

Marriage – An Introduction

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| Lesson 1 | - | Starting With The Right Foundation
(A Biblical _____ Life) |
| Lesson 2 | - | Men Are From “Venus” And Women Are From . . .
(A Biblical view of Unity in Marriage) |
| Lesson 3 | - | How To Have A Good Fight
(A Biblical discussion on Communication) |
| Lesson 4 | - | I Am <u>The</u> King of My . . .
(A Biblical teaching on Headship) |
| Lesson 5 | - | I’m Not a Door Mat for . . .
(A Biblical Teaching on Submission) |
| Lesson 6 | - | Personalities Aside
(A Biblical Response to Personality Types) |

A Biblical View of Sex

Four Purposes Of Sex Mentioned In The Bible

Procreation

The Bible is very explicit that procreation, reproduction of the species, is a very important aspect of human sexual relations. It is the most important, in fact (Gen 1:27-27). That is one reason why most Christians believe that abortion is wrong: even when a woman conceives unintentionally, since procreation is so important an aspect of our sex lives, bringing the fetus to term overrides other considerations (not to mention the fact that most Christians also believe that the zygote, at conception, is a living human being). This is also one of the reasons the Bible speaks against homosexuality: by its very nature, homosexuality cannot fulfill the ‘prime directive’ of one’s sex life.

Unfortunately, some have viewed procreation as having exclusive rights on the use of sex (such as the young lady who wanted to have sex with her husband only three times because she only wanted three children). I have known of couples—Christian couples—who didn’t touch each other for months at a time. This is hardly the biblical view of sex.

Pleasure

This might surprise you, but the Bible speaks a great deal about marital sex as a great pleasure. In fact, Paul even commands married couples not to refrain from sexual activity, because their bodies belong to their partner (1 Cor 7:3-5). Let's put an end to the "puritanical" misconception, for, "With respect to sex and marriage, the normal Puritan view was a robust and healthy one. The Rev. William Gouge, in *Of domesticall duties* (London, 1634), used Proverbs 5:18, 19, to express the joy and beauty of marital sex: "Let thy fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. 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." The Puritans often spoke of marital sex as one of the great delights and joys among earthly blessings. Frye tells us that a 'favorite Biblical passage cited by Puritan churchmen is Genesis XXVI. 8 where it is recorded that "Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife." *The Hebrew word for 'sporting' there does not mean, I assure you, "playing checkers."*

There are many other passages which speak of pleasure in marriage. Most are 'R rated', however! The Song of Solomon extolls the joy of sexual pleasure within the bonds of marriage. In fact, it is so explicit that the ancient Jews forbade young men from reading the book until they turned 30!

Intimacy and Unification

Monogamy and commitment to *one* person "till death do us part" are the only things that can produce the deepest intimacy. And intimacy, I believe, is what people are really after when they go after sexual experiences.

Genesis 2 says: "they were naked and were not ashamed." Emotional and physical vulnerability between a man and woman can only take place *without fear* at the level of the deepest commitment.

The Greeks had three or four different words for love

Agape, which is love as commitment (and can extend toward those who even return hate) is the broadest kind of love. The cognate verb, *agapao*, is used in John 3:16: "For God so *loved* the world that he gave his only Son, that every one who believes in him will not perish but will have eternal life." Also Romans 5:8: "God commended his own *love* toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." At root, it is *volitional*.

The second kind of love is called *phileo*. This is love which is reciprocated. It is love between friends. Hence, it is narrower in scope. It involves the *emotions*.

The third kind of love is *eros* (from which we get 'erotic love'). It is intended by God to be displayed for one other person. Hence, it is the narrowest love of all. At root, it is *physical*.

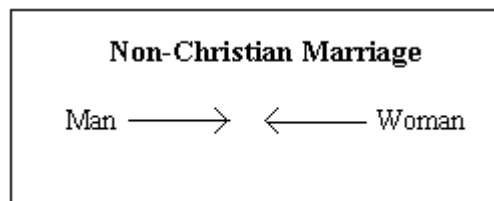
In any relationship, *agape* should always take the lead. In a marriage this is expressed in the vow, “till death do us part.” Many marriage vows express something of a *phileo-eros* sentiment only: “as long as love shall last.” When *eros* leads, there is no control, no steady course through the hard times. The relationship depends on whim.

Demonstration

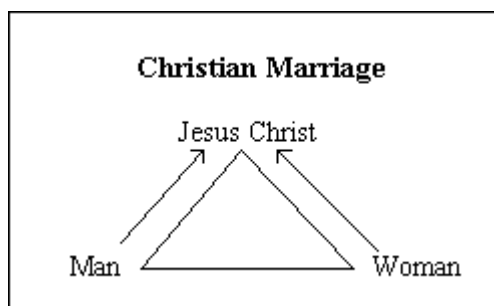
Finally, in the biblical view of sex, the marriage relationship is also intended to be a demonstration of God’s love for his people. In John 13:34-35 Jesus told his disciples that their love for each other would be a demonstration of God’s love. Paul makes a specific application of this principle: “Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” The point is that the bond between a man and a woman is intended to mirror the bond between Christ and the Church.

