

**Marriage God's Way, Lesson #1- The Importance of Understanding Origin and Purpose  
Thought/Discussion Questions  
Adult Class, Oct.12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading Assignment:** Genesis 1:28; 2:7,15-25; Psalm 127:3-5; Matthew 19:3-12;  
Ephesians 5:22-33; 1Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:1-6; 2Corinthians 11:2; Hebrews 13:4

1. What do you think is the most common reason marriages fail?
2. In 2005, U.S. divorce rates were at their lowest level since 1970. How do you explain this?
3. The divorce rate for U.S. "Christians" is only slightly better than those of the general population? Why?
4. How did W.W.II contribute to the decline of marriage in the U.S.?
5. How do we "fix" marriage (personally, in our churches, or socially/culturally)?
6. What constitutes a "marriage"? Cohabitation? Societal legitimization by civil decree? Something else? Multiple criterion? Please explain your answer.
7. Why is it important that we understand marriage to be the creation of God (rather than man)?
8. List at least 3 purposes God had in creating marriage for man (with scriptural references, please):
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
9. Write out a *biblical* definition of "marriage"- not how the dictionary defines it, but how you, understanding God's *creation* and *purposes* for it, define it.

## Answers for Marriage God's Way, Lesson 1

### 1. What do you think is the most common reason marriages fail?

Year in and year out, the studies usually show that the top three reasons couples *argue/fight* are: 1) Sex- including but not limited to adultery; 2) Money/Finances- income, expenditures, and saving; and, 3) In-Laws. The order may shift slightly, but these are pretty much the reasons couples argue year after year.

However, though these are “hot-button” topics for contention, they are not necessarily the reason(s) most marriages fail. Instead, I would suggest that **we're doing “marriage” wrong by:**

- a. Not understanding the difference between biblical *love* and fleshly *lust*. Biblical love *establishes* a value, cf. Rom.5:8; fleshly lust *requires* a value, cf. 2Sam.13:1-17 (Amnon *lusted for* her- desiring only to *have* her for *his pleasure* rather lovingly desiring to *please* and *provide* for her, as evidenced by his disdain of her afterwards).
- b. Not understanding the divine *origin* of marriage, and therefore the seriousness of the contract, Gen.2:18-24; Matt.19:4-6; Rom.7:2-3.
- c. Not understanding God's *purposes* for marriage, and therefore how to fulfill our individual and collective duties to the institution, Gen.1:18-20; 2:18ff; 1Cor.7:1-5; Heb.13:4; Eph.5:22-31,33; 6:1-3; 1Pet.3:7.

When we don't correctly *understand*, and therefore *apply*, the **biblical basis of love**, the **divine origin**, or the **godly purposes** of marriage (God's way), and instead seek to do it in *our own* lustful ways and for *our own* purposes, it is doomed to fail. And it does so with disastrous consequences personally, collectively, and societally.

### 2. In 2005, U.S. divorce rates were at their lowest level since 1970. How do you explain this?

Studies and their respective results (and statistics) can usually be “parsed” to support whatever theory one wants to make of them. But generally speaking, the divorce rate has been about 40 to 50 percent that of marriage (4-5 of 10 resulting in divorce) in recent years. Divorce rates seem to have hit their all-time high in this country in 1981, and have been in a modest decline since that time. However, the declining number of divorces is somewhat misleading. It is not due to an inversely proportionate rate of “successful” marriages, but **fewer marriages**. Most young American adults live together- either for a period of time, and then break up, or indefinitely without the benefit of marriage. Additionally, many older adults, either widowed or divorced, now often live together without marriage to prevent the reduction in government benefits. The “bottom line” to the studies and their statistics- no matter how they are parsed, is not more successful marriages, but few marriages.

### 3. The divorce rate for U.S. “Christians” is only slightly better than those of the general population? Why?

The answer, unfortunately, is the same for “Christian” marriage failures as it is for “Non-Christians”- 1) we don't understanding and practice biblical love as its basis; 2) we don't understand the divine origin of marriage (and thus use it as *we please*); and, 3) we don't understand and fulfill God's purposes in and through marriage. Simply put: Either we aren't teaching/preaching marriage God's way, and/or we are not understanding and practicing marriage God's way. God's way works, man's does not!

### 4. How did W.W.II contribute to the decline of marriage in the U.S.?

W.W.II was no different than previous wars in this regard: Women left the home and went to work making the implements and supplies of war. W.W.II was different from all previous wars in this important way: The women *stayed* at work after the war was over. There are any number of reasons this occurred, but the fact remains that women continued in the previously male-dominated workplace in unprecedented numbers. Men and working alongside women contributed to a sharp increase in adulteries and divorces. Women leaving the more traditional role of “home-maker” for the family (or dramatically reducing the time and effort spent on it) contributed to the fracturing of the institution that had been basically according to God’s order for roughly 6,000 years. This was as much, if not more, the failure of male leadership (husband/father) as anything. But we cannot deny that the cultural and societal changes that began to steer modern marriage away from God’s plan in 60’s and 70’s started in the late 40’s and 50’s with the shifting of roles within marriage.

5. How do we “fix” marriage (personally, in our churches, or socially/culturally)?

Correctly identifying the problem(s) determine the solution required. However, regardless of the particular problem(s) with a specific marriage, or the problem(s) with societies view and application for marriage in general, the basic answer is still the same. We must understand and practice marriage as God *created* it, according to the *dictates* (duties and obligations of it) He prescribes for it, for the *purposes* He intended, and understanding the *seriousness* of it. Unless we “do” marriage *God’s way*, it will become a *foretaste of hell on earth* rather than the *foretaste of heaven* He intended for us.

6. What constitutes a “marriage”? Cohabitation? Societal legitimization by civil decree? Something else? Multiple criteria? Please explain your answer.

Cohabitation (living together) does not constitute “marriage”- it constitutes either “fornication,” “adultery,” “homosexuality,” or “sexual immorality,” cf. 1Cor.6:9-10. Cohabitation and the sexual union of man and woman are the *rights* and *privileges* of marriage, not the criteria that establish it.

Societal legitimization by civil decree, when present, should be included in establishing and recognizing a “marriage,” but only when and to the extent that the decree does not contradict the laws of God pertaining to marriage, Acts 4:19; 5:29. There was a societal legitimization by civil procedure that was in place and recognized when Boaz married Ruth, cf. Ruth 3; 4:7-11; when Isaac married Rebekah, Gen.24:34-54,61-67; when Jacob married Leah and Rachel, Gen.29:1-28; and when Jesus depicted marriage to illustrate the nature of the kingdom and its inhabitants, Matt.22:2ff; 25:1ff. Therefore, God’s people should utilize and abide by the societal custom and civil decrees that establish “marriage” in the place where they live **provided** that such do not violate the decrees and limitations God has placed upon the institution of marriage.

We must recognize that there is no prescribed “marriage ceremony” dictated in the New Testament. But as Christians, we must be *in subjection* to the *governing authorities* wherein we abide to the degree that they do not conflict with or contradict God’s laws, Rom.13:1-7; 1Pet.2:13-17. Of course, God *originated* and *regulates* marriage, and we are ultimately responsible to Him for our understanding and application of it, Gen.2:7,15-17,18-25.

