

**COUNSEL FOR
THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY**

AN OUTLINE

for Pastoral
Counseling or a Bible Study Class

for
Personal and Family Study

**FOR THE
BUILDING OF A CHRISTIAN HOME**

by

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Purpose and Application

- * For personal study in the home.
- * For class study, for all ages, teens through adults.
- * For pastoral counseling, in group and individual situations
- * For counseling by those trained by the pastor, or others
 - * For premarital counseling
 - * For use with audio-cassette album
- * For use with additional audio-cassettes dealing with how to counsel, and use of discussion and application questions to get the most from this syllabus.

(Audio Cassettes are available from our office.)

Preface

The institution of marriage is being strained to its limits in our day. The old adage, "*There's no place like home,*" is not always true. Rather than being a haven of rest, the home is becoming a hell on earth for more and more individuals.

We need help from every possible source if we are to have godly homes and spiritual children led by spiritual mothers and fathers. The greatest crisis facing the home is not bombardment from without but deterioration from within. Much of the pressure on families comes from the false philosophies and luring temptations of the world. We must get back to the principles of God's Word and apply them to every facet of our daily lives.

It is our prayer and desire that this material will help you to conform your family to God's will, and make you more and more conformed to the image of Christ. We trust that you will study it with an open heart and apply the Word of God with a yielded will.

May God bless you, and use these studies to build your family for God!

Dr. Edward Watke, Jr.

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Dr. Edward Watke, Jr.

Foundational Principles for Life

Chapter One

Before we can start we must lay a Biblical foundation. There are certain "foundational principles for life" for all of us! These are central to all we could say about the home, and are for every age, for personal living, and life.

These foundational principles are to be applied, and lived out. Without bringing these principles into focus in life, much of the truth on the following pages, and principles for home, marriage, and rearing children will be of little help.

Biblical Foundational Principles

A. My Home is of God. (Psalm 127:1; Psalm 78:5-8; Genesis 1:26,27; Gen. 2:18-24) Its importance is seen, in that:

1. God created the home.
2. God used the beautiful "type" or illustration of marriage as a picture of salvation. (cf. Romans 7:4; II Corinthians 11:2)
3. Terrible devastation occurs when the family unit is violated. When there is error, sin grows in the family.
4. God's concern for the family, the home, and its future is seen over and over again in the Word of God. (cf. Psalm 78:5-8; Deuteronomy 4:9,10; Deut. 5:29)

The home is God's plan for the ages. It is not a happenstance. It is not an after-thought. All of us are related to a home, and family unit. The family is the primary foundational unit of life itself.

We must come to the place of saying that our home is of God. We must accept our mates as gifts from God, as Adam had to accept Eve as God's gift to him. (Genesis 2:24) Our children must be accepted as God's special gifts also, just as they are. Our concern ought to be that they (1) know God, and serve Him, and (2) that they follow His ways. (Judges 2:6-13)

B. My Choices Determine My Harvest

My (and your) present and future condition and circumstances are the direct result of my (and your) past and future sowing." (Galatians 6:7-9) My (and your) present and future condition and circumstances are the direct result of my (and your) past and future choices.

1. You must understand the negative law of sowing and reaping. (Galatians 6:7, 8)
2. You must understand the positive law of sowing and reaping. (Galatians 6:9)

3. The present reaping should teach me NOW to sow now what I need to sow, so that my harvest will be right in the future. (Lot, Achan, Samson, David, Jonah, Jehoshaphat)

We go to a counselor, a pastor, and we want them to immediately set us free from the results of past sowing. We want it solved, and removed from us right then. But that is an impossibility. They can talk with us, pray with us and comfort us, but they cannot set us free from the harvest of our past sowing.

I am sure that Lot, Achan, Samson, Jonah, and a host of others wished that they could have been set free from their sowing and harvest, but what they had chosen and sown was what they also reaped.

It is hard to get a family to see that what they are sowing right now, their children will be reaping five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years later. We cannot sow a mediocre life for twenty to twenty-five years and then expect to produce a spiritual, mature family for the Lord. We are daily sowing words, actions, deeds, thoughts, and attitudes that will be reaped in the lives of our children. And they will be reaping for years to come from the results of our sowing in their childhood years.

If I am wrong, I must change my goals, my life, and attitudes. I must try by the grace of God to listen to someone, when they say that something is wrong. But too often we are living on "past glory," past days of serving the Lord, and we are coasting while we are planting slothfulness and carelessness. We may be "reaping good from the past" and at the same time we are sowing complacency, and emptiness in our daily lives. But the future will bring the results of our wrong sowing.

C. My Covering the Problem Brings Tragedy. (Proverbs 28:13)

1. You must uncover and deal with each and every problem, every sin.
2. You must start confessing, and forsaking your sin. (Psalm 139:23,24)
3. You must stop being blind to that sin, ignoring it, denying it, and covering it. (Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 20:6)

Self-deception is the worse deception in all the world. We must stop being blind to our own sins, and stop blinding our eyes to truth. (Psalm 19:12-14; Jeremiah 17:9) It is so easy to not see our own sins, for "every man's cause is just in his own eyes." (Proverbs 20:6; Proverbs 21:2)

We must stop being blind to our abrasiveness, to our bitterness, to our thoughtlessness, to our unforgiveness. It is so easy for us to "accuse as we excuse," to so live within ourselves that everything within our own lives seems to be right to us. We must work at being open to our own wrong. We should not deliberately blind ourselves to our sins, ignoring them, covering them, denying them, and getting angry, and retaliating when someone tries to help us see the wrong.

