will try to destroy your potential and rob you of your testimony.

H. PART VII: HOW TO STAY COOL WHEN YOUR FEELING THE HEAT

1. The sex drive has been described as a “wild horse” and there are 3 things you can do to a wild horse:

- a.** shoot it – repression the act of denying such feeling exist - this doesn't work

- b. let the horse run wild – expressionism the problem here is that eventually the horse will run over you.
- c. contain the horse – self-control which is the biblical standard.

Much of society today believes that asking teens to simply abstain from premarital sex is unrealistic. However, we ask them to stay away from other things that can cause them great harm and sadness such as drugs, and alcohol. Why not expect them to be up to the challenge of abstaining from premarital sexual relationship? Planned parenthood organizations would rather we teach how to have “safe sex” with the aid of contraceptives. That would be ok if you have no concern about fornication or the other behaviors that God warns us against.

Why is abstinence an unrealistic expectation? We see teenage athletes punish their bodies physically to raise their skill level to a place of excellence, and others who excel in education do so by spending hours pouring over the books in study. Both of these take tremendous discipline and personal sacrifice to achieve. Shouldn't moral excellence be even more important to us a Christians?

God is not into birth control before marriage, but self-control before marriage. How to stay cool when you're feeling really hot? The answer is self-control.

1 Th 4:3-4 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4:4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

In other words it is the will of God that each of us learn how to control our own body. Going with what is natural is not the answer. This is learned. Here are 6 ways to help you stay cool when you're feeling hot.

2. Control what you put into your mind. If you fill your mind with dirt it won't stay clean. If you think you can expose yourself to sexual things and it not mess with your mind your very very wrong.

1 Cor 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

2 Tim 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

This means that guys must stay away from pornographic magazines and movies that you know have sexual scenes in them. Staying away is not repression it is controlling what affects my mind. Girls need to be careful what you read. Often girls will look for romance novels because they appeal to their emotions, but these are meant to excite and stimulate.

When you allow yourself to be exposed to such you will become more acceptable to experimentation in sexual activity. Music lyrics and music videos is another area where sex is being exploited to appeal to our flesh. Realize what you allow yourself to take in will effect you. No one is successful on a diet if they spend lots of time in the kitchen, any more than you can quit smoking with a pack of cigarettes in your pocket. IF you want to be free, then learn to control what you are exposed to.

3. Control your mind with the Word of God. This sounds similar to # 1 but it is different. #1 addressed what you put into your mind this one deals with what you allow yourself to think about.

2 Cor 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

We must learn to guard the very thoughts we allow ourselves to think on. Guys and girls must learn to control your thoughts.

Psa 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

Psa 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

The Bible says if you fill your mind with the word it will help you to keep yourself pure. Jesus used the scripture when faced with the temptation of the devil. Temptation will come but how we deal with it is up to us.

1 Cor 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

a. You will be tempted – temptation is tempting **Prov 5:3** For the lips of a strange woman drop as an **honeycomb**, and her mouth is smoother than oil: **But vs. 5** says, **“her steps lead to the grave!”**

b. Prov 6:23-27 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: 6:24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. 6:25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. 6:26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. 6:27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

c. Knowing the Word of God will help us to resist temptation when it comes. And it will come. But when the temptation comes we can think on the Word of God which will help us to flee the temptation. Flee does not mean we stay and talk about it.

d. **Phil 4:8** Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

4. Control your actions with the opposite sex.

- a. You must set a standard for yourself concerning sexual activity when dating.
- b. Be aware of tempting situations and steer away from them.
- c. Dates must be planned. Plan an activity if you are going to date. Don't allow yourself to have time alone with nothing to do but make out. When the date is over – go home.

5. Consistency in prayer will help.

A consistent prayer life will help you to stay close to God, and for Him to stay on your thoughts.

Mat 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

- a. Prayer helps us to be confident in God during the day.
- b. It reinforces our will to guard against temptation during the day.
- c. Prayer protects us from the spiritual forces that are trying to ruin our lives.

Eph 6:10-12 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

We must realize that we are in a battle with spiritual forces. Prayer helps to protect us in the battle. Through prayer we can call upon God's forces, His angels, to minister to us helping us to win this battle. Satan wants to destroy our lives and Christian testimony so we won't have any power to lead others to Christ.

Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Beginning your morning with prayer!

6. Companions control character.

Prov 13:20 NIV He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

How simple can it get? If you want to be wise, be with wise people, but if you want to be a fool hang with foolish men. If you want to get into trouble hang with others who find pleasure in the same things.

1 Cor 15:33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

Hanging with evil people will corrupt good people. We would like to think that the good person would change the evil but that is not the way it works. Evil will corrupt good.

7. Consider accountability.

Be accountable to someone of the same sex that you respect. This can be a trusted adult, or friend. Someone you can express your concerns to. They will be able to stand with you in prayer and help you when you feel your facing temptation.

Get involved in church activity that will help you maintain accountability.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

I. PART VIII: WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU HAVE ALREADY GONE TO FAR?

In this session we will examine two areas of sexual involvement: Past & Present and then answer some questions.

1. The Past: You're not dating now or are not involved sexually, but dated someone in the past and were involved sexually. What do you do to feel better?

a. First, realize you won't do yourself any good by beating yourself to death with feelings of self-hatred or sacrificing your life to some worthy cause to balance out the past mistakes. The answer is not even in simply going to church, but in asking God to forgive you. He will forgive you, it's His promise.

1 Tim 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**; of whom I am chief.

The answer is not in self-hatred, or personal sacrifice, but in receiving Jesus Christ as your savior. Jesus did not come to condemn, reject, or scorn us but to forgive us. He came to help sinners find the healing they need from the failures of life. God's forgiveness is greater than any sins you will ever commit. You might ask, "well what if I have failed many times?" The Bible doesn't count our sins, it tells us:

1 John 1:9 **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

This is the promise of God to believers, His children. It has to do with the sincerity of our heart. It is important that we confess and forsake our sin. It is not God please forgive my sin so I can hurry up and do it again. But when we are truly repentant no matter how great or sin, God will forgive us.

Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:11), "neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more!" If you confess your sin, God will forgive you and His forgiveness is a wonderful feeling to experience.

b. Secondly, you must forgive yourself. Forgiving ourselves is often hard. Sometimes we beat ourselves up with feeling of worthlessness, and rejection. Here are some scriptures, which can help you if you focus on them.

Psa 32:1 A Psalm of David, Maschil. **Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**

Psa 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath **he removed our transgressions from us.**

Isa 38:17 Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for **thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.**

Micah 7:19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt **cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.**

Jer. 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and **I will remember their sin no more.**

If you're still having problems with feelings of guilt, you may want to consider doing what it says in James 5:16

James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Transparency with someone else involves risk. But there are times and situations when the counsel and understanding of someone your respect can go a long way to help you overcome feelings that God does not want you to be harboring.

Phil 3:13-14 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In other words pick yourself up and move ahead, putting the past behind you press forward toward the calling Christ has on your life. And then verse 15:

Phil 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, **be thus minded:** and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Here he is saying that we should be like-minded. Put the past behind and move ahead. Trust God to forgive you and move ahead.

Keep in mind this does not mean that we won't have to face the responsibility of our actions. But it means we can do so with peace in our heart toward God and knowing He will help us each step of the way.

2. The present: You're presently dating someone and the two of you have become sexually active. What do you do?

a. "A" Admit there is a problem. Don't rationalize; don't say our love makes it right. You will soon learn that the very thing, which was meant to

strengthen your relationship, will destroy it. If you really love each other you will wait. Let's call it what it is – it's wrong!

b. "B" Both of you must agree that it is wrong. If one of you thinks it is ok, you will continue to have conflict. When you try to suppress your feelings because of your desire to please your partner you will feel guilt and disappointment and pretend it is ok and eventually it will crush you! You're not being open and honest with your partner and it will drive a wedge between you and destroy your relationship.

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

The answer here is NO! If you can't agree you will eventually breakup and you're better off to break up now than later after even more damage is done to yourself. I know you're saying, "break up, oh no, I can't do that." But there will come a point when you will, what you have to ask yourself is, "how much damage do I want to do to myself, or to my partner?" Love will do the right thing; self will do what pleases self! Better now before you're PG.

c. "C" Control – determine to maintain control. If you both can do "A & B" then the next step is to determine to maintain control. This will be very tough to do because once you have tasted it; it is natural for the flesh to desire more. You will have a battle ahead of you, but it can be done. To be successful you need to have a game plan for control:

(I) Start planning your dates and manage your time together.

Make sure your careful not to spend time together alone. Avoid the traps and tempting situations. When you face a tempting situation "Flee!" Get out of there! Some temptations we are to stand in and resist, but in the area of sexual temptation the answer is always to "Flee!"

(II) Start praying together before your dates. This doesn't have to be a long prayer, but simply ask God to help you enjoy your time together, and to conduct yourselves at all times in a way that glorifies Him.

(III) Become accountable. This should be with an adult of the same sex that your respect and will confide in.

(IV) Start double dating with couples that are not having sexual contact or only date in a group. There can be safety in numbers.

(V) Set a standard for physical expression. Realize the standard will have to be much higher than you have experienced. This is because when you have tasted sexual pleasure, it generally requires abstinence as the only safe standard. For example: to the alcoholic one drink is too much, for the drug addict one more fix is too much. With each failure you become addicted again. I'm not

trying to say you are sex addicts, but consider you have already gone too far. You have experienced the law of diminishing return. Anything you do that is less will only lead to frustration. Once you get started you will want to go all the way. Thus abstinence is the only safe standard. Try 40 days of fasting from all physical contact, which includes holding hands, and the good night kiss. Then re-evaluate your relationship and see where you are. What do you do with your time with each other when you're not spending your time getting physical? Do you have other common interests; is there a great deal more to your relationship than sex? If not, you don't belong together. If you need to break up, do it respecting each other's feelings. Speak to them face to face, don't just stop calling. Find a neutral place, realize there will be tears, and do your best not to argue or become angry. Make your decision before the meeting, and determine to follow through no matter what the pleas, promises or tears. Remember, you're saving yourselves even greater hurt down the road.

VI. THREE THINGS TO AVOID IN CHOOSING A PARTNER.

A. Wrong view of what God's will is - not our emotions:

1. It will be reasonable - "Come let us reason together."
2. It will be practical. He won't be 60 years old and her 18 years old. They will have things in common that can grow their relationship.
3. It will stand the test of time. "If waiting kills the relationship it ought to be dead."
4. It will be verified by others - other spiritual people. It should have witness with other responsible people who know both parties.

B. Wrong view of what marriage is:

1. Avoid unrealistic expectations. No marriage partner is perfect. Marriage will not solve your problems. In fact it generally adds to them. Thus it is best to only enter into a marriage commitment from a position of strength. A person who has many needs will only draw the life out of a relationship until there is none left.
2. If it's not a good relationship before marriage it surely won't be afterward. Give the courtship plenty of time to see if the relationship has "staying power" the ability to weather storms and grow stronger.
3. A successful marriage is hard, disciplined work. Anyone who has remained married to the same person will tell you that a marriage takes a lot of work on the

part of each partner. Relationships don't just happen to last, people must put some effort into it and learn to give more than to receive.

4. Marriage is a blending together of two lives with two personalities which are often going in different directions, both psychologically and emotionally and sometimes spiritually. Thus the individuals have to learn to give up their independent lives and become one. Marriage is the ideal place for Christ to work His character and the fruit of the Spirit into our lives as marriage will apply the pressure that yields the rarest and most valuable of gems.

C. Wrong view of what love is: (remind students of previous notes on what love is)

1. Love is not based on feelings as Hollywood would have us believe. Love is a commitment to the welfare and happiness of another.
2. Don't think just because your marriage doesn't feel right that you can look for something that feels better. There is no excuse for divorce just because your "feeler" isn't working. If something happened to your "feeler" you probably broke it; and if you broke it you and God together can fix it!

VII. WHY RELATIONSHIPS FAIL – BY Rev. Nick Panico

A. PRINCE CHARMING / SNOW WHITE SYNDROME

Some day a handsome prince is going to ride into my life on a white charger. He will be tall, dark, muscular and handsome. He will be real spiritual and have lots of money. Enough to keep me in the fashion I have always dreamed about. He will have no character flaws remembering every anniversary. The date of our first date, our first kiss, the date he proposed, and the list goes on. He will be perfect in every way.

Or maybe one day you will be driving along and see the woman of your dreams, perfectly proportioned, with hair like corn silk, and from the moment you meet she is totally consumed with thoughts of you. She loves all sports, is totally submissive, has no character flaws and knows you are God's greatest gift to the female gender. How could she be anything other than what God has for you.

Unfortunately, no one has ever been created who meets each of these qualifications. The pitfall in this relationship is **unrealistic expectation**.

We need to understand that just as there is no person who is perfect, without flaw, there is also not relationship that does not have its difficulties.

Psalms 37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

What that means is that as we take delight in the Lord, and lay down our own desires and seek to please him, he begins to place new desires into our heart. Desires that are in line with his will for our lives, desires that he is able and willing to meet. Remember, God knows what you need even more than you know what you need. So lets allow God to place the right desires into our hearts and then we will find greater success in all of our relationships.

B. THE CONSTRUCTION JOB ROMANCE

In this style of relationship you find yourself as the foreman on a construction sight where you have determined to pound the person of your dreams into your image. You should always wear your “hard hat” as you must always have your hammer and chisel in ready position. It is not enough for you that God created this person in His image but you want them in your image as well. God no longer can bring change into their lives as you are right in the middle of things doing it for him. This relationship is characterized by “constructive criticism”.

It begins innocently enough, simply offering some helpful hints to encourage social and spiritual growth in their life. Such statements as:

“You would be much happier if you would exercise daily”

“You know brown is really not your best color”

“People would think much more of you if you would only.....”

“You will never grow spiritually until you learn to.....”

After a while you would have accomplished one of two things. Either you will have forced that person into something God never intended for them (most likely resenting you for the rest of their life) or they will have fled from your construction sight because the work was hazardous to their health.

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

We are all under construction, but the foreman of our construction job is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. Perhaps we all should have signs about our necks which say, “Construction Sight - Enter at your own Risk”. From Phil. 1:6 we see that the construction work will continue until the day of Jesus Christ. In other words until the Lord takes us home or comes for us He will continue to do His work in us. The key is to allow God the freedom to do the construction work that needs to be done.

C. THE MASQUERADE SYNDROME

This is when you try to be what the other person wants in order to gain the relationship. You hide who you really are for fear of rejection. You're insecure in your relationship with yourself, with God, and with others. So you try to be something you're not. Sometimes we succeed in putting the right bait out there and we catch the fish, and get married. Nothing will make a mask fall off sooner than marriage.

Colossians 3:9-10 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

We must have honesty in relationship. The only thing we need to put on is Christ.

D. THE “MY WAY” ROMANCE

This relationship is characterized by a lack of commitment and sacrifice to the relationship. It is a self-centered relationship, always demanding to have “it’s” way.

Philippians 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Every relationship is a partnership and involves giving into the relationship. To prove our love by the willingness to lay down our own lives. Both parties sacrificing that the relationship would have life.

E. THE RACETRACK ROMANCE

Characterized by no foundation of friendship. It happens all too fast. There is a meeting of the eyes, a racing of the heart, everything comes so naturally, and you have so much in common. You feel like you have known them all of your life “in fact don’t you know your mother and my mother are both mothers?” It seems like we were destined for this meeting. The relationship continues quickly, she is already writing your last name next to her first name to see how it looks. Five or six weeks go by and you have seen a lot of each other, in fact you’re almost inseparable. So he pops the question and you say, “I will” and you’re married. The problem is you have spent time with each other but you really don’t know each other. You have been living in infatuation and emotion. That icky gooey feeling that you call love but all too often is lust. I want you to know you can get that same feeling from a good pizza! I know!

Time is one of the greatest assets we have in determining the will of God for our lives. Time allows us to see people in every season of life. I encourage everyone to date someone in all four seasons before marriage. It also allows us to witness the depth of someone’s Christian character. The Catholics are right there is a purgatory, and it is being married to the wrong person.

F. THE SUCTION CUP ROMANCE

Similar to the “Indy 500 Romance”, this relationship involves seeing to much of each other to soon, but adds to that physical intimacy to soon in the relationship. Holding hands by the second date, and tickling each other’s tonsils by the third date. The time together is now centered around fulfilling each other’s urges. Now time for friendship development. Two great pitfalls to this type of relationship:

1. Falling into sin - Your not sure where to draw the line and the closer you get to the line the further you push it back. When your asking yourself, “how far is to far?” then you know “its to far”.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. 4:2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. 4:3 **For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:** 4:4 **That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor;** 4:5 **Not in the lust of concupiscence (concupiscence = hot desire or sexual desire),** even as the Gentiles which know not God: 4:6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

It has been suggested that one way of determining what actions within a dating relationship are acceptable and which are not, is to ask yourself whether you would feel uncomfortable engaging in such activity if you knew Jesus was standing in the room watching you.

2. Marrying to put out the fire - Far to often people who enter into the physical dimension of a dating relationship end up marrying to fulfill their interpretation of :

1 Corinthians 7:9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

The rationalization is that, “I am better off to marry since I can’t control my physical desire.” Such thinking leads to marriage for no reason other than sexual attraction and lack of self-control. This type of marriage is doomed before it even starts. Ask yourself, “what are you going to do with the other 23 hours and 50 minutes in the day?” Here you are married to someone you don’t even know, how much better off we would be if we allowed the Holy Spirit to teach us some self-control, a fruit of the Spirit, and we learn to submit every member of our body as servants of a Holy God.

Clint Eastwood, in one of his movies coined the phrase, “a man got to know his limitations.” In dating we need to know our limitations, to agree on safe boundaries and follow them. A couple who agrees that anything below the neck is “off limits - out of bounds” is not likely to get themselves into a compromising situation. Learn to avoid places of temptation. Lay a good foundation of relationship and when your old and wrinkled you will still have a relationship.

G. UNEQUALLY YOKED RELATIONSHIP

2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

An unequally yoked relationship may take on several dimensions:

1. Spirit-filled with non Spirit-filled - Two people who love God but are unable to have spiritual fellowship. What church do they go to when they have differing spiritual needs. What if one person looks to the other person’s spiritual experience with condescension? How will the children be taught? There will have to be great compromise in this relationship if it is to work.

2. Committed Christian with non committed Christian - One wants close involvement in the church the other doesn’t. One feels going to church once a week is plenty where the other feels the need to be there every time the doors are open. One is more interested in career, sports and recreation where the other is more interested in sowing their strength and talents into the lives of others. This often leads to each going toward their own interest and often creates jealousy in the heart of one toward the church. These problems are compounded if the man is the non committed Christian because he is suppose to be the priest in his home. If he fails to take spiritual leadership and the wife steps in, she is walking in a role she was not meant to walk in and will prevent him from growing in God.

3. Christian and non-Christian - The scripture is clear, yet so often we hear, “I know God must have brought them into my life, they are so close to receiving Jesus.” There is no such thing as “missionary dating”. It is never God’s will for us to date a non-Christian. To do so is to try to have fellowship with darkness. Better we invite them to church and then wait for God to totally save them and watch them grow in Christ to the place that there is evidence enough to convict them of their testimony. A wolf can only stay in sheep’s clothing for so long! Give **time** for God to prove what His will is for you.

VIII. MODEL OF A GODLY COURTSHIP FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH

A. "Seven phases of a Godly Courtship" - (Bill Gothard material used by permission of the “Institute of Basic Life Principles,” Oak Brook, Illinois.)

1. Phase 1 - THE DESIRE OF BOAZ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FAMILY OF RUTH

"Then said Boaz unto his servant ... Whose damsel is this?" (Ruth 2:5).

A person should not marry without knowing of the background of the intended as our environment often effects our character.

2. Phase 2 - HIS DESIRE TO PROVIDE FOR HER AND PROTECT HER

"Then said Boaz unto Ruth ... abide here fast by my maidens ... have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn" (Ruth 2:8-9).

A husband has the obligation & responsibility to be a spiritual covering bringing protection & safety to his wife and family.

3. Phase 3 - HIS DESIRE TO BE WITH HER AND TALK TO HER

"And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of bread, and dip thy morsel in vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left" (Ruth 2:14).

Openness & desire to communicate show interest in her and desire to make provision for her.

4. Phase 4 - HIS WILLINGNESS TO LET TIME CONFIRM HIS IMPRESSIONS

"So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of the barley harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law" (Ruth 2:23).

Boaz felt no need to rush the relationship. If it was God it would withstand the test of time.

5. Phase 5 - HIS DESIRE TO ASSUME THE FULL RESPONSIBILITY OF MARRIAGE

"...If he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth ..." (Ruth 3:13).

He understood the full responsibility of his actions and had counted the cost before entering into commitment. He knew fully what the responsibility of a kinsman was.

