

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE LESSON 1 What is a Biblical Marriage?

Marriage is the first institution established by God within the Old Testament for mankind. Within human relationships, no relationship is higher than marriage. Marriage is used within the Bible as an example to reflect a proper relationship with Jesus Christ. This lesson will discuss what biblical marriage is and how God established marriage to operate.

MARRIAGE DEFINED

Marriage is defined as *the state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law; the mutual relation of married persons; the institution whereby individuals are joined in marriage; an intimate or close union.*

This is the definition as described by a standard dictionary but let us examine God's definition by looking at the first marriage within the Bible.

- **And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**

Genesis 1:28 KJV

- **Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**

Genesis 2:24 KJV

Within a biblical marriage, there is only one man and one woman. God's design of marriage **EXCLUDES** the following: homosexual (same-sex), transsexual (involving at least one transsexual person), human-animal, companion-based (sexless friendship), common law (no marriage ceremony but declared through law after an established time), polygamous (multiple spouses at the same time), open (multiple sex partners while married to another person), and time-bound (designated for only a specific time) marriages. As marriage is the first establishment God created, there is no doubt this is one area the enemy attacks the most. This means the enemy will not only attack the husband and wife within the marriage but also mock the establishment itself.

What does the Bible say about marriage?

- **And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his**

wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mark 10:5-9 KJV

As Jesus is confirming here to the Pharisees, marriage is one man and one woman joining together to be one flesh. Father, mother, or any other person is NOT to have a place within the marriage. With this information, it is the responsibility of each spouse to do their part to work on the marriage and not give room for others to get in the middle creating issues. Advice from biblical elders (whether parents, pastors, family members, etc.) is a great idea but allowing those individuals or putting those individuals within the marriage is wrong. The husband and wife should look in the Word, pray, and seek God together for the answers to whatever the situation may be. Ultimately, the husband (right or wrong) will have to make the final decision and lead his wife and family (if applicable). This process will be discussed in another lesson.

When a husband and wife join together to become one, they are joined in the body (sexually), soul (mind, will, emotion), and spirit (joined as one in God's eyes but also knit in a spiritual connection). This connection should be a lifelong commitment, but not every marriage maintains this path. Ken Blount has stated that successful marriages are not luck of the draw but are built. God designed marriage to benefit each spouse and create a team that loves one another in accomplishing what He desires to get done. Remember, these lessons are designed to look at marriage biblically, not culturally. Man was created to worship God and marriage was designed to help man be more effective in fulfilling the plans God has for that couple.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PLEASING A SPOUSE

- **But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.**

1 Corinthians 7:32-34 KJV

Paul begins these verses by saying, "I want you to be free from the concerns of this life". If someone is solely focused on God more can be done for Him. When married or parenting, there is a focus on God but also on those family members (within the same home) that cannot be neglected. Although the focus must be on God as well as a spouse there is assistance in getting things done for Him. Christians must remember God is into multiplication, not addition. Although a spouse must please and care for the other spouse one can put 100 to flight while two can put 10,000 to flight (**Deuteronomy 32:30**).

For those that are not married, they are to pursue God with less focus on earthly things. Married people are to do things for God but also please their spouse. This displays the importance of marriage and how that relationship is first and foremost to God before conducting ministry, as written through Paul by the Holy Spirit. As a husband and wife team can assist one another in various ways there can arise fewer temptations to fall into sin or other pits creating hindrances to serving God. On the other hand, a spouse can be a source of hindrance or distraction if not aligned with the heavenly vision for that marriage. This further emphasizes the necessity of finding the correct spouse.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE IS A BLESSING

A man that finds a wife *should be* very blessed (**Proverbs 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 31:10**). A woman that has a husband *should have* protection, provision, and is blessed (**1 Timothy 5:8; Genesis 18:19; 1 Peter 3:7**). Each spouse plays an important role and benefits the other spouse in ways that they could not achieve on their own.

- **Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.**

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 KJV

These verses reflect the assistance that can be offered within the marriage to bless each spouse. Each spouse should produce the Fruit of the Spirit within their life to be the best spouse not only according to the other spouse's likes/dislikes but according to the biblical standard.

- **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.**

Galatians 5:22-24 KJV

Marriage should be more enjoyable when it is a biblical marriage. This does not mean that everything will be perfect or easy, but should have a better foundation due to God being the center of the union. Using the Fruit of the Spirit assists in buffering the attitudes and moments of flesh that the other spouse may have but allows peace to remain within the home. This does not excuse the wrongs to be permitted but allows moments of the human element to not create bigger issues within the marriage or the home.

GUARDING A BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

There are three common areas that the enemy aims for in marriages. These areas are communication, intimacy, and money. Each spouse must be alert regarding these areas to prevent the enemy from gaining ground and dividing the marriage. Marriage is a lifetime commitment that must be guarded and protected. Understanding that marriage is joining together until death (or an atrocious sin takes place) is the requirement of the covenant

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that is established before God on the wedding day with witnesses present. Each spouse must guard their marriage as well as guard it together with their spouse to obtain and keep a healthy biblical successful marriage.

Producing the fruit of the Spirit and keeping the presence of God within the marriage will assist in maintaining the bond of unity and love in the heart of each spouse making the relationship deeper. This requires each spouse to have their own walk with God and apply the Word of God to their part of the marriage.

May we as Christians understand what a biblical marriage is and now be armed with the Word of God to produce marriages that bring honor to God and bless our homes.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

LESSON 2

Submission and Subjection

Within every marriage, there is both submission and subjection. The Bible clearly lays out the roles of the husband and the wife, which will be discussed in other lessons, but submission and subjection within marriage are like a nicely paved street that runs in both directions toward each spouse at the proper time.

DEFINITIONS

Submission is defined as *yielding to governance or authority, subordinate to, obeying, the voluntary attitude of giving in, and cooperating*. **Subjection** is defined as *to bring under control* and also has the same definition of submission but each word has different pictures within its usage.

Submission is the line of authority that reflects one ranking above another. Subjection is the line of authority that displays presenting information for consideration or input before making a decision. Every person is under submission to God because there is none like Him, while in a marriage each situation should reflect whether the spouse is submitted or subjected to the other spouse.

THE WIFE SUBMITS TO THE HUSBAND

- **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

- **And the wife see that she reverence her husband.**

Ephesians 5:33b KJV

- **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.**

Colossians 3:18 KJV

These verses display there is an honor and submission that the wife is required to have for her husband. Within the home, no one outranks the husband even God (but it is proper for the husband to submit to Him). This comes at the price of the husband carrying the weight of the household's future on his shoulders. If the husband is wrong the wife can assist in bringing the Bible and wisdom to her husband, but the ultimate decision is in the husband's hands. If he chooses to remain wrong, especially when he knows he is wrong, then that judgment is upon him as destruction comes to his household. If the husband is wrong yet allows himself to be subjected to his wife's advice (as his helpmeet) to make the proper correction, then the house benefits from that subjection to a better path. If the husband is right and the household is submitted to his authority, the entirety of the household reaps

the benefits of that submission to God. This reflects the importance of submission and subjection. If a wife has a reputation for not submitting to her husband, he may have a hard time allowing himself to be subject to her advice. If her reputation is one of submission her husband should be willing to use this wonderful resource God has given him to see a different perspective (at times) that he may not be able to see. Submission is vital to be a proper helpmeet.