D. My Spirituality Depends on Determined Change

1. I must fully, wholly follow the Lord. (Luke 9:23; Luke 14:25-33) Denying self is death to selfish desires and interests.
2. I must "put off and put on" certain things to effect change. (Ephesians 4:17-29; Colossians 3:5-13)
3. I must "renew the mind" and "have a transformed mind" by reading and applying God's Word. (Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2) I must allow God to change my life by changing my thinking so that I think His thoughts, and thus do His will.
4. I must continue on, as I began. The Christian life began by faith and obedience to His Word. It must continue in the same manner. (Colossians 2:6,7; I John 2:5,6; Ephesians 5:10)

We go forward in meeting over the years, over and over again, and yet never, never change. We make decisions again and again about the same thing and yet never change. We want to be different and yet never change.

God wants to bring change in our lives! He desires to effect that kind of change whereby we are different for the rest of our days. This can only take place as we apply the principles that will bring permanent change. This will make the difference in our spiritual life and maturing!

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. What verses prove to you that God has concern for your home?
2. Describe a choice (a past sowing) from which you are reaping today.
3. What choices are you making now from which you will reap in time to come? List some.
4. Name one problem you need to face and deal with, that you have been ignoring or denying.
5. What are the Scriptural principles you need to apply to bring about change?

Facing Marital Problems

Chapter Two

Only change brings solutions and progress.

Marital Problems and Solutions

A. The Certainty of Problems

So often we feel we have no problems, or we deny them, or we pretend they will go away. God says that the certainty of problems is as the gathering of dust (Job 5:6,7), as sparks fly upward (Job 14:1). We are not to borrow tomorrow's or bring over yesterday's problems. (Matthew 6:34) They are common to all (I Corinthians 10:13), and are for our good. (James 1:1-3)

We get tired of handling problems. The only two groups who do not have problems are either dead or insane. We will all have problems! The well-adjusted person faces problems every day! The maladjusted person keeps shoving them behind him, or aside, and will not face them, nor seek to solve them. You should never have a serious problem in your home or marriage! If it is serious, you have waited too long; you have put it off too long!

B. The Source of Problems

1. From a false view of marriage. (Romans 7:1-4)

- a. Marriage is built upon and dependent upon "falling in love." This is the world's idea. Love is often viewed as a mystical, uncontrollable happening that comes and goes as it pleases without reason or control. Love to many is a whimsical emotion. They say, "I can't live without her." Then later they say, "I can't live with her."

Biblical View--Marriage is permanent, (Romans 7:1-3; I Corinthians 7:39) and love is primarily a choice rather than an emotion. "Right feeling is the result of right doing-" The feeling of love is the result of the practice of Biblical love (Galatians 6:7-9). For many, love is not based on knowledge, on "getting the pattern" from God, but solely on emotional feeling.

Love is not foundational to a marriage but commitment is! One of the great tragedies in the United States is the forming of marriage on the basis of "falling in love." When marriage is based on the (1) hearing of the ear, the (2) seeing of the eye, and (3) the feeling of the heart, then it is based on feelings: and not necessarily the will of God.

People believed that when the feeling is not there, then love is gone and they have the right to break up. Marriage should be based on, "Is it God's will?" We must go to God and get the pattern from the Scriptures about what God says.

- b. "Things will be the same after marriage, just like when we were dating."

Biblical View--There MUST be change. It cannot be the same; the "me" and "her/him" must become "WE!" The "mine" and "his/hers" must become "OURS !" (Genesis 2: 24; Matthew 19:3 -5)

We are commanded to change attitudes! In marriage we surrender our sovereign rights. We must agree to change and to learn to do so! We must schedule into our lives a daily prayer time, a daily time of relaxed feelings, a sharing of the feelings of the heart, and a building of the "weaving" of our lives together. In this manner we will help to bring about the change that we need.

2. From sinful attitudes in marriage

- a. "This is just the way I am. I cannot help the way I am." Or, "Don't change me, I can't change. It's my temperament." "I didn't get married to change."

Biblical View--You are the result of your choices! Real change is not only commanded, but it is possible, or God would not have commanded it. (Galatians 6:7-9; Ezekiel 18:14-18, 25-29)

- b. "I must watch out for myself, for no one else will." (selfishness, me'ism, emphasis on self-importance)

Biblical View--I must die to self! (cf. Galatians 2:20; Luke 9:23) "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" (John 3:30; Matthew 16:24; Romans 7:18; Philippians 4: 13)

- c. "We just don't have any problems. There is really no need for concern or change."

Biblical View--You do have problems and they must be discovered, admitted, and dealt with! (Proverbs 28:13; I Corinthians 10:13; I John 1:8-2:2)

Our big problem is PRIDE!

We must be desperate to have a happy home! We must change, and effect that happy home that God wants us to have! I must decide that . . . marriage is for all time. . . God wants me to be happy with my wife/husband. . . only God's way of living will make me happy.

God wants you to have a happy home. His plan for your home is not just a few happy times, a few good days; but peace, joy, and victory in daily living.

You can have a happy home. It begins by (1) getting on your knees, and praying until you have it, (2) being willing to even die for it, and (3) recognizing that the central key is communication. Therefore, settle one issue at a time, determine to solve problems (stay at it until they are solved). Recognize that a happy home is not a "gift" but is something we must build. (Psalm 127, 128)

Let God change your life, for He will. He wants you to step aside and let Him have His own way. As you are willing to weep, pray, and work, you will see progress toward a happy home.