6. Phase 6 - HIS WILLINGNESS TO LET GOD STOP THE MARRIAGE AS HE PLACED IT IN THE HANDS OF OTHER AUTHORITIES

" ... There is a kinsman nearer than I.... If he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee ..." (Ruth 3:12-13).

Boaz wouldn't let the hand of flesh have its way. As Ruth was much younger it would have been a real ego trip for the older Boaz.

7. Phase 7 - GOD'S BLESSING UPON THEIR MARRIAGE, FAMILIES, AND THE WORLD AS A RESULT OF THEIR GODLY COURTSHIP

They were faithful, God is faithful.

"So Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. "And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name be famous in Israel.

"And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.

"And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

"And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David" (Ruth 4:13-17). (as reference see also Matt.1:1-6; Luke 3:31-32)

B. Some lessons we can learn from the character of Boaz and Ruth.

1. Concerning Boaz:

a. Boaz was a man who was prepared for marriage.

Boaz was a "mighty man of wealth." (Ruth 2:1)

In other words, He was a man who had gained wealth and maturity in handling of finances prior to entering into this marriage relationship.

b. Boaz was a man who demonstrated mature leadership.

"And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee" (Ruth 2:4).

He was more concerned about the people that he was working with than he was with his harvest. Boaz was a man who understood that if his workers were in right relationship with the Lord, they would be in proper relationship with him, and the job would get done. Thus he shows his leadership by having the right priorities.

A further mark of Boaz's mature leadership is found in Ruth 2:5:
"Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers..."

This reveals that Boaz had an orderly structure of authority that he operated through with his workers.

c. **Boaz was a man who was committed to character.**

"And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband" (Ruth 2:11).

This shows that Boaz was interested in the character of Ruth, not just her physical appearance. He had obviously done some investigation to find out something about her character.

d. **Boaz gives his expression of favor in a quiet, somewhat meek manner.**

"The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust" (Ruth 2:12). "And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not" (Ruth 2:15-16).

Boaz takes steps to see that Ruth is favored in her grooming. He does this in a quiet way, through his workmen, so that no resentment is brought to her from people who may have seen this display of favor. Also, no undue attention is brought him, therefore showing his desire to show favor, yet to do so in the most careful of ways. Boaz is a man of discretion.

e. **Boaz is concerned with the timing and method with which he honors his responsibility of kinsman redeemer to Naomi and Ruth.**

"And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest ..." (Ruth 3:11).

This shows that Boaz was willing to fulfill his responsibility of kinsman redeemer as Ruth and Naomi had requested.

"I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman" (Ruth 3:11).

Boaz was concerned with the timing, knowing that the rest of the people in the city would be affected by his action. He wanted to make

sure that those around him would approve of his action. Boaz did not rush into this decision, but rather it was something that was well thought.

f. **Boaz was above reproach.**

"And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's ... Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance ... And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah..." (Ruth 4:9-11).

Boaz was above reproach in that he followed every law and statute, and every custom that the city would expect. He made sure that there were ample witnesses to what he was doing so that there would be no misunderstanding. It is important to point out that not only was he above reproach, but his motives were Godly. He was very careful that in no way was any dishonor brought to God's house.

2. Concerning Ruth:

a. **Ruth had a pure motive.**

"And Ruth said [to her mother-in-law-], Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

Ruth's motive was self-sacrificing. We see that her focus was not on self; she was a young woman and could have very easily gone off and married some other young man. Instead she had Godly motives, and her focus was on Naomi.

Ruth was a woman of virtue, ("Virtue" speaks of the Godly influence that we have upon the lives of people around us) and Ruth was a woman who had a Godly influence on the lives of those around her.

God looks at a virtuous woman as the rarest and most valuable of all gems.

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies" (Prov. 31:10).

b. **Ruth was a woman of diligence.**

"And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn..." (Ruth 2:2).

Ruth and Naomi were poor. After the workers had harvested, they would glean the little bits of grain that were left behind for the poor. Ruth was diligent to glean the fields from morning until evening, gathering what little bit of food she needed to sustain her and Naomi.

c. **Ruth was genuinely grateful.**

"Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me seeing I am a stranger" (Ruth 2:10).

This statement to Boaz shows that Ruth had no expectation or demand. She was acting out of total gratefulness for any blessing that came her way. She did not have the attitude that because she had given up her youth to serve Naomi, God now owed her a blessing. Instead, her attitude displayed gratefulness for any good thing that came to her. Often we forsake some worldly thing & then expect God to reward us in some great way as if he owed us a debt.

d. **Ruth was a submissive woman.**

"And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz..." (Ruth 2:22-23).

Naomi was suggesting to Ruth that she stay close by the maidens in the house of Boaz instead of going on with the others. Ruth, coming under the authority of her mother in law, did exactly as Naomi had instructed her. This also shows that Ruth, even as a young woman of adult age, was willing to come under the authority of the woman who she was in submission to. Her submissiveness is also seen in the scripture where it is indicated that when she came to the field, instead of just demanding her legal right to go in and glean, she first asked the foreman of the field for permission.

e. **Ruth willingly responds.**

"Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? ... Behold, [Boaz] ... winnoweth barley to night in the threshing floor. Wash thy self therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself know unto man, until he shall have done eating and drinking ..." (Ruth 3:1-3).

We see Naomi give Ruth direction as to what she is to do. "And [Ruth]... said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do." (Ruth 3:5).

Ruth, being faced with the responsibility of a marriage to a much older man, still has a willing heart to do whatever God directs her steps to do. This teaches us a couple of things. We see even in this marriage relationship that Ruth was not forced, and that marriage involves a choice. Ruth's love was a mature love. She was able to make a mature choice.

f. **Ruth was committed to her marriage.**

"...I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman" (Ruth 3:9).

Ruth asks Boaz to complete his responsibility as a kinsman redeemer in fulfilling the commitment of marriage. Ruth at this point was no longer bound by her marriage vows to her first husband, because he was dead. However, we see that she has an opportunity to honor her dead husband's name by protecting his property. She does this through fulfilling one of the goals of their marriage by marrying Boaz, and then raising up a child that would inherit the first husband's land. Ruth willingly overlooks younger men and keeps her dedication and desire to fulfill the commitment and purpose of her first marriage.

Boaz sees this in Ruth and responds:

"And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich" (Ruth 3:10).

So the thing that we see most of all in Ruth is that **her motives were pure**, and she was a woman worthy of great honor because of her submissive spirit.

IX. THE WEDDING COVENANT

(Bill Gothard material used by permission of the "Institute of Basic Life Principles," Oak Brook, Illinois)

The traditions of a Christian wedding grow out of God's covenant relationship with Israel and Christ's relationship with the believer. God also uses the Jewish wedding to illustrate redemption and Christ's relationship with the Church. Marriage is a covenant relationship Mal. 2:14.

A. Comparing the Jewish wedding and its relationship to salvation.

1. The prospective bridegroom took the initiative and traveled from his father's house to the home of the prospective bride.

CHRIST LEFT HIS FATHER'S HOUSE AND CAME TO EARTH TO GAIN A BRIDE FOR HIMSELF. (see Eph.5:25-28).

2. The father of the woman then negotiated with the prospective bridegroom the price that must be paid to secure his bride.

CHRIST HAD TO PAY THE PRICE WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.
(see I Cor.6:19-20).

3. When the bridegroom paid the purchase price, the marriage covenant was thereby established. At that point, the man and woman were regarded to be husband and wife, even though no physical union had taken place.

THE BELIEVER HAS BEEN DECLARED TO BE SANCTIFIED OR SET APART EXCLUSIVELY FOR CHRIST. (see Eph.5:25-27).

4. The moment the covenant was established, the bride was declared to be set apart exclusively for the bridegroom. The groom and the bride then drank from a cup over which the betrothal benediction had been pronounced. This symbolized that the covenant relationship had been established.

CHRIST SYMBOLIZED THIS MARRIAGE COVENANT THROUGH COMMUNION AT THE LAST SUPPER.
(see I Cor.11:25).

5. After the marriage covenant was in effect, the groom left the home of the bride and returned to his father's house. He remained there for a period of twelve months separation from his bride.

CHRIST RETURNED TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE FOLLOWING THE PAYMENT OF HIS PURCHASE PRICE. (see John 6:62).

6. During this period of separation, the bride gathered her wardrobe and prepared for married life. The groom prepared living accommodations in his father's house for his bride.

CHRIST IS PREPARING A PLACE OF HIS BRIDE AND IS ALSO SENDING PASTORS AND TEACHERS TO PERFECT THE BRIDE FOR THE COMING WEDDING. (see John 14:2; Eph. 4:11-13).

7. After the period of separation, the groom, best man, and other male escorts left the house of the groom's father, usually at night, and conducted a torch-light procession to the house of the bride.

CHRIST WILL SOON COME FROM HIS FATHER'S HOUSE IN HEAVEN ACCOMPANIED BY AN ANGELIC HOST.

(see John 14:3).

8. The bride was expecting her groom to come for her; however, she did not know the exact time. Thus, the groom's arrival was preceded by a shout.

CHRIST'S RETURN WILL BE PRECEDED BY A SHOUT. WE EXPECT HIS RETURN, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW THE DAY OR THE HOUR.

(see I Thess.4:16)

9. The groom received the bride with her female attendants and returned to his father's house.

THE BRIDE WILL BE CAUGHT UP WITH THE LORD TO BE WITH HIM. (see I Thess.4:14-17).

10. The bride and groom then entered the bridal chamber and, in the privacy of that place, entered into physical union for the first time, thereby consummating the marriage.

CHRIST'S UNION WITH THE CHURCH WILL TAKE PLACE IN HEAVEN FOR ALL ETERNITY. (see I Thess.4:17).

B. What are the true meanings of wedding traditions? (This section only needs to be taught in areas where the wedding ceremony is similar to what is presented here.)

1. Why do ushers seat the family and friends of the bride and groom on opposite sides of the auditorium?

ANSWER: This provides a covenant setting. Marriage is established by God as a covenant, not a contract. "She [is] thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant" (Mal.2:14). Beriyth (Hebrew word for Covenant, Strong's definition) - "In the sense of cutting; a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh."

Before the covenant was made, Abraham, according to God's instruction, took selected sacrifices "... and divided them in the midst ... And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed

between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram ..." (Gen.15:10,17-18).

When God brought the Israelites out of slavery to Egypt, He established a covenant with them in which the people were to pass between the pieces of a calf. (see Jer.34:13,28).

Seating families and friends on each side of the auditorium symbolizes the sacrifices which they have made in order for the bride and groom to enter into this covenant.

**** HOW DOES A COVENANT DIFFER FROM A CONTRACT? ****

*A covenant is based on trust between parties.

A contract is based on distrust.

*A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility.

A contract is based on limited liability.

*A covenant cannot be broken if new circumstances occur.

A contract can be voided by mutual consent.

2. What is the significance of a white runner in the aisle?

ANSWER: It is symbolic of walking on holy ground. A covenant is not made merely between two people and their witnesses. It is made in the presence of God, and He is actively involved in the agreement, since it is God that joins them together. (see Matt.19:6).

3. Why are the parents of the couple given special seating?

ANSWER: The parents of the bride and groom are part of the marriage covenant. The commitments they make during the ceremony are just as binding as the vows of the couple. The final responsibility of parents for their sons and daughters is to determine with them God's will for a life partner. Thereafter, they serve in a chain of counsel for them and their children.

4. Why does the groom enter the auditorium first?

ANSWER: By entering first, the groom signifies that he is the covenant initiator. This is important because whoever initiates the covenant assumes greater responsibility for seeing its fulfilling. God initiated covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David. Christ initiated the covenant of salvation with us. God is still at work to

fulfill His covenants, and Christ will soon appear with the sound of trumpets to consummate the wedding with His bride, the Church. (see I Thess.4:14-17).

Based on this, the following would be appropriate. TO THE GROOM
(before the bride arrives)

As you come before these witnesses, are you signifying that you are taking the initiative in this marriage covenant, and that you will, by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, assume the greater responsibility in carrying out its terms?

5. Why does the father walk with the bride down the aisle?

ANSWER: This action has a twofold significance.

- a. The Father is saying to the bride, "I am endorsing this young man as God's very best choice of a husband for you, and I am now bringing you to him."
- b. At the same time the father is saying to the young man, "I am presenting to you a daughter whom I have earnestly endeavored to train up as a pure bride." (see Deut.22:13-21; II Cor.11:2).

6. What is the real significance of the white wedding dress?

ANSWER: The white wedding gown symbolizes the purity of heart and life for which the husband is responsible in the life of his wife. During the marriage, he is to cleanse her by the Word of God, just as Christ purifies believers by the Word. (see Eph.5:25-28).

7. Why does the minister ask the question, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?"

ANSWER: This question and its response symbolizes not only the full blessing of the parents, but also the transfer of responsibility to the groom by the father. A daughter is under the authority and responsibility of her father until she is married. (see Num.30:4-8). It is therefore, the father who transfers this responsibility to the groom. (see I Cor.7:38).

Because of this, the question should be expanded. TO THE FATHER

By walking down the aisle with your daughter, are you and your wife affirming that you are giving your full blessing to the marriage of your daughter with this man? (Response by the father.)

**Are you also hereby transferring your God given responsibility for the care and protection of your daughter to this man?
(Response by the father.)**

8. Why do the bride and groom take each other's right-hand during the wedding vows?

ANSWER: The open right hand offered by each party symbolizes their strength, resources, and purpose. By clasping each other's right hand, they are pledging these to each other. Just as we depend upon the "saving strength of God's right hand," so each partner can depend upon all the resources that the other brings to the covenant relationship. (see Psalm 20:6).

9. Why does the groom make the vows first?

ANSWER: He must be the leader and assume the greater responsibility to fulfill the marriage covenant.

10. What is the real significance of the wedding ring?

ANSWER: It symbolizes transfer of authority, strength, and protection. In scripture, the ring is a symbol of authority and the resources which go with it. (see Esther 8:2).

The belt has also been used in Scripture as the token of a covenant. (see I Sam.18:1-4). The belt represents the initiator's strength and pledge of protection. When God made a covenant with Noah, He put a symbol in the sky -- a rainbow. When viewed from the sky, the rainbow is a circle. It was to be a continual reminder to God of the covenant that He had made. (see Gen.9:8-17).

11. What is the special meaning of the bride's veil?

ANSWER: The veil represents modesty and respect. It reminds the couple and the witnesses that the physical relationship is only to be entered into after the vows are completed. When Christ fulfilled the conditions of His covenant for our redemption, the veil in the temple was taken away. (see Matt.27:50-51).

Similarly, when a non believer receives Jesus Christ as his Savior, the veil between him and Christ is removed. (see II Cor.3:14).

12. Why is the couple pronounced husband and wife?

ANSWER: The pronouncement of husband and wife establishes a definite point in time for the beginning of the marriage.

13. What is the purpose of introducing the new couple?

ANSWER: The introduction of the new couple establishes their change of names. In the marriage, the wife takes on the name of the husband, and the man becomes known as the husband of the wife. This name change is clearly illustrated in the covenant between Jehovah God and Abram. (see Gen.17:4-5). He is known as "the father of multitudes."

14. Why does the couple sign wedding papers?

ANSWER: The couple signs the wedding papers to establish a public document. It is a continuing public record of the covenant. God wrote out the testimony of His covenant in Scripture. When Laban made a covenant with Jacob, a heap of stones became a witness. (see Gen.31:43-55).

15. What is the significance of signing the guest book?

ANSWER: The guests become the official witnesses to the covenant. By signing their names they are saying, "I have witnessed the vows, and I will testify to the reality of this marriage." Because of the significance of signing the guest book, it should be done after the wedding rather than before it.

16. What is the purpose of the receiving line?

ANSWER: The guests give their blessing to the couple and their parents in the receiving line. (see Ruth 4:11-15).

It would be appropriate for the guests to write a short word of encouragement on a card while they are waiting for the receiving line and give it to the couple or one of their parents.

17. Why is a special invitation given for the reception?

ANSWER: The invitation for the reception symbolizes the invitation to salvation. Christ used the invitation to the wedding feast as an illustration of inviting people to partake of salvation. The wedding feast was free to all who will receive it. (see Isaiah 55:1).

All who respond to Christ's invitation, both good and bad, must enter on His terms. The man who came without the proper wedding attire in the parable was cast into the outer darkness. (see Matt.22:1-14).

18. What is the meaning of serving food at the reception?

ANSWER: Food is part of the covenant celebration. One of the root meanings of the word covenant is "to feed." Following the marriage, a feast was customary to further symbolize the unity of the couple. It is significant that the first event of Christ's ministry was attending a wedding feast, and His first miracle took place during that occasion. (see John 2:1-11).

19. Why does the couple feed cake to each other?

ANSWER: This act symbolizes their becoming one flesh. By feeding cake to each other they are saying, "This represents my body. As you eat it, I am becoming a part of you; and as I eat the cake that you give to me, you become a part of me." The obvious New Testament confirmation of this symbolism is in the Lord's Supper. (see I Cor.11:24-25).

20. Why do the guests throw rice at the couple?

ANSWER: This gesture symbolizes marriage fruitfulness. When a covenant was completed, both parties would often establish a memorial garden.

X. THE MARRIAGE MAP

by Michele Weiner-Davis (magazine article)

“Exactly what makes a marriage last? As a therapist and longtime observer of relationships. I can tell you that what happens in marriage is surprisingly predictable, and couples familiar with the emotional terrain ahead are better able to handle the bumpy roads. Most experience 5 stages, though the length of each will vary.

A. Stage One: Passion Prevails!

Early in their relationships, couples typically are head-over heels in love. They emphasize their mutual interest and comfort they feel in each other's presence while overlooking their differences. At no other time is their physical desire for each other as intense. While in this state of euphoria, they often decide to wed. **Survival tip:** Enjoy the magic but recognize that the euphoria won't last forever. And when it starts to fade,

remember: your marriage isn't failing. Infatuation is not the glue that holds marriages together.

B. Stage Two: What was I thinking?

Reality sets in. Differences in interests, perspectives, personalities and habits become glaring. To make matters worse, sexual attraction begins to fizzle. Ironically, couples now are faced with making life-altering decisions: Should they have kids? Who will support the family? Those in second marriages face the daunting task of blending families and coping with financial responsibilities of the past. **Survival tip:** Know that disagreements are inevitable. Take a class in building conflict-resolution skills. Stay connected by spending time together, communicating and making a robust sex life a top priority.

C. Stage Three: You change.

Couples spend the next few years trying to get their spouses to change. When this doesn't work, many face a fork in the marital road. Some divorce or have affairs. Some decide to stick it out—because of religious beliefs, personal values, concern for their children, financial considerations or even fear of being alone. A portion of those who stay together resign themselves to unhappy marriages, but others begin to investigate more satisfying ways of interacting. **Survival tip:** Remember, all marriages have stormy periods. Seek professional help. The sociologist Linda Waite says 86% of unhappy couples that stick it out report being much happier five years later.

D. Stage Four: That's just the way he or she is.

By now, couples accept that they are never going to agree about everything. They find ways to live more peaceably. Spouses more readily forgive and recognize that they aren't exactly easy to live with either. Fights are less frequent and less intense. Couples finally understand that one must accept the good with the bad. **Survival tip:** Don't rest on your laurels. Continue practicing the Three T's: Time together, Talk, and Touch.

E. Stage Five: Together, at last.

This is the payoff. Couples have a shared history and a sense of accomplishment. They appreciate rather than feel threatened by their differences. Their children are older, and they relish the more relaxed opportunities to reconnect. They've come full circle.

Survival tip: Keep yourself healthy and active so that you can enjoy the fruits of your labor.

XI. TEMPERAMENTS

Temperament notes primarily secured from the writings of, Tim LaHaye's book "**Spirit Controlled Temperament**," copyright 1966, and published by Tyndale House Publishers used with their kind permission.

A. Introduction

1. "Why is it that I can't control myself?"

- a. " ... for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in Me." (Rom.7:18-20).
- b. We have all inherited a basic temperament from our parents called several things in the Bible, "the natural man," "the flesh," "the old man," and "corruptible flesh." It seeks to satisfy our wants.

2. Temperament definition

Temperament is the combination of inborn traits that subconsciously affects man's behavior.

3. Character

Character is the real you. The Bible refers to it as "the hidden man of the heart." It is sometimes referred to as "the soul" of man, which is made up of the mind, emotions, and will.

4. Personality

- a. Personality is the outward expression of ourselves, which may or may not be the same as our character, depending on how genuine we are.
- b. The Bible tells us, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, and God looketh on the heart," and "Out of the heart proceed the issues of life. Provb. 4:23" The place to change behavior is inside man, not outside.
- c. In summary, temperament is the combination of traits we were born with; character is our "civilized" temperaments; and personality is the "face" we show to others.

