

Husbands And Wives

Introduction. It does not take a Solomon to see the family has more troubles today than anytime in our history. The home, because of the evil influences over it, is destroying itself physically, mentally, economically, socially, and spiritually.

It is the responsibility of every husband and wife to know the factors that are destroying family life and then lead their family in the pursuit of a spiritual home in spite of the overpowering hurdles of our time. Shakespeare said, "God is the best maker of marriages." God gave marriage for our benefit, and He also gave the laws that govern it. If we care enough to learn them and follow them, our marriages will be blessed.

I. The Attitude Of The Psalmist Is Correct

- A. In the face of widespread unbelief and defection from God in his day, the psalmist expressed a stronger ("above gold, yea, above fine gold") love for the law of the Lord than ever (Psalm 119:126-127).
- B. The constant hostility of the world toward the family must evoke within us a warmer and more fervent love for this sacred unit. However, we cannot win this war with just fervent love.
 1. Hollywood's influence is dictating the rules of the family, and they have just about destroyed it.
 2. These men are governed by worldly principles, and they know nothing of that wisdom that comes from above (James 3:15).
 3. So we have to develop a healthy hatred for what denies or contradicts God's plan for the family.
- C. We want the church to grow, but we fail to see where to start — the home! It has been calculated that churches of Christ would double about every 15 years, if we taught and converted our own children. Adding to this number those we convert from the world, it becomes obvious we would grow much faster.

II. The Family Is God's Divine Arrangement

- A. Genesis 2:21-24 is the establishment of the first home on the Earth. God had formed man from the dust of the earth and then he made woman from the rib of Adam. She was to be his helpmeet.
- B. God brought her to Adam (v. 22). This implies the solemn giving of her in the bond of the marriage covenant. When Adam awoke from his sleep it appears that he immediately recognized God's intentions and welcomed his bride.
- C. V. 24 is the inspired declaration of marriage as the strongest of all temporal ties (cp. Matthew 19:5).

- D. The nature of this union demands the forsaking of father and mother — not in respect of duty; but in respect of habitation and affection.
 - 1. A new home begins when a man and a woman separate themselves from their respective homes.
 - 2. You cut the emotional, psychological, and the financial umbilical cord. Just like a new baby cannot live if the cord is not cut from the mother, a marriage cannot make it if you do not cut the umbilical cord from the parent. Unconsciously, the mate will be in competition with the parents.
 - 3. Therefore, the greater the link between a husband or wife and his or her parents, the greater the strain there is going to be on their marriage. The greatest wedding gift parents can give their children is to release them.
- E. We grow up with strong ties to our father and mother, but this new union is far stronger. "Cleave" means the joining or fastening of objects together. This indicates the closest of associations.
- F. At this point, I would like to strongly state that God's ordained marriage was between a man and a woman; not one between two men or two women.
 - 1. Foolish men of our day are trying to make it otherwise, and they are an abomination to God (Romans 1:26-27).
 - 2. We should be comforted by the fact that homosexuals cannot reproduce their kind. We should be disturbed that they can teach this "acquired habit" to our children. They should not be mistreated as human beings, but they should not be allowed to influence our young people away from what God says is "honorable" (Hebrews 13:4).

III. The Arrangement Of The Family

- A. Characteristics of the husband.
 - 1. His love for his wife is a special love that runs deeper than any other relationship. He is to love her as he does his own body (Ephesians 5:28).
 - a) When people marry and have children, they have a tremendous responsibility to love, train, and guide them in righteousness.
 - b) But some day those children will be gone. A husband needs to remember that he loved his wife before children, and his love for her will still be the first priority, even after they are gone. The wife should have the same attitude toward her husband.
 - 2. The husband is to devote to his wife all his affection (Proverbs 5:18). His love is to be considerate and tender, excluding all bitterness (Colossians 3:19). He will give "honor" to his wife as the weaker vessel (1 Peter 3:7).

3. The husband's love for his wife is to be constant and lasting. His love is to find expression in providing for the temporal support of his wife to the best of his ability (1 Timothy 5:8).
 4. The husband has the courage of conviction (Joshua 24:15). It is his task to lead the home and look after its spiritual welfare (Ephesians 5:23; 6:4). It is not the wife's job to be spiritually pushing her husband along.
- B. Characteristics of the wife.
1. The wife should manifest wise and loving obedience to her husband. Sarah is quoted by Peter as an example of this obedience (1 Peter 3:6).
 2. Even when the husband and wife are both Christians, which makes them equal in Christ, she is not to usurp authority over her husband. On the other hand, this obedience also has its limitations. She is not to obey him in anything contrary to the law of God.
 3. The wife is admonished to "love her husband" (Titus 2:4). She does this all the more because of her love for Christ. The religion of Christ has lifted woman to the highest and noblest place she has ever known.
 4. Paul also directs the wife to reverence her husband in this relationship (Ephesians 5:33). But for the wife to be loved by her husband as she should be, it will help a great deal if she will be lovable. Some wives do not seem to care whether they are "lovable" or not in her disposition and character.
- C. Characteristics of both.
1. The greatest need in most marriages is maturity. There are a lot of spoiled, selfish, immature people who date and marry before they know what they are doing. Even if that describes you, the good news is that your marriage will work if you just grow up, accept some responsibility, and learn to adapt.
 2. The goal of every Christian is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:10). The more that happens, the more the problems in your marriage go away. The closer I am to the image of Jesus Christ, the greater the harmony in my home. The closer you and your spouse draw to Christ, the closer you will be to each other.
 3. In a concise way, there is no better advice I can give couples than to regulate your behavior toward one another with Ephesians 4:25-27, 29, 31-32.

Conclusion. Mother Teresa said, "Do not think that love, in order to be genuine, has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting

tired.” Respect the laws of God and you will greatly increase your chances to have a good marriage.