7. Why is it important that we understand marriage to be the creation of God (rather than man)?

If marriage is an invention of man (“for the societal legitimization of the sex act” or whatever other purposes proposed), then we are at liberty to engage in, edit, or eliminate it was we see fit. But if marriage is a creation *of God* and *for man*, as Gen.2:18ff teaches, then while still free to not engage in it (1Cor.7:1-2,7,26-28,32-37), if we do marry we are under obligation to

abide by the provisions and obligations God has legislated for the term of the contract as He has designated, Matt.19:4-6; Rom.7:2-3.

8. List at least 3 purposes God had in creating marriage for man (with scriptural references, please):
  - a. Companionship, Gen.2:18ff. It is the closest and most intimate of all human relationships, as well as the most fulfilling, Eph.5:22-33.
  - b. Sexual Union, 1Cor.7:1-6; Heb.13:4. This is **the** (one and only) God-given proper expression of ultimate love and sharing.
  - c. Procreation, Gen.1:28; Psalm 127:3-5; Eph.5:22-33 → 6:1-4. If it was God's plan or intention for us to be "single parents," He would have made legitimate provisions for procreation *outside* of marriage. (This is not to say that "single parents" cannot rear godly children- just to state that this was not God's plan.)

Please understand that God provided marriage for the ultimate good, happiness, and fulfillment of man and society. Marriage was not given to "complicate" our relationships or "restrict" us- except in ways that are for our ultimate good. Additionally, marriage provides us a basis for understanding our relationship to Christ (our Husband) in the church (His bride), Eph.5:22-33; 2Cor.11:2; Rom.7:1-6.

9. Write out a *biblical* definition of "marriage"- not how the dictionary defines it, but how you, understanding God's *creation* and *purposes* for it, define it.

Marriage is an institution of **divine arrangement**, given by God in wisdom and mercy, to increase **human happiness**, in which **a man** and **a woman agree to live together** as husband and wife, each faithfully fulfilling the **duties and obligations** and **enjoying the benefits** of the union (or contract) **until death** parts them.

\*In this lesson, we've looked at the *origin* and *purpose* of marriage. In this next one, we will consider the *duties/obligations* and the *terms/duration* of the contract.

**Marriage God's Way, Lesson #2- Biblical Love and Why It Is the Key**  
**Thought/Discussion Questions**  
**Adult Class, Oct.16<sup>th</sup>, Nov.2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Reading Assignment:** Matthew 19:4-6; John 20:2; Romans 1:24,31; 5:8; 1Corinthians 7:1-5; 13:4-13; Ephesians 4:31-32; 5:22-33; Colossians 3:21; 2Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:4; James 3:14-18; Hebrews 8:12

1. The New Testament either specifically mentions or generally references at least four types of "love." They are **family/natural love** (*stergo*, or *astorgas* -the *a* prefix indicates *without*), **sensual/sexual love** (*eros*), **friendly/brotherly love** (*phileo*), and **godly/Christian love** (*agape*). Please read each of the passages below and specify which type of "love" they are referencing.
  - a. John 20:2,
  - b. Rom.1:31 and 2Tim.3:3,
  - c. Rom.5:8,
  - d. 1Cor.7:1-5,
2. Which of these types of "love" are involved in marriage God's way? Please explain *how* or *why*.
3. Which of these types of "love" should be the foundation of marriage God's way? Please explain *how* or *why*.
4. Describe the differences between "love" (*agape*, Rom.5:8) and "lust" (*epithymia*, Rom.1:24). Hint: Think *selfless* vs. *selfish*, and *value-establishing* vs. *value-requiring*.
5. How does a marriage properly based on love (*agape*) rather than lust (*epithymia*) affect each of the following:
  - a. Longevity of the marriage?
  - b. Problem-solving in the marriage?
  - c. One-flesh aspects of the marriage?
6. Is true, biblical, *agape* love *found*, *fallen into*, *decided*, *learned*, or *developed*? Please explain your answer(s) and provide biblical references if possible.

## Marriage God's Way, Lesson #2- Answers

1. The New Testament either specifically mentions or generally references at least four types of "love." They are **family/natural love** (*stergo*, or *astorgas* -the *a* prefix indicates *without*), **sensual/sexual love** (*eros*), **friendly/brotherly love** (*phileo*), and **godly/Christian love** (*agape*). Please read each of the passages below and specify which type of "love" they are referencing.
  - a. John 20:2, *phileo*- this *brotherly love*. It means to have *kindly affection toward*. It is *friendly, warm, and tender love*.
  - b. Rom.1:31 and 2Tim.3:3, *stergo*- this is *familial/natural love*. Combined with the negative prefix *a*, *astorgos* is translated as "*without natural affection*" in Rom.1:31, and as *unloving* in 2Tim.3:3. These are the only NT passages containing *astorgas*, though the concept of *stergo* seems apparent in 1Thess.2:7 (*tenderly cares* or *cherishes* is translated from *thalpo*- to *cherish, brood over, foster*) despite its absence.
  - c. Rom.5:8, *agape*- *godly, divine love* (from or towards); *affection, good will, charity, and benevolence*. The variety of its definitions stems from its various uses and applications in the text. Working definitions would seem to include *godly love, love in action, and a love that establishes a value rather than requiring one*.
  - d. 1Cor.7:1-5, *eros*- *sensual or sexual love*. Though often confused with *lust (epithymia, see Rom.1:24ff)*, from the biblical perspective it refers to the sexual union/expression of love between a husband and wife. \*To my knowledge, no NT passage specifically utilizes the term *eros*. It is nonetheless included here for consideration because of its relevance to the overall subject of marriage.
2. Which of these types of "love" are involved in marriage God's way? Please explain *how* or *why*.

In my opinion, all of these forms of "love" are involved in godly marriage.

- There should be *phileo*- a *warm and kindly affection* between spouses (*philandros, Titus 2:4a*) and toward *children (philoteknos, Titus 2:4b)*.
  - There should also be a *natural affection and familial love* for one another (*stergo*), because such is what you have become, cf. Eph.5:28-31 (\**agape* is the word utilized in these verses, but the concept of becoming *one* implies a *new family* as much as it does the *sexual union*- if not more so, in my opinion).
  - Obviously, *eros*, when expressed in a *pure and biblical way* (cf. Heb.13:4), is the ultimate *sharing* between husband and wife, Gen.2:24; Song of Songs.
  - *Agape* must be involved to love *sacrificially*- "*as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,*" Eph.5:25.
3. Which of these types of "love" should be the foundation of marriage God's way? Please explain *how* or *why*.

Spouses should be *friends* (in fact, *best friends*), and maintain a *friendly love* of genuine warmth, affection, and kindness toward one another. One of the purposes God intended to be fulfilled within marriage was *companionship, Gen.2:18ff*. While young folks are often more interested in *eros* within marriage (and even have such as a motivation for marriage), older folks often marry (especially widows and widowers) for the *companionship of brotherly and*

*familial* love (*philo* and *storgos*). However, these types of love are more the *results* or *benefits* of marriage instead of its *foundation*. *Agape* should be the basis upon which a *godly* (and therefore *pleasing*) marriage is built.

4. Describe the differences between “love” (*agape*, Rom.5:8) and “lust” (*epithymia*, Rom.1:24). Hint: Think *selfless* vs. *selfish*, and *value-establishing* vs. *value-requiring*.

