

*The Sanctity of Marriage
and the Family*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone, whether single or married, should read the Word of God again and again on the subject of marriage and family. We should study these verses until the Holy Spirit burns them into our conscience, penetrates our heart, stabilizes our soul, and gives us capacity through divine ability to reveal Christ to one another.

So many people become familiar with their families. Don't do it! Do not be familiar with your family. Don't take one person for granted.

The Bible says that Jacob's brother Esau was profane and a fornicator and couldn't find a place for repentance, though he tried to repent with tears (Hebrews 12:16-17). In other words, Esau did not accept God's provision. "Profane" means he was familiar. He was familiar with God and with the blessing God intended for him to receive from his father as the eldest son.

God has mercy for our need, grace for our self-image, power for our weakness, love for our

motivation, and peace for our maturity. As this booklet will show, He desires to give us everything we need to develop relationships that bring glory to His name.

Chapter One

MARRIAGE: GOD'S PLAN TO UNVEIL THE MYSTERY

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the

fear of God.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

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

“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

“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.

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife,

and they two shall be one flesh.

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Ephesians 5:14-33).

Billions of years ago, the Lord ordained a plan for the human race. That plan included marriage and family. He said to the prophet, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel” (Jeremiah 31:1).

In Jeremiah 2:4, the Word of God says, “Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.”

As part of His eternal plan, God said, “I want to represent the unity of the Trinity and the mystery of Jesus Christ and His Bride, the Church, through the institution of marriage.” Christian marriages grounded in the Finished Work are the number one way of revealing the mystery of Christ and His Church to the world. Therefore, this kind of marriage must be diligently sought after, fervently understood, and consistently and stedfastly our pursuit by faith.

Neglect: Where Marriages Go Wrong

When marriages go wrong, often the first thing that happens is that husbands neglect their wives. She was not created to be neglected. Yet, a husband who neglects his wife wonders why he doesn't receive the response he needs from her.

Do not ignore your wife's needs. She is very sensitive, therefore be discerning to her sensitivities and do not ignore them.

Furthermore, do not neglect your own household. God is first, marriage is second, and family is included. I don't like to call the family "third," because if you have a family, it is a part of the marriage. The wife is to love and honor her husband, but many wives love their children more than they do their husbands, and that is very wrong.

Equal Partners

According to 1 Corinthians 14:40, we ought to do all things decently and in order. If only people would learn this about marriage and family! There is no inequality between husband and wife. In God's eyes, they are both equal. He has a position to protect her, to provide for her, and to love her with God's love. And she has a

position to submit to that protection and provision for love.

This may sound strange, but the Word of God does not say that a woman should obey her husband. It says she should *submit* to him voluntarily. He is never to legislate to her, but to operate in his position of spiritual headship lovingly, as a covering. If he gets off and demands her to do things that are wrong, it is better for her to obey God rather than man, in terms of the flesh (Acts 5:29).

If either the husband or the wife is unsaved, remember that Jesus Christ died for them. If, as in 1 Peter 3:1 and 2 for example, the wife has a partner who is unsaved, she may win him by her testimony, without preaching to him. The consistent life of a godly wife causes the unsaved spouse to be set apart, sanctified. When that is the case, he will not interfere with her Christian life, and he may get saved because of her godly life (1 Corinthians 7:14).

Expressions of True Love

Jacob worked for seven years to have Rachel as his wife, and in Genesis 29:20, the Bible says that it “seemed unto him but a few days,” because he loved her. That is a beautiful verse.

In Genesis 24:67, Isaac loved Rebekah, and she was a comfort to him after his mother's death.

In 1 Peter 3:6, Sara called Abraham "lord" out of respect. She was saying, "You are the leader of this marriage." At the same time, according to Genesis 21:12, when Abraham was wrong, Sara told him to cast out the bondwoman, and God backed her. God said, "Do what she says." There is the balance.

Wake Up and Start Singing

The entire chapter of Ephesians 5 deals with marriage, while chapter six concerns the family. God designed the institution of marriage to represent Christ and His Church—the Bride, whom Christ marries for all eternity.

Read Ephesians 5:14-20 again. People need to awake from their sleep and let Christ give them light. We are to walk circumspectly, in wisdom and not as non-thinkers. We are to redeem the time because the days are evil. We are not to be misunderstanding but understanding as to what the will of God is.

Do not be drunk with wine but be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are to be happy on the inside with a melody in our hearts to God, always giv-

ing thanks to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.

Chapter Two

GOD'S ORDER OF SUBMISSION

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

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

"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

"That he might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

"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" (Ephesians 5:21-27).

Notice how the Bible says we are to submit

to one another. Then, it says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands...." But it also it says, "...as unto the Lord."

