

Building a Biblical Home
Lesson 2 – Learning to Work Together
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Introduction: It is challenging to put another first in all of your decisions.

- A. During my single years I found many activities that required only one person.
 - 1. While I was only one I did not have to wait on anyone, give explanations as to what I was doing, or wait on someone before leaving.
 - 2. However I do not want to go back to that life.
- B. When someone marries another they must now make decisions for two.
 - 1. Marriage begins with a free will decision to live for two. What were the vows and promises you made at marriage?
 - 2. God will hold us to our marriage vows. (**Mal 2:14**)
 - 3. Far too many forget their vows and let selfishness take over. It is not uncommon for one to desire the benefits of two, while they live like they are only one.

I. Finding Common Ground in Marriage

- A. How do two become one?
 - 1. This is not just a matter of physical needs, however it is a part.
 - 2. This is not a matter of negotiation. (Ex. Pre-marital arrangements, predetermined marriage vows such as leaving out “obey” for the woman.)
- B. Two people become one by submitting to God’s will. (**Matt 19:3-6**)
 - 1. God is the only foundation for a good marriage. Why?
 - 2. A servant of God must have learned to submit his spirit to God. (**Luke 9:23-24; Jas 4:6-7**)
 - 3. When a man has this spirit he will eliminate selfishness, pride and the desire to fight to protect his “rights”. (**Jas 3:14-17**)
 - 4. Remember we are talking about true service to God from the heart. It is possible to attend services while being like the devil at home. (**Mal 2:13-17**)
- C. Spiritual Maturity is required to put another first! (See enclosed article: Marriage and Maturity)
 - 1. Consider the characteristics of immaturity that you would expect in children:
 - a. Selfish attitudes and behavior
 - b. Ingratitude
 - c. Demanding to have their own way
 - d. No sense of responsibility and obligation
 - e. Wrong reactions to conflicts and problems
 - f. Poor judgment
 - g. Thinking that happiness comes without giving
 - 2. Consider how maturity will respond in a marriage:
 - a. ***Independence*** (**Gen 2:24, Matt 19:4-5, Eph 5:31**).
 - b. ***Mature attitude toward sex:*** (**1 Cor. 7:2-5; Prov. 5:15-19, Heb 13:4**)

- c. *The ability to seek your companion's happiness as diligently as you seek your own:* (Eph 5:25, 28-29, 33, Titus 2:4, 1 Cor 13:5)
- d. *Capacity to live up to commitments:* (Psa. 15:4, Mal 2:14, Matt 19:6).
- e. *Ability to understand and accept authority:*

Class Discussion:

1. What kind of changes must occur in our thinking we leave the single life and marry?
2. What must occur in the heart of one who is converted to Christ? How does our relationship to God greatly prepare us for marriage?
3. How does an immature child act and think? What happens if one is immature and marries?
4. What other relationships change when one marries? What happens when one or both mates allow outside influences to become a higher priority than their mate?
5. How should we think about happiness and contentment in the home?
6. What happens when one consistently does not live up to their commitments?

II. Things That a Humble, Obedient Spirit will do in Marriage

A. The man will be a loving head. (Eph 5:25, 28)

1. Does this sound like a "me first" arrangement?
2. When one is this kind of head, who gets first consideration?
3. Both in our marriage and in the church, we must make our decisions to help others and not please ourselves. What was Jesus like? (Rom 15:1-3)
4. In marriage the man must major in understanding. (1 Pet 3:7)
5. One of the common problems in marriage is we cease to try to do the little things that please our mate. We have stopped trying to know what she likes.
6. Another problem related to this is that when we do give, we give what we need and not what our mate needs.
7. Husbands, have you stopped listening to your wives?

B. The woman will be a submissive and supportive wife. (Eph 5:22-24)

1. What does submit mean?
2. Consider the opposite of submission: question everything, discredit enough to weaken, complain to others while you do exactly what you want!
3. In both the husband and the wife, you are to do what God says even if your mate will not listen and is unloving. Why? God did not give a "if" clause to these commands.
4. Jesus submitted and suffered for it. (Heb 5:9)
5. Christians were not to rebel against their masters. (Col 3:22-24)
6. You must do this even if you are smarter, more successful, independent and now feel you do not need your husband.
7. You cannot divorce or separate without committing sin.

Class Discussion:

1. Briefly describe God's purpose in headship.
2. What are some things an effective head must do?
3. Can we be sincerely trying to do good but in fact be making a mess? How can this happen?
4. What does God expect of one who is to be in subjection?
5. What is the greatest example of subjection in the Bible?
6. If a woman is smarter and more able than the husband should she then become the head of the home?

III. Sources of Conflict in Marriage

A. In-Laws

1. God requires you to start your own home. You must be independent. **(Gen 2:24)**
2. This means your mate and family comes first. You still have an important responsibility to your parents.
3. If your children have married, have the wisdom to know your place! Do not become a busybody. **(1 Pet 4:15)**
4. Please do not have a war over the in-laws. Respect is needed. Never use the other's parents as a weapon.
5. There must be unselfish decisions as to who to visit, etc.

