

Marriage, Till Death Do Us Part?

Taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg Copyright © 1998-2006

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We all know the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. Could this same harmony that existed before man fell be reclaimed today? Could a new Adam sow new seeds with a new woman in a new garden? If so, how might this be accomplished? Adam gave no advice to God in the designing of the ideal woman, yet she still came from his flesh. What were God's preferences on the blueprint for this ideal couple? Could an ideal man have an ideal relationship with an ideal woman? What would be the blueprint for an ideal relationship? In this age of sky rocketing divorce rates, not even the church has been immune to the destruction of marriages. The rate of divorce in churches is just as high as the world around it. Apparently some people have not found what they are looking for in their marriage after saying their vows. Apparently what religion is preaching about marriage today is not working, so I think I will try to address some of these problems.

I want to make this very clear; I am not a marriage counselor or a pastor, but just a man that believes in Jesus Christ. Since I am not in a relationship at this time, I thought this to be a unique opportunity to be an observer of relationships from the perspective of a single outsider looking in. This analysis of marriage is only my opinion based on what I see and perceive to be wrong in marriage today. I also do not claim to speak for all men. I do not have any scientific data to back this up, so this should not replace professional or pastoral counseling. You must judge for yourself what is best for your situation and seek professional marriage counseling if necessary.

I currently do not believe the world today holds the key to an ideal relationship, even though most religions today hold the view that the ideal relationship is "one man with one woman, till death do they part". In this type relationship, what would be the glue that would hold one man and one woman together till death?

First I would like to put forth four different types of relationships and choose what I perceive to be the ideal one and why. These are very simple to understand. I will start with the most common first, which is *face-to-face* (→←). In this type of relationship, two opposites come together. In magnets this works great, but in people, can two opposites really stay together? From my perspective these relationships are constantly confrontational. Both husband and wife are trying to move the relationship forward but cannot because one or the other is always trying to go the opposite way. Then comes the argument on who has the right way. I have heard experts say that arguing is healthy for a relationship. I don't have a college degree and have not analyzed their data, but try going outside and yelling or kicking at your dog once each day and watch your relationship with your dog blossom. As I perceive for this type of relationship to move forward, one person has to change their direction contrary to their nature and must give up some of who they really are and go a way that they really don't want to go. Does this "mix" make the relationship exciting or spicy, maybe, but they usually can't agree and they can't

come together to accomplish anything. What does the Bible have to say about this type of relationship?

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3 KJV)

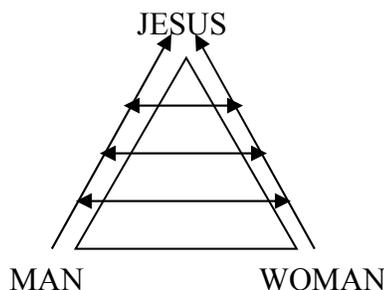
The second type of relationship that we will look at is called **back- to- back** (← →). It is easier than the **face-to-face** type of relationship because it avoids confrontation, but I perceive it to be just as destructive. In this type of relationship, the husband and wife decide that “you do your thing, and I will do mine”. The husband may spend his time at a bar or watching TV and the wife may spend her time shopping or working in the yard. As you both pursue your own direction, you drift farther and farther apart. Usually the people that choose this type of relationship experience constant loneliness. What usually happens with this type of relationship, is the husband or the wife will eventually find someone else that is going the same direction they are and they will divorce and pursue a new type of relationship with a new partner. When a couple quits working together for a common goal, then I perceive the relationship is doomed for failure. What did Jesus have to say about this?

And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (Mark 3:25 KJV)

The third type of relationship and I believe that is still better is called **side-by-side** (⇔). In this type of relationship, both husband and wife share common goals and walk through life **side-by-side**. You can walk side-by-side forever. Two oxen can plow more ground than one, especially if it doesn't have to drag the other ox plus the plow (just a hint for the couch potato in the marriage). This type of relationship can be very productive and last a long time, but I believe that there is still a more ideal relationship. The Bible gives some advice about this way if you decide to pursue it.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14 KJV)

The fourth type of relationship and the one that I believe is the ideal one was shown to me one time by a friend at church. It was a diagram that looked like this



What this diagram is illustrating, is the fact that if both the husband and wife are focused on Jesus, they will come closer and closer together as they become one in Christ.

After all was that not the divine plan with marriage for man and woman, to bring two back together into one. Is not your children one flesh, made up by the flesh of two people? So you see two can become one.