THE HUSBAND SUBJECTS TO THE WIFE

- **And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.**
Genesis 2:18 KJV
- **And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.**
Genesis 2:20 KJV
- **For the first man didn't come from woman, but the first woman came from man. And man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man.**
1 Corinthians 11:8-9 NLT
- **But among the Lord's people, woman are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God.**
1 Corinthians 11:11-12 NLT

As displayed from the above verses, although man, as a husband, has the highest rank within the home he needs the help of his wife to be balanced. This requires subjection on the husband's part to allow his wife to give input or wisdom that will assist him in making the final decision. If the husband does not allow his wife to be the helpmeet God designed her to be then he runs the risk of being unbalanced and a dictator within his home. God made Eve for Adam to not be alone and to assist him. In some areas, the husband submits to his wife in the role that he ordains her (gives her the authority) to fulfill.

- **Therefore, I want younger women to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us.**
1 Timothy 5:14 HCSB
- **So that they may encourage the young women to tenderly love their husbands and their children, to be sensible, pure, makers of a home [where God is honored], good-natured, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.**
Titus 2:4-5 AMP

Husbands should allow their wives to be the governess of the home to oversee the operations of the family. With this process, a husband would submit to the systems his

wife has in place to keep the home in order, but he would have the ultimate authority to overrule that system if he needed to change it to fit the heavenly vision. Although he has the authority to change those systems he should not abuse that authority because he must submit to a plan that he doesn't like. God still helps a husband today have this wonderful, beautiful helpmeet known as a wife within his life. It is the responsibility of each spouse to know when to submit and when to subject to one another.

SUBMISSION TO SPIRITUAL LEADERS

As previously mentioned, within the home no one outranks the husband, even spiritual leaders including the local pastor. Even God *does not make* the husband submit to Him but allows the husband to make the final decision whether right or wrong. It would behoove the husband to submit to God. Although the entire family should be submitted to the local pastor within the church the family must submit to the husband/father within the home.

- **Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.**

1 Peter 5:5 KJV

- **Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.**

Romans 13:1-2 KJV

- **For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.**

Romans 13:4-7 KJV

The pastor, as well as other spiritual leaders, are established to assist every member of the family within the church, but within the home, there is a different system of authority that establishes that unit. The husband and wife are taught by the pastor to grow in the things of God (**Ephesians 4:11-12**), but the husband is charged with the responsibility of leading biblically and correctly. The wife and children within the home are the husband/father's disciples. The fruit and character produced within those individuals are a reflection of the husband/father. The husband should reflect his pastor (the doctrine of messages not the person of the pastor), the Word of God, and most importantly Jesus Christ as his example.

- **Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.**

Hebrews 13:17 KJV

The family should submit to the pastor together to be of one mind and one accord with God's plan for their lives. Within the home, the husband is the final authority that can choose to submit to the Word of God, the local pastor, or the will of God **OR** choose not to submit creating issues for his household due to disobedience. Husbands, the success of your family depends on your walk with God and your willingness to submit to Him. This is a critical aspect of being a husband that many men do not even consider.

Although husbands are to have the final and highest authority within the home this does not permit them to be the dictator or jerk to the rest of the family members. As the leader, he gives an example of what right looks like. If the husband fulfills his role correctly he gives his sons an example of how to treat their future wife, his daughters an example of what to look for in a future husband, and protection, provision, and pleasure to his wife. If the wife fulfills her role correctly she gives her sons an example of what to look for in a future wife, her daughters an example of how to treat their future husbands, and respect, help, and pleasure to her husband.

May we, as husbands and wives, be in proper submission as well as subjection to one another to honor God within our lives and our marriages.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

LESSON 3

The Role of the Husband

In the beginning, God established man to be His servant but to also have authority. God ordained man to have dominion over everything on the earth. This includes the man being the head of the family within his home. Man's authority is only second to God on the earth.

- **And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**

Genesis 2:15-17 KJV

God gave Adam authority and freedom to eat from any source within the garden with one exception. Even in today's time, God allows man, as well as mankind, to have a choice of what to do with the authority given unto him. God formed man to not only give him life but authority.

- **And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.**

Genesis 2:7 KJV

- **And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.**

Genesis 1:26 KJV

As man began to establish his authority within the earth from God, God chose to make woman to help him. This did not create someone for man to use his authority against but to lead in accomplishing what God gave him to do.

- **Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?**

1 Corinthians 9:5 KJV

Before a man views marriage as having someone to be in charge of and command, he must see the woman he is courting (for and with the intention of marriage) as his sister in Christ that will help him do more for the kingdom of God.

- **How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight...**

Deuteronomy 32:30a KJV

- **And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.**

Genesis 2:18 KJV

God not only gave Adam as the first man a helpmeet with Eve but also gave him the authority to name her like he had named everything within the earth that was submitted to him (**Genesis 2:23**). God gave Adam this precious gift of a wife to help him as opposed to abusing her verbally, emotionally, sexually, or physically. Man's role as a husband is to honor his wife, love his wife, and protect her.

- **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 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.**

Ephesians 5:25-29 KJV

As the husband looks at his wife, he should see the wonderful gift that God has given him to help him accomplish what God desires in his life. When a husband loves his wife, he gives himself and anything he has for her. He should also keep her clean in every aspect that is his responsibility. This includes helping disciple her mind, disciple her health, disciple her emotions, not defiling her sexually to keep her clean, and giving her the proper attention in cherishing her not only because he loves her but to keep her heart and mind correct toward him.

A husband should not be a brute beast to his wife or his family. This creates division and may allow a root of bitterness to spring up.

- **Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.**

Hebrews 12:14-15 KJV

- **But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals (*brute beasts*), they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction.**

Jude 10 NLT

When husbands behave like brute beasts, they act and react with carnal instincts as opposed to having Godly character according to the Bible. This unchanged attitude or character leads to destruction. As a husband, this is not only individual destruction but the destruction of the wife and children (if applicable) because the man is held accountable for

his authority and leadership within the home. For the majority of animals, they have sexual intercourse for the purpose of reproduction or just for pleasure usually in non-monogamous encounters. Brute beasts find another animal to take advantage of but usually not for the purpose of love. Husbands should love their wives. This suggests making love as opposed to performing a sexual act that is no different than a beast.

- **Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.**

Colossians 3:19 KJV

Men are created to be sexual beings that have desires, but there is still a fruit of the Spirit called temperance (self-control) that is to be present within the husband's life. Wives should help their husbands with these desires but husbands are not to take advantage of their helpmeet in any regard. When husbands treat their wives with respect and love not only will wives be more responsive to the husband's needs (sexually or any other need), but he is also protecting her heart. If a wife cannot trust her husband with her heart who can she trust?

Husbands are to be the protector (spiritually, emotionally, physically, sexually, etc.) and providers (financially, spiritually, sexually, etc.) for their wives.