When we have mediocrity in our homes, our lives will be empty, and our

children will be robbed of a happy home. They will be depressed and just enduring until they can leave. Most Christians will live and die and never have a loving atmosphere in their home or a love relationship with God. How sad, as we go through the routines of life, to live in such a state of loss.

C. Specific Problem Areas

1. lack of communication
2. finances
3. anger, pride
4. loss of love
5. adultery (influenced by wrong literature, evil TV viewing)
6. in-laws
7. spiritual differences
8. sex, lack of affection shown
9. children's training
10. house management
11. wrong, or differing priorities
12. life-dominating sins such as alcoholism, drug abuse, selfishness, abusiveness, laziness, indifference, apathy, pornography, homosexuality, adultery, etc.

D. The Discovery of Problems. (Proverbs 27:12)

1. You must see the problem afar off or the problem will "run over you" before you discover it. The family must discover problems!
2. You must discover the problem when it is "afar off" or human love is already injured. If you love your wife/husband/children with a divine love, there is a human protectiveness that comes into your heart so that no danger come into that home! (Amos 6:1)

Facing Problems in Marriage:

1. Don't let the "problem run you down" before you discover it!
2. The vast majority of times when we call the pastor in to help our home, it is too late. Our house is "burning down," so to speak. We expect him to wave a magic wand and give us a happy home. It is impossible! The pastor has no power to do that! A happy home only comes from right planting, and right sowing, and then we will have the right harvest or reaping.

3. The ability to detect the problems as they begin, not after the damage has taken place, is one of the great blessings in a home.
4. Often people wait much too long before they try to solve the problems of their home. Only after anger, wrath, hatred, lack of faith, trust and respect have built up to an almost insurmountable mountain, do they finally try to get some help.

It is amazing that we have house insurance, fire insurance, good locks and fire extinguishers to protect our house and possessions, and yet the family is being destroyed emotionally and spiritually from the inside. We should be able to see the problem afar off, and then deal with that problem immediately!! 1

3. The wrong way to discover problems!

1. domestic violence 2. unfaithfulness
3. separation and/or divorce
4. The best ways to find the problems.
 - a. Talk to each other--ASK QUESTIONS!

Identify the right problem. It is too easy to argue over symptoms, rather than truly look at the real problem. Confess your fault in it. Maybe you are the one who caused the anger. Seek to have conversation "seasoned with salt," uplifting, helpful, cooperative, with the goal of solving problems.

- b. Examine your sex life.
- c. Examine your schedules, and priorities.
- d. Work on a list of things that you need to change! Review your lives often, because no relationship is static. It is either getting better or worse! List way your relationship has grown in the last year.
- e. Look for signals or warning signs of deeper trouble.
 - 1) voice tones, bad attitudes
 - 2) careless appearance or sudden changes in appearance
 - 3) indifference to spouse's affection--uncaring response to how he/she feels.
 - 4) anger or resentment revealed by reactions to various aspects of pressure.

E. Dealing with Problems for Victory

We discover the problems, but then we must also solve them. Victory comes for God's glory...."*but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*" (Proverbs 28:13)

1. You must identify and take responsibility for each problem. (Proverbs 20:6; Proverbs 21:2)
2. You must be totally dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 12:1,2;

Romans 14:9; II Corinthians 5:14,15)

3. You must work on the problems daily, until you solve them. Deal with them, or they will hatch new problems. Communication is two people who are spiritual enough to talk about their problems, solving them, and working to a God-honoring conclusion. (Ephesians 4:25-32)
4. You must communicate with love and forbearance. You need to be relaxed and totally free to share anything that is in your heart. (Colossians 3:8-12,13)
5. You must put away anger, bitterness, and pride. (I John 1:7,9)
6. You must ask God and your mate for forgiveness. (II Corinthians 7: 11; I Corinthians 13; James 1:19)
7. You must forsake that sin by examining correct attitudes and behavior in the Word of God, and then obeying the principles you find there.
8. You must seek to see the problem afar off. (Proverbs 22:3)

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. What is the Biblical basis for marriage?
Where there is _____, love can grow.
2. What basic attitudes about yourself may be a source of problems in your marriage?
3. What are some areas of difficulty in your marriage?
4. What is the first step in solving a problem?
5. Make a list of things you need to change in your marriage.
6. Are symptoms the real problem?
7. Can you identify the real problem?
8. What are you willing to do about the need of change?

Chapter III

Marriage is the first permanent human relationship that God planned.

Laying a Proper Foundation for the Christian Home

Introduction:

- > God founded the family: Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-9
- > God's Principles for the family: Ephesians 5:21-33; Psalm 127:1; Psalm 128
- > God's direction is best: Jeremiah 10:23; Psalm 37:23; Psalm 9:97-101

A. Step #1. Marry the right person.

1. Be the right person, the right kind of husband, the right kind of wife, the person that God wants you to be.
2. Only marry "in the Lord."
3. Only marry someone truly saved.
4. Only marry someone who is separated and dedicated.
5. Only marry the person who believes what God says about marriage, that it is for all of life. (Matthew 19:3-5; Genesis 2: 23,24; I Corinthians 7:39)

Suggestions and Ideas about What Kind of Mate You Want for Your Child.

What kind of qualifications would you desire for the son that marries your daughter?