This is where I want to stop and discuss what I believe marriage actually is. I think that many do not understand the true marriage relationship. Many think that marriage is a covenant and a vow that a man and woman make before God and the world sealed by a marriage license. I disagree, If marriage has been reduced to just a vow made to each other at a ceremony and a license by the state, then the church has no argument.

Theoretically two men or two women could claim to be married by following society's definition of marriage. But if true marriage is actually two beings coming together to produce a new creation that is half the flesh of each parent and is a result of their union, then only a man and woman could actually be considered "married".

One of the reasons why I think the church has missed what the marriage union actually is, and the reason why I am discussing this is, because whole churches are splitting over an argument whether two men or two women can be considered "married".

I believe that actually true marriage is when two become one in mind and body. The result of that union is a new creation. The Bible says that "two flesh shall become one". When a man and woman come together in a physical relationship then the child that results from that union is a totally new creation. That child has one half the mothers DNA and one half the fathers DNA. That child is a mixture of the two fleshes of the parents. Two flesh become one. This same relationship and resulting new birth is also used to describe the union of the Christian to Christ, which I will explain later.

There is also a difference between matrimony and holy matrimony. Matrimony is when a man and woman are joined one flesh; holy matrimony is when the believer and Christ are joined together in one Spirit. When the believer and the Holy Spirit are joined together a seed is planted and you also have a new birth. Please read the study "The Christian Experience: From Seed to Saint".

I want to go back to the Garden of Eden and revisit the original reason for this marriage union to help understand its purpose. The Bible says that woman was taken out of the man and now he was incomplete without the woman. In Genesis, God called them Adam, not Adam and Eve.

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created (Genesis 5:1,2 KJV).

Adam named Eve, in Genesis 3:20, not God. When God took woman "out of man" he became incomplete. Man, from then on, had a desire toward a woman to become whole again. This natural desire to become one between man and woman is not true love though; I will explain true love later.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his

father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:21-25 KJV).

Men and women are born incomplete in the flesh and need the other to become complete to reproduce. In like manner, the Christian must become one Spirit with Jesus Christ to become complete and reproduce also.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:29-32 KJV).

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:4 KJV).

Notice how the Bible uses this discourse about marriage to describe the churches union to Christ. You can walk side by side “totally committed” to serving, loving, and honoring your wife or husband all day long, but you still will never be able to reproduce until you become one with them! In like manner you can follow Jesus in total “commitment” to His cause, but you can never reproduce spiritual fruit until you become one with Him. There is a huge difference between a Christian, joined to the Lord by the spiritual new birth. (i.e. born again) and someone “committed to the cause of Christ”. Many religions have changed the Gospel from Jesus “is the way”, to Jesus “showed the way” and reduced Jesus Christ down to nothing more than a heavenly inspired teacher that “shows us a way to God”. Much like other religions supposedly “show us a way to God”.

I hear so many pastors and speakers preach on “commitment” to marriage and to Christ. This is where I disagree with almost every pastor and teacher on marriage. Total “commitment” to your spouse is not true marriage, and total “commitment” to Jesus Christ is not true Christianity! There are people that have so totally “committed” their lives to their religion, all the way to the point of blowing themselves up in a crowded market place, and still are in error!

What I see marriage reduced to today, is a vow made between two individuals to be together through a vow and a covenant before God and man, but they seem to try to remain individuals. This same school of thought has also been transferred to the Christian experience. Instead of an actual union of one Spirit with Jesus, Christianity is being taught as a covenant where you vow to be faithful to Jesus’ teachings and Biblical precepts, but you remain a separate individual. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:17,

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17 KJV).

What I am discussing here is the personal relationship that the believer experiences with Christ when they are “born again” and not the great end time event known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where the church as a whole body is together with Jesus.

Many people know about Jesus through reading the Bible, but unless you know Jesus in a personal spiritual union then no new birth can result. No seed was ever planted in the person's heart and no spiritual new birth ever resulted in the person's life. The same Holy Spirit that planted the seed in Mary for Christ to be born is the same Holy Spirit that plants the seed in our hearts for Christ to be birthed in us. Christianity is a spiritual new birth experience.

Let me try and explain it this way. When a woman is pregnant, then there are two separate beings and lives existing inside her body. The mother's life and the life of her child. Even though they both exist in one body, the child is a separate creation from the mother and carries half of the father's nature, which makes the child a totally new creation and a new life with a new and separate future. In like manner the new spiritual man that is growing inside the Christian when they are joined to the Lord by the Holy Spirit, is manifesting the attributes of the Father also. Paul said in Galatians 4:19 KJV, ***I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you.***

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Corinthians 13:5 KJV).