There is a distinct side benefit to all this: a truly Christian marriage is inherently stronger than a non-Christian marriage. The reason is that a Christian marriage always has a reference point greater than oneself. In a marriage which keeps God out of the picture, if one person decides to peel out of the relationship, the other person only has himself/herself as ‘leverage.’ But in a Christian marriage, both people have already made a prior commitment to Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks of this commitment as eternal, while the marriage-bond is only bound to this life. Consequently, there is a double commitment involved—and much more at stake. If a spouse wants to forsake the marriage, he or she is also disobeying his or her Lord. On the other hand, as both husband and wife grow in their relationship to Jesus Christ, they also grow in their relationship to one another.

Diagrammed, the relationship looks like this:



You can see why I cannot speak plainly and fully about commitment in marriage without saying something about commitment to Jesus Christ: a biblical view of sex demands nothing less.



A Biblical View of Unity

Men Are From Venus/Women are from Mars

Introduction

After interviewing two thousand married couples, one prominent marriage counselor reported that 70 percent of the women and 60 percent of the men would not marry the same partner if they had it to do over! Many reported that they wouldn't marry at all! As a pastor in whom people confide, I can attest that Christian homes are not exempt from this kind of marital unhappiness. We hear of marital unfaithfulness among Christians, of resentment and bitterness between Christian marriage partners, of loud outbursts of temper, of long periods of silence, of cutting criticism and declining affection. All of these are symptoms of sick and unhappy homes. Such people are a poor advertisement of the peace, purpose, and power, which Jesus Christ offers. For Christ's sake, as well as for our own well-being, we need to give serious attention to making our marriages work.

What is causing the breakdown of our homes? Sociologists have suggested several reasons for it:

- (1) Mobility. One out of three families in which the husband is under thirty-five moves each year. This tends to breed insecurity and instability.
- (2) The depersonalization of human beings in our computerized society. The resultant loneliness, aimlessness, frustration, despair, and self-pity are certainly not conducive to successful marriages.
- (3) The sexual revolution. Premarital and extramarital affairs are among the most deadly and destructive forces attacking marriage today.
- (4) Affluence. Our materialistic culture practically eliminates the meaningful interpersonal relationships necessary for a happy home.
- (5) Growing permissiveness in training children. We are producing an undisciplined generation of young people who are poorly equipped to establish successful homes.
- (6) Radio and TV. Their shallow portrayals of love and their addictive tyranny of time make an effective home life most difficult.

This multi-faceted assault on the home is really not surprising. The Bible teaches that marriage and the family are divine institutions. In fact, they were the first institutions established by God. He views them as essential elements in accomplishing His purposes for the human race. For this reason we can expect Satan to attack them. However, his attacks need not be successful. The God who ordained marriage in the first place can certainly make it work today.

Now add to this outer assault on marriage an inner list of demands that each partner places on the other and the intensity grows . . .

The man's "needs"

Sexual fulfillment
Recreational Company
An attractive spouse
Domestic support
Admiration

The woman's "needs"

Affection
Conversation
Honesty and openness
Financial support
Family commitment

Husbands draw an "X" through the man's needs and wives draw an "X" through the woman's needs. The only way you will experience marital harmony is to give those "needs" up for your spouses "needs."

How To Have a Good Fight

A Biblical Discussion on Communication

Introduction

Definition – A transmitting, a giving and receiving of information signals or message by talk, gestures, writing, etc. (Webster)

Reasons for Communication Breakdown

- Family togetherness has degenerated to joint Television viewing. Worse yet, technology has reduced the need for family members to physical contact (personal TV, stereo, computer, internet, instant-messenger).
- There is a tendency to prevent children from expressing their true feelings.
- In a competitive world: the stress is on performance rather than thoughts and feelings.
- Our sinful nature: It is embarrassing to expose our deceitful hearts, so we wear a mask of respectability rather than reveal our true natures.

FOUR RULES OF COMMUNICATION (Ephesians 4:25-32)

Good Relationships don't happen automatically. Neither are they immune from problems. All men are sinners (Romans 3:10—12,23) meaning they are selfish and finite, and that's all it takes to set the stage for conflicts.

Good marriages and strong relationships can be built by people who know Jesus Christ and follow His principles for communication, especially as they relate to problem solving.

In Ephesians 4:22-24 Paul stresses the importance of laying aside the "old self and its way of doing things and putting on the "new self," which is God's way of handling matters.