One woman gave the following:

1. One who is saved and loves the Lord.
2. One who is serving the Lord before he marries her.
3. One who is supportive at all times.
4. One who cares for the family's needs.
5. One who is not given over to anger, stubbornness, and/or silence.
6. One who is able to make decisions, and is responsible and considers the whole family when he does make the decision.
7. One who is good in carrying out discipline, and rearing children, and does it with love.
8. One who loves his home, is a homebody, and loves to be at home with his family.

A man gave the following for qualifications for a wife for his son:

1. Saved.
2. Dedicated.
3. Faithful to the house of God.
4. Separated, not worldly.
5. Living for the Lord.
6. Willing to be a Biblical wife
7. Wants to be a mother and keeper at home, and only works outside the home if absolutely necessary.

B. Step #2. Leave Father and Mother. (Genesis 2:24)

1. Negatively.
 - a. It is not just for the man, or woman. Rather it is for both to do!
 - b. You are not to abandon your parents. (Mark 1:30,31; I Timothy 5:8)
 - c. You are not necessarily to leave your parents' geographical area.
2. Positively.
 - a. Both partners must cease to be dependent children. They must now establish a permanent adult relationship.
 - b. Each person must become dependent on his/her mate for needs (not wants) once supplied by parents. Remember you get what you give. 1) physical needs--cooking, cleaning, money, clothing, sexual needs, etc.
2) emotional needs--approval, companionship, feeling of being at home, of belonging, helps to one another, building self-acceptance, self-worth.
3) spiritual needs--direction, advice, encouragement, help.
 - c. Each partner must remove and deal with any and all bad attitudes and resentment for parents. If you don't deal with these problems before marriage, you will bring those sins and problems over into your marriage relationship. (Proverbs 28:13)
 - d. Each person must avoid trying to change his/her mate to meet his/her parents' approval. Your mate should only be required to meet God's and your approval.
 - e. The husband/wife relationship must have priority over other relationships. (Genesis 2:23,24; Matthew 19:3-5)

C. Step #3. Cleave to the wife/husband.

1. Negatively.
 - a. It is not the responsibility of just one. Both must learn to cleave.
 - b. You must not exclude other relationships.
2. Positively.
 - a. We should cling to, should be glued to, should adhere to our mate. To cleave means to be stuck "on our mate, and to our mate."
 - b. Our relationship must be permanent. (Mark 10:7-9)
 - c. We should recall frequently our wedding vows and practice them.
 - d. Cleaving should include both our affections and our duties.

D. Step #4. Weaving your life together--becoming one flesh.

1. God says we are to become "one." (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-5;

Ephesians 5:30-32; Malachi 2:14, 15). We must work on "oneness."

- a. It means a "heart to heart" response.
 - b. It means a "soul to soul" response. Spiritually in marriage, $1 + 1 = 1$. Two become one whole person. Things, money, and needs are no longer "mine" or "yours," but are now "OURS." Both individuals relinquish personal identities, careers, and goals into a new singular identity and career.
 - c. It means a "mind to mind" response. (Philippians 2:2-4; I Peter 3:8) We must work at being "of one mind, one accord, loving the same things."
2. Physically and sexually they are to be "one." (Genesis 2:25) It is serious to minimize the aspect of oneness in marriage. God states that when a person is joined to a harlot, the two are made one flesh. God wants us to realize that oneness will bring unity, and that the right atmosphere will help to produce godly children. (Genesis 2:25; I Corinthians 6:16-18; Malachi 2:11-15; Hebrews 3:5)
3. Hindrances to this process.
- a. selfishness, envy, and jealousy
 - b. pride. Our major problem or sin is pride. It is pride that destroys the home. It is pride that causes us to raise our voice, to have bitterness, to continue unforgiveness, and to "clam up." We feel that we have a right to all of these responses. "We have been hurt, so don't we have a right to feel this way?"
 - c. holding back and covering up (Proverbs 28:13)
 - d. lack of communication

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. Why is it important to marry a saved person? List other spiritual qualities that must be evident for a proper foundation for a Christian home.
2. In marriage, dependency must develop between mates. List areas in which a wife must learn to depend upon her husband.
3. List areas a husband must learn to depend upon his wife.
4. What areas are you changing from independency to dependency in your marriage?
5. Describe a situation in which you would cleave to your mate. Is loyalty important?
6. List some possessions you speak of as "ours" and no longer "mine."
7. What decisions must be joint decisions rather than individual decisions?
8. List some mutual interests you are developing.

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9. Study Ephesians 5:30-32 and from that section consider what oneness means in the light of the spiritual oneness we have in Christ. In what way are you endeavoring in your marriage to have oneness that portrays the spiritual oneness that God sets forth?
10. From Malachi 2:14,15 describe what God desires out of oneness between a husband and wife and the deterrents to such oneness.

Roles of Husband and Wife

Chapter IV

Everybody is not a head, or the neck, or the eye, or the ear, but all are needed in their own place of function. (I Corinthians 12)

Taking Your Proper Place (Ephesians 5)

Introduction:

1. In any team, organization, or association, each person knowing and fulfilling their prescribed role is essential for harmony and efficiency. (I Corinthians 12:12-25; especially verses 12,18,19,20)
2. You must accept God's authority for assigning roles. (Psalm 119: 128)