And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha (Romans 9:29 KJV).

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16 KJV).

As Paul told the Galatians when he said, "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you", the Christian experiences travail during this spiritual new birth process. See, one day Jesus will tell many that he never "knew" them.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:23 KJV).

The Bible's use of the word "knowing" is used many times to describe the marriage union where a seed is planted.

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD (Genesis 4:1 KJV).

And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up (Genesis 24:16 KJV).

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the

power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:34,35 KJV).

You can see how far this idea of being married and staying individuals has gone when you see women keep their maiden name in a marriage to declare to the world that they are separate from their husband. The women in the Bible understood just how important it was to keep the same last name as their husband.

And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach (Isaiah 4:1 KJV).

When we are joined to Jesus in the marriage union then He takes away our reproach also, because we are now a part of His holy flesh also.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:29-32).

It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:11-13).

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy (1 Corinthians 7:14).

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:6,7).

If Jesus never became one body and Spirit with us and we didn't take His name, how could He take away our reproach? Women today have played a great part in driving this wedge into the marriage union. The whole purpose of the man and wife sharing the same last name was because they should have become one new individual. Your children are a reproduction and a reflection of that new individual. If men and women today understood the vital significance of that marriage union, then I think there would be much less spousal abuse. Bottom line ladies, as a rule, men are not going to attack their own body because it hurts, they are going to take anger or frustration out on what is not their own body.....

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:28-32 KJV).

Woman, by declaring that they are different individuals using different last names, are declaring that they are not actually a part of their husbands flesh. They then wonder why their husband is not treating them like his own body or nurturing and cherishing her? If a husband and wife do not consider themselves ONE, but only consider themselves two people in a covenant agreement, then the best they can possibly hope for in their “marriage” is to become really good friends that get together and have good sex. If the wife or husband doesn’t consider himself or herself the same flesh, then are they living with strange flesh? This is why the Bible refers to two men or two women relationships as strange flesh instead of same flesh.

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7 KV).

On to the next topic, there are some people in the world also that have been married several times, and many of them have the exact same excuse on why they are divorced. They say they always seem to attract the wrong kind of mate and they do not know why. They say that their mate seemed like a good person when they got married and then they changed for the worse. I want to stop and analyze this excuse for a second. If you have been divorced several times and still do not know why you seem to always attract the wrong type mate, then in the name of common sense stop pursuing any more relationships until you do find out exactly why this happens! You are just driving up the divorce statistics. If all your past spouses were the main ones at fault in the relationship, then common sense would seem to point to the obvious answer. If your past spouses all seemed like a good person before you married them and then they changed into something bad afterward, then the obvious logical conclusion would be that you turned a good mate bad. If they were bad to begin with and you knew that then there is your answer, you should not have gotten married to a bad person in the first place. If all you’re past spouses were actually bad to begin with and they just had you fooled each time, then you need to get on your knees and thank God that you are still alive. This is one reason I did this study, to help people figure out why they keep getting into wrong relationships, because if you do not figure out why you keep getting fooled by bad spouses, the next relationship you get into with a bad spouse could just be your last!

I want to now touch on couples in ministry. I personally would not marry a woman that had a separate ministry. I would pray that the Lord would send me a woman that could help me in my calling. When a man and woman are joined in marriage, then they are considered one individual and should both be focused on the same ministry. When God created Eve from Adam, He created her to help her husband in his task. She was not given a separate “new” task by God.

I want to touch briefly on the topic of sex, because many think that sex is something that is dirty or nasty. The act of sex is a beautiful creation of God given to the human race. The circumstance in which the act is performed is what is considered sin.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4 KJV).

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man (Romans 7:2,3 KJV).

The physical act of sex is the same whether people have a marriage license or not. One circumstance is considered a sin and the other is not. The act is still the same. If there is anybody out there that thinks that the act of sex is what is dirty or naughty, then a marriage license or wedding ceremony cannot take a dirty or naughty act and make it holy in your eyes. All a marriage license can do is take an act that is dirty or naughty in your eyes, and make it legal.

I just want to touch briefly on the subject where a husband and wife deny each other sex. What does the Bible say about this, because this can be very detrimental to a marriage?

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (1 Corinthians 7:3-5 KJV).