As previously stated, “love” (*agape*) **establishes** a value, while “lust” (*epithymia*) **requires** a value. Love says, “You are *valuable* to me because I *love* you.” Lust says, “I *love* you because you are *valuable* to me.” In this way, love is *selfless* while lust is *selfish*. Love seeks to *please*, lust desires only to *be pleased*. Compare Jacob’s *love* for Rachel, Gen.29 with Amnon’s *lust* for Tamar, 2Sam.13. Jacob’s *love* for Rachel established her value to him, Gen.29:18ff. Amnon *thought* he loved Tamar, but actually only *lusted* after her- when he had *taken* her, he *despised* her because she no longer had any *value* to him, 2Sam.13:14-17.

In unquestionably a better example, because God *loved* us, it made us *valuable* to Him when we possessed to real *value* otherwise, Rom.5:6,8a. So great was the *value* established by this love, that it made possible the tremendous sacrifice of His Son for us, Rom.5:8b-11.

5. How does a marriage properly based on love (*agape*) rather than lust (*epithymia*) affect each of the following:

- a. Longevity of the marriage? When marriage is based on lust, a value is required. “I *love* (which is really only *lust*) this person **because** they are valuable to me.” These *values* are obviously selfishly based and generally *physical* or *carnal* in nature. “He makes **me** laugh” or “buys **me** nice things.” “She looks great **to me**” or “pleases **me** as a man.” These are self-based motivations; they’re all about “**me**.” But what happens to the marriage when these *physically* or *carnally* based “values” (or our *desires* for them) change- either by time or circumstance (such as hardship)? “We just fell out of love,” or “We just grew apart.” No- you were in *love* only with yourself, and *lust* for a perceived value was the basis of the marriage in the first place. *Agape* is the love that *abides/endures*, 1Cor.13:13.

However, if truly and biblical love is the basis, and thus *establishes* a value (because I *love* you), then the ravages of time and hardships of circumstance only deepen the love and strengthen the marriage. For a marriage to truly parallel the relationship of Christ and His Church, it must be based upon the same kind of *self-sacrificing* and *value-establishing* love, cf. Eph.5:22-33.

- b. Problem-solving in the marriage? Read 1Cor.13:4-7. Understand that this treatise on love was not really presented to the Corinthians regarding marriage despite them apparently asking some questions related to the union, cf. 1Cor.7:1ff. This section (1Cor.13:4-7) is nestled in between instructions regarding the *purpose* of spiritual gifts, and their appropriate *use*, cp. chps.12,14. However, as *agape* love was paramount to their *understanding* and *application* of a blessing God had given them through spiritual gifts, so it is with our *understanding* and *application* of the blessing of marriage. Consider this: How many arguments and conflicts would be avoided altogether, or quickly and easily resolved, if we learned to *love* each other in the ways 1Cor.13:4-7 specify? Think about the three most common problem areas in marriage (as identified in the answer to #1 in the previous lesson): sex, money, and in-laws. Wouldn’t most of the problems in these areas, as well as most others, be eradicated if we learned to love one another with *patience* and *kindness*, *without jealousy*, *bragging*, *arrogance*, *unbecoming* attitudes or activities, *selfishness*, *excessive sensitivities*, and *score-keeping* (of *wrongs suffered*), if we *rejoiced in truth* rather than *unrighteousness*, and

were willing to really *bear all things, believe all things, and hope all things*? You see, this is **agape** love! And these are not its *characteristics*, but also its *benefits* to/for one who is so loved! *Value-based* love cannot accomplish these things because it is *selfishly* motivated, Jas.3:14-18, and therefore cannot allow true forgiveness, cf. Heb.8:12; Eph.4:31-32; Col.4:12-14.

- c. One-flesh aspects of the marriage? Without being crass, everyone has needs and desires- *physical, emotional, and sexual*. But when we love *selflessly* rather than lusting *selfishly*, we consider our partner's needs and desires more important than our own, cp.Phil.2:1-3, and find fulfillment in putting their needs and desires first, cp.Phil.2:4. Now, if each partner *loves* in this way also (in addition to the ways mentioned in the previous answer), that marriage will be happy and blessed, cf. Heb.13:4; Song of Songs 7:10; 8:6-7.

6. Is true, biblical, *agape* love *found, fallen into, decided, learned, or developed*? Please explain your answer(s) and provide biblical references if possible.

Understand that *agape* is first a *decision*, followed by *activity*, which results in *deep emotion*. In other words, we *decide* to love, and then *act* in loving ways, and from these the *highest regard* (*emotion/appreciation*) of love is produced. Why is this so? Is it not exactly how God manifested *agape* toward us? He *decided* to love us, *acted* in the way such love demanded, and then *felt* the highest regard for us, cf. Rom.5:6-11. This also helps to explain, especially for us to whom such is so foreign, how the *arranged* marriages of biblical history were so successful. A *decision* to love was made, *actions* of love were performed, and *deep, abiding, and sacrificial* love developed, cf. Gen.24:1-66, 67. But moreover, when we understand *agape* through the model of God's love for us, we see how it *establishes* a value (based on the *decision* to love) rather than *requiring* a value. His *adoption* of us as *sons* is the perfect example, Eph.1:5. There was a *decision* to love that *established a value*, which in turn prompted accordant *actions* (of sacrifice), and resulted in the *emotional desire* to *provide, protect, and preserve*, cf. Eph.1:3-14.

Lesser forms of love may be *found* or *fallen into*, but *agape* is *decided* (in the mind), *developed* (*cultivated* through accordant actions), and then it overflows and is *discovered* and *treasured* (in the heart). Put another way, if *real* love (*agape*) is *found* or *fallen into*, why was it *commanded*, cf. Eph.5:25ff?

**Marriage God's Way, Lesson #3- Duties of the Husband to the Contract**  
**Thought/Discussion Questions**  
**Adult Class, Nov.9<sup>th</sup>, Nov.16<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading Assignment:** Gen.3:17-19,23; 1Cor.14:35; Eph.5:23-33; 1Tim.5:8; 1Pet.3:7-9

**Review:** Marriage is an institution *God created* and gave to us for *His purposes and our benefit*. We need to understand and accept these principles *before* entering the contract of marriage. Biblical love, in all its forms, but especially *agapeo*, is the foundational key to a successful and happy marriage.

**Primary Point of this Lesson:** A husband must understand and be willing to work hard to fulfill his obligations to the contract he promised to his wife before God. Marriage won't work unless we work at it. So, what are husbands pledging with "*I do*"?

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1. The husband's duty to be a proper *head* to and for his wife is based upon the model of Christ's headship of the His spiritual bride, the church. What important aspects of *headship* should be understood in this regard from each of the following verses:

a. Eph.5:23?

b. Eph.5:25?

c. Eph.5:26?

d. Eph.5:27?

2. From each of the following verses, *how much* or *in what way* is love to guide his headship:

a. Eph.5:25?

b. Eph.5:28?

c. Eph.5:29?

d. Eph.5:33?

3. From 1Pet.3:7, please answer the following:

a. What is the import of the word "*likewise*" in the verse?

b. What is included within the phrase "*live with your wives*" (NASB), or "*dwelt with them*" (KJV)?

c. What does "*in an understanding way*" (NASB), or "*according to knowledge*" (KJV) mean?

d. What does it mean to "*grant her honor*" (NASB), or "*giving honor unto the wife*" (KJV), and why is this to be done?

4. Who has the primary responsibility for *physical/financial provision* of the family? Please provide passages to support your answer. If possible, also list some passages that include *work ethic principles* that will assist in this physical provision for the family.