A. The Biblical Role of the Wife

1. **Submitted Follower** (Ephesians 5:22, 24; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; I Peter 3:1-6; Genesis 3:16)

a. *Negatively,*

- 1) Submission is not just for women, but for all believers. (Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3, 4; I Peter 5:5; Romans 13:1; Hebrews 13:17)
- 2) Submission does not make the woman the slave (or doormat) of her husband. (Proverbs 31:10-31)
- 3) Submission does not mean that the woman should be idle, inactive, reclusive, or silent. (Proverbs 31)
- 4) Submission does not mean that she should never give advice or opinions. Her views are equally as valid as anyone's within the limits of God's Word. (Proverbs 31:26; Acts 18:26; Judges 13:12-23)
- 5) Submission in no way means she is inferior to or holds an inferior position to the man. (Luke 2:51; I Corinthians 11 :3; John 5 :30; I Corinthians 12) The man's and woman's positions are different but not superior/inferior. The husband is to make her the queen of his home, rather than to "*harass, hound, or hurt*" his wife.

b. *Positively,*

- 1) Submission is the wife's responsibility. She is to place herself under the leadership of her husband. The wife is commanded by God to be submissive, but the husband is never told or commanded to make her submit! (Ephesians 5 :22; I Peter 3: 1)

- 2) Submission is mandatory, not optional for the believer. (I Peter 3: 1; Luke 2:51; Ephesians 5:22,24; Colossians 3:18).
- 3) Submission is a spiritual matter. You cannot be submissive to God without being submissive to your husband. (Ephesians 5:22; I Corinthians 11:3; John 14:15)
- 4) Submission involves attitude as well as action. (John 4:34; Psalm 40:7,8; Proverbs 31: 13; John 14: 15)
- 5) Submission extends to all areas of life, except for the higher authority of God and His Word. (Ephesians 5:24; 1:22; Colossians 3:18; cf. Acts 5:28, 20)

2. **Godly Helper**, the "Help-meet." Definition of a help-meet. (Genesis 2:18-22)

- a. Literally she was made to be a help, or "*aid, helper, support*" that is *meet*, or sufficient for the opposite part, the other side. She was made to be a support to the man's other side.
- b. God made the woman to be man's helper, to help him to better **do** what God has commanded him (them) to do. (I Corinthians 11:9)
- c. God made her to be a suitable helper. (Proverbs 18:22; 31:10,11) Too often the wife countermands, belittles, makes light of, and resists her husband's directions. This is rebellion to God's command.
- d. God made the woman to correspond to the man. (I Corinthians 11:11) Here too often the husband acts independently, does not rely on his wife as a helper, and treats her with disdain and resentment. She is equal in everything but human strength, and position. ***Treat her as an equal!!***

3. **Creative Complement**

- a. make her house a home (Proverbs 31:11, 20)
- b. be dependable and trustworthy with her responsibilities (Proverbs 31:11, 12; I Corinthians 4:2)
- c. discuss problems, disagreements, and true feelings with her husband lovingly, openly, and honestly (Ephesians 4:15, 25; Proverbs 31:26; Proverbs 27:5,6)

It is the man that opens the door for communication! A wife has tremendous frustration when he does not communicate. She cannot make the full decision, yet she must keep the home together. She cannot communicate with a man who is a loner, a pouter, a wrathful and angry man, or an alcoholic. She cannot do it! Sir, you are the key!

- d. be a creative, industrious member of the team. Keep family goals ahead of personal ones (Psalm 128:3; Proverbs 31)

- e. show interest in her husband's problems and concerns, (Philippians 2:3,4; 2:20,21)
 - f. maintain a good spiritual life, (I Peter 3:1,2,7; I Timothy 2:9-15)
 - g. cooperate with her husband in rearing the children for the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 31:26-28; Proverbs 6:20-24; I Timothy 5:13,14)
 - h. be grateful, (Ephesians 5:33b; Romans 13:7)
 - i. show confidence in your husband; show admiration for him. (Ephesians 5:33b; I Corinthians 13:4-8)
- B. The Biblical Role of the Husband

B. The Biblical Role of the Husband

1. Serving Leader.

- a. The command of leadership (Ephesians 5:23; I Corinthians 11:3)
- b. The attitude of leadership
 - 1) not dictatorial, demanding, bossy, harassing, or hounding his wife
 - 2) Leadership must be viewed as a service to the ones led, not dominance over the ones he is serving. (Matthew 20:20-28; John 13:1-15; Philippians 2:6-8; Mark 10:45)
 - 3) Leadership must be viewed as a service to Christ, to the family, and not as self-service. (Matthew 20:28; Acts 15:26)
- c. The activity of leadership
 - 1) It involves the principle of continuous association, for you cannot lead those with whom you do not share your life. You cannot lead your family if you do not take time to meet their needs. (cf. Christ/disciples; I Peter 3:7)
 - 2) It involves teaching those that you lead what God wants, what they are responsible to do, and how to do it! (I Corinthians 14:35) *"Knowing God's will by knowing God's Word and leading your family accordingly."*
 - 3) It involves example, being what God wants you to be, and not just appearing so. (Philippians 4:9; I Thessalonians 2:7-10; I Peter 5:3)
 - 4) It involves making informed, correct decisions, and delegating responsibility. (cf. Christ and his disciples; John 4:1,2; Mark 1:35-38; Mark 6:7,35-43)

Never make a decision when you are angry or when you are discouraged and down! You are "dead if you do" and so is your family. We never make a right decision when we are angry or depressed, and we will regret it and have to undo it.

How long did it take you to admit wrong? To admit when you failed? How long did

it take you to say, "Forgive me, I'm sorry and I am wrong?" If I am a good leader, and make a poor decision, my mate will be the first to know about it. If my home is right, I will be constantly getting things right. The children need to see that Dad is a real man, who knows how to ask for forgiveness and to give it.

Don't Degrade Your Mate! A good leader. . .