I want to now discuss the source of true love and how it applies to the marriage union. This may shock many women and men too, but true love is not gotten from your spouse. True love can only come from a relationship with Jesus Christ and then that love is shared with your spouse. Many woman and men that are seeking true love from their spouse, will never find that love that they need. Their spouse cannot produce that kind of love. They also have to receive that love first from God, only then can they share that love with their spouse. The true marriage is when both are giving to the relationship and not always taking from the relationship. They need Jesus Christ as the source of their giving. A man or woman in a marriage union can show love to each other to a certain extent, but the love that will last the ages, can come only from the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ.

I want to stop here and expose two types of tricks that men and woman use on each other. Women are not going to admit they do these things and neither are men, so I will expose it. First I will deal with a trick that I have fallen for and I finally figured it out. When you come home and your wife is pouting or silent and they will not tell you what is wrong, but they keep telling you “you know what you did”, then there is a good chance

that the husband is getting set up for this trick. Most guys will start apologizing for things that they think they have done that their wife didn't know about. What they are actually doing is giving their wife a multiple choice of things to pick from. What I figured out finally is the husband has not done anything wrong that the wife knows about. The wife was just using this trick to get their husbands to tell on their self.

I also believe that many women from their childhood up have a preconceived notion what their perfect husband will be like. Many times though they settle for less than what they wanted with the intent on changing that man into their idea of a perfect husband. I have two words to address that practice. Stop it! That is not fair to your husband. What usually happens is that marriage ends up being a back-to-back or face-to-face style relationship. Wait and find that perfect husband that is at least focused on the same goals as you where you can walk side-by-side.

I want to address an issue that I have heard come up many times when talking about Christian marriages. Many women ask the question "What are we to do if our husbands are not Christians or active in their faith, should we still be submissive to them"? Firstly I have heard other Christian marriage counselors say they must just persevere in the relationship for the sake of their marriage vows. I will not tell you that. I do believe that Jesus can restore a marriage, but I do not feel that God honors a spouse that follows the other in ungodliness for the sake of being faithful to their marriage vows. I believe men and women do sometimes make bad decisions in picking relationships, but that should not translate into a life sentence of bondage and misery for them as Paul also taught.

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? (1 Corinthians 7:12-16 KJV).

I will offer my opinion on where you may go from this point. You defiantly must realize you cannot go backwards and change the past. That is already written down in history. In my experience, you will suffer loss in a divorce and you must come to grips with that. You can mourn what was lost, but then all you can do is start from the point that you may be in now and move forward. To do that, you must understand where you are and what options you have to decide what to do next. Number one, you must understand what kind of relationship you are in now to make a logical decision as to which way to go. The only two types of relationship you can be in with opposing views on religion is what I discussed earlier in this study on face-to-face or back-to-back. The end result of these types of both of these relationships I perceive to be destructive as I explained earlier, unless the other spouse is changed by the Lord.

Please understand this, you are not going to change them into a Christian! Only Jesus Christ can change their life. The most you can hope for by trying to change them yourselves is maybe a promise by them to change, depending how much pressure you

use. This will almost always end in failure. Their spirit may be willing, but their flesh is weak. As I see it, if Jesus Christ does not change them, then you have to decide next if you are going to walk with them in hoping they will eventually be changed or are you going to leave them. You have to come to that decision. I do know that you cannot go and stay at the same time. If you do decide to leave then, if you enter into another relationship, please learn from your mistakes. Look for a spouse that you don't have to try and change and is truly focused on Jesus Christ and not some religion.

If you are still committed at this point in saving your marriage, then maybe what I am sharing here can help. If you are in the position that you are deeply hurt by your spouse, you must first find a way to forgive them. I know it happens, I have hurt people in relationships that I cared deeply for. Once again you must realize that you can't go back and change what happened, so all you can do is start from where you are now and go forward. There is an old saying that says, "If you live in the past, then you are dead in the present, and you have no future". If you can't find a way to forgive them, try doing this instead. Jesus will forgive anybody. As you get your true love from Jesus, you have to get your forgiveness from Jesus also. Try praying once a day that Jesus would forgive them for what they did to you, just like Stephen prayed for the Lord to forgive the people that were stoning him in (Acts 7:59,60 KJV). You are not letting them off the hook, but turning them over to Jesus, so you can be free. After you get to the point where you can freely pray this prayer for Jesus to forgive them, then one day try praying for your spouse yourself.