The following verses (vv. 25-32) detail the "Four Rules of Communication" which we are to use in all our relationships. They are good for both preventing and solving problems.

I. BE HONEST (v.25)

Speak

1. There is a Greek imperative used, which implies a _____.
2. People cannot _____ our minds.
3. _____ is out for the Christian (Gen. 31:20).

Speak TRUTH

1. "Speaking the truth" in 4:15 is a verbal form which implies _____ action.
2. Honesty is more than not lying -- it is not being _____ and _____.
3. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old with its evil practices. (Col. 3:9)

Speak Truth Lovingly (4:15)

1. You can be brutal with Truth.
2. Christians are to speak the truth with the _____ person's best interests in mind.
3. Care must be given to not only you say, but _____ you say it.

II. KEEP CURRENT (vv.26,27)

"Be angry and sin not. Do not ever let your wrath -- your exasperation -- last until sundown. Leave no such room or foot hold for the devil." (Amplified Version)

Failure to solve each day's problems that day means we are:

1. Guilty of _____.
2. Opening the way to _____ and _____.
3. Distorting subsequent problems.
4. Endangering your _____ relationship.
5. Setting the stage for spiritual _____.

"Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt. 6:34).

III. ATTACK PROBLEMS -- NOT PEOPLE (vv.29,30)

Unwholesome words

1. By—passes the _____.
2. Zeroes in on person's _____ (Mt. 5:21-22)
3. Tears _____ or _____ (Jn. 3:5-12)
4. Grieves the _____ (Eph. 5:18)

Edifying Communication

1. Deals with the _____.
2. Zeroes in on the _____.
3. Centers on personal _____ (Mt. 7:1f)
4. Gives _____ to those who hear.

IV. ACT! DON'T REACT (vv. 31-33)

- The natural tendency of our _____ is to be defensive about dealing with our sins, to blame shift run, react, ect. (Gen. 3:8—13; Eph. 4:31)
- We, through God's spirit must _____ to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving. (ICor. 10:13; Phil. 4:13)
- Arguments are possible only if each person _____.
- No matter how the other person is, you must _____.

I Am The King of My . . .

(A Biblical teaching on Headship)

What Every Husband Needs to Know

There is a book in circulation entitled *What Men Know About Women*. Its pages are all blank! We have often heard some frustrated male sigh, "I'll never be able to understand women." Yet the Apostle Peter said, "Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge..." (I Peter 3: 7 KJV). This is a most amazing paradox. God tells men to dwell with their wives according to knowledge—an understanding of their basic nature and needs—but most men know very little about the makeup and mechanism of the female species. Could this be one of the reasons why so many marriages are floundering?

If God says that men are to live with their wives according to knowledge, then obviously they can know something about them, popular opinion notwithstanding! The first thing they need to know is stated in the very verse we have just quoted: "Giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel." The woman is the weaker vessel. That doesn't mean she is mentally, morally, or spiritually inferior, but simply that she is physically weaker. She may be less susceptible to disease and may even have a longer life span than the man, but the fact remains that she is not as large or as strong physically. God made her that way with the intent that the weaker would depend on the stronger.

A Word From Our Commentator

3:7. The words (kata gnōsin) translated **considerate** (more lit., "according to knowledge" or "with understanding") point out that husbands should understand and be considerate of their wives' spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. Paul also elaborated on the husband's responsibility to protect and care for his wife, "just as Christ does the church" (Eph. 5:28-30). Also husbands are to **treat their wives with respect as the weaker partner**. "Weaker" (asthenesterō) refers to physical or emotional weakness, not intellectual inferiority, for wives are their husbands' fellow **heirs** of God's **gift of life**. If Peter referred here to Christian husbands whose wives were Christians, then "the gracious gift of life" could refer to salvation (cf. Rom. 8:17; Eph. 3:6). If, however, the exhortation were directed to Christian husbands whose wives were unsaved (as 1 Peter 3:1-2 was written to wives with unsaved husbands), then "the gift of life" would refer to sharing the gift of physical life together. Peter added that husbands who do not treat their wives with consideration and respect (timēn, "honor"; cf. 2:17) cannot expect to have their **prayers** answered.¹

¹Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

The Focus of Biblical Headship

- Its foundation is rooted in servanthood.
“Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the Church and gave Himself up for her.” Ephesians 5:25
- Its focus is personal with at tentativeness to detail.
“In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” Ephesians 5:28
- Its force is witnessed in affection and respect.
“However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself....” Ephesians 5:33
- It faithfulness will be identified in a proper attitude.
“Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them (lit. ‘embittered toward them’)” Colossians 3:19

Headship is not some masculine doctrine cleverly designed to bolster the husband’s sagging ego. Headship involves the husband’s solemn obligation to establish an atmosphere of love in which the basic needs of his wife are fulfilled—an environment in which she is free to grow and develop into all that God wants her to be. Her submission will then be the voluntary response to his loving leadership

Some More Thoughts on the Subject

- Because the wife is physically weaker, she depends on her husband for provision and protection.
- Because the woman is a “responder,” she depends on her husband to create a loving environment where submission is possible.
Note: If she receives irritability, criticism, disapproval, unkindness, indifference, lack of appreciation, or lack of affection, she will respond with a defense mechanism, such as bitterness, coolness, defiance, or nagging.
- Because men are called to a self-sacrificing love, they will need to give time, up things, and look for opportunities to help.
- Because men are responsible for the spiritual well-being of their wives, they will need to pray, reassure and encourage their wives .