5. Differences

- a. A person's sex will also affect his temperament, particularly in the realm of the emotions. Women are usually considered to be more emotionally expressive than men. Even the hardest of women will weep at times, whereas some men never weep.
- b. Temperament is likely to always be the same, but the soul is where the battle is won or lost. It is the soul (self will) that needs Spirit control. It is

through our surrendering to the Holy Spirit that our negative temperament qualities are brought into subjection. Otherwise they will continue to create conflict.

- c. Absolute confidence in the power of Jesus Christ, "You can use your background as an excuse for present behavior only until you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. After that you have a new power within you that is able to change your conduct."

TEMPERAMENT PROFILE *

Directions: in each of the 40 rows, choose one of the four words that most often describes you and mark it with a check mark. When finished, turn to second page and remark all the words you checked on this page. Add the column totals. Write totals at bottom of columns. Write your name at the top of second page.

Strengths

- | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable | <input type="checkbox"/> Animated | <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Playful | <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Submissive | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-sacrificing. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociable | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong-willed |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Considerate | <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled | <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Convincing |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshing | <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful | <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-reliant | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirited |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Planner | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Promoter |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Sure | <input type="checkbox"/> Spontaneous | <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduled | <input type="checkbox"/> Shy |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Orderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Obliging | <input type="checkbox"/> Outspoken | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful | <input type="checkbox"/> Funny | <input type="checkbox"/> Forceful |
| 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Daring | <input type="checkbox"/> Delightful | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed |
| 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful | <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultured | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident |
| 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Idealistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> Inoffensive | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring |
| 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Decisive | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry humor | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep |
| 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Mediator | <input type="checkbox"/> Musical | <input type="checkbox"/> Mover | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixes easily |
| 16. <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenacious | <input type="checkbox"/> Talker | <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant |
| 17. <input type="checkbox"/> Listener | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal | <input type="checkbox"/> Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Lively |
| 18. <input type="checkbox"/> Contented | <input type="checkbox"/> Chief | <input type="checkbox"/> Chart maker | <input type="checkbox"/> Cute |
| 19. <input type="checkbox"/> Perfectionist | <input type="checkbox"/> Permissive | <input type="checkbox"/> Productive | <input type="checkbox"/> Popular |
| 20. <input type="checkbox"/> Bouncy | <input type="checkbox"/> Bold | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaved | <input type="checkbox"/> Balanced |

Weaknesses

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 21. <input type="checkbox"/> Blank | <input type="checkbox"/> Bashful | <input type="checkbox"/> Brassy | <input type="checkbox"/> Bossy |
| 22. <input type="checkbox"/> Undisciplined | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsympathetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Unenthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Unforgiving |
| 23. <input type="checkbox"/> Reticent | <input type="checkbox"/> Resentful | <input type="checkbox"/> Resistant | <input type="checkbox"/> Repetitious |
| 24. <input type="checkbox"/> Fussy | <input type="checkbox"/> Fearful | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetful | <input type="checkbox"/> Frank |
| 25. <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient | <input type="checkbox"/> Insecure | <input type="checkbox"/> Indecisive | <input type="checkbox"/> Interrupt |
| 26. <input type="checkbox"/> Unpopular | <input type="checkbox"/> Uninvolved | <input type="checkbox"/> Unpredictable | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaffectionate |
| 27. <input type="checkbox"/> Headstrong | <input type="checkbox"/> Haphazard | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to please | <input type="checkbox"/> Hesitant |
| 28. <input type="checkbox"/> Plain | <input type="checkbox"/> Pessimistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Proud | <input type="checkbox"/> Permissive |
| 29. <input type="checkbox"/> Anger easily | <input type="checkbox"/> Aimless | <input type="checkbox"/> Argumentative | <input type="checkbox"/> Alienated |
| 30. <input type="checkbox"/> Naïve | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervy | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonchalant |
| 31. <input type="checkbox"/> Worrier | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn | <input type="checkbox"/> Workaholic | <input type="checkbox"/> Wants credit |
| 32. <input type="checkbox"/> Too sensitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactless | <input type="checkbox"/> Timid | <input type="checkbox"/> Talkative |
| 33. <input type="checkbox"/> Doubtful | <input type="checkbox"/> Disorganized | <input type="checkbox"/> Domineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed |

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 34. ___ Inconsistent | ___ Introverted | ___ Intolerant | ___ Indifferent |
| 35. ___ Messy | ___ Moody | ___ Mumbles | ___ Manipulative |
| 36. ___ Slow | ___ Stubborn | ___ Show-off | ___ Skeptical |
| 37. ___ Loner | ___ Lord over | ___ Lazy | ___ Loud |
| 38. ___ Sluggish | ___ Suspicious | ___ Short temper | ___ Scatterbrain |
| 39. ___ Revengeful | ___ Restless | ___ Reluctant | ___ Rash |
| 40. ___ Compromising | ___ Critical | ___ Crafty | ___ Changeable |

* Taken from Personality Plus, by Florence Littauer; Flemming H.Revel Pub.; Grand Rapids, 1992

TEMPERAMENT SCORING SHEET

STRENGTHS

<u>Sanguine</u>	<u>Choleric</u>	<u>Melancholy</u>	<u>Phlegmatic</u>
1. ___ Animated	___ Adventurous	___ Analytical	___ Adaptable
2. ___ Playful	___ Persuasive	___ Persistent	___ Peaceful
3. ___ Sociable	___ Strong-willed	___ Self-sacrificing	___ Submissive
4. ___ Convincing	___ Competitive	___ Considerate	___ Controlled
5. ___ Refreshing	___ Resourceful	___ Respectful	___ Reserved
6. ___ Spirited	___ Self-reliant	___ Sensitive	___ Satisfied
7. ___ Promoter	___ Positive	___ Planner	___ Patient
8. ___ Spontaneous	___ Sure	___ Scheduled	___ Shy
9. ___ Optimistic	___ Outspoken	___ Orderly	___ Obliging
10. ___ Funny	___ Forceful	___ Faithful	___ Friendly
11. ___ Delightful	___ Daring	___ Detailed	___ Diplomatic
12. ___ Cheerful	___ Confident	___ Cultured	___ Consistent
13. ___ Inspiring	___ Independent	___ Idealistic	___ Inoffensive
14. ___ Demonstrative	___ Decisive	___ Deep	___ Dry humor
15. ___ Mixes easily	___ Mover	___ Musical	___ Mediator
16. ___ Talker	___ Tenacious	___ Thoughtful	___ Tolerant
17. ___ Lively	___ Leader	___ Loyal	___ Listener
18. ___ Cute	___ Chief	___ Chart maker	___ Contented
19. ___ Popular	___ Productive	___ Perfectionist	___ Permissive
20. ___ Bouncy	___ Bold	___ Behaved	___ Balanced

Totals

WEAKNESSES

21. ___ Brassy	___ Bossy	___ Bashful	___ Blank
22. ___ Undisciplined	___ Unsympathetic	___ Unforgiving	___ Unenthusiastic
23. ___ Repetitious	___ Resistant	___ Resentful	___ Reticent
24. ___ Forgetful	___ Frank	___ Fussy	___ Fearful
25. ___ Interrupts	___ Impatient	___ Insecure	___ Indecisive
26. ___ Unpredictable	___ Unaffectionate	___ Unpopular	___ Uninvolved
27. ___ Haphazard	___ Headstrong	___ Hard to please	___ Hesitant
28. ___ Permissive	___ Proud	___ Pessimistic	___ Plain
29. ___ Anger easily	___ Argumentative	___ Alienated	___ Aimless
30. ___ Naive	___ Nervy	___ Negative	___ Nonchalant
31. ___ Wants credit	___ Workaholic	___ Withdrawn	___ Worrier
32. ___ Talkative	___ Tactless	___ Too sensitive	___ Timid

33. ___ Disorganized	___ Domineering	___ Depressed	___ Doubtful
34. ___ Inconsistent	___ Intolerant	___ Introverted	___ Indifferent
35. ___ Messy	___ Manipulative	___ Moody	___ Mumbles
36. ___ Show-off	___ Stubborn	___ Skeptical	___ Slow
37. ___ Loud	___ Lord over	___ Loner	___ Lazy
38. ___ Scatter-brain	___ Short temper	___ Suspicious	___ Sluggish
39. ___ Restless	___ Rash	___ Revengeful	___ Reluctant
40. ___ Changeable	___ Crafty	___ Critical	___ Compromising
_____	_____	_____	_____ Totals

B. Sanguine - very friendly and responds to feelings.

1. **Strengths:** happy, enjoying, lively, emotional, able to live thoroughly in present, rarely disappointed or depressed or fearful, optimistic, easily inspired, enthusiastic, outgoing, friendly, loving, compassionate, sincere, personable, carefree, happy-go-lucky, cheerful.
2. **Weaknesses:** Impractical, unstable, restless, disorganized, lacking in concentration and discipline, half-cocked, unproductive, weak-willed, unaware of limitations, undependable, egotistical, irresolute, easily tempted, has a temper.

3. Description

- a. The sanguine is the classic extrovert; likable, emotional, buoyant, lively, and the immediate friend of anyone. He enjoys everything he does and especially enjoys people. He is cheerful, loud, smiling, and friendly and is therefore the "life of the party" wherever he goes.
- b. Sanguine children are lovable. They are constant talkers, even with perfect strangers. Inhibitions are unknown as they cheerfully skip their way through life. They are not so strong-willed that they are regularly rebellious or disobedient, but they do often exhibit a temper because of their emotional nature. They can erupt with both highs and lows (when crossed) but the lows do not last for long.
- c. In a group, the sanguine is the quickest to adjust to new surroundings and to strangers and therefore quickly becomes a leader. He is boisterous, a show off, and a daredevil with little thought for the future or personal safety. This impulsiveness often gets him into hot water and he can make the same mistake time and again.
- d. A sanguine is anxious to please and genuinely likes people. He has difficulty with schoolwork because he is undisciplined. Self-discipline is not natural to

him in the least. Finishing what he starts, sticking to a plan and deadlines are most difficult.

- e. Sanguines, therefore, though they are well-liked and friendly, can experience difficulties throughout life because of this lack of the capacity to see jobs through to completion.
- f. Parents of sanguines need to concentrate on several things for their child's sake :
 - (I) Instilling self-discipline.
 - (II) Teaching that emotions are an inadequate base.
 - (III) Training in skills until they are thoroughly acquired.

C. Choleric - self-sufficient, strong willed, life is activity.

- 1. **Strength:** self-disciplined, aggressive, confident, tenacious, single minded, determined, highly accomplishing, practical, organized, strong leader, forceful, quick and bold, optimistic, adventuresome.
- 2. **Weaknesses:** self-sufficient, stubborn, hard, angry, impetuous, un-compassionate, unsympathetic, quick-tempered, revengeful, bitter, cruel, un-yielding, unfeeling toward others, proud, blunt, sarcastic, cutting, disapproving of others, independent, domineering, obnoxious, hard to please.

3. Description

- a. A choleric's predominant characteristic is an active, strong will which gets things accomplished. He is disciplined, practical, and independent, often hot and quick in his responses. Life is activity to him. Adversities goad him on to even greater successes. If you want to get a job done, get a choleric behind it.
- b. The choleric is a born leader, but not a people-oriented "Mr. Nice-Guy" leader as in the sanguine. His motivation comes from within. He can often be domineering and is often accused of being an opportunist.
- c. His strong will and self-sufficiency make it difficult for the choleric to trust Jesus in the details of his life. Repentance and forgiveness do not come naturally to him. He can be a good executive; many well-known generals (and dictators) have been choleric. Paul is a notable example of a choleric whose will was tamed and redirected, but whose fire was never dimmed.

- d. Choleric children have independent spirits and quickly learn to do things for themselves that other children often will not try. (The stubborn, self-sufficient, unyielding will must be broken while the drive and energy and discipline are developed and properly channeled.)
- e. He invites conflict as a result of his iron will. From a very early age he will feel the need to be boss and woe to anyone who stands in the way. Submission comes very hard.
- f. Sensitive parents will provide him with opportunities to be fully himself as a choleric who is driven to do things. But they also need to teach him to relate to others in a gentle and understanding way. This will be very difficult for him. He thinks that everyone possesses the same drive and determination and abilities he has.
- g. Parents of a choleric need to give their child great amounts of love and tenderness while seeking ways to curb and soften his strong will. Throughout his early years he needs to be shown how to submit to Christ and to love and serve others. Even though such things are not inherent in his nature, if you give him a model, he can learn them.

D. Melancholy - Analytical, gifted perfectionist, self - centered and self-sacrificing, sensitive and emotional, introverted.

1. **Strengths:** sensitive, emotionally responsive, creative, inventive, appreciates life's finer things, perfectionist, detail-oriented, analytical, genius-prone, faithful, dependable, self-sacrificing, aware of limitations, precise, reserved, thorough, thoughtful, organized, practical.
2. **Weaknesses:** self-centered, overly contemplative, easily offended, suspicious, takes everything personally, persecution complex, pessimistic, indecisive, fearful, critical, proud, moody, depression prone, gloomy, despairing, unforgiving, expects a great deal from others, negative, judgmental, perfectionist, complaining.

3. Description

- a. The melancholy is the introverted version of the emotional type. They go through times of being moody, sad, and withdrawn. His emotions (like those of a sanguine) can propel him to great heights and depths. But often a period of ecstasy is followed by a time of depression.
- b. The melancholy is the richest of the temperaments, highly sensitive, gifted, always striving toward perfection, and self-sacrificing. Yet this perfectionism is the very thing that causes him such emotional struggles. For he is always disappointed,

always perceives that he has fallen short. No other temperament can be right 98% of the time and be depressed about it.

- c. Many melancholies are responsible for serious problems in marriage because their spouses cannot measure up to their perfect expectations. The melancholy's critical eye and constant negativity further compounds the problem. The melancholy parent can destroy a child with his constant expectations that a child will never achieve. Especially if the child is himself a melancholy, he is doomed to consider himself a failure no matter how great his achievements.
- d. The melancholy has great analytical ability that makes him able to see the potential in anything at a glance. The melancholy often will not take on a task because he pessimistically interprets everything in the worst possible light. When he is able to overcome this, however, his great creativity and inspiration produce great accomplishments (though they may well be followed by depression, doubts, thoughts of failure). He is self-sacrificing, thorough, and persistent in seeing successful punishments through to their conclusion.
- e. The child melancholy usually has a brilliant mind and the ability to be a deep and creative thinker. But his pessimistic and depressive tendencies make it easy for him to get his feelings hurt, feel inferior, and think he is not liked. He needs great love and understanding. He may be the most talented of all, yet suffers from the greatest doubts and feelings of inferiority. It is difficult for him to handle criticism and in many ways he needs it the least. For he will always be engaging in (sometimes morbid) self-introspection. He will be more aware than anyone of his own shortcomings and deficiencies. Unless it is checked, this negative self-analysis can destroy his self-esteem and wreck his spiritual life altogether.
- f. A child who begins early to demonstrate such mood changes for no apparent reason especially needs many esteem-building experiences if he is to enter adulthood with a normal attitude toward life. He especially needs tenderness and acceptance, for his tendency will be to feel imperfect and unaccepted. Anything he does is never quite good enough. And not good enough implies failure.
- g. Disciplining a melancholy is a knotty assignment for a parent, especially if he has secondary temperament characteristics of a strong will or temper. His sensitivity will require much more love and compassion than most children, yet his willfulness must still be broken. It is no easy task for a parent. "Breaking the will while preserving the spirit" of a melancholy requires much prayer and a great deal of love.
- h. A parent's key responsibility toward his melancholy child is to teach him to give God thanks. If this is deeply ingrained early it will do wonders. He must be shown how to focus on the positive. Melancholies should make Philippians 4:8 and I

Thessalonians 5:18 their daily food. Finally, parents need to recognize the special gifts of their melancholy child (and teach him to recognize them too) and give him opportunities to creatively learn and express himself in those particular areas.

E. Phlegmatic - calm, easy going, not involved in much and seldom conveys true feelings.

1. **Strengths:** easy-going, good humor, witty, good listener, objective, thoughtful, dependable, cheerful, good-natured, faithful, practical, neat, efficient, high standards.
2. **Weaknesses:** slow, lazy, unmotivated, teasing, stubborn, selfish, conservative, indecisive, uninvolved.
3. **Description**
 - a. The phlegmatic is known for his calm, cool, slow, easy-going approach to life. He is happy, content, unexcited, pleasant, and tries to stay as uninvolved as he can. No matter what happens he seldom gets ruffled. His emotions are well under control, very consistent. The phlegmatic just likes to keep his distance. He likes people and makes friends easily though he does not seek people out like an extrovert. He is a spectator of life and sees humor in the idiosyncrasies of the other temperaments.
 - b. He will rarely take leadership on his own, but does have leadership ability when it is placed upon him. He is a natural peacemaker, gracious, and efficient.
 - c. The child who in a phlegmatic may be the most enjoyable of all to raise and have around because he is so easy to get along with and undemanding. Because of his relaxed style and lack of variant emotions, the phlegmatic's weaknesses may not surface too visible.
 - d. Parents, therefore, have to watch him closely. His individual problems and stresses will require just as much love and help even though he does not appear to be overly bothered by them. His lack of motivation can cause him to have difficulty paying attention to your instructions. He will not be quite as strong-willed in his disobedience as the choleric, but he does have a stubborn streak.
 - e. He also has more of a problem with selfishness than the other temperaments, especially when young. He is a great tease as well, which can lead to making fun of others and insensitivity unless it is checked early. He often must be encouraged to participate with other children rather than merely being a spectator.
 - f. A phlegmatic has a deep need to learn responsibility because it is his natural tendency to shirk it. Many things are unimportant to him so being responsible concerning them

seems unnecessary. But when taught responsibility and when motivated to carry through, he usually does an outstanding job.

- g. For the parent of a phlegmatic it is important to teach two things above all: compassion for others and diligent responsibility.

F. Other statements on Temperaments

1. **Why study Temperaments:** If we have an understanding of our child's basic temperament then we can carefully consider those desired character qualities they will need help in developing. It will also help us to more effectively deal with their weaknesses while promoting their strengths.
2. **Most are combinations:** Most everyone is a combination of each temperament to a certain degree but there is almost always one temperament which is more dominant. Learning to recognize our tendency to act out of a certain temperament will help us to better understand ourselves and what steps we may need to take in correcting undesirable behavior.
3. **Praise the Lord for Weaknesses:** We need to be reminded that we can praise God even through our weaknesses because it is through them that we learn to depend on Christ. We also learn of His grace and power to overcome.
 - a. Learn to face your weaknesses - don't make excuses or deny your fault = be quick to agree with your accuser, Mat. 5:25.
 - b. Confess your faults to your spouse – I John 1:9 Heart felt confession reopens relationship allows forgiveness and restoration.
 - c. Pray, asking God to keep dealing with you until you have complete victory over problem areas. I John 5:14-15 Remember, we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.
 - d. Esteem others as more important than yourself. Learning to put others first in our thinking and actions is the character of God. Phil. 2:3
 - e. Remain committed to becoming the very best person you can be for God's glory. If we stay steadfast & un-moveable in our desire to see more of the character of Christ, then our harvest time will come in God's perfect timing. He will complete the good work He has begun in you. Until then He is still working! I Cor.15:58
 - f. **We are made after God's design,** knowing: Ps. 139:13-18

- (I) No temperament is better than another and none are bad. Be the best you-- you can be! No need to wish you were someone else, you are His workmanship and He is not finished with us yet.
- (II) No marriage combination of temperaments is wrong. Any combination will have its own set of obstacles to overcome. Learning to deal with difficulties in marriage relationships is one way God works to develop His character in us. Remember: 'We are more than conquerors through him who loves us." Rom. 8:37

g. To better understand ourselves:

- (I) To make full use of our temperament strengths putting them to use for the work of the kingdom of God.
- (II) To recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in areas of weakness. When I fall in an area of weakness its because I have given place to the flesh instead of walking in the Spirit. Failure brings our attention to an area that needs strengthening or has yet to be yielded to the will of the Holy Spirit.
- (III) To see the need for the development of the fruit of God's Spirit in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23). This process does not happen overnight. Fruit has to be planted, fed, groomed, cultivated, and harvested.

h. To help us better understand and relate to others.

- (I) With illumination comes responsibility. Once I have a better understanding of those in have developed close personal relationships with then I am better equipped to recognize areas where they may have weaknesses that I can strengthen.
- (II) To support and edify others in areas where they may have weakness. I can stand in the gap for others in need. Understanding our temperament and the temperament of others will enable us to be more sensitive to the needs of people around us and how we could be used of God to demonstrate His love.