5. Does your answer to the previous question prevent the wife from working outside the home? Why, or why not?

6. In what areas, besides *physical/financial*, is the husband also to provide for his wife?

### Marriage God's Way, Lesson #3- Answers

1. The husband's duty to be a proper *head* to and for his wife is based upon the model of Christ's headship of the His spiritual bride, the church. What important aspects of *headship* should be understood in this regard from each of the following verses:

- a. Eph.5:23? Christ's role as *Savior* at least includes sacrifice, provision, protection, and mediation. All of these were necessary to become our spiritual *Savior*, and essential to the continued process of salvation. As such, *sacrifice, provision, protection, and mediation* should also be part of the husband's role both toward and for his wife-modeled after Christ's *saving* His spiritual bride.
- b. Eph.5:25? First of all, consider that, technically, the *church* (as the spiritual *bride*) did not exist when Christ "*loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*" It was the *sacrificial nature* of His *love* that brought her into existence as *His bride*. So yet again, *love* has established a value that enabled the sacrifice that *saved* her, thus making her *fit* (cf. v.27) to become His *bride*.

The *love* that is here commanded is, necessarily, *agapeo*. Though a husband should surely have and foster the *warmth* and *tenderness* of *phileo* to his closest companion, and also both provide and receive the benefits of *eros* in the relationship, these are not the types of love being herein commanded. Neither *phileo* nor *eros* (or *stergo* for that matter) are at the core of, nor are necessarily essential to, *headship*. But *agape* is, for it enables the proper attitude of *sacrifice* that is necessary to biblical *headship*.

This type of *love* (*agape*) enables the husband to *give up*, or *sacrifice*, his own personal interests for that which is best for those of his wife (and their children, obviously, though such is not under consideration here, nor are children necessary for "family" to exist: *husband + wife = one flesh/family*). Thus, *agape* is the proper and essential foundation of godly *headship*, and subsequently *marriage*, because it enables the required attitude and action of *sacrificial leadership*. Obviously, this is far from the "I'm the boss, and it's my way or the highway" dictatorial and tyrannical *headship* some see and practice in the *headship* of marriage.

- c. Eph.5:26? The lesson for husbands in this verse, especially regarding *headship*, is that of *spiritual leadership*. The husband's *headship* in this regard emulates, but obviously does not equate to, Christ's of the church. Husbands do not *sanctify* and *cleanse* their wives in the same ways that Christ does the church, but they are to pattern their headship after His in regard to *spiritual leadership*. Note 1Cor.14:35. What does this verse imply regarding the *spiritual leadership* regarding the *sanctification* and *cleansing* of his wife, if not to require that he be competent and capable of guiding her "*with the word*" as in Eph.5:26?

To *sanctify* is to *set apart* or *make holy*. To *cleanse* is, as in 1Pet.3:21, "*not the removal of dirt from the flesh,*" but that which comes by "*the washing of water with the word*"- i.e. *baptism*. His headship, then, necessarily includes the provision of, and guidance in, *the word*, and is thus *spiritual* as much as *physical*- if not more so!

- d. Eph.5:27? His *headship* and *leadership* of his wife are not for the purpose of preparing and training her to serve him, but that she should be "*holy and blameless*" to Christ! His goal in this regard to help her to be *glorious, spotless/wrinkle-free* in spiritual terms- not that she should keep the house, dishes, and clothes clean, and herself beautiful for him and his pleasures.

2. From each of the following verses, *how much* or *in what way* is love to guide his headship:

- a. Eph.5:25? The answer is “*just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*” While such love in *physical* marriage would include death to protect and preserve, it would also include *giving up “self”* in life and living to provide what is best for her and to preserve godliness in all its forms for the family over which headship is maintained, cp.Phil.2:1-11. Also remember that the *love* here commanded is *agape*, as it is in Gal.5:22 and Col.3:19.
- b. Eph.5:28? The answer here is “*as their own bodies....himself.*” The reason for this command and its extent is simple: Through marriage, “*the two shall (have) become one flesh. Consequently there are no more two, but one flesh,*” Matt.19:5b-6a. This is not *self-love* in a narcissistic way, but as that which is natural- regarding and treating self in protecting and providing way, as the next verse further explains.
- c. Eph.5:29? The answer is that such love “*nourishes and cherishes...as Christ does the church.*” *Nourish (ektrepho)* includes both the ideas of *feeding* as well as to *bring up to maturity*. Thus, the *goal* of headship is again emphasized. *Cherish (thalpo)* includes not only the *emotion* of loving regard, but also the *action* of *fostering with tender care*. Literally, *thalpo* is *to warm or keep warm*. Have you seen the nature programs that show a parent penguin rolling its egg from the ice onto its own feet and sitting on it to protect it against the freezing gale? This is the picture of *cherish (thalpo)*, cf.1Thess.2:7. Self-preservation is only the goal inasmuch as it provides and allows for the preservation of that which has become part of self- in this case, by marriage- “*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,*” Gen.2:23a!
- d. Eph.5:33? The answer is “*love his own wife even as himself....*” (see the answers to b. and c. above). It admitted that this could be somewhat confusing. A husband is commanded to *love his wife “as Christ loved the church”*- which is *more than self*, and yet *love his wife “as himself.”* However, the resolution is actually simple. The two passages are emphasizing two different aspects of the same relationship- or at least his requirements in it. *As Christ loved the church* is emphasizing the *sacrificial* nature of his required headship. While *as his own body* is emphasizing his obligations to *nourish and cherish*.

3. From 1Pet.3:7, please answer the following:

- a. What is the import of the word “*likewise*” in the verse? Back in 1Pet.2:13, *submissive relationships* of the Christian began to be highlighted and explained. (Depending on translations, it is the same way v.1 of this chapter begins.) Does such mean that *husbands* are to *submit* to their *wives*? No, but it does mean that they are to *submit to God’s will* in the manner of how they *view* and *respond* to their wives, just as the *wives* must *submit to God’s will* in how they *view* and *respond* to their husbands as God’s will dictates both aspects.
- b. What is included within the phrase “*live with your wives*” (NASB), or “ *dwell with them*” (KJV)?
- c. What does “*in an understanding way*” (NASB), or “*according to knowledge*” (KJV) mean? First, understand that husbands are to *live with their wives* rather than just *sleep* or *eat* with them. They are to share a *life*. This is as much the meaning of *one flesh* as any other. Second, this *living with* the wife is to be governed by “*in an understanding way.*” Such is further modified/explained with “*as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman.*” The position of *headship* of the wife could be viewed or regarded as a dominant position- especially in light of her required *submission* to him. However, as we have noted above, when tempered with the right *emotion* of *love* that

establishes a value, and the right *mindset* of *sacrificial headship* in and for her good, both his position is made clear by purpose. Christ's understanding of the *needs* of the church, and His *love* for it, allowed Him to use His position to *sacrifice, provide, protect* in order to *preserve* her. Such is not only our model of *emotion* and *activity*, but also of *purpose*. Her *weakness* is likely one of a *submissive position*, rather than *physical* (or otherwise) *limitation!* When one *submits themselves* to another, great appreciation and care should be demonstrated by the one granted the responsibility of *headship* over them. Failure to grasp this is certainly not *living with them "in an understanding way"!*

- d. What does it mean to "grant her honor" (NASB), or "giving honor unto the wife" (KJV), and why is this to be done? It is vital to understand that the word *grant* (*aponemo*) means *to assign* or *portion out*. Thus, the *honor* that is to be assigned or *apportioned* not due to merit, but because of *position*- both as a *wife*, and especially "as a *fellow-heir of the grace of life*,". She is a *fellow-heir* of *physical* life- having been granted such by God's grace just as the husband, and she is also a *fellow-heir* of *spiritual* life by God's grace also- Christ died for her just as He did for the husband. To disregard God's grace in either sense is to fail on two counts: 1) to *grant her honor* according to God's grace that has been extended to her; and, 2) to *live with her in an understanding way*. Both failures share the penalty of a severed relationship with God- "so that your prayers may not be hindered," cf. 1Pet.3:10-12.