- **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

Men are not to treat their wives as if they are weak and incapable of anything but being a protector, discipler, and provider that displays both a strong and soft hand according to the situation. One element that is due to the wife from the husband is honor. Honor is placing a value upon someone or something. True honor involves honesty, fairness, and integrity. To honor is the opposite of using for lust or lacking value. When a husband has honor for his wife she is valuable to him for multiple reasons. She is not a sex object, she is his lover. She is not a servant, she is his queen. She is not a whipping post, she is his best friend. She is not someone to kick, she is his better half.

Today's culture leads men to believe they must be brute, mean, unemotional gladiators but this is could not be further from the truth. Men, especially husbands and fathers, are to reflect the characteristics of Jesus according to the circumstance at the time. Jesus loved in kindness (**John 3:16; 11:33; 15:13**), Jesus was firm in not allowing God to be mocked (**Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46**), and Jesus cried (**John 11:35**). There are so many more aspects that Jesus gave to be an example to those who follow Him that one lesson cannot encompass them all. Culture should not define husbands, but the Word of God should define what a husband is.

May Christian men fulfill the role of husband and Christian women know what a husband is according to God's standard and not how culture defines this role.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE LESSON 4 The Role of the Wife

The role of the wife is an important part of the marriage institution. More is said about having a wife to the husband than having a husband to the wife. This reflects how important it is for the wife to be a helpmeet to the husband. It is vital for men to be holy and seek God regarding who to marry.

- **And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 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.**

Genesis 2:18-22 KJV

God expressed that it is not good that man should be alone. God had given Adam the responsibility of having dominion and working for him, so He blessed Adam with Eve to assist him. Tim LaHaye has stated in his book *The Battle for the Family*, "There are reciprocal economic obligations between husband and wife that is, they both work for the family, even though the amount and kind of labor or production may be far from equal". Whether the wife works for a paycheck or works within the home, her responsibilities are important to the marriage that can easily be overlooked if a person is only seeing the financial aspect of work.

THE WIFE WALKS WITH THE HUSBAND

God formed Eve from Adam's rib. The wife was not made from the skull of a man to be the head of the husband but she was made from the rib. She was also not made from his heel for him to walk on her. The rib reflects how the wife walks beside the husband in fulfilling the call of God on his life as his helpmeet.

- **Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.**

Proverbs 31:10-12 KJV

A virtuous (morally excellent, righteous, having excellence) woman is priceless to her husband. The husband will benefit from a wife that he can trust because she comforts, encourages, and does only good for him. No wife will be perfect, but there is a difference between making a mistake toward a husband and willfully sinning against a husband.

THE WIFE SUBMITS TO AND HONORS THE HUSBAND

When the wife submits to her husband this allows the husband to have the proper authority to lead her as he is led by God.

- **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

One responsibility of the wife is to be submitted to *her* husband, as mentioned in a previous lesson. Part of this submission is giving respect to her husband. Many television shows or media sources portray the husband as an idiot and the wife as the brains or real authority of the family but this could not be further from God's design. Wives must see each attack against their minds and faith as Christian women to maintain their proper role according to what God designed them to be.

- **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fitting in the Lord.**

Colossians 3:18 KJV

For the husbands, this requires giving the wife the quality of character that is worthy of respect and honor. Giving this honor and respect to the husband will also create confidence within him. Feminism is not God's design but a ploy of the enemy to destroy the institution of marriage as well as what a woman was biblically designed for. This movement creates competition between the husband and the wife, blurs the distinction between the sexes, creates dissatisfaction with being a housewife and mother, causes insecurity in women, destroys a true feminine character, causes insecurity in men, and also makes children insecure. To overcome this rebellion and mindset submission, love, and honor are required. Submission, love, and honor should be key elements of every biblical marriage.

- **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 KJV

Reverence does not include obeying him as a king or allowing him to be abusive but does require respect and love. Part of this respect is carrying out the missions or tasks the husband desires to be completed within his home or family.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A WIFE

A wife is to govern the home according to the husband's vision.

- **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 2:4-5 KJV

Some women view the role of a governess of the home as a lower class of woman due to the feminist movement, but this responsibility in God's eyes displays assisting in the highest form to achieve what He planned for that specific family according to the husband's calling. When the wife is forced to work outside the home, a spirit of independence may arise, especially when tension rises within the marriage, further dividing the husband and wife as opposed to the wife having the biblical desire toward her husband (**Genesis 3:16**). The wife must have and maintain the proper attitude toward her role within the home, especially when working a job outside the home.

The role of the wife is to be the governess of the home, the authority with the husband, or the authority in the husband's absence (**Judges 4** see *Deborah fulfill the role as a judge in her husband's absence*). She is vital to the home but especially within the marriage. The wife also has the capability of turning the atmosphere of the home into peace or strife because she has been given the authority to govern or lead that establishment.

- **It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.**

Proverbs 21:19 KJV

- **Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.**

Proverbs 14:1 KJV

These verses within Proverbs display that the wife (the woman) has the ability to create a lack of peace or build the home with wisdom. A biblical wife will seek God each day to know how to handle the various situations within the home (building the home). Even before children arrive within the home it is still vital for the wife to govern the home. With this mindset in place, as children come systems are already in place to keep the home running smoothly and efficiently.

THE WIFE SANCTIFIES THE HUSBAND

- **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 KJV

Another role of the wife is to assist in sanctifying the unbelieving husband by being a holy example of the Gospel lived out. The holy wife will pray for her unbelieving family

members, read and live the Word of God, and be that consistent person that displays the love of God. The wife that is this example will have companionship with her husband.

HELPING THE HUSBAND

Companionship is a need of the husband. This is included in showing respect for the husband, but also having good communication and being his best friend. Part of this companionship is doing things that the husband likes to do. *(Not to be left out, the husband should also participate in things the wife likes to do as well.)*

Another need that a husband has is sex. Sex is an important part of marriage not just to men, although most women may agree that men place this higher on the needs list, but also for women. Marriage is the only God-ordained permission for sex. With this in mind, a man desires to participate in this physical intimacy with his wife.

- **The wife *gives authority over her body* to her husband, and the husband *gives authority over his body* to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.**

1 Corinthians 7:4-5 NLT

Although the husband is over his wife's body this does not permit abuse. The wife is not a sex slave to her husband but she is to be intimate with him to satisfy him as well as herself. On the opposite side of this scenario, a wife should not withhold herself from her husband as a form of tantrum or manipulation. Husbands must also understand when the wife desires to wait a day or two there are limits to her physical body that he needs to respect. Husbands and wives must judge each scenario according to the *facts* at hand to determine the true motives. Just because the wife says, "no" does not constitute a disobedient wife, but she must also determine why she is saying "no" to begin with. *She* should be submitted to her husband and *he* should love her correctly to have the proper biblical formula for their marriage. When this formula is used correctly the result is an amazing couple that is strong, united, holy, and walking with God together.