That costs something; in fact, it costs everything. It demands total self-sacrifice. That is exactly what it cost Christ when His love led him to Calvary. If you are not willing to pay that cost, then you made a dreadful mistake when you promised a woman you would love her until death.

“All Right men . . . Live like Kings in your castle!”

I'm Not a Door Mat for . . .*(A Biblical Teaching on Submission)*

We have discussed the subject of headship and God's order of authority in the home previously, but now we want to apply it specifically to the wife, for submission is her principal obligation. "You wives must submit to your husbands' leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord."² Ladies, submission to your husband is really submission to the Lord, because the Lord commands you to do it! If you cannot find it in you to submit to your husband for his sake, do it for the Lord's sake. The Lord loves you with a perfect love. Respond to His love with subjection to your husband.

"You wives must willingly obey your husbands in everything, just as the church obeys Christ."³ Those two words "in everything" are rather broad, aren't they? Obedience is not to be practiced only when you feel like it, or when you wholeheartedly agree with your husband, or when he is treating you with Christ-like love, but in everything! *The Bible does not condition your subjection on his love, even as it did not condition his love on your subjection.* You must answer to God for your own actions, and no excuse for disobeying His Word will be accepted.

"But my husband never considers my feelings. I've got to stand up for my rights." Aren't you disputing the Word and wisdom of your omniscient God? Do you think for a moment that He did not know about your circumstances when He wrote His Word? He says that you are to be in submission to your husband in everything. He must have known that this would be best for you, or He would never have asked it of you. Give your will to Him; tell Him that you are willing to be the submissive partner. Obedience to this command glorifies God richly.

"But my husband is a jellyfish. He makes Charlie Brown look like the Rock of Gibraltar. How can I submit to him and lean on him?" Try it! Try submitting to him as unto the, Lord, in everything. Just obey the Word and entrust the consequences to the Lord! Defer to your husband's judgment when he really ought to make the decision. Express some confidence in his abilities instead of running him down, ridiculing him, belittling him, or comparing him with other men. Tell him that you think he's the greatest, and that you thank God for having him to lean on. Watch God use your attitude to make a man out of him, the man God wants him to be.

Just as God planned for a husband's love to meet his wife's needs, so he planned for the wife's submission to meet her husband's needs. While a woman's God-given nature is to be dependent, a man senses an inner urge to take charge. No matter what he says or how he acts, he deeply resents any tactic his wife may use to dominate or manipulate him. Furthermore, a leader must have respect and recognition, and that is exactly what God wants the wife to provide. "The wife must see to it that she deeply respects her husband."⁴ God made the husband to lead; the wife must let him lead, treating him as a leader should be treated.

² Ephesians 5:22, TLB.

³ Ephesians 5:24, TLB.

⁴ Ephesians 5:33, TLB.

FIVE Biblical Principles Concerning the Wife's Submission

Principle #1 A wife is to be submissive to her husband in all things unless her husband asks her to sin.

*“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in **everything**.”*
Ephesians 5:22,24

Principle #2 A submissive wife is not afraid to do the “right thing.”

*“...like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you **do what is right** and do not give way to fear.”* 1 Peter 3:6

Principle #3 A wife is to be submissive even if her husband is not a Christian.

*“Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them **do not believe** the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.”* 1 Peter 3:1,2

Principle #4 A submissive wife does not dishonor the Word of God.

*“Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, **so that no one will malign the word of God.**”* Titus 2:3-5

Obeying the Word . . .

- Obeying God is more important than having her own way. (Rom. 12:1-2)
- She has an appropriate reverential fear of the Lord. (Ps. 2:11; Pr. 3:7)
- She lets the word of Christ direct her life. (Col. 3:16)
- Her life is not an affront to the pattern of marriage described in Ephesians 5:24.
- She is submissive whether she feels like it or not. (Heb. 12:1-2)

Principle #5 A wise wife will seek training and counsel on submission from a godly older woman.

*“He who ignores discipline despises himself, but **whoever heeds correction** gains understanding. The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.”* Proverbs 15:32,33

**“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.”**
Proverbs 31:30