The word translated as *honor* is *time* (pronounced *tee-may*). It refers to a *valuing by which the price is fixed*. In this case, the *value* that determines her honor is not her own worthiness- or the *honor* due her conduct, but that which is assigned her by God as a *woman* of His creation, and for which His Son died, as well as the *position* she holds as *wife* in God's arrangement of marriage, cf. Eph.5:26-27.

Though we will get to it in the next lesson (on the duties of the wife), please understand that there is no degradation intended by *submission*. Was Christ *degraded* through His submission to God? Are Christians *degraded* by submission to *earthly masters, civil governments, or spiritual leaders*? Of course not- *submission* is of *position* rather than *person!*

4. Who has the primary responsibility for *physical/financial provision* of the family? Please provide passages to support your answer. If possible, also list some passages that include *work ethic principles* that will assist in this physical provision for the family.

The husband/father does, Gen.3:17-19,23; 1Tim.5:8 (the wife has a different *primary* responsibility, Gen.2:20; 1Tim.2:15). As to the *work ethic principles* passages, here are a few that came to mind:

- Matt.6:25-34, remember not to let your work define who you are; always put God, His kingdom, and His ways/righteousness *first*;
- Eph.4:28; 6:5-9, don't *steal, labor and share*; not as *men-pleasers* with *eye-service*, with *sincerity of heart* as to the Lord and good will;
- Col.3:22 – 4:1, not with *external service* as *men-pleasers* but with *sincerity, fearing the Lord, heartily*;
- 1Thess.4:11-12, *lead a quiet life, attend to your own business, work with your hands, behave properly toward outsiders* (non-Christians), don't be *in need*;

- 2Thess.3:6-12, do not *lead unruly* (undisciplined) *lives*, do not *eat anyone's bread without paying*, work diligently to avoid being a *burden*, *work so you can eat*, *work in quiet fashion* and *eat your own bread*; and,
- Titus 3:8,14, *engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs to be fruitful*.

5. Does your answer to the previous question prevent the wife from working outside the home? Why, or why not?

No, Deborah was one of the Judges, Judges 4:4 – 5:31; the *virtuous woman* apparently worked outside the home, Prov.31:16,24; as did *Lydia*, who was referred to as “*a worshipper of God*” prior to her conversion to Christ, Acts 16:14ff; and *Priscilla*, Acts18:1-3.

These two questions (#4,5) concern *primary* roles as defined by Scripture. The wife is not forbidden to work *outside* the home anymore than the husband is forbidden to work *inside* the home.

6. In what areas, besides *physical/financial*, is the husband also to provide for his wife?

Though the comparison is certainly not complete, in what areas did Christ provide for His *spiritual bride*? Surely all of them!

The point is that husband is to provide for *all* of his wife's *needs* (not *wants*)- whether they be *spiritual*, *physical*, or *emotional*, as per Christ's provision of *everything* His bride needs, Eph.5:23,25-31,33a.



g. What do you think is the greatest hindrance or obstacle to a wife's submission to her husband? (Husbands and wives please answer separately, but *generally* and without specific reference to your spouse.)

h. Is the *reverence* or *respect* the wife is commanded to her husband in Eph.5:33 and 1Pet.3:2 based on his *merit* of it? Why, or why not? Please explain.

3. From Titus 2:3-5, please answer the following:

a. What are *older women* to *encourage younger women* to do (7 in all), and why?

b. What *kind* of "love" is to be encouraged? (*stergo/family, phileo, or agapeo*)? Why is this important?

c. How will these *attitudes, attributes, and actions* affect the husband's *headship*?

4. From 1Pet.3:1-6,8-9, please answer the following:

a. How are husbands that are *disobedient to the word* to be *won*?

b. Are the restrictions of v.3 *absolute*? Why, or why not?

c. Why is it important for wives to maintain a *gentle and quiet spirit*? (at least 3 reasons, please)

d. Please explain the meaning of the last part of v.6, "*without being frightened by any fear.*"

## Marriage God's Way, Lesson #4- Answers

1. What does the term *submit/submission* mean, *literally* or *practically*?

*Submit* (and its derivatives) are translated from the compound term *hupotasso*; *hupo* means *under* and *tasso* is to *order* or *arrange*. Thus, *hupotasso* is to *order/arrange* oneself *under* another's control, cf. Eph.5:21,24 and 1Pet.3:1.

In practical terms, *submission* is a **voluntary** placing of oneself under the control/supervision of another. Submission that is not *voluntary* is dictatorship at best, and usually tyrannical as well.

2. From any or all of the assigned reading passages, please answer the following:

- a. To *whom* is the wife to submit? Why? Why is this important?

Eph.5:22ff; 1Pet.3:1ff; and Titus 2:5 all specify *to your own husband*, rather than to *all men* or *all husbands*. This distinction is critical to our understanding of submission, in that the wife has *agreed*, by marriage, to *submit* to *her* husband. It is him with whom she was willing to become *one flesh*, and therefore share a life with him. It was in him that she trusted implicitly- such is certainly not true of other men! In my opinion, women should treat men *generally* in a *respectful* way, **in the same way** that men should regard women *generally* in high regard. But, the text of these two passages leaves no doubt that the *submission* commanded of *the wife* is *specific* to *her husband*. See also 1Cor.11:3 where Christ is stated to be the head of *every man* (thus, *universal*), but **the man** (meaning *one*) is head of *a woman* (singular, *his wife*).

- b. Does this *submission* imply or involve *degradation*? Why, or why not?

No, it doesn't involve *degradation* for the simple reason that it is *voluntary*. Christ's submission to His *Head*, God, involved no degradation. It was His *position* that was *subjected/submitted*, not His *person*, cp. Heb.2:9ff with Col.2:9. Consider also the church's *submission* to Christ- does it involve *degradation* or *exaltation*, cf. Eph.5:23,26-27? Likewise, are church members *degraded* when *submitting* to its appointed *leaders*, cf. Heb.13:17; or citizens when they *submit* to the governing authorities, 1Pet.2:13-17; or servants to their masters, 1Pet.2:18?

- c. To what *extent* is she to submit?

There are two considerations from Eph.5:22,24: 1) "*as to the Lord*," v.22; and, 2) "*in everything*," v.24. However, biblically required submission to any *person* or *human organization/institution* is **always** superseded by submission to God. Even the apostles were required to submit *to the governing authorities* until and unless submission *to them* conflicted with submission *to God*, cf. Acts 4:19; 5:29. Thus, the wife's submission *to her husband* is only to be rejected if and when such would require her to violate **her** submission *to God*. Note carefully 1Pet.3:1-2 in this regard. Submission is required *to her husband* even when **he** is "*disobedient to the word*." This is not the same as him requiring **her** to be *disobedient to the word*!