May we as Christians understand the role of biblical wives and how this position is important to the whole family, especially the husband as his helpmeet.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

LESSON 5

The Key of Teamwork

Biblical marriage is about honoring God via the vision He has given the husband, but the heart of marriage is teamwork. Everything the couple is to accomplish in life requires teamwork. John Maxwell has said, "Teamwork makes the dream work". This is not only reflected in a ministry or big tasks for a couple's marriage but more so in the daily grind of normal life. A wife is not only the helpmeet to the husband but the husband should also help the wife accomplish the things she needs to accomplish.

The spirit, soul, and flesh of the husband and wife are to be one (**Genesis 2:24**). As the couple works together this creates a deeper relationship within all three of these aspects. The more a couple argues or chooses not to work together the more division takes root within the marriage making what should be one into two.

- **Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.**

Hebrews 12:15b NLT

- **Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.**

Ephesians 4:31-32 NLT

Teamwork is more than just accomplishing things together but reinforcing the team as one unit that allows more time and creates an appreciation for one another producing more intimacy on various levels. The enemy desires to attack this attitude of teamwork within a marriage to feel isolation or desertion. Husbands and wives must do their part to not allow any room for the enemy to use this attack against their spouse. Be there for your spouse and use teamwork to not only fill in gaps when one needs assistance but do things together.

GETTING THE BEST OF ONE ANOTHER

The more teamwork that takes place within marriage the more each spouse should receive the best from one another. Alleviating burdens from one another displays love and companionship that should be part of the foundation of the marriage as God designed.

- **Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**

Galatians 6:2 KJV

Bearing a spouse's burdens not only helps the other spouse but also helps the marriage. Working together should not be a responsibility for marriage but a desire within each person because love is present and God has joined the two together to be one.

- **What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**

Mark 10:9 KJV

When teamwork is not chosen as a method of operation, that spouse (or each spouse if both oppose teamwork) can be creating a division of what God has joined together. Many times people will read this verse and think about others creating a division or issue for another couple's marriage, but how many times does a couple hinder their own marriage or create unneeded issues sabotaging the very marriage they claimed to support until "death do them part".

Lester Sumrall says in his book *God's Blueprint for a Happy Home*, "Marriage is not a temporary arrangement. It is a commitment for life." Each spouse should be committed to forever with their spouse. Divorce is not an option (with exception of biblical reasons to be discussed in another lesson).

- **Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**

Matthew 19:6 KJV

Again, this same thought is spoken by Jesus in Matthew to not let man pull apart what God has joined together. This should be motivation for all married couples to resolve conflicts to restore peace and love within the marriage. Conflict resolution takes teamwork. In most circumstances, each spouse may have committed a wrong with at least one part of the issue at hand. No one is perfect hence the need for Christians to produce the fruit of the Spirit even when the flesh desires to fulfill the exact opposite.

- **But the fruit of the Spirit [the result of His presence within us] is love [unselfish concern for others], joy, [inner] peace, patience [not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.**

Galatians 5:22-23a AMP

Biblical marriage should have these fruit within each spouse creating more unity each day. A true test of character is if these fruits can be produced on a routine basis with family, especially within a marriage. While it may be easier to produce these fruit for someone that will not be around long enough to truly try that person's fruit, producing these fruit within the home is the key to a blessed home and a biblical marriage.

TEAMWORK OPENS THE DOOR FOR INTIMACY

When working together on various tasks daily, a biblical marriage will be blessed on **emotional** (deepens the emotions between husband and wife), **natural** (by accomplishing things), and **spiritual** (connecting husband, wife, and God) levels. Part of the emotional relationship that is deepened through teamwork is the closeness that a wife can feel in having a protector, provider, best friend as her husband helps her, and knowing she is not alone. A husband can feel the emotions of being needed as his wife's "man" when helping her, supported by his wife when she helps him, and knowing he is not alone.

When this closeness is confirmed regularly the relationship will get more intimate on various levels. Holding hands, kissing, flirting, and other intimate activities become more frequent due to the nature of the relationship not being isolating or burdensome with only one spouse carrying the load. Even the activities of holding hands, kissing, flirting, etc. take teamwork in recognizing whether the other spouse is receptive or not of these advances and if the timing is appropriate. Not every moment is appropriate for such activity but when teamwork is present more time and opportunities can be made for this type of intimacy.

Let's face it, a man is usually ready to be intimate on any given level (especially the most intimate one of lovemaking), so he should be more of a team player to help his wife with the responsibilities of life to make more time and opportunities for intimacy. Husbands should not focus on sex as the end goal of why help their wives but instead focus on giving their lives to their wives and reaping the benefits of that love and devotion.

- **Husbands, love your wives [seek the highest good for her and surround her with a caring, unselfish love], just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.**

Ephesians 5:25 AMP

To love someone to the point of giving up oneself for another is the highest form of love and honor. This should be the heart of every husband.

- **Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.**

John 15:13 KJV

For many husbands sacrificing their life is not a requirement but sacrificing a nap, a hobby, tv time, or some other desire to help be the teammate their wife needs is necessary. Marriage is like a bank account, if a person only takes from it it will be depleted of all positive standing. Marriage requires both spouses to make a deposit (especially the husbands) to keep it in a healthy status.

- **In the same way, you husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way [with great gentleness and tact, and with an intelligent regard for the marriage relationship], as with someone physically weaker, since she is a woman. Show her honor and respect as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered or ineffective.**

1 Peter 3:7 AMP

Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote these words for husbands to know how important it is to have the proper mindset for treating wives correctly. Husbands must be not only the teammate but the team captain that acts and gives directions. When the captain leads correctly the whole team wins.

- **Then the Lord passed by in front of him, and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth (faithfulness).**

Exodus 34:6 AMP

This verse is another display of how the Lord treats the people of God (**Ephesians 5:25**). Husbands are to assist by being gracious, slow to anger, having lots of lovingkindness, being faithful to their wife and their marriage, and having compassion. When each spouse (especially husbands) ensures they are being an active teammate this helps the other spouse (especially wives) feel the love and support they need or desire. Knowing love, kindness, and support are present will help a wife give her love to her husband the way he desires (and she desires) because he is displaying his love in a manner she desires or needs.

May we, as Christian spouses, understand that teamwork is an important key to marriage success and the biblical design.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE LESSON 6 The Marriage Bed

God established the institution of marriage and all of its components. One of the aspects of marriage is the marriage bed regarding sexual intimacy for one man and one woman united within the sanctity of their covenant with one another before God. The marriage bed is not only for reproduction but also for pleasure.

- **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 2:24-25 KJV

- **I belong to my lover, and he desires me.**

Songs of Songs 7:10 GNT
(Good News Translation)

Sexual intimacy is a great benefit to being married but is not what a marriage is based on. Adam and Eve were described to become one flesh, not only the union of physical but also the joining of spiritual and emotional. This intimacy creates a powerful force for God through the couple. Each of the five senses is involved in the act of making love creating a physical and emotional connection like nothing else. This enhances the experience for both the husband and the wife creating a deeper connection to one another.