B. Money

1. Man is to be the provider for the home. **(Gen 3:19; Eph 4:28)**
2. A common problem is a lack of discipline and understanding concerning finances. You cannot start where your parents are today.
3. While man is the head it is never "my money".
4. You must communicate and make decisions for two in marriage.

C. Principles in Disciplining Children.

1. What should be the Christian's view towards Children? **(Psa 127:3-5)**
1. Both parents must be involved. This is not just the woman's work.
2. It is work that we must be consistent in. **IT WILL TAKE TIME! (Deut 6:4-9; Eph 6:4)**
3. Parents are to direct the Children (Parents are in charge!)
4. Parents must not blindly defend their children. **(Heb 12:5-11)**
5. Proper communication is a necessary element of discipline. Consistency is a must! Parents must be united in discipline.

Class Discussion:

1. What does the Bible teach about our relationship with our parents after we marry?
2. What is the proper role of in-laws?
3. Why does money issues become a problem in the home?
4. Should a wife work outside the home? Discuss!
5. What does God want us to do in the discipline of our children?
6. What happen when parents are divided or even show favoritism in discipline?

Conclusion: What makes a successful marriage?

- A. It is not determined by the kind or number of problems you have, but rather how you deal with them! "What would Jesus do?" is the question we must be asking of our own actions and responsibilities.
- B. Most problems that continue are a result of spiritual neglect. Make your heart right with God. (**2 Cor 6:1-2**)

Maturity and Marriage

By Bill Walton

When we talk about "maturity" there are different ways in which people can be mature and different ways in which they can be immature. It is possible for a physical giant to be an emotional dwarf. It is possible for a grown man to be as immature as a 13-year-old boy. It is possible for a beautiful woman to be an emotional child. The connection this has with marriage is simply this: (1) marriage requires maturity, and (2) immaturity in marriage is the reason many marriages fail.

Immaturity In Children

I want you to ponder some examples of immaturity in children. Children often show their immaturity by:

Selfish attitudes and behavior:

Some children are so wrapped up in themselves that they care very little about others' needs. For example, a child may be more concerned about his broken toy than his neighbor's burned house.

Ingratitude:

Immature children often take for granted the things that others do for them. Ingratitude is an ugly, disgusting thing to see. But we've all seen children and teenagers who show no appreciation or gratitude for all the sacrifices and actions of their parents. They act like they fully deserve everything they get, that their parents owe it to them.

Demanding to have their own way:

Many children have the attitude, "If you don't play my way, I'll just pick up my marbles and go home."

No sense of responsibility and obligation:

Children often feel no obligation to take on any part of the work around the house. A child may feel it is his right to make any kind of mess he wants to, and let someone else clean it up.

Wrong reactions to conflicts and problems:

We have all seen children who are happy and contented until something goes wrong, and then they react with anger, temper, and frustration.

Poor judgment:

Children often lack the judgment to appreciate the true worth of things. They may treasure worthless things and despise priceless things.

Thinking that happiness comes without giving:

Children sometimes act like they are only interested in themselves, and care very little about the feelings and needs of others.

Immaturity In Marriage

Some adults never outgrow childhood immaturity, and they demonstrate it in their marriage.

It is possible for a husband to be so self-centered that he doesn't care about the feelings of his wife (and that can be true of wives as well). It's sad that many young women (when they're dating) don't realize that a young man who doesn't care about anyone's feelings but his own probably won't care about her feelings either once they're married.

It is possible for married adults to be as ungrateful as a small child. Many husbands and wives hardly know what it is to say, "Thank you." Often the words are absent because the feeling is absent.

It is possible for husbands and wives to be locked in a constant battle to see who gets his way. Such marriages usually have a constant cycle: manipulative tricks, dramatic actions and reactions, sulking, shouting, as each one maneuvers to get his way.

It is possible for married adults to have no sense of responsibility or obligation. A wife may be financially irresponsible. A husband may act like his only responsibility is to "make a living."

It is possible for married adults to react immaturely and irrationally to problems and conflicts that arise.

It is possible for husbands and wives to be characterized by childish standards of judgment. Husbands may be infatuated by what the world calls "glamour." Wives may be obsessed with the desire for their husbands to make more money.

It is possible for married adults to think that real happiness is found in getting more and more things.

It doesn't take much insight to see that when one or both of the marriage partners behave with such immaturity, problems in the marriage are inevitable. The problems that are inevitably brought on by such immaturity will eventually come, no matter how handsome, beautiful, or sexy the man and/or woman may be.

Biblical Marks of Maturity

I want to turn to the positive side and talk about some of the marks of maturity that the Bible connects with a good marriage relationship.

Independence:

The Bible teaches that when a man marries he is to leave his parents and cleave to his wife ([Gen 2:24](#), [Matt 19:4-5](#), [Eph 5:31](#)). Rebekah is a good example of independence from parents for women - "And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go" ([Gen 24:58](#)).