XII. GUARDING OUR THOUGHT LIFE

A. God knows our thoughts:

1. Matt.9:4 - "Jesus knowing their thoughts"
2. Job 42:2 - "No thought can be withheld from thee"

3. I Chron.28:9 - "The Lord understandeth every motive behind the thought" (NIV)

4. Ps.94:11 - "God knoweth the thoughts of men and that they are vanity" (empty, useless)

B. Main Problem of Wrong Thoughts:

1. Ps.10:4 - "God is not in all his thought"

2. Mic.4:12 - "But they knew not the thought of the Lord"

3. Mark 7:21 - "For from within the heart of men proceed evil thoughts"

4. Prov.24:9 - "The thought of foolishness is sin" (don't entertain wrong thoughts)

C. What to do with wrong thoughts:

1. Repent of wrong thoughts. "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray

"God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).

2. Study the Word (to expose our dark thoughts to the light). "For the Word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb.4:12).

3. Commit our thought life to the Lord (and it shall be established - what a promise!). "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Prov.16:3).

4. Think on these things (Phil.4:8):

a. Whatever is TRUE.

b. Whatever is NOBLE.

c. Whatever is RIGHT.

d. Whatever is PURE.

e. Whatever is LOVELY.

f. Whatever is ADMIRABLE.

g. Whatever is EXCELLENT.

h. Whatever is PRAISEWORTHY.

XIII. DEALING WITH LUST

Genesis 39 - JOSEPH AND POTIPHAR'S WIFE

Joseph is an example of purity and confidence toward God. He shows us that as believers we do not have to give in to the weakness of flesh.

A. Joseph's situation

1. He is alone with Potiphar's wife - Had Opportunity
2. He was approximately 20 years old and single - Had natural Desire
3. He would immediately win favor with her - Had Advancement Appeal
4. To deny her would invite trouble - Had Reason
5. She started it - (Verse 7 "cast her eyes on him") - Wasn't His Idea
6. She tempted him daily - (Verse 10) - Was Under Constant Pressure
7. She even attacked him - (Verse 12) - She Forced The Moment

B. Joseph's Response

1. Daily denied her
2. Recognized it as sin against God (vs. 9)
3. He fled from her attack - was disciplined and obeyed

C. Result - (Verse 12-20)

1. You would expect to hear angels rejoicing and God to immediately defend and bless

Joseph - but instead:

- a. He was falsely accused before other servants
- b. He was falsely accused before his master
- c. He was thrown in prison

BUT

2. (Verse 21-23) Reveals that the Lord was with Joseph, and eventually God blessed Joseph and made him second to the Pharaoh, and ruler over all the land which included Potiphar's wife.

D. What can we learn?

When you determine not to give in to lust:

1. You must not be weakened by situation and opportunity.

2. Don't allow yourself to entertain the temptation.
3. Don't be gentile in your emotion and response to the temptation. Be firm, convicted, and flee from it.
4. Don't be confused by the immediate result.

**Remember "God was with Joseph." The day came when he ruled over Potiphar's wife!

XIV. THE LORDSHIP OF MAN (Eph.5:22-33)

A. A man has two dominant needs:

1. **LORDSHIP** - Man was made to be a lord. Man has lordship spirit. God created man and put him in the garden and made him lord over all his creation.
 - a. Man was not meant to be a servant.
 - b. His curse, due to his sin, was to be a servant to labor for his own existence.
 - c. Man lost his position of lordship, but not his desire to be lord.
 - d. No man away from his home is lord. Every business position has it hassles, laws, rules, regulations, and restraints. Man in the workplace is a servant to someone.
 - e. When we speak of lordship we are not talking about dictatorship.
 - f. A lord is someone we choose to serve because a sacrifice has been made.
 - g. Eph. 5:22 encourages wives to submit to their husbands as they would to The Lord. We submit to Christ because he has given himself for us.
 - h. Lordship involves, on the man's side, the making of sacrifice. He must give himself for his wife and family. Eph. 5:23 we read that Christ is the savior of the body. In the same manner husbands should be the savior of their families.
 - i. Serving Christ, and making him Lord is not always easy. There are times when his demands of Lordship are difficult to fulfill. This may be due to the hardship the demand places me in or it may have to do with my willingness to submit. The very idea of submission involves a yielding of will.

- j. There is responsibility attached to lordship. As lord, some of my responsibilities include: providing, protecting, leading, and covering
- (I) As lord I am to care for the daily needs of my family. It is my role to be a provider of food, clothing and shelter. As God is my provider, I can look to him for guidance and strength in this area.
 - (II) As lord I must protect my family from the attacks of the enemy. This means I must be spiritually aware of the enemies devices and take appropriate steps to insure my family's safety.
 - (III) As lord I am to take responsibility to lead my family in the purpose and plan that God has for our lives. This requires me to be spiritually in tune with the working of the Holy Spirit.
 - (IV) As lord I provide a covering likened to an umbrella that is used to provide a place of safety and protection from the elements of the world. It's a place of hiding and coming together with care for each other. We see God provide a covering in the form of a cloud that led Israel through the wilderness. They were cared for and safe as long as they stayed under the covering. As lord I know God is my covering and therefore I can hide under the shadow of his wing, but to do so I must be responsible to stay in close fellowship and communion with Him.
- k. Lordship is an area in which marriages often experience difficulty. This may be a result of the wife's lack of submission or it may stem from the husbands lack of fulfilling his lordship responsibilities.
- l. Eph. 5:25 we see that one of the major responsibilities of lordship is to love our wives. This is a key to lordship – to love our wives. God made women to be responders and men to be initiators. If we don't like the response we are getting from our wives perhaps we need to first examine what we are initiating. We reap what we sow!
- m. Another problem is when the man conducts himself more like a dictator than a loving lord. This often surfaces because his lordship need is not being met. This may be due to his own fault or reluctance on the part of his wife. For either reason if his need is not met he may begin to exercise his lordship spirit by placing demands on his wife and family.
- n. Dictators are not recognized for their caring spirit, but rather generally rule from positions of power where they have a tendency to instill fear in their subjects. When this happens the wife will usually either submit to maintain peace in the family while resenting him for her plight or resist his demands bringing about an eventual confrontation.

- o. Husbands need to remember that Christ is both Lord, and High Priest. Lordship goes hand in hand with being the priest in our home. This means that we should encourage spiritual growth in our family and demonstrate leadership through the development of our own personal relationship with Christ.
- p. A wise husband realizes the difference between lordship and dictatorship. Jesus is Lord and King yet he rules our hearts with humility, meekness and love. To this we respond in willing submission.

2. WORSHIP - Every man desires worship. His ego, his personality and make-up demand worship. He can't be second - He has to be #1.

- a. The most devastating thing a woman can say is, "I wish you were like someone else so I could really love you."
- b. Christ is the same:
 - 1) Christ demands Lordship
 - 2) Christ demands Worship
 - 3) Scripture says if we don't give it He will cause the rocks and stones themselves to worship Him.
- c. If a man has a low self-esteem, and his wife doesn't seek to build him up, but rather uses it to her own advantage, he will involve himself in other areas where this need is fed:
 - 1) It may be in his work
 - 2) It may be with the guys at the bar
 - 3) It may be the girl at the office or across the street who feeds his ego.
 - 4) This is a time when he is vulnerable to Satan's attack.

B. Lordship is earned

1. It is not a gift - you must earn it. No one would make Jesus Lord if He had not first given Himself for us. Lordship must be deserved. A man must give of himself if he is to be lord in his home.
2. Do three things right and one wrong and you have to start over. Women need consistency before they will re-place their trust once that trust has been violated.
3. If a woman has security and love she is able to make her husband lord. If we as the Body of Christ don't make Jesus Lord He will never have it. Likewise, if the wife doesn't make her husband lord, he will never really be happy.

C. Husbands love your wives (Ephesians 5:25).

1. Eph. 5:25 Sacrificially - her welfare first.
2. Eph. 5:26 Responsibly - help her develop in all ways.

3. Eph. 5:27 Realistically - ignore her faults.
4. Eph. 5:29 Unselfishly - giving of ourselves.
5. Eph. 5:31 Totally - committing yourselves one to another.

XV. TWO DOMINATE NEEDS OF WOMEN

A. Security

1. Not money - you can have inner security and be flat broke - money does not give inner security.
2. We are the Bride of Christ - "The Church." What is it that we demand of Christ as our husband? - Security.
3. That is why Christ honors His Word above His name - If we know He keeps His Word, we have security in His Word and our relationship with Him. His Word is "Yea and amen."
4. For a woman to have security, she must be able to believe her husband.
5. If a husband says, "I'll be home at 5:00," and doesn't show up until 6:00, it affects a wife's sense of security.
6. Man must develop security by keeping his word.

B. Love - Women need to be loved.

1. I'm not talking about sexual relationship, but rather her need to be loved. She needs to know she is first in our thoughts, cherished, and see in her husband a willingness to sacrifice for her.
2. Just as a man plays little games to test his lordship so will a woman play games to see if she is really loved.
3. If there have been some careless words or poor decisions by the husband the wife's security and trust is injured.
 - Maybe it's his closeness to his family.
 - Maybe it's his devotion to his job.
 - Suddenly the family or job means more to him than I do - he loves them more than me.

4. When her security or feeling of being loved is threatened, she will react:
 - a. Builds defense mechanisms
 - b. Becomes independent - puts walls up.

5. His lordship now fails so he makes a demand upon her to break the wall and suddenly in her mind he is a dictator instead of lord. Such behavior and attitudes leads to a great number of marital problems.

C. Questions we should ask ourselves:

1. Every man needs to ask himself:
 - a. Is my work worthy of my calling?
 - b. Do I share all decisions - no surprises?
 - c. Do I tell my wife and show her (gifts) that I love her?

2. Every woman needs to ask herself:
 - a. Is he lord? Have I made him lord?
 - b. Is he making demands? If so, his lordship is threatened.
 - c. Am I doing my best at providing a safe harbor (sanctuary) within our home?

XVI. MEN AND WOMEN'S EMOTIONAL DIFFERENCES

A. God is spirit thus neither male nor female but we see in His revelation of Himself that He is a perfect balance of each one's personality, strengths and feelings. Adam most likely was created with both personalities as the exact image of God. Eve was taken from Adam that could show a separation from Adam of the personality traits common to all women. Concerning the re-uniting of man and woman in marriage Paul said, "For two, saith he, shall be one Flesh." Just as he that is "joined to the Lord is one Spirit." This unity may also be the reason for the statement in Gen. 5:2 where God blessed them and "called their name Adam." Only as man and woman totally share their being with each other can they be as one "Adam."

Man was given strength, a strong physical drive, and often possesses the desire to lead. Woman was given great sensitivity and deep inner feeling which enables her to sense the very heart of God's feelings. She was also given the desire to mother and to be more of the paternal mate, yet she is said to be made the weaker vessel. It is interesting that though the woman is the weaker vessel she normally lives longer than her husband.

B. Attraction

Most often a marriage relationship began due to one or both parties being physically attracted to the other. As communication between the two develops they may see strengths in the other person that they lack and find desirable. Therefore we frequently find marriage partners seeking after completeness which Adam may have originally possessed but then forfeited when God made Eve from Adam taking some of those qualities and placing them in her.

C. It has been said that women experience ten times the emotional feelings of most men.

If man is to learn to relate or respond to those feelings, he must give opportunity for their expression and seek to understand their source. Frequently men will avoid situations in which they have to deal with emotional expressions of women. This is because they feel inadequate in this area and do not wish to show their lack of sensitivity.

We should never expect one another to guess about our feelings, needs or desires of each other. Men especially need to learn to be sensitive to those around them and learn to express their own feelings in caring ways. Expression of feelings does not come natural to most men. They are not normally as in touch with their feelings as women and they may have to give some effort to discovering just how they feel.

D. Sensitivity

This seems to come easily for some people, but much more difficult for others. Sensitivity is often best learned through our experience. If we ask God to help us to become more sensitive we should realize that we are probably asking God to take us through some difficulties. It is as we experience the feelings and emotions associated with different situations that we can become sensitive to others who are going through similar situations.

This area is often a problem area in marriage. Wives naturally want their husbands to be sensitive to their needs, feelings, and desires without having to tell their husbands what they want. However, this does not come as easy for most men. Wives need to keep in mind that their sensitivity is much greater than that of their husband. Even a husband who desires to meet every need his wife has, may fall far short of her expectation. Why is this?

Perhaps part of the difficulty lies in how men are trained in early childhood. Most boys are taught not to cry through such statements as: “Big boys don’t cry” or “Stop acting like a cry-baby and act like a man”. Also men are expected to be strong, to take the lead, to defend, and to provide for a family. All this training wars against development of sensitivity. Thus most men lack the foundational base of sensitivity training that almost all girls receive.

Certainly the situation is not hopeless as men who love their wives will want to learn to be more sensitive to her feelings. However, such training will take time and understanding on both parts. Remember, many years of conditioning went in to making us who we are and one does not reverse that overnight. But with God's help the situation can change dramatically. Wives need to encourage their husbands to think in terms of feelings while at the same time keeping in mind that he does not sense things as quickly or as well as you. Sitting down together and communicating how each of you may have felt through a certain situation may help in bringing understanding to future situations that are similar. Husbands need to learn to recognize the pattern of feelings and emotions that often surround situations that repeat themselves. Doing so will enable you to be more sensitive to your wife's emotional needs at the time. And finally remember that God is truly our source. When others may try and still let us down, God never fails! He knows our needs before we ask and when we bring them to Him He will fill the empty places.

Mat 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

E. Truthfulness

God always reveals to His people the truth. He never expects us to guess at what He wants. He even went to the extent of describing how He is to be worshipped by His people. He has made clear the level of love He wishes of us, and then provided the only means we could demonstrate such love – Christ.

Men and women in their inter-relationships must express the truth especially in the area of their needs and desires, just as our Heavenly Father has done. It is insensitive of us to place an expectancy on our spouse that they are unaware of or ill-equipped to meet. This is often the situation in marriage when one spouse desires for their partner to respond in a certain way but has not openly or clearly expressed that desire. When this happens and the need is not responded to quite often the offended partner will in some way punish the other for their failure. This is certainly not God's way.

The Lord does hold us accountable but not until He has clearly communicated His expectation and made sure we had the equipment to honor the request. Husbands and wives will enjoy much more success in their relationship with each other if they learn to express clearly their needs and are assured that their partner both understands and has the capacity to do so. As their relationship grows over time, they will become much more aware of each others needs from past experiences without them even needing to be expressed, but this comes about over years of developing a close personal relationship.

XVII. SEXUAL BALANCE IN MARRIAGE

Sex is one way of expressing man's love, harmony, and unity as well as the method of reproduction. It is to be enjoyed, and is perhaps the greatest emotional outlet there is.

A. Man in sex:

1. As we have already said, most men have a very strong sex drive.
Much greater than women - in almost all cases.
2. Some men think about sex almost constantly - it's foolish for a woman not to realize this.
3. To the husband sex activity is not necessarily an act of love but is generally entered into to satisfy his physical desire.
4. Men will fantasize a great deal, which also arouses their sexual desire - most men are moved to fantasy at the slightest provocation. To men a woman's body is like putting fire to dynamite.
5. Women need to realize what I have shared here and apply it in their relationships with men. Understand that men will not always realize that a woman who is simply being friendly, is simply being friendly and not looking for anything more.
6. You can pretty much count on the fact that if a man is pursuing relationship with a woman he has sex on his mind. Though he may do his best to seem innocent in his actions there is almost always more going on in his thinking.
7. I encourage young women who are dating to always be involved in activities that are planned and to be involved with groups or at least another couple to avoid being alone with their boyfriend having nothing to do. Being alone with your boyfriend with nothing to do is providing Satan opportunity to tempt you.
8. Additionally, I encourage young women to always pay for any expense they have on a date. In other words do not allow the boyfriend to pay for their expense. In this way the girl never has to feel as though she owes the boy anything more than friendship. Even gift exchanges at Christmas were limited as to what each could spend to keep them from feeling indebted to each other.

B. Women in sex:

1. Sex is not foremost on every woman's mind. Just because the man is excited or aroused does not mean his wife is.
2. Unlike the man's attitude toward her body, she is not normally excited by the nude male body.
3. Sex to the woman is an expression of her emotions, love, and submission - it is a tenderly emotional time and can also be physically enjoyable. For the woman the degree to which she enjoys sex physically has a lot to do with what she is feeling emotionally. If she is emotionally aroused, she will most likely enjoy the sexual activity. When she is not emotionally aroused she is much less likely to enjoy the physical.
4. For men their emotions play a very small role which is quite the opposite of women. For most men sexual activity is almost entirely physical. It takes very little to excite the man so his emotions play a very small role.
5. You can see from the discussions above that there is a tremendous difference in the motivations of men and women when it comes to sexual activity. That is why there are often severe problems in this area of marriage relationship.
6. If a man does not recognize the needs of his wife in physical relationship and seek first to minister to her needs, she will begin to feel used. When this happens she may not say anything at first but if the pattern continues she will eventually begin to avoid sexual relationship. No one wants to be or feel used. This is especially true of women in this area.
7. Just as it is foolish for the woman not to realize the strength of a man's sexual desire, it is also foolish for the man not to respond the very different emotional needs of his wife.
8. Those emotional needs within a woman take place before, during, and after sexual activity. The male can be aroused almost instantly and his excitement can be over in but a few moments, and he is satisfied. But for the woman this is a process, NOT an event. For the man sexual activity is more like an event, in that it is something that takes place and is soon over with and he is ready to move on to other things. But for the woman this is a process which begins well before the event, continues during the event, and continues long after the event. So the attitude of the husband both before, during and after is very important.
9. Frequently men will become very loving and affectionate when they desire sexual activity from their wives. This is a foolish man who only becomes

affectionate and tender toward his wife when he wants sex. Unfortunately, this is often what happens. It won't take long before his wife realizes the pattern and when he begins to turn on the affection and charm she knows exactly what his intentions are.

10. Women like the feeling of “being swept off their feet” or in other words they enjoy suddenly realizing that they want to be with this man because of his consistent loving treatment of them. It is much like the working of the Holy Spirit as he woos us to faith in Christ. There is a period of loving us, caring for us, and tenderly moving us closer to Jesus. A woman likes to be wooed until she suddenly realizes her desire to be with this man.
11. After the sexual activity she wants to still see him as tender and caring wanting to be near her while remaining affectionate. It is a wise man who realizes this and ministers to his wife in this way.
12. It is also wise for the woman to understand that for the man his willingness to see sexual activity as a process will not always be present as there will be times when he wants her for the sake of satisfying his desire. In these times his attitude toward her and sex will be much more carnal in nature. But men need to keep this in balance less they begin to abuse their wives.
13. Sex for the woman involves:
 - a. Her sense of security. She needs to be able to trust her feeling to this man. Thus the man needs to develop the sense of security for her well before sexual activity.
 - b. Her demand to be loved. If the man will seek to minister to his wife during sexual activity instead of seeking only to satisfy himself, she will sense this caring attitude and it will only serve to increase her emotional response. He will naturally be satisfied and if he is sensitive so will his wife be.
 - c. Her need to express love. The level of submission given by the woman in sexual activity is one way she expresses her love. All the more reason why men need to be sensitive to that fact.

XVIII. PARENTING CHILDREN IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME

A. The Role of the Father:

1. His responsibility as a TEACHER:

- a. He is to teach the Word of God to his family.
- b. He cannot push the responsibility off onto other agencies such as Sunday School, the Christian School, or the Child Care Center.
- c. Father can't teach the Word if he doesn't know it.
- d. Men are the priests in the home and God will hold them accountable
- e. He is also to teach by the example of his own walk. There needs to be consistency in our example.

2. He is to be RULER (I Tim.3:4,5,12). To deacons, men of God:

- a. Paul says to be rulers, that means to be a man who shows positive direction.
- b. God has always expected the men to be spiritual rulers.
- c. As a ruler you must be dedicated to putting first things first - Christ - Family - Job.

3. He is to be the CHASTISER:

- a. It is Dad's responsibility as well as Mom's.
- b. Eight important principles:
 - 1) Correction and chastisement must be reasonable.
 - 2) Correction must never be under the influence of anger.
 - 3) Correction and chastisement must be agreed upon by both parents.
 - 4) Must follow through and keep your word.
 - 5) Must not be vindictive - don't punish children to get at spouse.
 - 6) Must be without respect of persons.
 - 7) Must be sure the child understands
 - 8) Correction must be dealt with love.

4. He is to be PROVIDER:

- a. Both parents are working in many homes - this is O.K. if necessary - most vital that husband work.
- b. Providing both material and spiritual needs.
- c. Provides for them emotionally - encourages and gives direction, etc.
- d. II Cor.12:14 - Paul suggests parents are to provide for child's financial needs as well.