- **The taste of honey is on your lips, my darling; your tongue is milk and honey for me. Your clothing has all the fragrance (*smell*) of Lebanon.**

Song of Songs 4:11 GNT

- **I was a virgin, like a wall; now my breasts are like towers. When my lover looks at me, he is delighted with what he sees.**

Song of Songs 8:10 NLT

The husband in this verse sees his wife and takes delight in what he sees. This reflects the entirety of the physical aspect of sex in joining together as husband and wife. When the marriage bed is handled biblically the marriage itself is stronger and holier to fulfill the plans God has for that couple.

FOREPLAY IS NOT A SIN

Some Christians consider this act sinful for various religious reasons, but the Bible clearly points out people of God using this as part of the marriage relationship.

- **Your lips cover me with kisses; your love is better than wine. Take me with you, and we'll run away; be my king and take me to your room. We will be happy together, drink deep, and lose ourselves in love.**

Song of Songs 1:2, 4a GNT

- **My lover has the scent of myrrh as he lies upon my breasts.**

Song of Songs 1:13 GNT

- **Who is this sweeping in from the desert, leaning on her lover? I aroused you under the apple tree, where your mother gave you birth, where in great pain she delivered you.**

Song of Songs 8:5 NLT

How does a spouse arouse their spouse? By using foreplay. Foreplay is not a dirty thing. Throughout the book of Song of Songs (aka Song of Solomon) foreplay, sexual intimacy, and expressions of love can be found.

- **But some time later, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out his window and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah. Immediately, Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed, She is obviously your wife!**

Genesis 26:8-9a NLT

This caressing and foreplay are noticeable enough to reveal to the king that there is more than a brother and sister kind of love in this situation as Isaac had lied about their relations. Tim LaHaye in his book *The Act of Marriage* says, "Modern experts tell us that foreplay before entrance is essential to a mutually satisfying experience". This part of the marriage bed is biblical and displayed within the Bible. Understanding making love in God's design can strengthen a marriage and bring pleasure in the process.

MAKING LOVE TAKES PRACTICE AND COMMUNICATION

Not every aspect of sex will fall into place just because a man and woman get married. This requires communication and practice for each spouse while working together. Just as discussing the various likes or dislikes of other topics, the marriage bed necessitates the same mode of operation. Marital sex should be approached without fear or selfishness and have courtesies applied to every occurrence.

- **Drink water from your own cistern [of a pure marriage relationship] and fresh running water from your own well.**

Proverbs 5:15 AMP

Sex is often viewed by Christians, not as a gift to be thankful for, but as an act that corresponds with guilt and shame. Sex is designed to be a method to serve the other spouse and for pleasure. The more each spouse tunes into the other spouse's sexual desires they will both be satisfied. Since God established this wonderful act between a husband and wife there should be no shame or guilt when sex is within its proper context. Drinking water from one's own cistern is keeping a pure marriage bed with one's own spouse. God not only instituted sex but created the sex drive.

- God saw *everything* that He had made, and behold, *it was very good* and He validated it completely. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

Genesis 1:31 AMP

God created everything (including man, woman, and a sex drive) and found it all to be very good. With this in mind, there should not be restrictions on the sexual intimacy between a husband and wife except for perversion.

THE MARRIAGE BED SHOULD HONOR GOD

When conducted biblically, everything about marriage should give glory to God, even sex.

- **Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

1 Corinthians 10:31 NASB

Honoring God within every aspect of marriage should be the desire of each spouse. Lester Sumrall has said in his book *60 Things God Said about Sex*, “No kind of sexual pleasure is off-limits to husband and wife, so long as it honors God”. Sex can honor God since He established this union unless a spouse uses this act with selfish or perverted motives.

Perversion includes but is not limited to: bringing in other people, pretending a spouse is another person (or having another perverse mindset), including animals, using unnatural methods of intercourse (body parts not designed for entry), or acts that are harmful to one’s body regarding either spouse. There are no other restrictions for married couples outside perversion.

- **Let us get up early and go to the vineyards to see if the grapevines have budded, if the blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love.**

Song of Songs 7:12 NLT

On the other hand, various positions and other playful means *that are not perverted* are completely up to the experimentation of the married couple. Let’s take a quick look at what the Bible has to say about this.

- **Let your fountain (wife) be blessed [with the rewards of fidelity], and rejoice in the wife of your youth. Let her be as a loving hind and graceful doe, Let her breasts refresh and satisfy you at all times; always be exhilarated and delight in her love.**

Proverbs 5:18-19 AMP

Here the husband is to be refreshed and satisfied by his wife’s breasts. This reflects that sex should be refreshing and bring excitement. Exhilarated means very happy, excited, or elated (marked by high spirits). Delight is defined as a high degree of gratification or pleasure. If sex is a taboo for Christians, then God would give the direction of only having

sex to produce children or give specific instructions on how to have sex just as He did with building the ark for Noah or how to build the temple. Praise God He didn't, He leaves this up to each couple.

- **Marriage is to be held in honor among all [that is, regarded as something of great value], and the marriage bed undefiled [by immorality or by any sexual sin]; for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.**

Hebrews 13:4 AMP

There is liberty in this intimate connection because every married couple is different. *Perversion is the enemy* of this holy act and must not be allowed within the marriage, especially in the marriage bed.

- **I am my lover's, and he claims me as his own. Come, my love, let us go out to the fields and spend the night among the wildflowers.**

Song of Songs 7:10-11 NLT

Many couples, either before marriage or after getting married, do not consider how much God designed marriage, including sexual intimacy. God designed sex to be the most intimate method for the man and woman to be united in every way. This is why it is so important for this act to be saved until the wedding night (**1 Corinthians 6:16**).

ENJOY THE MARRIAGE BED

Married couples should have an attitude of gratefulness and awe as opposed to guilt, shame, timidity, or suspicion of pleasure from such an intimate act. Although this wonderful gift of pleasure is available to married couples there is more to each spouse than just being lovers. This intimate union is more than physical but also a spiritual experience that deepens the growth between husband and wife.

- **Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself.**

1 Corinthians 6:19 NLT

When husband and wife join together there is more going on than just the physical intimacy. This is one of the many dangers of sex outside of marriage to join with someone that is not a spouse. Again, the two (husband and wife) becoming one flesh is emotional, spiritual, and physical. Sex is not the resolution for problems but can be the reward of working on a holy marriage by staying connected to God and spouse. This act of making love should be exciting and pleasurable.

- **Restore my strength with raisins and refresh me with apples! I am weak from passion. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand caresses me.**

Song of Songs 2:5-6 GNT

As the couple draws closer to God and each other the better and more intimate the relationship can get. For each spouse, sex fulfills different things that God designed to only be filled through this intimate act of love.

Even as a couple ages their lovemaking will keep them connected on each of these levels (emotional, physical, and spiritual). Although this act may transform over time and consist of different methods, the love and desire for one another should remain. As the couple ages, the lovemaking process will ultimately be up to the couple in how to proceed but every effort should be made to express love as agreed upon by both the husband and the wife.