- d. What does her submission not prevent?

Proper submission does not prevent:

- Her from letting her wishes be known to him regarding any aspect of the family;
- Her from disagreeing with him- whether he is right or wrong;

- Her from being her own person with independent thought and action, cf. Prov.31:11ff;
- Her from being judged *individually*- both as a *Christian* and as a *wife and mother*, 2Cor.5:10.

e. What does her submission prevent?

Her proper submission does prevent:

- Her demanding her will over his, 1Pet.3:1-2;
- Her being in anyway or at anytime *disrespectful* to or of him, Eph.5:33; 1Pet.3:1-6;
- Her from being *unsupportive* of **non-sinful** decisions he makes regarding the family, even if she disagrees, cf. Gen.2:18,22-25; 12:1,4-5; 1Pet.3:6.

God will judge *husbands* regarding their *headship/leadership* and *provision* of/for their wives/families, and *wives* regarding their *submission, respect, and support* (as a *helper suitable*, cf. Gen.2:20) of their husbands/families.

f. Does the wife's submission to her husband require her to support decisions with which she disagrees? Why or why not?

We must understand that the *real test* of submission only comes **when there is disagreement**. When we agree with everything those over us require- that it is good and/or right, there is no real submission involved. **Real submission only occurs when there is disagreement**. Consider the supreme example of Jesus Christ in Matt.26:39-42. He earnestly desired *another way*, but after expressing His desires for such, in complete submission He said, "*if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, **Thy will be done.***" And then resolutely did as submission to His *Head* required.

Given these things, the answer is "Absolutely, yes." But again, the single exception comes into play if her submission to and support of her husband's decisions would require **her** to violate her submission to God, Acts 4:19; 5:29; 1Pet.3:1-2.

g. What do you think is the greatest hindrance or obstacle to a wife's submission to her husband? (Husbands and wives please answer separately, but *generally* and without specific reference to your spouse.)

My answer is: "Her husband's abuse of power." If and when she believes her husband is making *selfish* decisions and leading her/the family in *self-serving* ways, submission will surely become an issue for her. But, as long as she believes he is making decisions and leading her/the family in ways that *he thinks* are in **their best interest**, most wives will submit even if they disagree.

h. Is the *reverence* or *respect* the wife is commanded to her husband in Eph.5:33 and 1Pet.3:2 based on his *merit* of it? Why, or why not? Please explain.

No, it is based on two very much interrelated things: 1) God's command of it; and, 2) the *position* (rather than the *person*) of her husband as God ordained. Note that the "*chaste and respectful behavior*" of the wife in 1Pet.3:2 is in the specific context of a husband who is "*disobedient to the word*" in v.1.

By comparison, the *reverence/respect* required of the wife toward her husband is as the *honor* commanded of the husband toward his wife in 1Pet.3:7. In that sense, both are to be *apportioned* or *assigned* because of the *positions* held by each in marriage, and God's ordination and estimation of them, rather than by merit.

But let us add to those things these: 1) Submission without respect becomes self-deprecating and self-destructive, and is sometimes equated with slavery; 2) Therefore, no marriage can be mutually satisfying without mutual respect; 3) However, respect, like love, should grow and mature in marriage as each partner learns and grows in their understanding and application of their own responsibilities, and their appreciation for the efforts of their partner toward the same; and finally, 4) Respect should be much more of a motivation for marriage than lust, convenience, security, and other common reasons to wed.

3. From Titus 2:3-5, please answer the following:

a. What are *older women* to encourage *younger women* to do (7 in all), and why?

- 1) *Love their husbands* (philandros- love of man/husband), note that this is to be *taught* and *encouraged* by the *older women* to the *younger women* (the word also indicates *new-* not *women* but *wives*), probably because: a) this type of love is a *decision* that produces appropriate *action* and is *learned* rather than *fallen into* or *found*;
- 2) *Love their children* (philoteknos- love one's offspring/children), cp. Rom.1:18-31 where those who *rebel* against the knowledge of God (vv.18-23), and are thus *given over* by Him (vv.24-28), are or become "*without natural affection*" or "*unloving*" (vv.28b-31); note here also that it is the *practical application* of this type of *love* that enables the other acts of service enumerated as follows in the text, cp. 1Thess.2:7-8;
- 3) *Be sensible* (sophron- of sound mind, sane, in one's senses; curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate); *personal desires* are *subjected* for the good of the husband/family, as his are also for the same reasons, cp. Eph.5:23,25,28,29;
- 4) *Be pure* (hagnos- pure, holy); cf. 1Pet.3:2-4; the wife has a responsibility (as does her husband, for that matter) of *purity/holiness-* to her spouse, Heb.13:4; and to her God, 1Pet.1:15-16;
- 5) *Be workers at home* (oikourgos- {oikos- home, and ouros- a watch or to be ware} to be busy at home); cp. 1Tim.5:13-15; certainly this does not prevent a wife from *also* working outside the home (as demonstrated in the previous lesson from Judges 4:4 – 5:31; Prov.31:16,24; Acts 16:14ff; 18:1-3), but it does manifest her *primary area of responsibility*;
- 6) *Be kind* (agathos- of good constitution or nature; useful; pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy; excellent, distinguished; upright, honorable); *unkindness* on a wife/mother (or indeed any woman) is as out of place and about as adorning as *pearls on a pig*;
- 7) *Be subject to their own husbands* (hupotasso- to arrange under, subordinate; to subject one's self), see/review previous answers to questions 2a-h on this admonition.

And the stated purpose of these is "*that the word of God may not be dishonored.*" The **purpose** is not to have a "better" marriage by human standards (though such will surely be the *result!*), but to have a marriage that meets God's standards and fulfills His purposes- which are stated in His word!

b. What *kind* of "love" is to be encouraged? (*stergo/family, phileo, or agapeo*)? Why is this important?

Phileo- *of husbands* (aner- man or husband), and *of their children* (teknon- offspring or children); a *kindly, warm, and tender affection* is to be cultivated toward both the *husband*, and if they be present, *children*. As any wife or mother can attest, such is not always easy, nor is it necessarily *natural*- especially when either or both recipients are not being very *lovable!*

But learning and developing this kind of love enables the wife/mother to better *appreciate* her husband in a practical sense, and allows her to *help* him in the other ways enumerated in the text- and to do so with a sense of joy and pleasure rather than dread and drudgery.

- c. How will these *attitudes, attributes, and actions* affect the husband's *headship*?

Perhaps this question was better suited to the text of 1Pet.3:1-6, but it applies equally here. When the husband sees and feels his wife *humbly* and *diligently* submitting herself both in attitude and activities of service in these ways, all but the most hard-hearted will be inspired to likewise fulfill his God-appointed responsibility of leadership to the best of his abilities, cf. Titus 2:6-8 and 1Pet.3:7-12.

4. From 1Pet.3:1-6,8-9, please answer the following:

- a. How are husbands that are *disobedient to the word* to be won?