5. He is to be the STABILIZER: I Thess.2:11 Paul says a father is to:

- a. Exhort - urge and direct

- b. Encourage - not put down
- c. Expect - them to obey and succeed.

B. The Role of the mother:

1. She is to have compassion (Isaiah 49:15): She is to have understanding which is coupled with the feeling of compassion, both with words and actions.
2. She is to show correction (Prov.29:15-17):
 - a. She should never say "Wait until your Dad gets home."
 - b. She should be able to correct with control and love.
 - c. Correct with the rod, not the hand.
3. She should show comfort (Isaiah 66:13): There is no comfort like that which comes from a godly mother.
4. She should give counsel (Prov.1:8):
 - a. Think before you make a law or rule.
 - b. Then back it up and hold to it.
5. She should show Care-Love:
 - a. Care extends to what they eat, wear, watch (TV) etc.
 - b. She should spend time with her children doing things not just watching over.

C. Children's needs

1. Need to be recognized:
 - a. If they are not, they will do things to gain attention; some good, some bad.
 - b. But avoid:
 - 1) Child more important than spouse (not true).
 - 2) Child deserves to be center of attention (not true).
 - 3) Child should be pushed into mature roles (not true).
2. Let your children help around the house: Train them that work can be a pleasure and not punishment.

3. Introduce you children to other people - old and young.
4. Let your child speak for itself - let them answer questions put to them.
5. Give your children a choice - let them learn to reason.
6. Trust your children occasionally with things that will surprise them.
7. Spend time alone with your children (one at a time).

XIX. COMMUNICATION

A. INTRODUCTION

- * Most problems we have in the family and church today are a result of a breakdown in communication.
- * Definition of communication: “A process of sharing information with another person in such a way that they understand what your saying.”
- * Talking, listening, and understanding are all a part of the process of communication.
- * One of the key problems in communication is making yourself understood.

B. 6 THINGS THAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN WE COMMUNICATE

1. What you mean to say.
2. What you actually say.
3. What another person hears you say.
4. What the other person thinks he hears you say.
5. What the other person says about what you said.
6. What you think the other person said about what you said.

So it is easy to see that even when we make the effort to communicate our message may not be properly understood or acted upon in the way we expect.

C. WHY HUSBANDS DON'T TALK TO WIVES

Most men do not have much of a need to talk. When they do talk it tends to be on a shallow superficial level and more factual in nature. Men do not customarily talk on a heart level. When they greet one another the conversation very likely goes something like:

“Hi there Joe, how ya doing?”

“Just fine, Harry. and you?”

“Oh fine.”

“It’s been great seeing you!”

“You to, say hello to your family for me!”

“Will do, take care!”

“You to, Joe., we need to get together sometime”

“Right, lets do it, bye now!”

BUT, when their wives talk it is much different:

“Oh Joyce, how are you, I haven’t seen you for so long, please sit down tell me everything, how is Joe, how is his business, and tell me about the kids, all 5 of them. Did you hear about Molly? She is pregnant again, I just don’t know where they are going to put all those kids in that small house.”

“Oh Grace, it is so good to see you, I have so much missed our time together, and you know your the only person I can talk to. Where in the world to begin. Let me see now, Joe is pretty good except for an occasional bout with lower back pain but you know I just think it’s stress. He worries about his business to much. I keep telling him to trust God more and worry less. But he never listens to me, if I have told him once I must of told him a thousand times. It just goes in one ear and out the other. ON & ON IT GOES....

THE IMPORTANT POINT IS: Men just because you may not have the need for conversation doesn’t mean you wife doesn’t! We are talking here about the importance of meeting the needs of our spouse. If we were to ask our wives if this need was being fulfilled by us, most of us would find that we weren’t even coming close.

D. THE LEVELS OF CONVERSATION:

1. **Cliché** - shallow small talk with no personal information being shared. For example, “Hey, there beautiful day huh?”
2. **Facts** - here again there is no personal comment or information being shared. Just facts, such as, “Boy it sure is hot today!”
3. **Ideas and judgments** - here personal feelings begin to enter into what is said. For example, “I don’t want you to take a

job; a woman's place is in the home.”

4. **Feelings and emotions** - this is where we share our real feelings about the facts, ideas, and judgments. For example, “I feel like I will just explode if I have to discuss this with you again.”
5. **Open truthful communication** - this is where there is a measure of vulnerability. For example, “I’m not sure that I have what it takes to be a manager?”

E. WHAT MAKES COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE:

1. It must be regularly maintained - We must take time on a daily basis to communicate with one another. Most authorities on marriage relationship suggest at a minimum we should spend one hour per day in conversation with our spouse. Some have suggested a minimum of 15 hrs. per week . Remember when you were courting how easy it was to spend time talking and how you would talk for hours and think nothing of it. It was in part that willingness to demonstrate such interest in one another that gave you the sense of value and appreciation for one another. It is as we share ourselves with another and as we take the time to listen to others that we feel valued or give value. Each of us prior to our marriage gave special attention to our intended spouse and each of us thought that same level of involvement and attention would never end.

2. It must bond relationship - When women talk to their husbands or to other women there is a bonding which takes place as they share their feelings. We can't expect one another to guess what we are thinking. We must communicate and reinforce our feelings for one another. Remember we cannot judge the needs of our spouse by our own needs as we each have different needs and expectations. Men when we take time to talk to our wives she feels that you really care for her and this creates that bonding that she needs. The man who takes the time to communicate with his wife will have an inside track to her heart.

3. We must concentrate on the interest of the other person - Men we will get further in our relationship if we concentrate on what our wife needs in our conversation rather than promoting our own cause. Communication is a two way street; we should not spend the whole time we have talking only about ourselves. A smart man will talk about those things that interest his wife. Remember women find significance in relationships whereas men find significance in their accomplishments. When we demonstrate a willingness to do things that our spouse enjoys that you otherwise would never do by yourself shows the value we place on the other person.

4. Consider their feelings - wives want to talk about feelings. If we haven't got to the place where we have shared our feelings then we have not yet arrived to the point of meaningful conversation.

We also need to ask how our spouse feels about decisions before we act. Take the time to get their input. Place value on their opinion. "Come let us reason together" is what the scripture tells us.

5. Speak the truth in love - Critical words must be used very sparingly. As if you only had a six-shooter with six silver bullets that must only be used as a last resort realizing they may bring hurt. A wise person will surround critical words with words of edification.

If we are going to have effective communication, it begins with our communication with God as we seek God as to how we can be a better husband, wife or parent.

6. Effective communication involves good listening skills. Studies show that when someone is speaking to us we only hear 20% of what is said. This is largely due to other things we are thinking about or other distractions about us. Learning to turn off the TV or put down the newspaper will improve our concentration and understanding of what is being said. It also will go a long way to demonstrate the value we place on the person who is speaking. God also wants our undivided attention when we spend time with Him in prayer.

7. It must be developed over time. We must work on the development of a mutual sphere of interest. There will be "his interest" and there will naturally be those things that are "her interest." However, it is vital to a healthy marriage to develop some overlapping interest that are "mutual interest." Spiritual interest could be one area of mutual interest and with a little effort you can develop many area of mutual interest.

8. It can't be negative. We should not use our conversation to punish one another. If you can't speak edifying words then you better off to be quiet. Also we don't want to use our conversation to force our spouse to agree with us. It is all right to disagree with one another and still demonstrate love and a desire to work together to find God's answer to our situation.

Proverbs 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

This is talking about loving right conversation and how fruit will come from right speech. Right communication brings love and security which help to build relationship. There is life and death in our tongue. We can bring death to our relationships through improper use of our tongue. To threaten to divorce one another is to set the stage for destruction in our relationship.

Proverbs 26:22 “The words of a talebearer are like wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts.”

It is possible if we are not careful to in the heat of our dissatisfaction to speak words that go so deep and do so much damage that they are never forgotten. So often the person who unloads their anger walks away and soon forgets what was even said as they have vented their anger without realizing the venom was placed deep within their victim.

If your upset and can't speak to one another with “right words” then perhaps you should take a walk and discuss the situation with the Lord before speaking with your spouse. When we choose to argue it out with one another we only escalate the situation and end up saying things we later regret. Remember the bible says, “The wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God.” You may win the argument but loose the war. It is amazing how different things look after we have taken them to the Lord and slept on it overnight.

1 Peter 3:10 “For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.”

If you want to be happy and have a long happy life then watch your mouth. It is better to find the point of mutual compromise where we are able to keep peace with one another.

XX. FIVE THINGS MEN MUST UNDERSTAND ABOUT LOVING THEIR WIVES

Ephesians 5:22-33 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 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. 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 5:31 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. 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

A. WE ARE TO LOVE OUR WIVES -

It tells us no less than 4 times in the new testament that husbands are to “love their wives.” Three of them we just read in Ephesians 5. Also you will find this stated in Colossians 3:19 says, “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.” We are not to hold bitterness in our hearts against our wives. The scripture tells us, “that God commanded his love toward us in wives. If we would just love our wives they would love us back. Christ first loved us! that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) It also tells us in I John 4:19, “We love him, because he first loved us.” Our responsibility is to love her first just as Christ first loved us. Just as Christ took the initiative toward winning us so are we to take the initiative in winning the heart of our wife.

1. LOVING OUR WIVES IS AN ACT OF OUR WILL

It doesn't say anything about feeling good about it! Love is not a feeling though there is feeling to love, love is not to be based on feelings, but rather is a choice of our will. When your wife does something wrong you are to love her whether you feel like it or not. In the same manner God loved us while we were yet sinners. It was not a matter of meriting his love. We were sinners, we didn't deserve his love but he **commanded** his love toward us. He made a choice to show us love even though we didn't deserve it. God doesn't love us because we set off some feeling of emotion within him whereby he finds us irresistible. God's love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost and is a love of choice (agape love). His nature is to love even when there is nothing good there to love, he loves us. In the same way we as parents love our children regardless of their behavior at times we still choose to love them.

Matthew 5:44 says, “But I say unto you, Love your enemies....”

“But God, I don't feel good about my enemies,” we say.

“It doesn't matter how you feel, I want you to love them anyway.”

You see God wants us to:

- ◆ Choose to love our enemies
- ◆ Choose to do good to my enemies
- ◆ Choose to forgive my enemies
- ◆ Choose to do kind things for them when they deserve the opposite

By choosing to love our enemies and obey God we break from the bondage our enemies have over us and free ourselves to follow God. We are to bless our enemies not because our flesh delights in it (as it certainly does not please the flesh) but because God delights in it. This hasn't got anything to do with feelings but rather is a choice of obedience to the Spirit of God whereby we discipline our flesh and obey the Holy Spirit. We are to walk in the Spirit not the flesh.

This same principal is true in marriage, we are to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the craving of the flesh. When we move by the flesh, it doesn't take much to break down the presence of God that should be in our relationships. We don't want the flesh to rule our marriages.

God's love for us is the same every day. The love he had for you last month is the same as this month and will be the same next month. God's love doesn't change at all. He is consistent! We are to love our wives in the same way, with consistency. Spiritual maturity is not up and down but rather demonstrates consistency and is stable. This is due largely as they have learned not to be led by their feelings and emotions. This is not a love that is dependent on pleasure but rather on the value God sees in us. This love is one that is:

- dedicated
- faithful
- kind
- not jealous
- not self-centered
- compassionate
- able to see the good - the value
- devoted
- able to esteem others as more important than self
- not critical but rather prizes
- not lazy but rather a love that acts and is responsible

The same kind of love that God has demonstrated to man is the kind of love we are to have for our wives. We dedicate ourselves before God to love our wives. The grass may look greener on the other side but you still have to feed it and mow it. Better we put that effort into the marriage we have rather than thinking a new yard is what we need. You may "have lost that loving feeling" but if you lost it you can get it back! When we choose to love our wives faithfully, over time God will help us to gain the feelings back. When we dedicate ourselves to obeying God and prayerfully change our attitude toward what God has commanded, then he brings his blessing. As we walk in obedience to God's Spirit he equips us to accomplish his will for us. We need to ask God to change us instead of praying that he will change our spouse. Love is a choice!

2. LOVING OUR WIVES IS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

A fruit is grown, developed, and cultivated. It takes work. It takes work to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. When we open ourselves to the working of God's Spirit in our lives he will do the work in us that is necessary to bring forth his will. We must invite God to deal with us and change our heart. That God would do whatever he needs to do to bring forth the fruit of love. Relationships are developed in marriage just as our relationship with God is

developed. It requires time and effort if it is to have any depth to it. As we work on strengthening our marriage relationship we will see the fruit of that effort. As we seek God and change our attitude and begin to cultivate the love of God in our hearts, then God will add his blessing. Even when we feel like we have lost our love for one another; if we will to love and develop the fruit of God's love in our lives, the feelings of love we thought were dead and gone will be resurrected. God would not command us to do something if he were not planning to enable us to do so. If God commands us to love our wives, then he will help us to do so!

We need to realize that just as love is a fruit and can be cultivated so are negative feelings. When we choose to speak negative thoughts such as divorce or separation, we plant the seeds that could, if we are not careful, bring forth sour grapes into our lives. Separation and divorce do not happen over night, but are the results of many negative seeds being planted and reinforced until they become a reality, a fruit of our labor.

3. WE SHOULD LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY

Love should be felt and expressed even when there has been failures. When your wife or kids are afraid to talk to you about their failures you should realize that your losing it. Our heavenly father doesn't jump up and down and scream and yell at us. Rather he corrects with love. We must realize that we husbands have faults in our lives as well.

B. WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE -

Jesus Christ gave himself for the church. Likewise husbands need to give of themselves. Putting their own desires aside and lifting others up. We are willing to do things we really would rather not do in order to enter into relationship with our wives and children. Love sacrifices through humility willing to take the blame and give in for the sake of the relationship. The one who is most spiritual will give in. The husband is the one who is to sacrifice, to give his life as Christ. Being able to admit we are wrong will gain the respect of others. Sacrificial love is not critical. It does not seek to put people in the hall of shame but rather the hall of fame. It admits when it is wrong. Admits its faults and needs. Love sacrifices through manners in our treating our wives as ladies and our children with respect. A yielding of our rights. Giving more than is given, not asking others to do what you are not willing to do ourselves.

Ephesians 5:26-27 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; **5:27** That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

C. THE HUSBAND IS TO SANCTIFY THE FAMILY

It is the father's job to bring godliness into a home and family. The Lord sanctifies the church cleanses it. In the same way the man should sanctify his home to separate it and bring godliness into the home. The husband is to be the priest of the home and is to be the head spiritually. How then does a man sanctify his family:

- 1. Through your walk** - We must put the "word" into practice. It is in the way that we live that we sanctify our family. We sanctify by our example. However we are the way our kids are going to be. If we are stable, consistent, men who walk in faith, then that is how our kids will be. Our kids will imitate us. Do you want your kids to grow up and be as you are now?
- 2. Through the word** - God has called us to be the priest over our home. That we accept the responsibility to bring the word of God into our families through our example by reading the word, being in God's house, and living by the word.
- 3. Through wisdom** - Wisdom is the application of knowledge. Knowing the will of God and leading our family in it. We are going to pray and seek the will of God for our lives and our families. Then once we know the will of God to apply it to our lives. The book of Proverbs speaks to the importance of applying ourselves unto wisdom.

Proverbs 2:1-12 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2:2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; 2:3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 2:4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; 2:5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 2:6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. 2:7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 2:8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 2:9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. 2:10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; 2:11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: 2:12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

D. EPH. 5:29 A HUSBAND SHOULD NOURISH AND CHERISH HIS WIFE

A wife needs to know that she is provided for and protected. That she is secure. We should provide a protective covering for them providing all we can to minister to them emotionally, spiritually, and physically. It is our responsibility to care for our families.

E. EPH. 5:23 THE HUSBAND IS TO BE THE HEAD, TO RULE OR TO LEAD

Before a man can rule and be the authority he must be a person who has come under authority. God has called us to rule under authority to first demonstrate our submission to authority if we are to be given authority to exercise.

Luke 7:8-9 For I also am a man under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go; and he goeth: and to another, Come; and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this; and he doeth it. 7:9 When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.

* We see here that the centurion recognized the Jesus was under authority just as he was and because he had been under authority he had be given authority. We can only exercise authority as we are willing to come under authority and be in submission to it. We can't expect others to follow our leadership if we can't receive instruction ourselves. We then must first come under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are going to lead for God then we had better know what God is saying. Once we are willing to get off of the throne of our lives and put Jesus in his rightful place then God can bring healing into our lives and the lives of our family. The presence of God flows from our Heavenly Father to earthly fathers, then to the mothers and on to the children. When we then get our hearts right with God the rest of the family will follow as they see the brokenness, humility, and dependence in our hearts toward God. As the head we are to :

1. Bring positive direction to the family. Making positive decisions by knowing the will of God and bring that direction into the life of the family. What is God's plan and desire in our decision making? Wait for the peace of God before moving ahead.

2. Establish priorities in our families. To put the things of God in their right priority. This means we need to know what God wants and put that in it's rightful place of priority. We can't just do what we want but rather spend time in prayer seeking God's will for our lives.

3. Bring correction and discipline for our families. Discipline is not something we do to our children but for our children. If we are going to discipline our children then:

- it must be correction and not punishment
- a child must understand before hand the rules and expectation and should be given reasonable warning
- it must be reasonable discipline in that the discipline should fit the crime
- it should not be done in anger
- it should be agreed upon by both parents

- we should follow through and keep our word
- don't let it be vindictive or vengeful
- it must be without respect of persons, not showing favoritism among children
- after we have exercised the discipline we must let our children know they are loved

XXI. SIX KEY THINGS FOR WOMEN

A. COMPANION - (HELP MEET)

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

“**Help meet**” - does not refer to someone who is ordered about as a slave to perform some else's bidding. “Help meet” refers to someone who is suitable to a man (spiritually, intellectually, morally and physically). Literally, “**someone who assists another to reach complete fulfillment.**” Elsewhere, it takes the meaning of “someone sent to rescue another;” and certainly most men need rescued from a variety of problems. We can see from this relationship that the success or failure of the husband is connected to the wife.

2. **Proverbs 31:10-31** Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. 31:11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. 31:12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. 31:13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. 31:14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. 31:15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. 31:16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. 31:17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. 31:18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. 31:19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. 31:20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. 31:21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. 31:22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. 31:23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. 31:24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. 31:25 Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. 31:26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. 31:27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. 31:28 Her

children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.
31:29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.
31:30 Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. 31:31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Verse 23 shows us that her husband is lifted up in the gates because of her labor and diligence and love for her husband and household. Not only is he know in the gates but also we see in verse 31 that the fruit of her labor causes her to be lifted in the gates as well. Her own husband and children call her blessed.

- 3. Ephesians 5:21-24** Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
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. 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

B. CHRIST (AS THE HEAD)

If you are to be the wife and mother God has called you to be, then, Christ must be the head, the Lord of your life. The only way you will ever know fulfillment yourself is through the Lord Jesus Christ. Your husband will never be able to meet your needs just as you will never be able to meet all of his needs.

Whether we are married or single we can live in a place of fulfillment and be content. Contentment is not dependent on our marital situation or lack of it. Women do not need a husband to feel fulfilled. Only the Lord Jesus can bring fulfillment.

The apostle Paul said that he wished that all had the “gift” (I Cor. 7:7) that he had. Perhaps singleness is a gift and that God may call some to singleness but when he does he equips them with the “gifting of singleness” so that they have a freedom and joy in it and are able to live as such without frustration. Paul went as far as to call marriage a “bondage” (I Cor. 7:27). As we are bound to one another and have a desire to serve one another. Singles on the other hand are free to serve God in ways married people can't.

If you have the “gift of singleness” you won't have the desire to be married.

Before we can ever be in submission to our mate we need to learn submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. Wives cannot really be right relationship with their husbands until they are in right relationship with Christ. As we learn to submit to the Lord it will give us a greater heart to submit to our husband. As you draw near to the Lord he will meet those needs that your husband can't.

Remember none of us are perfect and when you look at others thinking you wish your marriage could only be like theirs, you don't really know the battles they are facing or have faced in their relationship. Everyone has problems in marriage relationship.

C. CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION

1. **Ephesians 5:23-24** For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. 5:24 Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

We are talking her about submission “as unto the Lord.” In verses 23-24 we see that wives are to submit unto their husbands “as unto the Lord” meaning in the same way as you do unto the Lord. There is to be no distinction for the “husband is the head of the wife **even** (meaning in the same way) as Christ is the head of the church.” In verse 24 we see that in the same way that the church is subject to Christ so is the wife “in the same way” to be subject unto her husband in everything.