1. does not scoff at his mate
2. is not critical of his mate
3. is not bossy, dictatorial or demanding
4. treats her as an equal; as a rational, moral, creative being
5. gives her the greatest characteristic of love which is respect. The very kernel of true love is respect. If we have lost respect, we do not have much, but when we have respect, then true love can grow.
6. puts leadership first. Leadership is built on honor, and respect. Then there can be true love! We build love on leadership, not leadership on love!

2. Godly lover. The husband is commanded to be a lover, as Christ loves!

a. The nature of this love. (Ephesians 5:25,28,33)

- 1) This is a "divine love," agape love, the love that gives because of need, not because of worthiness.
- 2) Obeying the command to love (agape love) will produce the feeling of love or romance. Correct thinking will produce correct action, from which will follow correct feeling.
- 3) Love is to be given, as an act of the will! God's love, an unconditional love, is to be lived out in the home.

b. The demonstration of this love. How can we show it?

- 1) Say it. We are commanded to speak in love, just as God tells us of His love in hundreds of ways. (John 15:9; Romans 5:8; I John 4:19)
- 2) Meet needs. (I Peter 3:7; I Timothy 5:8; I John 3:17; Ephesians 5:28; Romans 8:32)
 - a) physical needs--provision and protection
 - b) emotional needs--approval, affection. Tokens of love reveal you are thinking about her when you are not with her.
 - c) social needs--companionship, friendship; "*your best friend*,"
 - d) recreational needs--rest, exercise, time alone, and time away from work and routine,
 - e) sexual needs--satisfying her, not YOU, should be your priority in this area; pleasing her and not yourself first!
 - f) spiritual needs--leadership, fellowship, service, prayer together, etc.
- 3) Sacrifice for her. Give of your time and money. (Ephesians 5:25; Philippians 2:5,6; Philippians 2:20,21)
- 4) Share your life with her, not with someone else! Share your plans, dreams, feelings, fears, weaknesses, and needs. (I Peter 3:7)

- 5) Praise her in sincerity. Tell her what is good about her, not just for what she does. Thank her for the way she meets her responsibilities.
(I Peter 3:7-12; Proverbs 31:28; Ephesians 5:20)
- 6) Share positive thoughts. (I John 3:18; Colossians 3:19; Philippians 4:8)
"When we depreciate something mentally, we will treat it (or them) accordingly! Negative thoughts will bring about negative responses!"

C. Conscientious Learner.

1. The husband must learn to initiate love.
2. The husband must learn to demonstrate unconditional love.
3. The husband must learn to practice a walk in love. (Ephesians 5:1,2) He will find much love showered back through his wife to all in the home!
4. The husband must learn to be a leader by demanding of himself the kind of dedication to his task and the kind of openheartedness to his family that will aid a consistent, godly leadership. (I Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9)

God's Plan in Marriage: adapted from Dr. Ed Wheat's book, Love Life.

Genesis shows us that the woman was created to fill man's loneliness as his lifelong companion and his beloved one. Man was instructed to leave all else, cleave inseparably to his wife, and to know her intimately over a lifetime--a process designed to establish a powerful love between a husband and wife. The woman is pictured in Proverbs and in Song of Solomon *"as a cistern, a well, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed for her husband, whose waters will satisfy to the fullest."* To be ravished in the Hebrew language means to reel and stagger as if intoxicated, to be enraptured, and exhilarated. To be satisfied is to have your thirst slaked, to take your fill, to be satiated and abundantly saturated with that which pleases. There must be daily romantic caresses, admiring glances, affectionate pats, a smile, a wink across the room. . . small attentions that tell the mate that they are special people in your sight. There must be warmth, gentleness, softness, and caring. For both men and women crave the physical reassurance of loving closeness! Dare to be needy; do not be afraid to say, *"I need you."* We must build the warmth, acceptance, and fulfillment for one another.

Adapted from Moody Monthly article, "Satan's Doctrines of Marriage," by Craig Massey.

Satan's lie says, "You can spend time away from one another without hurting the marriage relationship." No wonder this is a favorite satanic lie! Intimacy--physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual--simply cannot be accomplished by separation. It is this intimacy that fulfills and satisfies, which causes two to become one according to God's design.

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

For Husbands:

1. What is a husband's greatest ministry and to whom?
2. What must you know and study in order to lead your family correctly?
3. How can you practice taking your responsibility of leadership at home? List where you can begin and other things to do in time to come.
4. Does giving love result from (1) feeling the love, (2) returning the love, or (3) deciding to show love as an act of the will?
5. List some of your wife's unique needs.
6. List ways you can demonstrate love to your wife.

For Wives:

1. What are some incorrect views of submission?
2. Who does God say should submit unto whom?
wives to _____ workers to _____
children to _____ church to _____
deacons to _____ husbands to _____
3. Who is the greatest example of submission? (John 5:30; Philippians 2:5-11)
4. Submission is possible because of a beginning _____ with the continuous action of daily practice.
5. How can you actually be a "help meet" to your husband?
6. List ways you have been and ways you want to improve. (I Corinthians 11:8,9)

Chapter V

The purpose of communication in all of life is basically to build a Christ-centered home, to build understanding, and to solve problems in a Christ-honoring, kind, Biblical way.

Learning to Communicate

Introduction

1. Examine the basic need for communication. (Amos 3:3; Ephesians 5:10)
2. Examine the basic meaning of communication. (Nehemiah 8:8). One person shares what he knows, understands, and feels so that another person can understand him. It involves correct speaking and accurate listening.