The text species, "*without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior,*" vv.1b-2. He is not to be *brought back to obedience to the word* by the *preaching/teaching* of their wife, as such is neither her role nor responsibility, cf. 1Tim.2:11-12. Instead, the catalyst is to be her exemplary *obedient (to the word, God who gave it, and even her husband) and respectful behavior*, cf. 1Tim.2:15. Don't fail to note that 1Pet.3:3-6 begins with "*And....*" indicating a connection to, and continuation of, the thoughts of vv.1-2. The idea is that the restrictions and admonitions of these verses are at least in part descriptive of how she is to influence her husband *back to the word without a word!*

- b. Are the restrictions of v.3 *absolute*? Why, or why not?

No, for then "*putting on dresses*" would also be forbidden. With what then was she supposed to cover herself? The emphasis of the verse, properly understood, is that of *internal* and *spiritual* "adornment" over the *external* and *physical* varieties. Note specifically the latter part of v.4, "*which is precious in the sight of God*"- rather than in the sight of humanity of the male or female types! Again, the lesson is the same: God's marriage must be done God's way and for His purposes to please Him (and be successful by His standards)!

- c. Why is it important for wives to maintain a *gentle and quiet spirit*? (at least 3 reasons, please)

- 1) It, by contrast to *external* and *physical adornments*, never fades or diminishes, v.4a;
- 2) It is *precious to* and *valued by* God, v.4b;
- 3) It is in keeping with the biblical examples of *holy women*, v.5; and,
- 4) It is *what is right*, v.6.

- d. Please explain the meaning of the last part of v.6, "*without being frightened by any fear.*"

To understand this phrase, we must consider the context both *before* and *after* it:

- V.1 introduces the idea that the husbands of the women addressed were *disobedient to the word*. This could mean that they were unconverted, or that they

had reverted to sinful ways after their conversion. In either case, *courage* would be required of the wife to *do the right things herself*, and presumably without the leadership or support of her husband in doing so.

- Vv.13-17ff also includes the very real possibility of *suffering persecution for having done the right thing(s)*. Thus, for the wife of a husband who is *disobedient to the word*, courage is again required as she may very well suffer at his hands, at least initially and until her *godly example of submission and internal/spiritual adornment* wins him over to *obedience to the word*.

In both cases, she must remember her *godly submission and example is precious to and will be rewarded by God* regardless of what her husband or the world thinks of or does to her. Therefore, she is to *do the right thing(s) “without being frightened by any fear.”*

**Marriage God's Way, Lesson #5- Love's Support System: Marriage Helps**  
**Thought/Discussion Questions**  
**Adult Class, Dec.14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Reading Assignment:** Gen.2:18-24; Prov.5:18; 19:1; 20:7; Eccl.9:7-10a; Luke 14:26-33;  
Rom.7:1-6; 1Cor.7:1-16; 13:4-8a,11; 14:20; 2Cor.6:14; Col.3:9-14;  
Phil.3:13-14; 4:8; 2Tim.4:7-8; 1Pet.3:10-12

**Review:** Lesson 1: Marriage is an institution *God created* and gave to us for *His purposes* and *our benefit*. We need to understand and accept these principles *before* entering the contract of marriage. Lesson 2: Biblical love, in all its forms, but especially *agapeo*, is the foundational key to a successful and happy marriage. Lessons 3 & 4: The husband and wife both have duties to fulfill in marriage as determined by God that will enable them to please Him, their spouses, and themselves.

**Primary Point of this Lesson:** Marriage has some *prerequisites* that each participant must bring into the marriage, or quickly develop, for it to be successful. Without these, even *biblical love* may not be sufficient.

=====

1. *Character* can be defined as moral and/or ethical strength based on God's word. After each passage(s) below, please list what attribute is included in character, and describe why or how it is important to character.
  - a. Prov.19:1 and 20:7,
  
  - b. Col.3:9
  
  - c. 1Cor.7:10-16,
  
  - d. 1Cor.7:2-5,
  
  - e. Rom.7:2-6; Eph.5:28-33 (cp.Col.3:1-2),
  
2. *Maturity* (from the Latin *matures*- ripe, having completed natural growth; fully developed), in the context of "ready for marriage," should include *physical*, *emotional*, and *spiritual* maturity. Please explain how each of the passages below define or describe maturity, and why such is important to marriage:
  - a. 1Cor.13:11,
  
  - b. 1Cor.14:20,

- c. Luke 14:26-33
3. *Independence* (both as an *individual* and *collectively* as a couple) is important to marriage. Describe how *independence* should be manifested in each of the areas below from Gen.2:24.
- a. *Leave-*
  
  - b. *Cleave-*
  
  - c. *One Flesh-*
4. Having a *suitable disposition* is important to not only *selecting* the right marriage partner, but also to *being* the right marriage partner. After each passage below, identify which aspect of a *suitable disposition* is being described, and tell why it is important to *selecting* and *being* the right marriage partner.
- a. Prov.5:18,
  
  - b. Eccl.9:7-10a,
  
  - c. Phil.4:8,
  
  - d. 1Pet.3:10-12
5. *Common Interests*, in the “bigger picture” way of shared *values*, *goals*, and *dreams*, are an important consideration in marriage. From each passage below, tell what *common interest* should be shared, and why it is important to marriage.
- a. 2Cor.6:14,
  
  - b. Phil.3:13-14,
  
  - c. 2Tim.4:7-8,
6. Thought Question: What do *you* think are the basic needs of the human heart (males answer for men, and females answer for women)?

## Marriage God's Way, Lesson #5- Answers

1. **Character** can be defined as moral and/or ethical strength based on God's word. After each passage(s) below, please list what attribute is included in character, and describe why or how it is important to character.
  - a. Prov.19:1 and 20:7, **Integrity**- unimpaired condition, sound; firm adherence to a code of moral values; complete or undivided. *Individuals* lacking integrity (wholeness or completeness) cannot constitute one whole/complete *couple*.
  - b. Col.3:9, **Trustworthiness**- because of vv.10-14. The husband must be able to *trust* his wife, *cf. Prov.31:11ff*; and the wife surely must be able to *trust* the man to whom she submits herself, *cf. Eph.5:22,24,33*.
  - c. 1Cor.7:10-16, **Commitment**- until death parts, *cf. Matt.19:6 and Rom.7:1-3*. To be a spouse, one must be a person of deep commitment!
  - d. 1Cor.7:2-5, **Fair and Duty**- the *obligations/duties* of marriage should be viewed and rendered with a sense of fairness; to them spouses are duty-bound. *Deprivation* cannot be used as a tool of manipulation; *agreement* should prevail because of a sense of fairness and an understanding of responsibility and purpose in this area.
  - e. Rom.7:2-6; Eph.5:28-33 (cp.Col.3:1-2), **Loyalty**- *absolute and unquestionable* loyalty; as Christians are to be to Christ (spiritual Spouse), so also ought we to be to our physical spouse!
2. **Maturity** (from the Latin *matures*- ripe, having completed natural growth; fully developed), in the context of "ready for marriage," should include *physical, emotional, and spiritual* maturity. Please explain how each of the passages below define or describe maturity, and why such is important to marriage:
  - a. 1Cor.13:11, Marriage is an *adult* institution. It is the time to, if such hasn't been already done, *put away childish things*. It is for the mature, not those who just want to *play grown-up*.
  - b. 1Cor.14:20, In spiritual terms, the *innocence of youth* is to be maintained and cultivated as much as possible. But, *immature thoughts* such as jealousy, and *immature acts* such as peevishness and pettiness, have no place in marriage. The *picture* of "love" painted in 1Cor.13:4-8a is one of *mature devotion*, not *juvenile infatuation*.
  - c. Luke 14:26-33, **Maturity** is demonstrated by the ability to look at one's past and present to see a reasonable estimate of one's future; or to be able to objectively see one's own capabilities and limitations in a productive way. "Oh grow up!" may be exactly what is needed.
3. **Independence** (both as an *individual* and *collectively* as a couple) is important to marriage. Describe how *independence* should be manifested in each of the areas below from Gen.2:24.
  - a. **Leave**- The *desire* as well as the *ability* to "*leave father and mother*" demonstrates at least some basic level of physical and emotional maturity, and also helps to further develop them. Whether to become married, or just to be "out on my own," *leaving* home (mother and father) is a rite of passage to adulthood. The inability or lack of desire to do so is an indication of the opposite.
  - b. **Cleave**- While one can *leave father and mother* without becoming married, and demonstrate maturity or develop additional levels of it in the process, to *cleave* to a spouse is definitely an additional step in the incremental process. It is one thing to be responsible