If Christ is really the head of our life then he will have every area of our life. The battle we go through as Christians is surrendering and trusting him with every area of our lives. We find that when we actually do subject every area to the Lord that instead of it being bondage we find freedom. When we do submit ourselves to our husbands in obedience to the Lord there is a freedom that comes because the Lord ministers to our needs. Your submission to your husband frees God to do the work he wants to do in your husband. When we resist God we tie his hands because we are getting in God's way. When we get out of the way we free God to do what he wants.

The word submission is used over 40 times in the new testament. In most places where it is used it is a military term. It means to bring an order, to place in its right order, to arrange under so that it can function. It is to function for a specific reason that being so that victory can come. An army puts things in order for one reason, to win. When we think of submission we think of loosing our freedom, being dominated or beaten down. God is not trying to keep us from something but because God wants to bring blessing into our lives. We all have been called to be in submission. It is when we submit to authority that God gives us authority but when we resist authority, authority is taken away from us. Jesus gave himself in submission unto the Father even unto death and as a result God has highly exalted him and given him a name above all names. Lucifer on the other hand didn't walk in obedience and tried to usurp to

gain authority and lost authority and was cast down. It is always when we submit ourselves that God exalts us. Submission therefore is a positive not a negative.

Submission does not mean to be dominated by the husband. We submit because of the love and sacrifice shown to us by Christ. Submission is always voluntary. It is the response to a covering of love. Men, if we are to have our wives reverence and respect we are going to have to earn it. Submission does not come about by a husband's demanding always putting your wife to a test of submission. But rather to live for his wife and to take her best interest into account.

Even when the husband doesn't do what he should, wives have a responsibility to submit as unto the Lord. If we are only willing to submit when the other person is right, it would not be submission. Submission is giving in even when you don't agree with the other person. The only reason scripturally to defy the authority of our covering is if that covering authority asks us to do something that we can plainly see in God's word is against God's will or against the laws of government.

Most men shy away from leadership in the home especially in the area of spiritual matters. This often happens because of a fear of failure or self-centeredness when he simply doesn't want to take the time to prepare himself. Men need to realize their responsibility before God in this area. Wives need to make room for their husbands to lead so that men can be the covering God has meant them to be.

2. I Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ.

Paul is saying, "Follow me as I am following Christ." Submit unto me as I am submitted unto Christ. We certainly would not follow him if he were not submitted unto the Lord. How can we men expect our wives to follow us or be in submission to us when we refuse to follow or be in submission to Christ. However, if we are following Jesus, then we can say to our wives, "follow me." As we men follow Christ we walk in authority, we have truth, and we know we are moving in the right direction as we follow after Christ.

3. I Corinthians 11:2-3 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 11:3 But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Here Paul gives us this order of authority:

Christ is under God the Father
Man is under Christ
Woman is under man

This order has nothing to do with one being better than another. There is an equality in the godhead between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. There is nothing in the scriptures that indicate that God the Father is in any way better than God the Son or God the Holy Spirit or any other comparison. Rather in this order there is a completion and harmony that comes to the godhead. That same order carries into the home. It is not the man is better than the woman but rather God brings an order so there can be harmony and safety. God never intended that women be a doormat for dominating men. But rather the wife is to be loved and cherished.

4. I Corinthians 11:4-6 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. 11:5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head, for that is even all one as if she were shaved. 11:6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn; but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.

Here it is saying that it is a shame for a woman to shaved or shorn or to be without a covering. This was not meant to bring people into legalism but rather to show that there is an honor or submission of the heart. In those days a harlot wore short hair so it was considered shameful for a decent woman to have short hair. But the whole idea here is that a woman should have a heart of submission unto her husband demonstrating such by keeping her hair longer. See verses 13-16:

I Corinthians 11:13-16 Judge in yourselves: is it seemly that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 11:14 Doth not even nature itself teach you that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him: 11:15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering. 11:16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Here we see that according to verse 16 this was a custom but could be taken or left and was not a legalistic issue in the church. In other words, if such a custom was going to bring contention within the church, then Paul's viewpoint was that there be no such custom in the church. Paul was not concerned about legal issues but the attitude of heart. When a woman is surrendered and covered by her husband that is her glory just as when she has long hair it is her

covering her glory. But when a woman is rebellious to her husband and comes out from under her covering then to her it is a shame.

- 5. I Corinthians 11:5** But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head, for that is even all one as if she were shaved.

Remember the issue here is one of her covering. Notice that it speaks of women who “prophesy” in church. This is a hard verse for those who believe that a woman is not to speak in church when we can plainly see here that they were speaking out in prophecy. Again the issue here is that whatever they were doing they were to do under the covering or authority. The truth of the scripture is that women were not to usurp the authority of a man. Prophecy is the greatest of the gifts. Therefore, it follows that if women were allowed to function in the greatest of gifts they would also be able to function in the lesser gifts providing they did so with a heart that was submitted to authority not usurping authority or covering.

- 6. I Corinthians 11:7-12** For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. 11:8 For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. 11:9 Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. 11:10 For this cause ought the woman to have authority on her head because of the angels. 11:11 Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. 11:12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

- a. “the woman is the glory of the man” - The man is glorified when the heart of the woman is to submit unto him. The woman’s glory is to submit. Just as it is anyone’s glory to submit unto God. When a woman’s heart is rebellious it doesn’t bring glory to them, their husband, or to God but rather is their shame.
- b. “the woman is of the man” - She came from man (his rib), again speaking to God’s order. She was created to be a help suitable for man. This is not saying that the woman is inferior to man but again speaks to God’s order. In Timothy it says:

I Timothy 2:11-14 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 2:12 But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 2:13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.

The key word here is to be in subjection. Verse 12 doesn't mean that they can't teach but rather not to do so by usurping authority over man. Because the woman fell she is to be in subjection to her husband who is to provide the covering and protection for the family.

- c. "even so is the man also by the woman" - God puts everything in perspective by pointing out that man should remember that though by God's design he is to be the head, he would not be here if it were not for women. God wants us to have a heart to submit one to another (see Ephesians 5:21).

In summary: we see that when everyone is content to be in their right order before God in mutual subjection one to another then God is glorified. But when we are working against one another to gain position or power, and we are fighting and back-biting one another then we destroy each other and we go down together because God has to lift his glory off of it. But if we have a heart to submit to one another and to glorify God by our submission and finding our proper order and place before God, then it brings glory to us and glory to God and is our fulfillment. Then as we see our family and husband blessed it brings glory to our own hearts because as they are honored we are honored with them. Whenever God asks us to submit and we obey, God always lifts us up.

Men, just as Christ always tries to bring out the best in the church so are you to do all you can to support and encourage your wife to be the very best she can be before God in whatever God would have for her. That we work together for one cause: to glorify God.

D. CARING FOR CHILDREN

1. **RECOGNITION** - If we are going to meet the needs our children have then we must give them recognition treating them with respect as a human being. We must build their self esteem in many ways such as introducing them to who they are in Christ and raising them in a Christian environment. We need to give them approval, show them acceptance, speaking encouragement into their lives, and acknowledging them in positive way when ever possible. Remember, God has made each one of us to be different and did not give us the same gifting. Some children are more outgoing and aggressive while others are more quiet and laid back. Regardless of their different personalities, we as parents have the responsibility to provide recognition without comparing our children to one another. All of us look for acceptance from our parents, many adults are still longing for that acceptance and recognition.

2. **FALSE ASSUMPTIONS:**

- a. That it is ok for mothers to put their children ahead of husbands. This is not true because the children are eventually going to grow up and leave while the husband remains at home. God's order is husband first. Wives need to be careful not to make over and give all of their energy and attention to their children and then have nothing left for their husband. When a wife puts her husband first and honors him then her children will grow up seeing that order. Otherwise they grow up without knowing the proper order and will experience difficulty in relationships.
 - b. That the child deserves to be the center of attention. Don't let your child control your family. How many times have you see children who control their parents because their parents have neglected to teach them their proper place.
 - c. That it is ok to push your child into more mature roles. We should not try to advance our children into areas that they are not interested in at all. Many parents try to live out their second childhood through their children. Many times this causes undue stress on children to be something they aren't. Dad never made it as a football star so now he drives his son to be a football star.
3. **LET THE CHILD HELP AROUND THE HOUSE** - Allow your children to participate in the various responsibilities around the house and let them know they are appreciated for doing so. We should not teach children that it is punishment to do work. There is joy in working and feeling a sense of self accomplishment. Start them at a young age working with you around the house building their self esteem as you do.
 4. **INTRODUCE YOUR CHILDREN TO OTHER ADULTS** - When your with your children and you encounter other adults make sure you introduce them as someone who is important with value as a part of the family.
 5. **LET CHILDREN SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES** - When someone asks them a question let them answer for themselves.
 6. **GIVE CHOICES TO YOUR CHILDREN** - Help them to learn to reason. Don't demand from them rather give them opportunity to choose. This will help them to develop character.
 7. **SPEND CHOICE TIME ALONE WITH EACH CHILD** - It is important that they been seen and recognized as individuals and not always as one of a group. Both parents need to spend time alone with each of their children. Those times are treasured by children. This again teaches them that they are of

value and loved for who they are as individuals. God loves each of us in the same manner, for who we are.

- 8. GIVE THEM LOTS OF LOVE** - By the things we do and say. Providing lots of hugs and caring touch. Loving on them is not an unmanly thing but rather is just what kids need to grow in sensitivity.

E. CORRECTION

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

- 1. BOTH PARENTS BRING CORRECTION** -Mothers as well as fathers are responsible for discipline. Mothers should not say something like, “Wait until your dad gets home, your going to get it!” It is not right to always make dad the heavy. When there is a very serious offense it wise to defer correction until mom and dad have a chance to discuss together what is appropriate.
- 2. DISCIPLINE WITH CONTROL** - When we discipline with anger it causes rebellion and bitterness. Do it with control, if your upset send your child to their room until you are under control and then deal with the problem in a loving but business like manner.
- 3. THE TYPE OF CORRECTION SHOULD FIT THE CRIME** - Don’t be afraid to spank your child but do so in a reasonable manner following acceptable guidelines.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him when it is fitting.

Spank when it is fitting, not for every occasion but mainly when you are dealing with rebellion. Also don’t use your hand but rather an instrument such as a wooden spoon. Make sure you apply correction privately not in front of their friends. Be consistent in when you discipline. Set guidelines that you will enforce.

F. CONTROL

- 1. CONTROL YOUR CONVERSATION** - Be very careful about confiding with others about your problems especially in the area of your

marriage. Especially don't share your marital problems with your mother. She will resent your husband and it will cause real problems in their relationship. The best person to talk to is the Lord. We need to be careful what we say about someone to others. What happens is we spread our hurt to others telling only one side of the story causing others now to think poorly about the person we were upset with and then we go and make up with that person leaving everyone else thinking poorly about them.

Proverbs 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

2. **CONTROL YOUR CUISINE** - Mothers need to be careful what they feed their families. Mothers do control what their family eats at home. Try to teach your family to eat healthy foods in moderate proportions.
3. **CONTROL OUR CREDIT** - It is so easy to get credit these days. The reason being that they are making tremendous amounts of money by encouraging people to buy on credit. If you have a credit card only use it if you can pay the balance in full at the end of each month so no interest is due.
4. **CONTROL YOUR COMMITMENTS** - God wants women to maintain order in their homes keeping their commitments outside the home in balance with their responsibilities at home.

Titus 2:4-5 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 2:5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

You can tell a lot about a home by the way it looks. If the home is in disarray it reflects the hectic life that is being led. This usually is a spiritual barometer. When both husband and wife work the responsibilities at home need to be shared if the husband wants his wife to work outside of the home.

5. **CONTROL THE CLIMATE OF YOUR HOME** - If the husband is the head you are the heart. You bring the order in your home, you the one who monitors the music that is played, what TV shows are watched, what the atmosphere in our home is like. You do set the spiritual climate in your home. Without a strong woman the man

won't reach his potential. It is as the husband and wife come together that releases the blessing that God has for them.

XXII. FINANCE – by Mr. John Juliano

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee....

Knowledge and understanding are not the same thing. I can understand something and either, reject, accept, or embrace it and take it into my heart and make it a part of my knowledge. Just because we hear the words does not mean we have knowledge. When we understand something we must then embrace it and apply it to our lives before it becomes a part of our knowledge base.

A. TWO KEY WORDS

Two key words we often hear in relationship to finances are:

1. Discipline
2. Budgeting

Yet when we ask people if they are disciplined in their finances, most will admit to not being disciplined enough. Additional examination shows that most people do not follow a budget in dealing with their finances. Does this mean that people who neither budget or who are not highly disciplined are doomed to failure financially? The world would say yes! But remember God's grace covers our finances as well as our sin. When we understand God's principals concerning finances, we will succeed in our finances without either being disciplined or using a budget.

B. GIVING

To the first two key words the church adds the word, "GIVING". Even in giving there are principals which must be followed if "giving" is to be effective. Not all "giving" yields God's blessing.

1. In Genesis 4:5 we see Cain bring a gift to God, but his gift was not accepted.
2. In Acts 5:1-11 Ananias & Sapphira brought a gift that cost them their lives. So giving didn't work out to well for them.

Giving as an action in and of itself is powerless unless we understand God's principals for giving and apply them properly. So we see that budgeting, being disciplined, and even giving do not, for a Christian, insure financial success in and of themselves.

C. YOUR KNOWLEDGE BASE

When we take the time to examine where our base of financial knowledge came from, most of us would see that we learned what we know from, parents, friends, experience all of which reflected the world system view of how to manage our finances. All of the years of learning before we found Christ work against God's way of doing things.

God's word promises us success as we walk in the knowledge of His word. The world's way is simply not God's way.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee....

D. STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is God's way of dealing with our finances. Webster defines stewardship as: "the person entrusted with the management of a household or estate of another, one employed to manage domestic affairs, superintend to servants, collects rents & income etc.; one who acts as a supervisor or administrator handles finances or property for another or others."

Remember God owns all things. Many of us have heard this said, and have understood but have failed to make it part of our knowledge base through application. Until we take this simple fact into our being and receive it in our spirit we will not be able to be successful stewards. We must know and live by the fact that God owns all things.

In stewardship we may use "world systems of finance" but the core or center of our operation is Christ. We use the "world systems" but walk in stewardship. Scriptures that show God owns all things:

Deuteronomy 10:14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

Psalms 50:12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof.

Job 41:11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

Psalms 24:1 A Psalm of David. The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

1 Corinthians 10:26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.

E. STEWARDSHIP/TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITY

Stewardship is the same responsibility as that of a trustee. If you were a trustee in a bank and responsible for handling someone else's money. In that situation your responsibility is manage the money, make investments, pay bills and generally do what is in the best interest of the person for whom you are trustee. It is not your money and you must give account for how you handle the money.

In God's kingdom we each are trustees as stewards. What is our compensation? The Lord says you can take out of the trust account what you need to live. But all too often what happens is that we take out more than what is there leaving a debt. How do you think the bank president would react if he came to see how you were managing the trustee account and found that not only was all the money gone but there was debt on top of that. You would probably go to jail. Is it any different with God's money?

We are to take out what we need to live and with the balance let it be used in the kingdom with the Lord's direction. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to guide us as we seek to walk in God's principles.

Spending money in disobedience to God's will is sin. Often God's gives us direction but we fail to listen. In the same way ignorance is not acceptable with the Internal Revenue Service IRS, it is not acceptable with God either. The real problem with finances is SIN. When people are in financial difficulty, most often, it is a result of disobedient spending. A heart problem, not a money problem.

How do we know we can have victory. **1 Corinthians 10:13** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

This shows us that every time we are tempted to spend money we shouldn't spend, the word declares that there is a way out. If we choose to spend the money we must accept the responsibility for our disobedient action. The battle for our finances is a spiritual battle. It is not what to buy or not to buy but a battle for our soul, the seat of our will.

F. TITHING

One of the first obstacles we face in our Christian walk is when we learn that the tithe belongs to God. Salvation is a free gift but tithing is a responsibility which transcends the law. We see in Genesis 14:17-20 that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek before there the law was given to Moses. When we look at Hebrews 7:9-10 we see that Levi who came after the law paid tithes before the law in Abraham.

Hebrews 7:9-10 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 7:10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

Tithing was a spiritual principal before there was a law of tithing. The principal of giving is clearly seen in the following:

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.

2 Corinthians 9:6-9 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (see also Luke 11:42)

Here in Matthew 23 we see Jesus rebuke the Pharisees because they were tithing but omitting the more important things such as judgement, mercy, and faith. These they should have done in addition to their tithing.

There is a freedom that comes to the believer when he embraces the fact that God own everything, we are privileged to be stewards, and we must trust God completely for our provision. He is Jehovah Jireh, the God who's provision will be seen.

1. THREE WAYS WE FACE TITHING

a. *We can refuse to give the tithe* - if we choose to do this the scripture says that we are guilty of robbing God.

Malachi 3:8-11 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 3:9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. 3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

b. *We can tithe but do so without the right heart or attitude.* We should be reminded that God loves a cheerful giver and that we are not to give begrudgingly, or out of a feeling of necessity. God is always more interested in our heart attitude than our outward appearance.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

c. *We can “take a leap of faith” give with a whole heart* embracing the fact that we are but stewards of God’s blessing on our lives, and that every possession we own belongs to God. This we can do because we realize that the tithe is not ours to begin with. If we carefully examine the scriptures we will see that the scriptures always refer to the tithe as “the tithe” as opposed to “our tithe” or “my tithe”. The tithe belongs to God. It is never ours to begin with except that he places it within our care as a steward.

Leviticus 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, **is the LORD'S**: it is holy unto the LORD.

The “**storehouse**” is where we are instructed to bring the tithe. The “storehouse” is where we are called to attend church. This is where we are fed, where we receive spiritual instruction. Our responsibility is to release the tithe to the storehouse. It then becomes the responsibility of the stewards of the storehouse to make sure they are following God’s leading as to how the tithe is used. (see Malachi 3:10)

G. SIGNIFICANCE & SECURITY

The more we do to increase our significance financially the less secure we become. This is due to the fact that the more we spend on significance the less we have to spend on security. The goal is to achieve the right balance between these two.

One problem that we see is that men tend to have a greater need for significance. Whereas women need more security than significance. In a marriage this can become a problem as the husband spends for significance he reduces his wife's feeling of security. Therefore, the need to keep this balance in our finances concerning our marriage responsibilities.

There are consequences when we don't maintain the correct balance between significance and security. If we overdue significance the consequences are debt, bondage, and the loss of security. If we overdue security the consequences are greed, hoarding, and fear of loss. Excess on either side has very negative consequences. When both spouses have a need of significance they will likely always be in debt and bondage because they will spend to meet that need. On the other hand if security is overly weighted then you will find the couple afraid to spend any money, living hand to mouth with all kinds of money stuffed in their mattress. Any time we try to focus on one we find its appetite cannot be met. Thus we need to maintain balance which brings peace and prosperity.

H. CREDIT CARDS

Often you will hear people say their major problem is their credit cards or debt. Actually, the real problem is **surety**.

Proverbs 22:26-27 Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are **sureties for debts**. 22:27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

A mortgage is debt, not surety. Debt is not wrong. *Surety is uncollateralized debt*. Debt is when we borrow with an object of collateral that covers the amount borrowed. Surety is when there is not an amount of collateral sufficient to cover the loan should you for any reason default on the loan payments. Surety is the place of financial bondage where you owe more than you have the ability to repay. Surety, according to God's word is to be avoided at all cost.

Surety will usually lead to our being mad at God for not meeting our need. We extend ourselves beyond our ability to pay and then when the pressure comes we expect God to meet our need. The real problem lies on our not being obedient to God's word concerning avoiding surety.

Ecclesiastes 4:6 Better is a handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.

God's word in Ecclesiastes teaches us that we should not grasp after that which is not within our means. As we extend ourselves beyond where we have provision we put ourselves into the situation of "travail and vexation of spirit."

I. A PLAN FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT BUDGET

1. Take the time to study all of your periodic or annual bills such as auto insurance, life insurance, anything you pay on a periodic basis. Total all those and set aside an amount each month to cover those bills.
2. Set aside 20% of your income after tithe and taxes for unexpected expenses. Those items such as auto breakdown, refrigerator breakdown, etc.
3. All of our standard monthly bills and weekly expenses need to fall within the 80% that is left. If you can't do this then you are living beyond your means.

Remember that God's provision is not always in the form of increased income. It often comes in the form of keeping us from unexpected expenses. When we live by God's principles he brings forth his provision in many forms.

4. Extra income derived from a spouse working should not be used for our basic living expenses. Rather it should be used to do a specific thing such as get out of debt. When we add that extra income into our basic living expense we only multiply our exposure and risk because we usually take upon more debt. When the second income situation changes we are in a position of having debt beyond our ability to pay, or surety.

