

LOVE & MARRIAGE

A. “**Love & Marriage**; they go together like a horse & carriage.”

1. Practically speaking, there is probably not a lot of love in many marriages (1 Cor 13:4-8a).

1 Cor 13:4-8 – Love is patient, love is kind & is not jealous; love does not brag & is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly [rudely]; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails;

B. **It may be** hard for some people to believe, but God designed marriage for the good of the human race (Gen 2:18, 21-24).

1. Solomon counseled, “*live joyfully*” in marriage, “*for that is your portion in life*” (Ecc 9:9) – FROM GOD
2. But when the joy drains out of a marriage, something results that God hates (Mal 2:14-16).

C. **Because God also** designed marriage to be permanent.

1. Marriage is for our good, permanently!
2. God intended husbands & wives to derive great pleasure & peace of mind from knowing they are in a permanent life-long relationship that is always & only for their good!
3. So maintaining a marriage—as God would have it—ought to be a top priority for Christians who are married.
4. A marriage as God would have it is a relationship that is much deeper than simply sharing good times together.
 - a. As we stated in our vows: Marriage is “For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness & in health – forsaking all others.”

- b. God's laws regarding marriage have to be observed even when, especially when, the very worst possible things happen to us.
- c. {Habitual liar, infidelity, substance abuse, alcoholism – expenses exceed income, financial irresponsibility – disease, physical or mental illness.}

[**God** has given specific instructions about the behavior He expects of us in our marriages.

When we honor His word we can be assured of the best possible results.

In this lesson we're going to apply some passages to marriage that are not often thought of in that regard.]

- I. "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39; Rom 13:8-9)

A. **Every relationship**, including marriage, is to be governed by this law.

- 1. And besides, is there any neighbor closer than a spouse?

B. **Husbands** are not only commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church, they are to love their wives as their own bodies (Eph 5:25, 28-29).

- 1. That principle alone would preclude the husband from ever expecting his wife to do something for him that he would be unwilling to do for himself.

- 2. Remember, Adam lived on the earth for sometime before Eve was made; he was "doing for himself". So when Eve was made, he knew first hand the effort it took to take care of him. And that would make Adam far more understanding of her plight (1 Pet 1:7). {It's good for a young man to live on his own for a while – after leaving the nurturing care of his mother.}

C. Both Peter & Paul address the wife's role.

Tit 2:3-5 – the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

1 Tim 5:14 – Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

1 Pet 3:1-6 – Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands (**Eph 5:22**), that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel--4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (**Eph 5:33**), whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

1. A wife cannot love herself any more than when she fulfills her God-given role toward her husband (and vice-versa).

a. Because their happiness in life is inextricably tied to obedience to God.

a. The husband works to provide for his wife & children, motivated by a deep love for her.

b. The wife provides a supporting role to her husband's labor out of love & respect for him.

2. God's laws for marriage are basically rejected in mainstream society, which is why so many marriages end unhappily.

a. I heard recently about a wife that decided to do something to help her marriage. She made her husband's lunch before he went off to work, then she kissed him & told him to have a good day. He cried! {What was so natural in a marriage a generation ago is now so unusual.}

b. On the other side of the coin, there would be a lot of wives who would cry if their husbands ever showed them a little special "neighborly" care.

3. In today's modern society, marriage is often just a relationship of convenience—and if it becomes inconvenient, then it ends.

- a. And because of that, husbands & wives tend to view each other with suspicion & mistrust.
- b. They look at each other with a lustful & covetous eye—as a means to an end—as a way to have a sleeping partner & a 2nd income to meet their selfish demands for a pleasure.

[**But** to love your spouse as yourself means that you seek his or her highest good, & that you will help that person achieve the character that God requires of them.

The greatest service of all that you can perform for your neighbor, your spouse, is to help them to heaven: *pray, read & study, figure duty to God into every plan & action.*]

II. “Love does no harm to his neighbor” (Rom 13:10)

A. **The worthy woman** that “*she [did her husband] good not evil all the days of her life*” (Prov 31:12).

1. Spousal love does no harm; rather it does good – text (1 Cor 13:4-7)!

- a. Love will not allow you to put down or embarrass your spouse.
- b. Rather, love will compliment, protect & thoughtfully anticipate the feelings & needs of the other.
- c. Criticism is easy to throw around in a marriage, but love works for a peaceful correction rather than a harsh criticism.

Prov 17:9 – He who covers a transgression seeks love.

Rom 12:21 – Love is not “overcome by evil, but overcome[s] evil with good”

[**You** may have heard about the woman who sued her husband for divorce.

She told the judge that she couldn't get him to do right.

The judge asked if she had tried the Bible principle where it says to "*heap coals of fire on his head.*"

She answered, "No, but I don't think it will work, I've already tried boiling water."]

III. "Let brotherly love continue" – "sincere love of the brethren" (Heb 13:1; 1 Pet 1:22)

A. **When a Christian** man & woman are married to one another, they have a dual responsibility.

1. They must not only treat one another according to God's marriage laws, but they are to treat one another as brother & sister in God's family.

1 John 3:18 – My little children, let us not **love** in word or in tongue, but **in deed & in truth.**

Rom 12:9-10 – **Let love be without hypocrisy.** Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be **kindly affectionate** to one another with **brotherly love**, in honor **giving preference** to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Col 3:12-14 (NASU) – So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy & beloved, put on a **heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness & patience**; 13 **bearing with one another, & forgiving each other**, whoever has a complaint against anyone; **just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.** 14 Beyond all these things **put on love**, which is the perfect bond of unity. (Eph 4:1-3, 31-5:2)

B. **Brotherly love**, in marriage, also shows the world that you are a disciple of the Son of God (Jn 13:34-35).

1. Would your relationship with your spouse convince others that you are a disciple?
2. It would if it was a "*fervent love*" (1 Pet 4:8), which is another way Peter described the love that ought to exist between brothers in Christ.

[**This** is where many Christian husbands & wives go wrong.

Because they don't see the bigger "family picture", they hobble along in a relationship that has no depth of love, no sincerity is shown in the relationship, & the marriage eventually disintegrates into a meaningless association.]

IV. “Love your enemy” (Matt 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-30)

A. What does this have to do with, “Love & Marriage”?

1. It does happen, as the divorce courts will verify, that marriage partners many times become bitter enemies – sad but true.

B. What do you do, when at one moment in time you dislike your spouse as much as you have ever disliked anyone!

1. You “do good...pray...give” in ways that will not compromise your belief in the word of God.
2. God sends the sunshine & rain upon the evil people of this world.
3. Jesus prayed & even died for the people who had Him nailed to the cross.

4. Surely, we can overcome a momentary feeling of bitterness by carrying out some deed of kindness, for that special person to whom God has bound us together as one in this life.

CLOSING

A God-ordained marriage is to reflect the same love that our Lord has for His church, and that is an overwhelming consideration, because Paul stated that “*the love of Christ passes knowledge*” (Eph 3:17)

But Paul also told us that we can understand the width, length, depth & height of the love of Christ, & we can be filled with all the fullness of God, if Christ (His word) dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:17-19).

Paul was telling us that the more serious we are in our obedience to God, the better we will understand the love He has for us; the love that caused Him to send Jesus to this earth for our sakes.