for and to oneself, but it is a whole other matter to become so to another person to whom you were not previously related (prior to marriage)!

- c. **One Flesh-** This is *maturity* (aka as “adulthood”) one stage further. Stage 1: *Leave father and mother* to be “on your own” and self-sufficient; Stage 2: *Cleave* to your spouse- to find, select, and become dedicated/devoted to another person not previously related to you; Stage 3: Become *one flesh* through the most intimate sharing of your *person, name, and life*. *One flesh* is much more than sharing a bed, it is sharing a life; it is becoming *one* independent couple, dedicated to one another in the most intimate of all human relationships! This *bonding* into *one* requires and encompasses love in all its forms: *phileo-* warm and friendly affection or affinity; *eros-* sexual sharing and intimacy; *stergos-* becoming *family* with someone not related by blood; and *agape-* unconditional good will.
4. Having a *suitable disposition* is important to not only *selecting* the right marriage partner, but also to *being* the right marriage partner. After each passage below, identify which aspect of a *suitable disposition* is being described, and tell why it is important to *selecting* and *being* the right marriage partner.
    - a. Prov.5:18, While the context of this passage, vv.15-23, is clearly toward *sexual purity* and *devotion*, this verse also lends itself to the notion of staying *young at heart* with regard to your mate. That is, strive to maintain the youthful exuberance and fervor of love throughout your married life, cp. Rev.2:4-5.
    - b. Eccl.9:7-10a, Note some *key words* and concepts from this text that are directly related to *disposition*: *happy, cheerful heart, clothes white all the time, not lacking oil on head, enjoy, love, reward, verily, and with all your might*. Though circumstances certainly can *affect* our disposition, it is, nonetheless, mostly determined by choice!
    - c. Phil.4:8, Having the right *mindset* (or having your mind set on the right things) goes a long way toward creating and cultivating a suitable and pleasing disposition!
    - d. 1Pet.3:10-12, This citation should have probably included vv.8-9 also, but note that *attitude* (the disposition *meaning to love life and see good days*) is inseparably linked to *actions* (*refraining the tongue from evil and lips from guile, turning away from evil and doing good, and seeking and pursuing peace*). This is not unlike God’s reprimand and admonition to Cain upon seeing his *anger* and *fallen countenance*, “*If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?*” Gen.4:6-7a.

While it can be helpful for two people to have similar dispositions in marriage, it is in no way absolutely necessary- but they should have *compatible* dispositions. “Opposites attract” is true only when these are compatible opposites- “oil and water” still don’t mix well together! You can stir and beat “oil and water” into a somewhat homogenous mixture, but they eventually separate themselves due to incompatibility.

Spouses should work toward a *disposition* of happiness and optimism, and be willing to work together to make the most out of life. Generally speaking, a person with a “bad disposition” is a *selfish, moody, and unloving* person- such will not make a good lifetime partner in marriage! As a bumper sticker well put it: “Sometimes I wake up grumpy- other times I just let him/her sleep!” Surely we can and should do better with regard to our dispositions.

5. **Common Interests**, in the “bigger picture” way of shared *values, goals, and dreams*, are an important consideration in marriage. From each passage below, tell what *common interest* should be shared, and why it is important to marriage.
  - a. 2Cor.6:14, Shared *values* that are *spiritually-based*, while not absolutely essential (cf. 1Cor.7:12-16), are surely an important consideration to and in marriage, cp. Thess.5:5;

Jas.4:4. *Values* determine how and what we think ultimately matters in life. Thus, it is of critical importance that the criteria for determining that which really matters be shared.

- b. Phil.3:13-14, Shared *spiritual goals* are also important. Can you, or are you, working toward achieving the ultimate goal of heaven *together*? Paul is an example of striving for the *prize* of heaven alone, but if we are *bound* to another in marriage, sharing this same spiritual goal is paramount.
- c. 2Tim.4:7-8, Shared *spiritual dreams*- at or near the end of your lives, are you going to be able to say these things *together* with your spouse. Will that have *helped* or *hindered* you toward this *spiritual dream*? And conversely, will you have *helped* or *hindered* them in the achievement of this *spiritual dream*?

Think of it this way: The more important a *goal, value, or dream* is to you, the more important it is that your mate (or potential mate) share that *goal, value, or dream*. So if there are discrepancies, work toward compatibility through *prioritizing* and *compromising* where possible (obviously, this pertains to *non-spiritual* matters), cf. Acts 5:29.

6. Thought Question: What do *you* think are the basic needs of the human heart (males answer for men, and females answer for women)?

From an unknown author regarding *basic needs of the human heart*:

**We need *love* in good measure and all types- and we need to give it as well as receive it!**

**We need to feel a *sense of worth* and *belonging*.**

**We need to feel that we are capable of *adequate achievement* to face life's challenges.**

**We need *recognition* for what we achieve.**

**We need to know that the *pleasure* that our bodies and senses can bring is not only permissible, but also intentional by our Creator.**

**We need to feel *accepted* and *understood*.**

**We need to feel *worthwhile* and essentially *worthy* of being uniquely the self we are.**

In my judgment, and take that for only such as you consider it to be worth, it is a mistake to think that only wives have *emotional needs*. The husband's heart has needs that are perhaps very different from those of his wife, but he has them nonetheless. What are they? At least in part, he needs the following from his wife:

- Appreciation for what he does to provide for and protect the family.
- Respect for who he is as a (Christian!) man, husband, and father.
- Confidence and trust in his abilities to lead, provide, and protect.
- Praise for and pride in being his spouse and *helpmeet*.
- To be desired rather than tolerated (sexually).

Obviously, I cannot- nor would I if I could, answer for the female side of the equation. Yes, men often hide and even suppress their feelings and needs- but such doesn't negate their presence. But when wives understand and enjoy meeting these *emotional* needs of their husbands, both benefit greatly.

**Conclusions for this lesson:**

1. **Before we can be complete and whole (*one flesh*) as a couple, we must first be complete and whole *individually*. This means we have *character*, and are *mature, independent* adults of *suitable dispositions* and *compatible* if not *common interests*.**
2. **The truly “happy” marriage is one in which each partner has learned to enjoy meeting one another’s basic needs of the *mind, heart, soul, and body*.**
3. **The “successful” marriage is: “happy” as in the previous; *pleasing to God* because they live together as He says they should; and, they become *more together* than either could have ever been apart.**