J. THE MONTHLY PAYMENT MENTALITY

Most people have a monthly payment mentality. Most people feel as long as they pay less than they earn they will be ok. So how can we determine whether we can afford something or not? If any of these following four things are true in your life then you cannot afford the item:

1. If you are only paying the minimum on your credit cards then you cannot afford anything more.
2. If you are not setting aside money for periodic payments then you cannot afford anything more.
3. If you are not setting aside the 20% after tithe and taxes then you cannot afford anything more.
4. If you do not have a plan to be surety and debt free then you cannot afford anything more.

Until we determine to do our finances God's way we will not know real freedom and blessing in this area of our lives. Obedience is always better than sacrifice.

XXIII. Finance Continued – (additional notes by RevC)

A. Responsible for about 40% of divorce rate.

B. Leadership

1. Man is responsible for financial leadership but it is a wise man who realizing his own inability to manage money, would suggest a sharing of responsibility with his wife.
2. This will not damage his lordship if handled with wisdom and respect. Marriage involves team work and the realization of who has what gifting. Responsibilities should be shared and allow room for gifts to function.

C. Who's Money

1. All money should be our money - in one account.
2. Wife should receive X dollars to take care of certain responsibilities - likewise the husband.
3. Rest of money in common pot to take care of common expenses agreed to by both parties.
4. No secret funds or secret money.

D. Debts can ruin a marriage:

1. Don't go into debt for more than one thing at a time.
2. Don't spend beyond your ability to pay. Don't spend next week's paycheck this week as none of us has the promise of tomorrow.
3. AVOID credit cards - beware of interest. If you use a credit card pay it off completely each month or tear it up.
4. Romans 13:8 "Owe no man anything ..." Share difference between debt and debt that has equity to cover it. Debt is defined as something that I owe without the collateral to cover it should I have to. Collateralized debt involves owing but having the resources to pay the debt if needed.

E. Budget:

1. Keep records of your spending. Know where your money goes as you have a stewardship responsibility before God. We are only stewards of His blessing.
2. Budget your paycheck to get the most out of it. Learn to live on a budget so you can develop discipline in your spending and an awareness of your expenses. If we are good stewards then we will not have to be ashamed before God as to how we used the provision He graciously gives us.
3. Envelope system of budgeting. If appropriate provide a couple of methods a person can use to develop a budget system.

XXIV. DEALING WITH CONFLICT - Rev. John A. Lloyd

Ephesians 4:25-5:2 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 4:27 Neither give place to the devil. 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

God's word does not say that we won't become angry but when we are angry we are not to sin. Remember one of the fruits of the Spirit is "self-control." As long as there are people there will be problems. We are to do our best to be at peace with all men even if they are not at peace with us.

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

A. 12 THINGS THAT CAUSE CONFLICT

1. **Weariness** - when Elijah was tired after battling with the false prophets, calling fire down from heaven, and running 40 miles we see him even considering death (suicide) in his weariness. Weariness causes us to look at things from the wrong perspective.

When we are tired and easily upset we are best to avoid talking to others about matters that could cause problems. We must come apart and get rest. As we wait on God and put him first he gives us strength.

Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

The best thing to do when we are weary is to spend some time praising God, reading his word, and then go to bed and get some rest. We wake in the morning to a new day in God.

2. **Discouragement** - when we get discouraged we also become argumentative because our perspective is negative. Discouragement is the result of believing the devil's lie. When discouraged we get mad at other people and use them as a scapegoat for what is going on in our own lives. The enemy has a way of setting the stage for real destructive arguments when he knows we are in a place of discouragement. Therefore we must be very sensitive when we realize our mate is discouraged. We need to be vessels used to build up not tear down.

3. **Satan sets the stage for arguments** - though Satan is not guilty for every argument we face, he is responsible for setting the stage for a lot of it. We must stay filled with the Holy Spirit so we are always clothed in our armor, ready to resist the attack of the enemy.

4. **Fellowship with those who are spiritually backsliding** - they are feeling guilt and condemnation because of their sin. Therefore, they must find someone to blame rather than to accept responsibility for their own actions. They lack spiritual sensitivity and therefore are a fight waiting to happen. When they draw believers into their behavior or argument, they can justify their own behavior. "You're just like me!" They will also try to get others to do what they are involved in, to justify their behavior. A backslider will always try to pull you down to their level, therefore we must be aware of the devil's tactics. Another reason to stay "prayed up" when we know we are dealing with those who are backslidden. Don't fall for the enemy's bait, but rather let your light shine.

5. **Financial pressure** - we often blame the other for their selfish spending without examining our own spending habits. We have a tendency to justify our expenditures without accepting the expenditures of others.

6. **Sickness** - even a headache or cold can cause us to be out of sorts in how we deal with others. We expect others to be ultra sensitive to our needs without being sensitive to their needs.

7. **Insensitivity to a woman's menstrual cycle** - it is believed that 90% of marital disharmony occurs during this time of month. Husbands need to be aware of what is taking place and demonstrate extra sensitivity. This is a time to be extra helpful, and considerate.

This is a time when we often say things we later regret. It is a time to guard our words carefully.

8. **Fear** - the anxiety that accompanies fear often causes us to be more susceptible to argument.

9. **Poor communication** - it is said that we speak approximately 100 words per minute but think about 600 words per minute. Therefore, often we don't receive what was communicated because we are somewhere else in our thinking. We need to make sure the listener heard and understood what we were attempting to communicate instead of taking for granted that they got it.

10. **The desire for attention** - if someone feels neglected and wants to be noticed to avoid feelings of rejection they seek attention. Often the attention seeking method is not acceptable. Rejection causes rebellion, anger, independence, and lack of cooperation. It will also contribute to behavior that involves putting others to a test to see if they will respond in the way that I want.

11. **Lack of sensitivity to others** - sometimes we are not even aware of our lack of sensitivity and the offense goes un-dealt with until later when something else adds to the earlier situation and someone explodes. We in love need to confront problems when they occur instead of letting it compound into a situation that is even harder to deal with.

12. **Inferiority complex** - we must see our place in God so we are not threatened when others don't recognize us in the way that we think they should. People with this problem are argumentative because they are hurting and become defensive trying always to protect themselves. Thus our need to edify and build up one another.

Conflict is a natural thing. We shall always have to deal with conflict, but we need to find the right way to deal with it. Remember, we are not to go to bed with anger in our heart. We are better to take the fault and seek peace rather than to allow anger to work in our heart leading us to sin. Learning to cope with conflict in the right way brings growth in our lives.

B. COPING WITH CONFLICT

Ephesians 4:25-27 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

1. **Conflict is inevitable** - The scripture is clear concerning the fact that we will all deal with anger. However, we are admonished not to give place to sin when we are facing anger. We know from scripture that Paul and Barnabus got angry with each other, also that Jesus was

angry with the Pharisees. Just getting angry in itself is not wrong but it is what we do with it that leads to trouble.

We don't need to feel guilty about having anger, but we do need to be responsible for how we respond to our anger. God often uses conflict in our lives to bring growth. It wasn't until there was conflict between Abraham and Lot and their men that Abraham separated and began to move in the will of God. God used that conflict to move Abraham in the right direction.

Often in marriage relationships there will be conflict. If we respond in a positive way to the conflict we can see growth in our lives and relationships. God shakes every relationship to make us strong in Him and strengthen our relationship. When we see conflict it identifies a problem or weak area. When we fix it correctly the whole situation becomes stronger no matter what it involves. Remember, most of the benefits we enjoy in life have come as a result of a problem for which someone found a solution.

2. **Avoid conflict if at all possible** - There are some people who think that fighting is the only way to solve a problem. Remember the scripture says that, “**the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God**” and that, “**the flesh profits nothing**”. God wants to bring grace into such situations and help us find positive solutions to our conflict problems.

3. **Time is important** - We need to face conflict in the right time. Most of us are aware when conflict is approaching. Often couples will not use good judgment as to picking the correct time to deal with the conflict. It is best to alleviate distractions as much as possible so the couple can focus on the needs at hand. It is also very advisable to deal with potential problem areas before they become major problem areas. Be open and honest yet doing so with meekness and love. Our desire is to edify and strengthen the relationship not destroy it. This policy goes beyond the marriage relationship.

4. **Organize your thoughts then wait and pray** - Our first thoughts about a problem are generally fleshy. So often we respond in our flesh instead of backing off, taking time to digest what was said, examining the facts more closely, spending time with the Lord to receive guidance from Him. Once our spirit has tempered we are in a better state to deal correctly. It is generally wiser to encourage the other party to speak first. By doing so you have more information from which to respond when your opportunity comes. Even if the other party is upset and vents their anger, purpose in your heart to hear them out without presenting a defense of your own position. If possible, the scripture tells us to “be at peace with all men”.

5. **Anger is manageable** - We don't have to blow up every time we get angry. What we do serves as an example to our kids. We don't want them to grow up that way therefore we need to exercise control over our display of anger. We know anger is manageable because one of the fruit of the Spirit is “self control”. We can have Godly control over our anger.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 13:6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 13:7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

a. Love suffers long - it does not give into anger at the least little thing instead it bears with the weaknesses of others

b. It is not puffed up - pride puffs us up - when we are filled with our pride there is no room for anyone else. It is like a trying to fit a big air mattress and a big person into a small car. The puffed up air mattress takes all the space so that there is no room for anyone else. When we are puffed up in our pride there is no room for anyone else!

c. It seeks not its own - love enables us to look to the needs of others and to esteem others as more important. When we understand the nature of God's love for us we are able to cast every personal care on Him so we are free to seek the welfare of others.

d. It endureth all things - real love will endure much, enabling us to effectively manage our anger.

6. **We must not flaunt our superior capacities** - Some people can think quickly on their feet while others are slower to speak. We need to be careful not to intimidate our partner or to cut them in shreds with our tongue because we have a superior capacity with words. Because you may be able to yell louder does not mean that it is right to do so.

7. **Never lie** - We cannot resort to rationalization of untruth. Be honest, but not brutally honest in the sense that you do not exercise caution and inflict unnecessary hurt. We are to Eph. 4:15 "speak the truth in love".

8. **Don't say things that you don't mean** - When we are in middle of conflict we say or bring things up that we don't mean. This only brings hurt and creates resistance, resentment, and possible retaliation from the other party. We need to guard our words because they don't return void! They accomplish what we sent them to do and more so. We may speak carelessly in a moment of anger and later regret what we said but the damage is already done and very difficult to undo.

9. **Never bring up the past** - We may remember the past but true forgiveness chooses not to bring it up. If we have truly forgiven someone we don't have a desire to bring the issue up again to anyone. When we continue to expose the past we have not forgiven and are harboring bitterness in our hearts.

10. **Don't bring others into the conflict** - We should not draw others into our conflict in order to strengthen our position. When we do that we taint other people's perception of the

other person. Then after you make up the person you drug into the conflict still has a bad perception of the individual.

11. **Understand other people's needs** - You can avoid a lot of arguments when we take the time and energy to better understand the needs of our spouse. When we do so and adjust our actions to better meet the needs of the situation we avoid conflict.

12. **The most spiritual has the greater responsibility** - The most spiritual person in the relationship has the responsibility to demonstrate such. The more spiritual one will seek peace not war. Even taking the blame if need be to bring reconciliation and healing in the situation.

XXV. 3 BUILDING BLOCKS TO LASTING RELATIONSHIPS

- by Rev. John A. Lloyd

These building blocks are very important. A carpenter can work real hard but if he doesn't use the right materials he will not accomplish his goal. God's word gives us the right materials to use in building a strong marital relationship.

A. GRACE

Grace is "unmerited favor". There is no situation that is hopeless with God. Yet all too often we as individuals see our situation as hopeless and therefore give up, believing the devil's lie. God's desire for us is that as Christians we would constantly be moving toward oneness. Oneness of spirit, oneness of soul and oneness of body. Christians more than anyone can do that through God's power, strength and resources. Christian's should, more than anyone, live in harmony and victorious marital relationship.

GOD'S GRACE TEACHES US THAT NO SITUATION IS HOPELESS

Matthew 26:65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

Numbers 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

Acts 14:14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

The "renting of garments" was an expression of grief as we can see from these references. However, there was one group of individuals which God commanded not to rend their clothing as a sign of grief and that was those who were members of the priesthood. The only time it was permitted for a priest to do so was in the case of blasphemy. That is why Caiaphas, the high priest, in Matt. 26:65 "rent his clothes" because he thought it was blasphemy for Jesus to say

that he was deity. The robe of the high priest was even sewn in a way to prevent them from being ripped (Ex. 28:32; 32:23; Lev. 21:10). Even when Aaron's two sons were killed in judgment, in that moment of grief, Aaron was told by Moses not to rend his garment or he would die. The priest was the only one privileged to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year to make atonement. A priest being the only person having such access to the presence of God would be the only person who should never regard any situation as being without hope. To rend our garment is to say the situation is hopeless that our problems are beyond God's help. There is no end to God's grace, it is infinite. God is always sufficient. Nothing takes God by surprise he is always able. So why do we say our marriage is hopeless? That is a lie!

Matthew 19:26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

As we find Christ as our personal savior we become priests with Jesus as our High Priest. We as priest have access into the Holy of Holies. The veil has been rent. We have the privilege of open access to the Almighty Holy God, Himself. Therefore, we have no business seeing our situation as hopeless. We are to come to God knowing he understands our situation and will provide the mercy and grace that we need to meet our need.

Hebrews 10:19-23 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 10:20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 10:21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

The first building block to lasting relationship is to see that God is gracious and able to take care of anything we bring to him. Remember:

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

We are to be overcomers. A priest may have problems but should never despair for God is able and his grace is sufficient. When we are walking in the will of God we can do so with confidence toward God knowing that God is working on my behalf even when I don't see evidence of it as yet. God often places us into the fire to purify our lives and to bring about maturity of spirit.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

B. COMMITMENT

My commitment is based on the fact that God is gracious and good.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

I can stay in my marriage relationship because I believe God has good for me through it. Obedience will always lead to God’s purpose being fulfilled. That doesn’t mean there won’t be difficulty to face in obedience, but we can do so with confidence that God will be sufficient to see us through. When I by faith realize that even through a difficult situation God will bring good as I trust him and walk in obedience it allows me to do so with confidence toward God whereby I want to do God’s will. My attitude toward my situation is positive not negative.

THREE IMPORTANT STATEMENTS

1. We know God is good and demonstrates his goodness through his actions. God showed his love for us through his action on the cross. When we take the attitude of non-commitment to a relationship that has problems, we are in a sense saying that *we don’t believe God* can bring good from our problem. We lack faith in God and therefore are not willing to work through the problems. We miss the fact that as we make a commitment to God he rewards us for our faithfulness. “God is the rewarded of those who diligently seek him.” What we need is more faith in the goodness of our God.

Psalms 34:4-9 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. 34:5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. 34:6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. 34:7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. 34:9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.

2. When you’re full you can give. We need to look to God for our satisfaction and not our mate. Your mate will never be able to satisfy you the way the Lord does. If you look always to your mate, you’re looking to the wrong source. Proof of this is in the fact that God calls some to remain single and he is able to bring satisfaction to their lives. If he can do it for single people, he can do it for the married. If we marry with the thought that at last there is someone I can go to that will meet all of my needs, we are in for a rude awakening because they probably were thinking the same thing. God can bring fulfillment in spite of any situation as we look to him.

3. You can’t blame your spouse for lack of joy. We tend to point out the faults we see in our spouse as the reason for our lack of joy and happiness. It’s always someone else’s attitude that we see as responsible for our lack of joy. This is not scriptural. Your joy is not dependent on what someone else is doing or not doing. Your joy is from God. If we lack joy it is because we are not abiding in God. When we are full of the fruit of the Spirit we will have joy as it is a fruit of the Spirit. Joy and peace come from abiding in the Holy Spirit. We find

joy in doing what God wants us to do even when others don't respond as we wish they would. My joy is knowing I am doing the right thing before God.

C. ACCEPTANCE

God accepts us and wants us to be accepting of others.

Romans 15:1-7 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 15:2 Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 15:6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15:7 Wherefore **receive ye one another, as Christ also received us** to the glory of God.

We are to receive one another the way God receives us, just the way we are. Instead of us trying to change our mate we let God do the changing. All of us know there are things in us that need changing. But the more we bring it up to our spouse and push on them the more they are determined to dig their heels in and not do anything. Better we let God do the pushing because he gets lasting results.

Ephesians 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, **forbearing one another in love;**

1. Before I can accept and love someone else, I must be accepted and loved. I cannot give what I don't have. We must personally know self-acceptance and love if we are to be able to give it. When we look to Ephesians chapter 1 we see that we are chosen by God, he hath made us accepted, blessed us, loved, forgiven us and destined us to his purpose and plan. In other words God has accepted us and demonstrated his love for us so that we can know in Christ our acceptance.

Without God we look to find acceptance through:

a. **Performance** - we look to ways to perform and excel with the hope we will find acceptance and approval. If we look for our self worth in our performance what happens when we can no longer perform. Are we then no longer of value? We can't build self esteem on performance. When we do so we also measure the worth of others on their performance.

b. **Pleasing others** - we look to please others and when they don't acknowledge our effort we lack self worth. When this is our method we judge others by whether they please us and when they don't we reject them because others rejected us.

We know that all of these things are lies and the Jesus Christ has paid the price for all of my sins and shortcomings. Jesus has pleased the Father and I don't have to because my life is hidden in Christ Jesus. I don't have to perform because Jesus performed all that was required and now I stand in a place of acceptance and receive the love of the Father through Jesus Christ.

When we come to the place that we know God loves and accepts us, it frees us, it removes condemnation, guilt, inferiority, rebellion and fear. When we really know this in our heart then we can begin to love and accept other people. I can love myself because God loves me. If we can't love ourselves we can't love others. Knowing this, I don't have to look to my mate all the time for acceptance or approval. When I reject others it brings feelings of inferiority and later rebellion. When we receive someone and accept them it frees them to blossom into the person God wants them to be and disarms the rebellion and hostility.

D. BREAKING THE CYCLE OF REJECTION--FORGIVENESS

If the cycle of rejection and resulting inferiority and rebellion is to be broken it must begin with you taking the first steps in your family situation. Realizing that God has forgiven you, you must forgive those who have offended you and offer them acceptance. This is the first step in the restoration process.

Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

This reference in Ephesians is God's word to us for our marriages and our relationships with others.

Matthew 18:21-22 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 18:22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Here Peter is admonished by God that we should not count offenses but offer forgiveness as many times as is needed. Jesus goes on to provide the following parable as an example:

Matthew 18:23-35 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 18:24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 18:25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 18:26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 18:27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 18:28 But the same servant went out,

and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 18:29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 18:30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 18:31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 18:32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 18:34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Jesus is saying, “As I have forgiven you, you must forgive others.” Remember what God has forgiven for you! If we harden our heart and don’t forgive our brother, then God according to verses 34 & 35, turns us over to the tormentor. When we harbor unforgiveness and bitterness in our heart, God removes his protection from us and allows us to be tormented.

(These thoughts added by Rev.C) When we harbor such unforgiveness and bitterness in our heart, we become a prisoner of those attitudes and emotions. We are like slaves to our bitterness as it consumes our strength, distorts our perception of life, causes us to focus on our feeling to the detriment of our other relationships. In a sense, such attitudes give the other person an unspoken power over our existence as we have given what could otherwise be a healthy productive existence over to attitudes that slowly eat away at our emotional and spiritual well-being. Learning to forgive others, even if they are unaware of the offence we feel, or if they are unwilling to accept responsibility, will allow us to free ourselves to move ahead with the plan God has for our lives leaving the matter of correcting the wrongs done to us in our lives to God.

XXVI. MARRIAGE - DIVORCE – REMARRIAGE

by Rev. Dick Christensen

INTRODUCTION:

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What I am about to share I do so after much study and prayer. It is my heart to “share the truth in love”. It is my prayer that you will receive it in love and that it will bring liberty to those who are being held captive by the enemy’s lies. When we know the truth, “the truth will set us free”! I am also aware that some of us may feel conviction and I trust that will bring correction and direction from God. That we not be just hearers of the truth but doers!

Sometimes the truth is not an easy pill to swallow but God never promised us that every situation in life would be pleasurable. On the other hand the scriptures clearly teach that with obedience comes blessing.

From a July 1986 issue of American Demographics, stated that at current rates 6 out of every 10 American women now in their thirties will go through at least one divorce. Some 70% of those will remarry and 52% of those who remarry will divorce again.

LET'S PRAY

A. WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

Malachi 2:14-16 “Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the **LORD** hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and **the wife of thy covenant.** **2:15** 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 against the wife of his youth. **2:16** 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.