I want to also expose a trick that men use on woman many times that is far more destructive and very serious. Some men will verbally abuse their spouse in an attempt to break down their self-esteem. If men are successful in this, then the only sense of worth or value a woman has comes from what their husbands will give them. If not even their husband places value on their wife, then she feels she has no value to anyone else either. Only if a woman truly knows who they are in Christ and that they are a daughter of God, then they are destined to live in a marriage of constant uncertainty. Women that are overcome by this trick are constantly kept off balance and rarely come to a stable enough position to make a solid decision on leaving or staying in that relationship.

I also see today a steady decline in the way woman are perceived by many men and society from fifty years ago. Fifty years ago women were many times set on a pedestal and respected by men. Why did men do that? Simple, because women back then acted respectable. What many young girls today are buying music that refers to them as "ho's", and they wear the term "bitch" as a badge of honor. The word "bitch" means a female dog. Many girls today are embracing derogatory names and think it is cool or funny, but then they are reducing themselves to that identity in their lifestyles and actions. We see society and men today starting to perceive women in this way also and are responding to them accordingly. In many men's eyes, these girls that have gone wild are changing men and societies perception of all women. Men are starting to look at younger women as drinking buddies that they can have sex with later, instead of a woman that they would want to be the mother of their child. Older women also are being portrayed in society and on television as desperate and running around the neighborhoods looking for sex. It does not take a visionary or a rocket scientist to see where this road of decline that many women are on will lead. In many countries even today, women are considered a little above animals and treated accordingly. The older women in America need to stop for a

second and look where they are and many of the young women are heading. Through the degrading of women in songs and television and the sexual revolution, women in the future could be eventually looked at as in other countries as nothing more than breeding stock. Many young and older women are somehow thinking they are finally finding great liberty and sexual freedom today in these lifestyles, but I perceive women have turned full circle and are going right back to square one. It took women to accept these stereotypes so to reverse this trend it will take women that will stand up and reject these stereotypes. The Bible teaches that it is the older women's responsibility to teach the next generation of women.

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:3-5 KJV).

A father can teach a daughter that she has great value, but I don't believe a man can effectively teach a girl how to become a respectable woman. Women do not deceive yourselves, as you can see in other countries, men and society can and will adapt to accept women as only breeding stock if that is your wish.

I mainly wanted this study to be focused on the marriage union, but I just want to stop briefly and address the subject of rebellious children. They can be very destructive to a marriage if not handled properly. I have heard countless sermons about how parents are to blame if a child goes astray or is rebellious. I want to put in a word of support in for the parents. Even if parents do everything right, a child can be rebellious and go astray, because they inherited a sin nature and rebellious spirit from Adam, and the only cure for that is Jesus Christ, not better parenting. I also want to touch briefly on the subject of divorce, because many men and women want to get remarried sometime, but they do not understand divorce. In the church, many times divorced people are looked down upon, but they are in some pretty amazing company. God was even divorced once.

The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. (Jeremiah 3:6-8 KJV).

In the Bible there are several verses on why a couple could get a divorce, but what actually is a true Biblical divorce is in God's eyes.

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife (Deuteronomy 24:1,2 KJV).

Man has added more stipulations to the biblical divorce procedure that was not spoken of in the Bible. Divorce is much more complicated now than when it was described in the Bible. The divorce now has to be handled in a court and a judge must sign it to be legal in man's eyes. The reason for this is to divide up property and child custody. According to the Bible, divorce was final when the man handed the woman a divorce paper and told her to get out, the Bible says that she is able to go be another man's wife.

I want to share something here that I believe has also brought much harm to many marriages. I want to address this to the men that are married. I have seen a study that is quoted often on the Internet in varying percentages. The one that I saw said that the average person uses 40 percent of their mind worrying about something that will never come to pass and 30 percent of their mind worrying about something that has happened and cannot be changed. According to this study, 70 percent of the average person's mind is distracted worrying about things that they cannot control. Do not add your fears to your wife! If any husbands have a fear that is not proven, do not share this with your wife unless it is valid and certain. Many women try to get their husbands to open up and share their fears so they can show their husbands some support. I believe men should open up to their wives about certain things, but what usually happens when a husband shares their fears with their wife is now you have two people in the marriage that are worrying about something that may not even happen. Your wives may think they are strong, but they will sense a loss of security in their husband and internalize it, whether they admit it or not. You will notice a difference in their behavior toward you if you jeopardize their sense of security.

For the end of this study, I want to discuss one of the most important issues that are related to a successful marriage. I also want to stand up for the husbands that have been beaten up in the church by pastors and women that have accused them of not being the spiritual head of their house. I think almost every pastor has one sermon on beating up men in the church for not being the spiritual leader of their home. I want to expose this so maybe some pastors will start building up the men in the church instead. There is a reason for some of this.