Communication is a must! Communication that helps me maintain a right relationship and fellowship with God. Communication that makes my employment or job what it ought to be. Good communication makes possible a right relationship in working experiences. Communication brings good, lasting friendships into my life. It is communication that either makes or breaks my home and marriage.

A. The Necessity of Good Communication

1. The purpose of communication (I Peter 3:8-12)
 - a. It is a means to cultivate family living.
 - b. It is fundamental to a Christ-centered home.
 - c. It is for sharing and understanding.
 - d. It is the means of "talking things out to a harmonious, happy, God-honoring, Biblical solution." It is for solving problems!

It is the man that opens the door to communication. The wife can't make the final decision. The wife is greatly frustrated who must, on the one hand, hold the home together and yet knows that she cannot get the man to talk!

If the husband is a loner, a pouter, or an angry man, life will be a very difficult for his wife, and to carry on communication will be almost impossible.

The purpose of communication in the home is basically to (1) build a Christ-centered home, (2) to understand each other, and (3) to solve problems in a Christ-honoring, kind, Biblical way.

We must be able to talk out anything to a conclusion without getting angry. Often we don't even think about communication. We get up in the morning, and live the day without even thinking about the words we say or the way we say them. What happens, happens and we have a lot of unhappiness.

2. The Principles of Good Communication. (Ephesians 4).
 - a. Honesty, speaking the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:15, 16)
 - 1) There must be openness and honesty.
 - 2) We must talk; we are commanded to do so!
 - 3) We must speak the truth, not covering, ignoring, lying, or hiding true feelings.
 - 4) We must speak the truth in love! Our speech should be controlled by love and the purpose of our words should be to benefit, help, and not hurt the one with whom we are speaking.
 - b. Solving problems daily. Not putting things off.
 - 1) Don't go to bed angry. Don't end the day with problems unsolved. (Ephesians 4:26, 27)
 - 2) Little things will grow. They will become big things. They will lie in your heart, fester, multiply and bring resentments and hurts. Later explosions may take place.
 - 3) Deal with it now, lest Satan get an advantage. (Ephesians 4:27)
 - c. Bring about edification. The purpose is to build up the other person. (Ephesians 4:29)
 - 1) "Corrupt communication" means harsh, hurting, cutting words. It includes the caustic, abrasive, and hostile language we so often hear in homes!
 - 2) The purpose of communication is to bring "grace" to the hearer, to encourage, to lift up, and to meet needs.
 - d. Right actions, not wrong reactions. (Ephesians 4:30-32; Ephesians 5: 18-21)
 - 1) Poor communication in the home grieves the Holy Spirit. As we communicate there must be a constant consideration of our walk with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5: 18-21 teaches us that we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The results of His control are a melody in the heart (v. 19), a thankful heart (v. 20), and a submissive spirit (v. 21).
 - 2) Right actions are a continual response of kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness. The Greek verb (4:32) is in the tense of a continued action.
 - 3) The wrong reactions, which so frequently are manifest in a home, are very destructive. The sinful reactions listed in Ephesians 4:31 need to be removed from our lives. They should not be the normal reactions to words, attitudes, and actions of other people.

3. The Practice of Effective Communication

- a. Be a good listener. (Revelation 2,3; Hebrews 3:7,8,15; Hebrews 4:7; James 1: 19; Luke 8:8,18; Proverbs 22: 17, 18; Proverbs 18: 13; Proverbs 18:15)

How can we understand each other? By practicing good listening habits. We must listen intently, with the purpose of lovingly responding to needs. We must listen with the heart, so we can understand the feelings and undertones behind the conversation. We must listen effectively so that we can compassionately meet the need of the person.

- b. Avoid quick reactions. (James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13; Proverbs 17:28)
- c. Avoid quarreling. (Proverbs 15:1,15; Proverbs 17:28; Proverbs 25:8; Proverbs 25:28)
- d. Admit sins, and wrongs, and seek forgiveness. (I John 1:7,9; Proverbs 28;13)
- e. Accept the offender's apology; offer forgiveness. (Luke 17:3,4; Colossians 3:13)
- f. Avoid nagging. (Proverbs 19:13; Proverbs 21:19)
- g. Maintain a humble disposition. Put away pride! (Proverbs 18:12; Proverbs 11:2; Psalm 51:17; Psalm 34:18; I Peter 5:5,6; James 4:6,10)

Pride is our chief sin! Pride is at the base of all sins.

We must talk about spiritual things, spiritual needs, and the direction we are going in life. We must build a deep spiritual desire, and communicate about our desires and interests in spiritual things. Many wives wish that their husbands would pray with them, and that they could share their heart, fears, concerns, and spiritual burdens. Our basic sin is pride. Because of our pride we get angry, we answer back, we pout, we hate, we get hurt, we clam up, and we will not meet needs.