This means that we are to submit to one another as unto the Lord. The wife is to submit to her husband as unto the Lord, which means that he is to love his wife the way that Christ loved the Church, by giving His life.

Your hands do not consider it degrading to submit to your head. If your head tells your feet to take steps, your feet do not feel that is degrading. They love their head, and they respond by doing what they were designed to do (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

We are made to have one head. In God's order of delegated authority, God the Father is the head of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1-3). Christ is the head of the Church, and every husband has one head, which is Christ. Every wife has one head, and that is her husband, while the children submit to mom and dad.

Christ Is the Standard

A good marriage is the greatest way to reveal Jesus Christ on this earth because that is what marriage is supposed to do. Study the times that Ephesians 5 says, "even as [Christ]...."

He is the standard for how we should treat one another.

Please hide this in your heart. If a wife submits to her husband as unto the Lord (and that is entirely up to her), she glorifies God in her womanhood. And if her husband loves her as Christ loves the Church, he glorifies Christ in his manhood.

This is how the apostle Paul presented it, in Ephesians 5:25-30: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he may sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word."

"That he may present it to himself as a glorious church, not having *spot*" (that means sin), "or *wrinkle*," (that means familiarity with age), that it "should be holy and without blemish."

Then it says that a man ought to love his wife as his own body.

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh...." He is to nourish and cherish her, the Word of God says, even as Christ loves the Church. And if he loves his wife as his own body, he loves himself.

Then it says, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:30).

The relationship of Christ and the Church is

a mystery as they go up against Satan's attack, which is against God's nature in the angelic conflict. Satan attacks marriage and family more than any other thing in the universe. After free volition, marriage is God's number one institution. Therefore, the life of Jesus Christ must motivate the marital union.

Things That Go Against Oneness

Anything that would divide the individual's heart will be used to divide the individual's relationship with his partner. Hosea 10:2 talks about a divided heart, which always leads to a double mind (James 1:8). So, anything that will divide a person's heart in his own decisions will be used to divide the union he has with his wife in their marriage.

That is why homosexuality, promiscuity, pornography, immorality, and passivity are all enemies to a marriage. Think about it.

Satan has produced immorality for this reason: If a person has sex with a harlot, he becomes one flesh with the harlot (1 Corinthians 6:16). That is why they go back and do it again. They are now one flesh because of the influence of libido waves on the central nervous system.

According to 1 Corinthians 6:17, "He that is

joined unto the Lord is one spirit” with the Lord. But verse 18 says, “Flee fornication....” Other sins are sins outside the body. But if your sin is sexual immorality, it’s a sin inside the body.

Don’t Defile the Temple

After 1 Corinthians 6:18 speaks about sinning inside your body, verse 19 says that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and you are not your own. You have been bought and paid for with the price of His blood: therefore glorify God in your body and in your human spirit (verse 20).

Proverbs 6:32 says that he who commits adultery lacks understanding and destroys his own soul—all because of wrong sexual relationships. Proverbs 6:33 says, “A wound and dishonour shall he get.”

I studied that word “wounds,” and it means that unless this person is made completely brand-new, for the rest of his life he will have a wound that will not set him free in sex in marriage.

The wound is a sexual wound that bars proper sex as God intended it. The wound produces a sense of dishonor so that a married couple cannot experience sex as it should be in

the marriage union. Thankfully, God can deliver anyone from that. God can bring in deliverance and transformation and clear up the past, so they can start out brand-new.

Satan is also attacking marriages and the family through people who do not support godly family values. Much of the entertainment industry attacks the family, even when they promote their product as family entertainment.

Satan also promotes drugs and alcohol to hurt families. And although the warfare intensifies, consider God's premise: The family is sacred. Every person we meet, regardless of his condition, was created to be a part God's family, to become perfect—without spot or wrinkle.

Keep Your Relationships Fresh

A marriage should be renewed every day just as our relationship with God should be renewed each day. My commitment to my wife should be renewed daily, and likewise, her commitment to me should be new every single day.

If you are single, and God has ordained that so far for your life (1 Corinthians 7), you are to have a relationship of love with Jesus Christ that will fulfill all your needs.

Chapter Three

NOURISH AND CHERISH WHAT YOU LOVE

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Ephesians 5:28-33).

In marriage, as people get older and they

have been married for quite a while, they become closer and closer.

I knew a man and woman who were married for seventy-five years. She was ninety-five, he was ninety-seven, and they were having their platinum anniversary.

I had led them to Christ and visited them often. He acted just exactly like her and she like him. They looked alike. They talked alike. Everything about them was the same. If he wasn't around, you could count on it; she would do exactly what he would do if he were there. It was fun to watch them.

Do you know why they were so alike? As they were being conformed to Jesus Christ, whom they loved, they were also being conformed to each other's image. Do you see it? They loved each other so much that they were conformed to each other's image in God.