Sunday school classes and church services are attended by both the husband and the wife, and they are both usually on the same learning level. The Sunday school teacher, pastor, cell or small group leader, or TV evangelist has replaced the husband as the spiritual leader of the home. This then can present other problems if the wife starts comparing her husband's spiritual walk to their Sunday school teacher or pastor or small group leader. Many women get their spiritual teaching now and their doctrine from women's conferences, the latest Christian author, television or radio. Many times the husbands cannot compete with these other spiritual leaders as "priest" of his home. How can a man that has spent all day at a job, come home and compete with a TV evangelist or a professor of theology, or Christian author that their wife has been listening to? Then on Sunday they have to compete with a pastor and a Sunday school teacher. I participated in a men's only Bible study because I think it builds up men when they get to share a new revelation that they have received with their wife. The husband actually gets to step into the role of the priest of his home. He gains respect and reverence from his wife and he

comes to realize that he has a greater responsibility and duty in his family's spiritual health instead of leaving that to someone else.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

The same thing applies to the children in the church today. The youth pastors in the church have stepped into the families and become the children's spiritual leader instead of their father. There are many teenagers and children that would never fuss, cuss, and fight with their youth pastor like they would talk bad and argue with their father. Why is that? Because the youth in the church today look at and reverence the youth pastor as God's representative to them. The father used to hold that position also, as being God's representative to their children.

In many ways, the church today has stepped in and taken away the ministry of the husband to his family. I think Paul was warning about this very thing happening to a marriage in 1 Corinthians 14:34,35 KJV. In these scriptures, Paul was not trying to claim that women were any less spiritual or less of a person in the Lord's eyes, but it could be damaging their husband's credibility in his family's eyes.

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34,35).

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Ephesians 5:33).

I am strictly dealing with a husband and wife relationship here and not a believer and Christ relationship, because the Bible says that in Christ there is neither male nor female in (Galatians 3:28). A woman can share her testimony of a changed life just like a man. The Bible also says that in the end time, both sons and daughters and servants and handmaidens will prophecy in Acts 2:17,18. I have heard many pastors say that the man and woman are co-equals in the leadership of the marriage, in light of all the scriptures that stands in contradiction to this, where do they get this doctrine? Even in the union of the believer with Jesus Christ, Jesus is accepted as the leader of that relationship.

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

If this idea of the wife submitting to her husband only came from one scripture, then you might be able to argue against it, but this doctrine is found in many verses of the Bible. I asked a pastor one time after showing them many scriptures proving that the man is the head of the marriage, why do they preach them as co-equals in the leadership of the marriage? He said that if you preach that the man is the head of the marriage, then that tends to breed arrogance in man. This is where I think many pastors may miss this. It is

not the Biblical principles of a wife submitting to her husband that breed's the arrogance in man. That is an issue of the flesh. The problem is the husband's heart, not the Biblical principles for the leadership in the marriage. I have even heard woman make a joke about these verses, and they say, "the husband may be the head, but the wife is the neck that turns the head". What does the Bible have to say?

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing (Ephesians 5:22-24 KJV).

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3 KJV).

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man (1 Corinthians 11:7,8 KJV).

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them (Colossians 3:18,19 KJV).

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:3-5 KJV).

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; (1 Peter 3:1 KJV).

For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:5-7).

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Timothy 2:11-14 KJV).

If women today do not accept their Biblical role in the marriage as addressed in all these scriptures, and pastors don't preach they should, then the pastors need to quit

demanding the men to keep their Biblical role as God ordained head of the marriage that is spoken of in the very same verses! We can just continue as we are going in the church today and sit back and see if the divorce ratio in the church stabilizes or increases. What I see are many pastors that are just causing confusion. If the church wants to help restore and reverse the decline of marriage today, then try strengthening and supporting the men and then let them strengthen their wives and families.

I can tell you that if the church doesn't start supporting the fathers and husbands, then who will? I will support them in this Bible study, but I am just one voice. Society already portrays husbands and fathers as stumbling, bumbling idiots on TV and in movies. The old saying "father knows best" has been changed into "father knows nothing". Here is the secret to the successful marriage.

Make sure that the husbands have a true relationship with Jesus Christ, and are not just making vows to the church and to each other to keep promises to their families. Their spirit may be willing, but their flesh is weak. If the husband in the marriage is truly saved, then the true love will follow.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7 KJV).

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Franklin Whittenburg
P.O.Box 87
Hixson, Tn 37343