Some young married men and women are still psychologically dependent upon their parents - husbands who are still "Mama's boys" who can't cut the apron strings, and wives who are still "Daddy's girls" who won't build their own homes with their husbands. Some parents encourage this kind of dependence instead of preparing their children for independence and insisting that they be mature and independent. Some parents interfere in their children's marriages, and young married couples sometimes allow their parents to interfere. This doesn't mean that it's wrong for young couples to respect their parents, or seek advice from their parents or from others. Grown children ought to love and respect their parents, and parents ought to live in such a way so they can be respected. It is wise to seek advice from those who are more experienced. But people shouldn't enter into marriage when they can't be independent, and they shouldn't enter into marriage with the idea that their parents are still going to make their decisions for them. If a man is not mature enough to make decisions and assume responsibility and leadership, he is not emotionally mature enough for marriage. If a woman is not mature enough to "cut the apron strings" and build a new life with her husband wherever he leads, she is not emotionally ready for marriage.

Mature attitude toward sex:

The Bible teaches that God intends sex to be an enjoyable, satisfying part of marriage ([1 Cor. 7:2-5](#); [Prov. 5:15-19](#)). Instead of having mature, Bible-based attitudes toward sex in marriage, some have very immature attitudes.

Some think of sex merely as something to "get," instead of shared affection, mutual enjoyment and satisfaction. Some use sex in the marriage as a weapon to coerce the marriage partner, or as a manipulative tool to get their way about something. Some think that sex, even in marriage, is dirty and sordid.

In contrast to such immature attitudes, people with mature, Bible-based attitudes realize that sex in marriage is a part of expressing, building, and maintaining love ([Heb 13:4](#)).

The ability to seek your companion's happiness as diligently as you seek your own:

I'm not just talking about the infatuation that typically exists before marriage but often doesn't survive marriage. Some immature people can be considerate for a short time in order to get what they want, but they have never developed the capacity for real, sustained consideration that is a part of real love and real maturity. Marriage ought to be a relationship in which the husband is concerned for his wife's happiness as much as his own happiness, and vice-versa. An old story is told about a young man who sold his pocket-watch to buy an expensive brush for his girl friend who had beautiful hair, not knowing that she had cut her hair and sold it in order to buy him a gold chain for his pocket-watch. That story illustrates the kind of attitude the Bible teaches husbands and wives should have in marriage. [Ephesians 5:25, 28-29, and 33](#) teaches husbands to love like that. [Titus 2:4](#) and [1 Corinthians 13:5](#) teaches wives to love like that. One reason this kind of love is not demonstrated in many marriages is because many of the young men and women who enter into marriage have never developed the maturity that makes lasting love possible.

Capacity to live up to commitments:

We are living in a society that makes it easy not to develop this kind of maturity. The popular concept is: "If you make a commitment but you find out that something is not the way you thought it was, or something is not to your liking, or it's too hard to fulfill your commitment, then get out of it." We frequently see famous athletes who renegotiate their contracts, refusing to live up to the contract they already have. Many children are seldom required to honor their commitments when fulfilling the commitment is found to be unexpectedly difficult.

In contrast to this modern attitude, God teaches us to keep our word even when keeping our word is causing us to hurt ([Psa. 15:4](#)). Marriage is a covenant that involves vows and requires a commitment between the husband, the wife, and God ([Mal 2:14](#), [Matt 19:6](#)). The fact that a marriage often encounters unexpected difficulties and requires unforeseen sacrifices doesn't nullify the commitment. What is needed for marriage is the kind of maturity that enables a person to fulfill his commitments until the hardship is over, or even if it is never over ([Psa. 15:4](#)).

Ability to understand and accept authority:

There is a special need for this today because there is growing stress in many marriages over authority in the husband/wife relationship. Instead of having a mature attitude toward authority, some husbands think authority is a weapon to use on their wives. Instead of having a mature attitude toward authority, some wives think accepting authority and living under authority makes them inferior. Some young women are even omitting the bride's traditional promise to "obey" from their wedding vows. What is needed is a maturity that is capable of understanding and accepting the true nature of

authority. That means husbands who are mature enough to understand that having God-given responsibility is a solemn responsibility, not an ego trip. That means wives who are secure enough about their own worth to realize that accepting authority doesn't make one inferior. So if someone is not emotionally mature enough to understand and accept authority, they really are not mature enough for marriage.

Conclusion

I want to explain some reasons why I have said all this: (1) To stress the fact that marriage is a relationship for the mature, and maturity means more than the desire to get married, and more than the ability to conceive children, and more than the ability to earn enough money to live on; (2) Although some have entered marriage without this maturity and the marriage somehow survived until maturity was developed, the best time to develop the maturity needed for marriage is before marriage, not after marriage; (3) The best guide for developing the kind of maturity needed for marriage is God's word. If you are unmarried, and you want to be mature when you marry, make the Bible your guidebook. If you are already married, and you realize you still need to develop maturity, make the Bible the guide for your life.