Notice these notes from the book *The Act of Marriage*:

For men lovemaking does the following: *satisfies his sex drive, fulfills his manhood, enhances his love for his wife, reduces friction in the home, and provides life's most exciting experience.*

For women lovemaking does the following: *fulfills her womanhood, reassures her of her husband's love (companionship, compassion, and romantic love), satisfies her sex drive, relaxes her nervous system, and provides the ultimate experience.*

It should be the heart of every Christian marriage to honor God even in the marriage bed as well as a desire to receive the most from their marriage as God designed. God established the marriage bed with the purpose to bless His people as they serve Him. This wonderful benefit should be used but only within its proper institution of marriage.

May we, as Christians, keep the marriage bed undefiled and holy as we enjoy this wonderful benefit of sexual intimacy.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE LESSON 7 Three Areas of Attack

Throughout these lessons, we have studied the relationship between the husband and wife as established by God. God established marriage as an institution from the beginning of time so it is obvious that the enemy of God desires to destroy this relationship if not from outside then from within. As briefly mentioned in a previous lesson, there are three common areas of attack against a marriage: communication, intimacy, and money. Let us examine each of these categories.

COMMUNICATION

When communication is attacked tension can arise between spouses creating division. These assaults can come in various forms that include: unclear communication, lack of communication, emotional communication, or evil communication. Each of these forms attempts to separate each spouse not only physically but in the mind of at least one of the spouses. Communication in every relationship is vital, especially in marriage and a walk with God.

- **Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.**
James 1:19-20 KJV
- **Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**
Ephesians 4:29 KJV
- **Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.**
Colossians 4:6 KJV

God has given His Word to assist in having communication that is clear, correct, in love, and full of truth. Each spouse should strive to have proper communication with their spouse as well as protect communication about the marriage to prevent the enemy from being successful in attacking.

- **But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.**
Ephesians 4:15 KJV
- **And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**
Ephesians 4:32 KJV

- **Just say a simple, Yes, I will, or No, I won't. Anything beyond this is from the evil one.**

Matthew 5:37 NLT

When a person gives their word they are to keep it. Understanding that everyone will give an account of every idle word (**Matthew 12:36**) should help individuals use words more wisely and less emotionally. By using this mindset communication should begin to have clarity and be proper within the marriage between spouses.

INTIMACY

Intimacy on all levels is attacked within marriage by the enemy. The obvious attack on the marriage bed is through perversion or neglect but other subtle assaults include intimacy of holding hands, kissing, flirting, etc. to begin the separation of hearts and minds of each spouse.

- **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**

Revelation 2:4 KJV

This is Jesus addressing one of the churches in Revelation, but could He say the same thing about some marriages? Leaving the first love here is not the first love to come along but the first in rank, the highest-ranking love of one's life. Jesus was the first love of the church at Ephesus but they left Him. Jesus should not have to call any spouse out for this type of behavior. Each spouse should love God and their spouse as their highest ranking loves.

- **Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.**

Hebrews 13:4 NLT

- **Even so husbands should and are morally obligated to love their own wives as [being in a sense] their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.**

Ephesians 5:28 AMP

Love is not just an action carried out in bed but an expression that is conducted throughout the marriage in everyday life. If the enemy can create a division in this area of the marriage the relationship will deteriorate quickly. Of course, intimacy does include the marriage bed.

- **The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife. Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.**

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 NLT

Even the Bible states DO NOT let intimacy be attacked by the enemy through neglect or perversion. Marriages must stand against this attack of the enemy and honor God and one another within this institution.

MONEY

Money can be a source of attack from the enemy within a marriage creating stress on one or both spouses. A lack of money creates stress about how to survive financially leading to disagreements or other sources of division while an abundance of money creates pride that opens up other temptations.

- **Let your character [your moral essence, your inner nature] be free from the love of money [shun greed – be financially ethical], being content with what you have; for He has said, “I will never [under any circumstances] desert you [nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless], nor will I forsake or let you down or relax My hold on you [assuredly not]!”
Hebrews 13:5 AMP**
- **Lazy people are soon poor; hard workers get rich.** Proverbs 10:4 NLT
- **Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows over time.** Proverbs 13:11 NLT

No matter how a couple tries to shake something to get money from it, the proven method of having money is budgeting and being wise faithful stewards of what God has given a person. Marriages that do not have a solid foundation of God as the supply will tend to fall into either of these traps associated with a lack of money or an abundance of money. Having finances that are submitted to God and being stewarded according to His word will bring increase to that marriage.

- **He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.** Ecclesiastes 5:10 NASB

Money is not a source of joy for a marriage. Some marriages succumb to either lack of finances from income, lack of wisdom in spending, or lack of fulfillment from life (always seeking more money). No amount of money will ever be gained to keep a couple happy. The foundation of marriage should be God.

- **Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”** Luke 12:15 NLT

A biblical marriage honors God financially through tithing, giving in offerings, and being faithful stewards over what God has given the couple. God honors those that honor Him and seek Him FIRST (**Matthew 6:33**). When God is not put first in the seeking (putting Him first in everything) He does not have to supply every need.

COMBATING THE ENEMY IN THESE THREE AREAS

The common theme of a marriage is love and honor. Not only should each spouse love one another but each spouse should love God. This keeps the marriage blessed and covered in a holy anointing to fulfill each role in the manner God designed.

- **Love endures with patience and serenity, love is kind and thoughtful, and is not jealous or envious; love does not brag and is not proud or arrogant. It is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a wrong endured. It does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices with the truth [when right and truth prevail]. Love bears all things [regardless of what comes], believes all things [looking for the best in each one], hopes all things [remaining steadfast during difficult times], endures all things [without weakening]. Love never fails [it never fades nor ends].**

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a AMP

This one set of scripture can diffuse attacks on all three of these areas. Love is patient, is kind, is thoughtful, full of truth, believes, hopes, and endures/does not end. Looking at each of the three areas of attack there is wisdom in how love applies to each area. Love applies to communication by being patient, kind, thoughtful, full of truth, believing, and steadfast (communicate even in difficult times). Love applies to intimacy by being patient, kind, thoughtful, not holding account for wrongs, and does not end or fade. Love applies to money by being patient (not hasty in spending), kind and thoughtful (giving to those in need), not jealous or envious (does not keep up with the Jones'), and not proud or arrogant.

May Christian marriages guard these three areas against the enemy that seeks to destroy this beautiful institution.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

LESSON 8

Divorce and Remarriage

Throughout these lessons, marriage, as designed by God, has been established as well as describing what it takes to maintain a biblical marriage. When discussing marriage one must also discuss divorce and remarriage. Just as God established the institution of marriage, He knew that mankind would not be perfect in maintaining these relationships. God created guidelines for the people finding themselves in this situation. Not all couples will both walk with God as they should or at all for the duration of the marriage. This is one of many reasons to ensure a biblical foundation for every relationship and find the correct qualified person to marry to prevent this situation. Although not every person chooses to remain faithful to God or their spouse having a proper foundation will assist in a biblical marriage that will endure when found faithful to God.

The word divorce means the action or an instance of legally dissolving a marriage, separation, and severance. As previously discussed, God is not into separation but into joining together.