- 1. VS. 14** Marriage is a covenant relationship.
- 2. VS 15** A warning, “be careful how you deal with your wife” you are in a covenant relationship.
- 3. VS 16** In the old testament when a man divorced his wife it was referred to as “putting her away”. Here we can plainly see that God hates divorce! His attitude has always been the same. Divorce was never his will for man. It is an abomination to him because it involves the breaking of a covenant. Today’s laws and the attitudes of society have made divorce as common and as acceptable as profanity on the movie screen. It has become an accepted alternative to living in a situation that has “lost that lovin’ feeling”. I want to make this point perfectly clear - Man can look at it any way he desires but to God it is still something He hates!

B. WHAT IS A COVENANT?

There are three references in scripture, the first two of which I will deal with in our discussion. Let me encourage you to write all three down so you can do your own research. They are:

Jeremiah 34:13-19
1 Samuel 18:1-4
Genesis chapters 15-17

Jeremiah 34:13-19 “Thus saith the **LORD**, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondsmen, saying, **34:14** At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. **34:15** And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbor; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by name: **34:16** But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids. **34:17** Therefore thus saith the **LORD**; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor: behold, I proclaim a liberty for , saith the **LORD**, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. **34:18** And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof. **34:19** The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between parts of the calf;

Jeremiah is speaking to King Zedekiah and the people who were in covenant with God. Jeremiah speaks as the Spirit of God directed him. Notice what he says.

1. VS 13-14 We see here that the fathers of these men had a covenant with God but did not honor the covenant.

2. VS 15 The sons were in a position of having honored the covenant because they, unlike their fathers, had set their bondsmen free in the seventh year after they had served for six years.

3. VS 16-17 God says that though the sons had started out right they had since turned from doing what was right by the covenant to doing what served their pleasure. Therefore, God has determined that since they would not keep the covenant of liberty He would give them a liberal dose of judgment.

4. VS 18-19 What is described here is what is called a “blood covenant” which was nature of the covenant that according to verse 19 all the people had entered into with God.

C. WHAT IS A BLOOD COVENANT?

1 Samuel 18:1-4 “And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. **18:2** And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father’s house. **18:3** Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. **18:4**

And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

Here we see Jonathan & David enter into a covenant.

1. **VS 1** Here we see that these two men had a special kind of friendship with each other without any sexual connotation. They could be referred to as “blood brothers” though they were not actual siblings.

2. **VS 2-3** They loved each other as much as they loved their own selves.

3. **VS 4** Here Jonathan is demonstrating another part of the “blood covenant” by taking off his robe and exchanging it with David.

We all know the story of David, Jonathan and King Saul, Jonathan’s father. Saul sought to have David killed. In the natural, David had every right to defend himself and to protect himself against Saul. Eventually, both Jonathan and King Saul die. At that point David does a strange thing. After the death of Saul, David had all of Israel sing a lamentation of praise for Saul. Why did he do that? Because David was in covenant relationship with Jonathan, everything that was Jonathan’s was David’s and vice versa. Therefore, it was as if Saul was David’s own father in the eyes of the covenant. Thus, due to the covenant relationship, David was not going to bring accusation against his father but rather exalt him. Not only that but if you read on you will find that David even blessed Saul’s other sons because they were as brothers to him under the covenant he had made with Jonathan. This is the strength of a covenant relationship in the eyes of God.

D. HOW IS A BLOOD COVENANT MADE?

1. A calf was slain and cut length wise. The two halves of the slain calf were then laid on the ground with a space of isle between them. Enough space that the parties of the covenant could pass through. The significance of this cutting of the flesh is found in today’s marriage ceremony. Normally, there will be a center isle with different sides of the families sitting on their respective side. The groom would walk the isle and take his place waiting for the bride to walk between the two families and take her place beside the groom.

2. The parties of the covenant would also exchange their names. So that if I were cutting a covenant with Pastor Nick, my new name would be Dick Panico Christensen and Pastor Nick would become Nick Christensen Panico. It was a sharing of their names. In our modern wedding ceremony we know the wife takes the name of the husband. Showing the union between the two.

3. The parties of the covenant would also take upon the responsibility of each other's families. If anything should happen to one, it would become the responsibility of the other to take care of the family.

4. They would also exchange their outer garments which was a symbol of their strength, wealth and position in society. They would also exchange their waist belts which was what they wore to hold their weapons. To exchange these represented their willingness to defend the other even unto their own death.

5. The covenant was further sealed by the cutting of the palm of their hands, and then the hands would be clasped and bound together by cords allowing the blood to drip down onto the cords. Later they would each keep a piece of the cord as a reminder of the blood covenant.

In many eastern cultures they would take a cup of wine and hold it under the cords and allow the blood to drip into the wine cup. Then at the covenant feast they would drink the wine & blood mixture and thus partake of the very life of each other. The Jews were forbidden to do this therefore, they would drink wine at the covenant feast which was symbolic of the blood. This is important because Jesus said in:

1 Corinthians 11:25 "After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

He was pointing back to the blood covenant. When you and I receive communion we are remembering that we are in a blood covenant relationship with Him.

6. Finally, to complete the covenant they would undo the cords and rub a black powder in the palm of their hands which would aid the healing of the cut but it would also leave a permanent black mark in the palm of their hands as a reminder of the covenant. Isn't it interesting that the scriptures show that Jesus still bares the marks of the covenant in the palms of His hands.

7. Bread was also served at the covenant feast symbolic of each other's flesh. In their minds they truly became one flesh with each other. As we partake the bread of communion we are reminded of our oneness with Jesus. We are the body of Christ. You see this is not an empty procedure but demonstrates our relationship with Christ. He took our filthy rags and clothed us in His righteousness. He made us heirs to the Kingdom. When David and Jonathan exchanged garments, David was a simple shepherd boy of no significance, on the other hand Jonathan was heir to the throne, next in line to be King. They are a type of the covenant relationship we have with Christ. Jonathan accepted David as he was though David had nothing Jonathan needed while David gained significance in receiving what Jonathan freely gave, his right as heir to the Kingdom.

Think about all that the covenant signifies. We were defenseless, yet Jesus gave us the “weapons of our warfare” that we could put on the “whole armor of God”. A benefit of the covenant. Everything that is His is mine.

Remember the covenant is not entered into because of a legal obligation but out of a pledge of love and devotion. And that is exactly what marriage is - a covenant relationship. Can we not see why God hates divorce and the dishonoring of a covenant?

E. WHAT ABOUT DIVORCE?

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. **24:2** And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife. **24:3** And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife: **24:4** **Her former husband**, which sent her away, (the first husband) **may not take her again to be his wife**, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the **LORD**: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the **LORD** thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

1. VS 4 Please note that if you have been married and divorced, and your first husband has remarried and that second marriage of his ends in divorce, according to the scripture he may not remarry his first wife. Note also that to do such is considered as an abomination to God.

2. Here Moses is talking to the men about what should be done if you were going to “put away your wife”. The reason for this was because up to this time when a man grew tired of a wife or was upset with her, he could simply tell her to leave and she had to go. He was under no obligation to give her anything or even put it in writing. His verbal declaration was all that was required. In fact during this time in history, divorce was strictly a man’s choice, the woman had no rights or anything to say about it due to largely to the attitude of the time toward women. Women then were of lesser value and treated as second class. It was a male dominated world. This was not the way God intended it to be. Therefore, Moses is suffering them to give the women a written bill of divorcement.

3. VS 1 The word “uncleanness” that is used here carries the meaning of sexual impurity. However, by the time of the incident in the new testament when Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees, the meaning of “uncleanness” had grown well beyond sexual impurity. Now it was anything that could be considered as unclean. If for example, she failed to keep the house clean, the husband could say, “Ha ha uncleanness - get out - here is your bill of divorcement!”

Note also that from this point on according to verse 1 the man could no longer divorce his wife for “any” reason. Now he could only divorce her “because” he found in her some “uncleanness” = sexually impure or unfaithful. So adultery was the only reason for divorce from this point on and if he was to divorce her for that reason he had to put it in writing. Moses does not indicate if the woman could divorce her husband for the same reason.

4. Matthew 19:1-4 “And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan; **19:2** And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. **19:3** The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” **19:4** And He answered and said unto them, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,”

Note the problem here in the days of Jesus was that men were divorcing their wives for “every cause”. It is no different today - we divorce each other for every reason under the sun.

5. VS 4-5 Matthew 19:4-5 “And He answered and said unto them, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, **19:5** And said, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?”

Here Jesus answers them by saying, go back and look at what was intended from the beginning. Then he quotes in verse 5, **Genesis 2:24**. That when God instituted the marriage relationship he intended that the two would become as one flesh. This has not changed as we see in the next verse.

6. VS 6 Matthew 19:6 “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

“They are no more two but one flesh”. I have heard people say, “I don’t think God was in our marriage from the beginning.” Let me share that though God may not be the one who brought you together, if you stood before a minister at an altar in the presence of God, then He was part of your marriage from that moment on. And from that moment on you were one flesh in the eyes of God.

You see, Jesus is wanting us to see that this marriage union is as much spiritual as it is physical. It is a union of soul, spirit and body. One flesh. Don’t let any man divide it because God hates divorce.

7. The Pharisees now looking to justify themselves respond: **Matthew 19:7** They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

Here the Pharisees are trying to lay the blame on Moses. First of all, Moses didn't command them concerning divorce. The scripture says that he "suffered the men", which means he was only interceding as there was no command. Here the Pharisees are trying to lay the blame on Moses. When in actuality Moses was only trying to solve a big problem.

8. Matthew 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts **suffered (or permitted)** you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9. Now Jesus knowing the depth of the problem here, and realizing that marriage is a covenant relationship, makes a statement that must have shaken these men to the bone. **Matthew 19:9** "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication..."

Fornication carries the meaning of sexual relationship outside of marriage. In some translations it refers particularly to "marital unfaithfulness". This is important because "adultery" is commonly referred to when a married person has a sexual relationship outside of their marriage. Fornication would include adultery but also add:

Prostitution

Sodomy

Homosexuality

Incest

Any other type of unfaithfulness to marriage

Keep in mind that these Pharisees had been putting their wives away for any reason. Now Jesus says there are consequences to their behavior. Which he reiterates in the rest of verse 9:

Matthew 19:9 "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Except for marital unfaithfulness a person could no longer divorce and remarry without committing adultery plus if anyone married the former wife who had unlawfully been divorced now became guilty of adultery.

This takes upon even greater significance when you consider that even up through the time of Christ the penalty for adultery was death by stoning. No wonder these men were shaking in their boots.

10. Job 31:1 “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”

Job has made a covenant with himself concerning his eyes. That he would not allow himself to look upon another woman to lust. He realized how destructive an adulterous relationship would be, therefore he entered into covenant with himself to protect his eyes.

When we sit home every afternoon and tune into the “soaps” we are opening ourselves up to the glorification of adultery, fornication and all other types of uncleanness. When we open ourselves up to this, we allow the seeds to be planted.

Look at verse 9: **Job 31:9** “If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbor’s door;”

Let me paraphrase: What if I was deceived? What if a woman did entrap me? or What if I did wait to make sure my neighbor was gone and then I went to see his wife?

Look at verse 10: **Job 31:10** “Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.”

How am I going to make restitution to my neighbor for such an act? Do I then give my neighbor my wife? You see, if you steal a loaf of bread you can give back seven fold. But what do you do to recompense for adultery?

Look at verse 11: **Job 31:11** “For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.”

Very simply, there is no way you can make restitution for adultery. It is a heinous crime. Once you have done so, the damage is done and the hurt goes on and on. God can and does exercise grace in our lives but there is always a consequence to our actions and it always goes beyond what we expect to pay.

So we can see that Jesus is putting some teeth back into the marriage covenant. Jesus is saying enough of this! This stops! It is one man and one woman in a covenant relationship. Know when you stand at an altar you are entering into a covenant relationship which is not to be taken lightly because God does not take it lightly.

F. SCRIPTURAL PERMISSION TO DIVORCE

Matthew 5:27-32 “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: **5:28** But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. **5:29** And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. **5:30** And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. **5:31** It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: **5:32** But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

Here Jesus gives the **ONLY** scriptural grounds for divorce “marital unfaithfulness”. He also adds a very important statement concerning adultery. He shows us that adultery is equal to a spiritual problem born in the heart. Now it is beyond a physical act in that it now involves spiritual adultery. The spiritual adultery takes place before the physical act is ever done. When we entertain lust in our hearts we separate ourselves from God and the sin has already taken place. That is why it is so important that we not allow ourselves to entertain such thoughts. We may not be able to keep the birds from flying over our heads but we can keep them from building a nest in our hair. To maintain our fellowship we need to keep covenant with ourselves concerning our eyes.

G. THIS IS TOO HARD TO RECEIVE

Matthew 19:10 “His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.”

1. The disciples also were having difficulty with what Jesus had said. Their attitude was, “if this is the way it has to be, we are better off not marrying.” They did not want to get married and live in a horrible situation.

2. Jesus replies: **Matthew 19:11** “But He said unto to them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.”

*** If I understand this correctly, Jesus places a qualification on what he has taught in that “not everyone will be able to abide by this teaching.” Then He goes on to describe those who can abide by the teaching:

Matthew 19:12 “For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be

eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”

A eunuch is someone who has been separated to serve the Lord who has curbed or put to rest such physical desire. There are some people who are able to take upon themselves that ministry. But for him who is able to receive it let them do so.

H. SO WHAT IS JESUS' ATTITUDE ON ADULTERY?

John 8:1-11 Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives. **8:2** And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down, and taught them. **8:3** And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, **8:4** They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. **8:5** Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? **8:6** This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. **8:7** So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. **8:8** And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. **8:9** And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. **8:10** When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? **8:11** She said, no man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

The woman was caught in the act. Jesus was the only one there with the right to stone her. He writes in the sand and declares, “that whosoever is without sin may cast the first stone.” But they all walked away except Jesus. There is many things He could have said to her to punish her:

You can never marry.

You are banished from the house of God.

You can no longer minister.

You can't serve God.

No, He said none of these things. Rather, He treated her act as a sin and commanded her to go and not repeat the sin. There is forgiveness in God for adultery. This is further supported by **John 4** when Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well who was going to tell her husband about the living water. Jesus said to her that she had had 5 husbands and the man she was currently living with was not her husband. Yet here again Jesus ministered grace and later we see her acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah.

We see Jesus had opportunity to make these two ladies an example to others through their punishment. But I believe they were to be an example. An example that adultery is sin and should be treated as such. No sin is to be taken lightly.

I. FOUNDATION STATEMENTS BEFORE MOVING TO 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 7

- 1.** To the Christian, marriage is not a social or legal contract but rather a covenant relationship before God based on unlimited responsibility and should not be broken even if new circumstances arise.
- 2.** If you are divorced and neither you nor your ex-partner are remarried, then I believe you should make every effort to reconcile your relationship.
- 3.** If you cannot reconcile, you should consider celibacy (remaining unmarried) and put your energy into serving God.
- 4.** If after you have made every effort to reconcile, and your ex-partner remarries. If you find that you can no longer remain single, you need to make sure your heart is right before God before entering into any relationship. I suggest a year without any dating to make sure your heart is right and that you are not entering into a relationship with the wrong motive.
- 5.** To divorce with the intention to marry someone else because you are already entangled in a relationship is to commit adultery through the divorce and enter into an adulterous relationship. If I understand the scriptures correctly, to do so means you are living in sin because you have never repented of the wrong in your heart. If that is what you have done, then confess your sin before God and ask for forgiveness.
- 6.** Today's legal writ of divorce is no indication of innocence before God. Remember that man may look on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart. He knows the truth of how we conduct ourselves in a relationship.

J. 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 7

Background: Corinth was a lot like Las Vegas. It was an anything goes type of place; a total lack of morals. They came to worship the goddess, Venus who is the goddess of love. Sex was a part of their ritual worship. A person only got married if they wanted to have children. Sex for pleasure was done outside of marriage. Thus the new believers living in Corinth had some questions about marriage. Paul is saying that sex for pleasure and children is to be within the marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:1 “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

1. The word “touch” (haptomai) means to do so with the intention to excite or to manipulate. He is saying that it is wrong for a person to touch another if his purpose is to incite sexual interest.

1 Corinthians 7:2 “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

2. If you are dating a person and feel there is love then you need to consider marriage so that you don’t involve yourselves sexually outside of marriage. However, if you are dating and you don’t see a future in it, then you should get out of the relationship before your involvement leads to more than you are looking for.

1 Corinthians 7:3 “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.”

3. The Greek word for “her due” is “eunoia” which means - due benevolence or good will or grace thinking. In other words, think good thoughts about your spouse. Think on the good points in your spouse, don’t focus on their faults.

1 Corinthians 7:4 “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.”

4. The word for “power” means to have control or authority over. We do not have control or authority over our own bodies but submit to the needs of our mates.

1 Corinthians 7:5 “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 incontinence.”

5. “Defraud ye not” in the Greek says, “stop depriving one another”. This is a form of manipulation. God does not want us to conduct ourselves in such a way. The only reason to avoid sexual contact is by mutual consent for the purpose of prayer and fasting and then for a specified period of time.

The word “tempt” is “peirazo” meaning to “entangle through a weakness in a person”. What Paul is saying is that if we don’t come together soon physically, then that person is in a weak position open to Satan’s attack in that specific area of weakness. Thus we need to preserve our sexual union. We men most often are responsible for misusing our wives in this area. We need to be more concerned about the needs of our wives than we are our own needs. We need to understand the different needs we have in the relationship.

1 Corinthians 7:6-9 “But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. **7:7** For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. **7:8** I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. **7:9** But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.”

6. Paul speaks to the importance of spreading the Gospel and choosing celibacy if possible.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband: **7:11** But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”

7. Here Paul admonishes us to accept the commandment of the Lord that we not seek to be separated. As believers, all the more so should we be examples before the world of what God can do through yielded vessels.

1 Corinthians 7:11 “But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”

See also: **1 Corinthians 7:39-40** “The wife is bound by law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. **7:40** But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.”

8. In other words, if your husband dies, you have the right to remarry as long as that person is a believer. He also shares that if your spouse dies and you have the ability to remain single and serve the Lord it in Paul's mind would be even better.

1 Corinthians 7:12-15 "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. **7:13** And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. **7:14** For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. **7:15** But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."

9. If you find yourself married to an unbeliever, your responsibility is to live like Christ in front of them without cramming the Gospel down their throat. So that they may be won because of the good testimony they see of God in your life.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28 "Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. **7:28** But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you."

10. If married don't divorce. If single try to remain so. But if you are divorced and you choose to marry you have not sinned. Remember Jesus said in **Matthew 19** that not everyone could receive His teaching. Also, **Deuteronomy 24** the woman who was put away for marriage unfaithfulness was allowed to go out and marry another man. Even though she was the guilty one, she was allowed to remarry. So we see there is both old and new testament which suggest it is OK to remarry even if I have been through a divorce providing our heart is right before God. However, we must not use this grace as a license to sin by divorcing from a partner just because we are unhappy in the relationship.

XXVII. GOD'S BLUEPRINT - 4 STEPS TO A HAPPY MARRIAGE **GEN. 2:23-25**

A. vs. 24 SEVERANCE -- "...therefore shall a man leave his father and mother."
There is to be a break between the parent-child bond. Parents need to allow children to grow and mature without always bailing them out.

B. vs. 24 PERMANENCE -- "...and shall cleave unto his wife."
Marriage is permanent - "till death do us part." Divorce is never God's will.
Marriage is a giving up of our rights.

Fifty percent of all homicides are a result of domestic problems in relationships. Until we learn to lay down our rights we will simply carry our problems from one relationship to another.

Matt. 19:3-9 tells us that except for the cause of fornication you do not have a right to divorce. Even when there has been unfaithfulness God can still heal a marriage.

C. vs. 24 UNITY -- "they should be one flesh." Marriage is a process. It is more than sexual union, though that is part of it. There is no unity in marriage even if sex is there if other things are not also in place. It takes more than sex to bring unity in marriage.

"Unity" is different from "uniformity". Uniformity is every one looking the same; but that's not "unity". It is the difference between unison and harmony. Unison is when everyone hits the same musical note. Harmony is when everyone hits a different note but there is a blending together. That is what God intends for marriage. To compliment one another with different gifting that blend together.

Someone wrote, "That woman was made from the rib of man. She was not taken out of man's head to be lorded over by him. Nor from his feet to be trampled on by him. But from his side to be equal with him; from under his arm to be protected by him, and from near his heart to be loved by him."

If husbands will love their wives as Christ did the church she will gladly serve him. To love her as Christ did the church means to sacrifice of himself for her.

D. vs. 25 INTIMACY - There is no intimacy if the other three qualities are not also in place and functioning. Intimacy is not just the act of sex. When the other qualities are not functioning the wife resists sexual advances because she doesn't feel the affection, heart relationship and caring she needs.

Some people go from sex partner to sex partner looking for fulfillment. How can we ever find fulfillment in something God doesn't bless. If we want happiness and fulfillment, lets do it God's way.