True Respect

As I understand the Bible, if I love my wife as Christ loved the Church, she won't have any problem submitting to me. Some husbands like to holler and scream, "You are supposed to submit to me!" But I don't hear them hollering, "I am supposed to love you as Christ loved the

Church!"

If a man lays down his life for his wife, it will be easy for her to submit to him. She will grow in her ability to respond to him, to appreciate his initiations, and to respect him.

In Ephesians 5:33, the last part of this verse says the wife ought to "reverence her husband." To reverence means to give great respect. And when her husband loves her as Christ loved the Church, it is because he loves himself as Christ loves him. A man doesn't hate his own flesh. *No* man hates his flesh. If you think so, see what happens when something falls on your foot. See how much it hurts. No, he nourishes it and cherishes it. And as Christ does the Church, so men are to nourish their wives.

It is said of Joseph that while a great famine was going on, he "nourished his father, and his brethren" (Genesis 47:12).

To "nourish" means that a husband gives his wife everything he can to bless her. To "cherish" her means he is single-eyed in his affections—that there is nobody but her in his life.

Genesis 2:24 and Mark 10:7-8 say that a man and woman leave their father and mother and become one flesh. "And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one

flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:8-9). Let no man separate what God puts together. They are one flesh. Let no man put it asunder. That's what the Bible says.

Perfect Oneness

It is an amazing thing to have one heart (Acts 4:32) and one mind. That doesn't mean you don't have diversities. It doesn't mean you don't have creativity to share with each other. You do. You are not a puppet. But it means that you have the love and wisdom of God as one heart, one mind, and one soul. But when you are married, you are also one flesh. That is why you must stay away from pornography and suggestiveness on the television.

Make a covenant with your eyes (Job 31:1), and do everything so that your heart is one flesh with the one you're married to—husband with wife and wife with husband. Don't sin against your central nervous system, which really does a job on your future sex life in marriage. It damages the soul. It wounds you and affects your capacity for the person you marry. It hurts you so that sex doesn't provide the pleasure God intended, unless you become right with God and

receive a gift of repentance. Be completely filled and renewed with the Holy Spirit every day.

Do Not Become Familiar

A woman was very rebellious to her husband. Then, when he was thirty-one years old, he died suddenly. During the funeral, she started screaming, and a friend had to take her outside.

When asked what was wrong, she said, "I never loved him like I was supposed to. I was rebellious. I always nagged him. He could never do anything good enough for me." She went on to say, "He was a tremendous worker. He got promotions at work. He was a great provider. He took care of us. He was a fine husband. He was never angry. But," she said, "I always nagged him to death. Now he's not going to be here to tell him I'm sorry. It's too late."

We ministered to her, and finally she realized that God forgave her.

The point here is that if you are married, make it be the greatest thing that ever happened to you, and be faithful. If you have a family, consider that family the most sacred thing you have ever considered on earth. As Christ is our Head and loves us, let's reflect that love that He has for us, the forgiveness that He has for us, the

mercy and grace that He has for us. Let's reflect it, because in marriage, we have a relationship.

Build your relationship. Cherish your partner. Be sensitive. Honor one another. Reveal God in your relationships. Be wise and use sound wisdom in your marriage. Train your children how to have proper relationships in the family and with others. Marriage is a continuing relationship—one that should be kept alive, one that can be glorious, and one that can be filled with joy and happiness when Christ is the center.

CONCLUSION

Relationships are so vital throughout our lives. Once we become saved, we start by having a relationship with God the Father. Then we have a relationship with the Son, then with the Holy Spirit, and then with the Word of God. We learn to develop beautiful relationships with one another as a family, knit together in the Body of Christ.

But Satan also has a family. In Job 41:16, the Word of God says that there is no air between them. He has an amazing plan to destroy marriages and families and the Church. The demons have shocking unity to defeat us, frustrate us, and bring us down in our marriages.

In marriages that are very good—where no one defrauds, where the wife complements her husband and edifies him behind his back, where he is sensitive and loves her as she needs to be loved, because she is human—both partners are operating in the Holy Spirit. They have some-

thing that is rare on the earth. Christ is amplified through their marriage to reveal Himself and the Church to the world.

Pray in faith that God will make us what we ought to be with His precious love and with His grace. That way, we can enjoy the fullness of everything we have going for us. God wants us to be blessed.

Father, we pray that You will help us to be filled with all the fullness of God and to reflect Christ in the Church, in our relationships. Please help us. That is what we want. We don't want any subtle rebellion.

Teach each husband how to love his wife and honor her needs. Help each wife to see her husband as You see him and to reinforce his leadership in Christ by honoring and respecting him. Above all, never let us become familiar with any member of our families. Bless us in our relationships, in Christ's name. Amen.