- **Didn't the Lord make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And what does he want? Godly children from your union. So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth. "For I hate divorce!" says the Lord, the God of Israel. "To divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty" says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. "So guard your heart; do not be unfaithful to your wife."
Malachi 2:15-16 NLT**

In today's society, there is a worldwide divorce rate of 41% of first marriages, 60% of second marriages, and 73% of third marriages. The top five causes of divorce are lack of commitment, infidelity/extramarital affairs, too much conflict or arguing, getting married too young, and financial problems. Remember, this list is the world's reasons for divorce, not God's. Divorce is not the will of God for any marriage, but He also knows that not every marriage will begin or remain within the biblical guidelines He established. These issues arise when sin or carnality is chosen over God's plan for a person's life. Let us look at what God says about reasons for divorce.

BIBLICAL REASONS FOR DIVORCE

God allows divorce in certain circumstances. Adultery, abuse, and abandonment are the three overall categories the Bible gives reason for divorce. Each of these categories can go into different issues within a person's life but the biblical picture covers these areas as legitimate for divorce. When following God's protocol for divorce remarriage can be pursued if desired at the appropriate time and with a qualified person.

ADULTERY

Adultery may be the easiest to understand of the biblical reasons for divorce. When adultery is committed by a spouse the trust and purity of that marriage have been compromised. A compromised marriage is not an impossible marriage to have restored but it is a major task that can only be completed through God.

- **You must not commit adultery. Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18 NLT**

As stated within the Bible multiple times, adultery is wrong in God's eyes no matter the circumstance. It must also be stated that adultery begins in the heart before it is carried out from the body (**Matthew 5:27-28**).

- **You have heard the law that says, "A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce." But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.**

Matthew 5:31-32 NLT

Here Jesus brings up the use of the Old Testament law that states a man can give his wife a written divorce but He is calling out their hypocrisy to use it when it is not substantiated by a biblical reason. Jesus is also stating that unfaithfulness is a biblical reason for divorce. This would include adultery or other sexual immorality as the proper use of divorce.

- **If a man be found lying (committing adultery) with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.**

Deuteronomy 22:22 KJV

The Old Testament method of handling adultery is old-fashioned stoning to death. Both parties were to be killed for such an act against this institution of God. This would, in turn, release the faithful spouses from any guilt or wrongdoing to be free to marry again. Since this has been taken away as punishment adultery can be handled with divorce IF the faithful spouse desires to not reconcile.

- **He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication (sexual immorality), and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.**

Matthew 19:8-9 KJV

Jesus is giving the reason again here for sexual immorality being a legitimate reason for divorce. God allowed Moses to give divorce as a method of separation but notice that Jesus states that was not God's plan in the beginning.

ABUSE

Abuse can be broken into many categories. No abuse is acceptable but physical abuse can lead to injury or even death. Jesus describes that abuse is not acceptable even when evangelizing (**Matthew 10:23**). If Jesus does not allow abuse when preaching the Gospel why would He command a person to remain in the same house with an abusive person? Even the apostles did not stay in places that were abusive to them (**Acts 14:5-6**). When abuse is the norm for a person this is a true issue. Recognizing abuse as opposed to looking for an excuse to be released from marriage is an issue that each spouse must be honest in judging with their spouse, themselves, and with God. The Bible gives clear instructions for relationships to be good and not abusive.

- **Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.** Colossians 3:19 NLT
- **Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.**
Ephesians 4:29 NLT

No abuse should be permitted within a marriage. Verbal abuse can create psychological damage to the abused person and break down all the aspects of a marriage. This is no manner to have a marriage with anyone husband or wife. Abuse displays a lack of self-control and love of God working in that person's life.

- **So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body.**
Ephesians 5:28-30 NASB

Biblical husbands love their wives as their own bodies. This is a reflection of two becoming one (**Matthew 19:5-6, Genesis 2:24**). For any husband to abuse his wife displays the disconnect of heart from his wife but also disobedience toward God and His Word.

- **"I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and the one who is guilty of violence," says the Lord who rules over all. "Pay attention to your conscience, and do not be unfaithful."**
Malachi 2:16 NET
(New English Translation)

God hates divorce as well as the person guilty of violence. This type of violence reflects unfaithfulness to the marriage. Each spouse should not only be in love but walk in love with their spouse every day. Walking in the love of God with a spouse displays faithfulness to both God and the spouse.

ABANDONMENT

Abandonment begins in the heart and is followed through action if not corrected within the mind. The Bible clearly states that any believer that has an unbelieving spouse is given the

ability to let the unbelieving spouse choose what they desire to do with no repercussions on the believing spouse.

- **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.**

1 Corinthians 7:14-15 KJV

If the unbelieving spouse chooses to leave the marriage, the believing spouse is released from the guilt of wrongdoing. With this release of guilt, remarriage can happen for the believing spouse to enjoy biblical marriage to another believing person at the appropriate time.

- **But I can guarantee that any man who divorces his wife for any reason other than unfaithfulness makes her look as though she has committed adultery. Whoever marries a woman divorced in this way makes himself look as though he has committed adultery.**

Matthew 5:32 GWT

This is a form of abandonment. When a spouse chooses to leave their spouse for any reason other than adultery (abuse could arguably be added) it makes the spouse that has been left behind look like the guilty one with the issue. In today's courts, one spouse can end a marriage with the stroke of a pen. When a proper resolution has not been sought or it is for an unbiblical reason, this is abandonment. When the faithful spouse is faced with their spouse leaving and all attempts of restoration have been made the faithful spouse is free from wrong and can remarry if desired.

REMARRIAGE

Remarriage is one topic (along with divorce) that many Christians will not always agree on but the Bible gives guidelines for those that may face this situation. Although this topic has been covered in small doses within this lesson already let us look at some points on this topic.

- Remarriage after the death of a spouse is permitted (**Romans 7:3, 1 Corinthians 7:39**).
- Remarriage for the faithful spouse after divorce due to abandonment is permitted (**1 Corinthians 7:14-15**).
- Remarriage for the unfaithful spouse is adultery (**Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9, Luke 16:18, Mark 10:11, Hebrews 13:4**).
- Remarriage for the faithful spouse after divorce from adultery is permitted (**Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:8-9, Matthew 1:19**).
- Remarriage after divorce should be given spiritual oversight due to restoration just as a person that is restored after sin (**Galatians 6:1**).

- Remarriage after becoming a Christian and being forgiven of sins is permitted (**2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 John 1:9**).

God forgives sin when people seek forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Everyone has a past but if that past has been forgiven through Jesus Christ that person has become new.

May Christians seek God to be pleasing unto Him in every aspect of life and live holy lives according to the Bible.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

LESSON 9

Summary

Since beginning these lessons, many aspects of marriage have been discussed from the Bible. Let us review and summarize the heart of this curriculum to understand what a biblical marriage is.

Marriage is the first institution established by God within the Old Testament for mankind. Within human relationships, no relationship is higher than marriage. Marriage is also used within the Bible as an example to reflect a proper relationship between Jesus Christ and the church.

MARRIAGE DEFINED

Marriage is defined as *the state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law; the mutual relation of married persons; the institution whereby individuals are joined in marriage; an intimate or close union.*

Within a biblical marriage, there is only one man and one woman. God's design of marriage **EXCLUDES** the following: homosexual (same-sex), transsexual (involving at least one transsexual person), human-animal, companion-based (sexless friendship), common law (no marriage ceremony but declared through law after an established time), polygamous (multiple spouses at the same time), open (multiple sex partners while married to another person), and time-bound (designated for only a specific time) marriages. As marriage is the first establishment God created, there is no doubt this is one area the enemy attacks the most. This means the enemy will not only attack the husband and wife within the marriage but also mock the establishment itself.

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE IS A BLESSING

A man that finds a wife *should be* very blessed (**Proverbs 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 31:10**). A woman that has a husband *should have* protection, provision, and is blessed (**1 Timothy 5:8; Genesis 18:19; 1 Peter 3:7**). Each spouse plays an important role and benefits the other spouse in ways that they could not achieve on their own.

GUARD THE MARRIAGE

There are three common areas that the enemy attacks in marriages. These areas are communication, intimacy, and money. Each spouse must be alert regarding these areas to prevent the enemy from gaining ground and dividing the marriage. Marriage is a lifetime commitment that must be guarded and protected. Understanding that marriage is joining together until death (or an atrocious sin takes place) is the requirement of the covenant that is established before God on the wedding day with witnesses present. *Each spouse* must guard their marriage as well as guard it together *with their spouse* to obtain and keep a healthy biblical successful marriage.

When **communication** is attacked tension can arise between spouses creating division. These assaults can come in various forms that include: unclear communication, lack of communication, emotional communication, or evil communication. Each of these forms attempts to separate each spouse not only physically but in the mind of at least one of the spouses. Communication in every relationship is vital, especially in marriage and a walk with God.

Intimacy on all levels is attacked within marriage by the enemy. The obvious attack on the marriage bed is through perversion or neglect but other subtle assaults include intimacy of holding hands, kissing, flirting, etc. to begin the separation of hearts and minds of each spouse.

Money can be a source of attack from the enemy within a marriage creating stress on one or both spouses. A lack of money creates stress about how to survive financially leading to disagreements or other sources of division while an abundance of money creates pride that opens up other temptations. Money is not a source of joy for a marriage. Some marriages succumb to either lack of finances from income, lack of wisdom in spending, or lack of fulfillment from life (always seeking more money). No amount of money will ever be gained to keep a couple happy. The foundation of marriage should be God.

THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND

- Lead his wife (**1 Corinthians 9:5**).
- Love, sanctify, cherish, and nourish his wife (**Ephesians 5:25-29**).
- A husband should subject himself to his wife's advice (**Genesis 2:18, 1 Corinthians 7:4-5**).
- Supply protection, provision, and discipleship.
- Fulfill the role of the husband according to God's description, not culture.

Men are not to treat their wives as if they are weak and incapable of anything but being a protector, discipler, and provider that displays both a strong and soft hand according to the situation. One element that is due to the wife from the husband is honor. Honor is placing a value upon someone or something. True honor involves honesty, fairness, and integrity. To honor is the opposite of using for lust or lacking value. When a husband has honor for his wife she is valuable to him for multiple reasons. She is not a sex object, she is his lover. She is not a servant, she is his queen. She is not a whipping post, she is his best friend. She is not someone to kick, she is his better half.

THE ROLE OF THE WIFE

- Submits to the husband (**Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, 1 Corinthians 7:4-5**).
- Be a helpmeet to her husband (**Genesis 2:18-22**).
- Honors her husband (**Ephesians 5:33**).
- Governess of the home (**Titus 2:4-5**).

A wife is to govern the home according to the husband's vision. The role of the wife is to be the governess of the home, the authority with the husband, or the authority in the husband's absence (**Judges 4** see *Deborah fulfill the role as a judge in her husband's absence*). She is vital to the home but especially within the marriage. The wife also has the capability of turning the atmosphere of the home into peace or strife because she has been given the authority to govern or lead that establishment.

CHAIN OF COMMAND IN THE MARRIAGE

Within the home, no one outranks the husband even God (but it is proper for the husband to submit to Him). This comes at the price of the husband carrying the weight of the household's future on his shoulders. If the husband is wrong the wife can assist in bringing the Bible and wisdom to her husband, but the ultimate decision is in the husband's hands.

As a husband has the highest rank within the home he needs the help of his wife to be balanced. This requires subjection on the husband's part to allow his wife to give input or wisdom that will assist him in making the final decision. If the husband does not allow his wife to be the helpmeet God designed her to be then he runs the risk of being unbalanced and a dictator within his home. God made Eve for Adam to not be alone and to assist him.

THE MARRIAGE BED

God established the institution of marriage and all of its components. The marriage bed is one of those components. The marriage bed is for reproduction and pleasure. Perversion is the only restriction to the marriage bed for a married couple.

Sexual intimacy is a great benefit to being married but is not what a marriage is based on. Adam and Eve were described to become one flesh, not only the union of physical but also the joining of spiritual and emotional. This intimacy creates a powerful force for God through the couple. When conducted biblically, everything about marriage should give glory to God, even sex.

THEME OF MARRIAGE

The common theme of a marriage is love and honor. Not only should each spouse love one another but each spouse should love God. This keeps the marriage blessed and covered in a holy anointing to fulfill each role in the manner God designed.

Along with love and honor comes teamwork. When the husband and wife are to be one (**Genesis 2:24**), they must work together to fulfill the plans God has for them. Teamwork also reinforces the unity of the marriage and deepens the relationship in many ways. Teamwork also encourages one to assist one another with burdens and give the best of one another to their spouse.

BIBLICAL REASONS FOR DIVORCE

God permits divorce in certain circumstances. Adultery, abuse, and abandonment are the three overall categories the Bible gives reason for divorce. Each of these categories can go into different issues within a person's life but the biblical picture covers these areas as

legitimate for divorce. When following God's protocol for divorce remarriage can be pursued if desired at the appropriate time and with a qualified person.

REMARRIAGE

Remarriage is permitted for certain situations.

- Remarriage after the death of a spouse is permitted (**Romans 7:3, 1 Corinthians 7:39**).
- Remarriage for the faithful spouse after divorce due to abandonment is permitted (**1 Corinthians 7:14-15**).
- Remarriage for the unfaithful spouse is adultery (**Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9, Luke 16:18, Mark 10:11, Hebrews 13:4**).
- Remarriage for the faithful spouse after divorce from adultery is permitted (**Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:8-9, Matthew 1:19**).
- Remarriage after divorce should be given spiritual oversight due to restoration just as a person that is restored after sin (**Galatians 6:1**).
- Remarriage after becoming a Christian and being forgiven of sins is permitted (**2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 John 1:9**).

As one can see from these lessons biblical marriage involves W-O-R-K. The ability to fulfill the role of each spouse, guard this institution from the enemy, maintain the proper intimacy, walk in love, and work as a team requires each spouse and God. When conducted biblically, the benefits and blessings are priceless.

May Christian marriages become biblical in all regards to reflect God's original design of one man with one woman becoming one flesh in a covenant with God.