Follow These Biblical Guidelines:

- 1. Is it really true? (Ephesians 4:25, 29; Proverbs 18:13)
- 2. Is it meant to help, not hurt? Is it constructive? (Proverbs 20: 15, 17; Romans 15:1 -3)
- 3. Is this the proper, or best time to say-it? (Proverbs 15:23, 28; Proverbs 25:11,12)
- 4. Are the words I'm about to use the best way of saying it? (Proverbs 12:25; Proverbs 15:1; Proverbs 16:23)
- 5. Have I prayed about it? Do I have God's direction in this? (Proverbs 3:5,6; Psalm 37:23; Colossians 4:2-6)

B. Problems in Communication

Introductory Thoughts: *You can have a happy home without Christ, but you cannot have a happy home without communication. The single greatest need is communication, for without it the marriage will collapse. National surveys tell us that couples today spend only about seven minutes a week in good communication. Could it be that our pride, anger, and stubbornness keep us from communicating?*

1. Look at the source of problems (James 3:13-18)
 - a. the sinfulness and deceitfulness of our own hearts. (Isaiah 53:6a; Jeremiah 17:9; James 4:1-3; 3:13-18)
 - b. the basic differences in the way men and women think and express themselves, and the differences in their outlook on life. (Genesis 2: 18; I Peter 3: 17)
 - 1) difference in role, and responsibility
 - 2) difference in physical force, and strength
 - 3) difference in emotional outlook, view of vocations, positions, etc.
 - 4) difference in source of "self-acceptance, self-worth, self-esteem."
 - c. the natural apathy toward dealing with problems and acceptance of the status quo. (Revelation 3:17; Amos 6:1; Proverbs 20:6; Proverbs 21:2; Colossians 3:24)
2. Look at the potential areas of problems in communication.
 - a. finances
 - b. in-laws
 - c. sex
 - d. personal habits
 - e. spiritual needs, life, direction, will of God, etc.
 - f. recreation
 - g. showing affection
 - h. social life, friends
3. Look at the steps to be taken to overcome these problems.
 - a. Identify, confess, and forsake the sin of not communicating with your mate. (Proverbs 28:13)
 - b. Both must recognize that they themselves are part of the problem. (Proverbs 20:6)
 - c. Determine to speak with self-control! We must speak under the control of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) The uncontrolled tongue can do much damage! (Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 15: 1; Proverbs 16:27; James 3:5-8; Colossians 4:6)
 - 2) We must not retreat into silence. (Proverbs 31 :26; Ephesians 4: 15)
 - 3) Emotions must be controlled for communication. Anger, tears, and pouting will cloud the issue. (James 1:20)

- 4) Don't let your pride get in the way! Be humble and forbearing.
(Ephesians 4:28, 29, 32)
- d. Both must be patient as they begin to practice good communication. Don't get angry or discouraged. It will take time to build good communication.
(Ephesians 4:29-32)
- e. Don't discuss your problems with other people present. (Matthew 18:15)
- f. Deal with the present problem, not the past. (Philippians 3:12-14)
- g. Deal with one problem at a time. (Matthew 6:34)
- h. Avoid using emotionally charged words. (Matthew 7:12; Proverbs 15:1)
- i. Be sure you really understand what the person has said. Ask questions until you are sure.
- j. Take a look at the question or problem at hand from the other person's point of view. Seek to understand their viewpoint. Be willing to disagree agreeably!!

It is always best to be willing to compromise on a non-Biblical, or non-moral issue. (Romans 12:10,16) When agreement is not reached, the father/husband, as the head of the home, must make a careful, correct, and considerate decision and the wife and family must abide by it! (Ephesians 4:22,23; Ephesians 6:1; I Peter 3:5-7) There must always be submission to those who are in a God-given place of authority.

"Role Playing" to Help Communication

Here are some "keys" to help communication.

1. The one approached should ask, "What do you think is the solution?" As one seeks out the other about a problem to be solved, the one asking should have an answer in mind.
2. The one bringing up the problem should have a solution in mind even before presenting the problem! Give a suggested solution, and sit down and talk about it!
3. Whoever is talking should talk until they are finished, without any interruption. They should take the time to communicate what is on their hearts. Don't hurry the other person. Give them time.
4. Come to a conclusion, in an amiable, kind way. *"Communication is two people able to discuss anything with the aim of bringing it to a good conclusion without getting mad!"* So there must be -- self-control. Remember you are speaking to the one whom you love! -- a putting away of anger and wrath. There must be control of heart, lip, and life. -- a controlled tongue. You must speak the truth in love. (Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 15:1; Proverbs 16:17; 16:27) -- adults who know how to play and walk with God.
5. We should communicate about more than problems. There should be

communication of praise, encouragement, thankfulness, and love.

6. Never make a decision without talking and praying about it together. It is very important to talk to a conclusion, with determination to succeed and to meet needs.

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. For good understanding, who has the greatest responsibility? the listener or the speaker? Why?
2. What is the listener's first responsibility? In what ways could you learn to become a better listener?
3. What is your primary responsibility if you are the one talking?
4. Why is communication so fundamental to a Christ-centered home?
5. What is a definition of communication?
6. What are the three main parts of Ephesians 4:15a? In what way do we fail in these three important elements?
7. According to Luke 6:45, what is the cause of bad communication?
8. What is the correct way to handle anger according to Ephesians 4:26?
9. List some ways you could edify your mate, your child, and your friend.
10. How can you change your pattern of thinking according to Ephesians 4:23, and Romans 12:2?
11. How do you work at solving problems daily? Consider things you ought to do or change.
12. How did you avoid a quarrel this week?
 - a. Clam up and stew about it?
 - b. Shout louder? (Proverbs 15:1)
 - c. Put it off for a better time and pray for wisdom?
 - d. Agreed in some aspect of it?
 - e. Restated it calmly and discussed both sides of the issue?
13. Did anyone ask for forgiveness in your home this week? What was the situation?
 - a. How did you practice giving forgiveness or accepting an apology?
 - b. What happens in communication when someone is forgiven?
 - c. Is forgiveness first a feeling or an act of decision?
14. List ways pride destroys communication. (Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 18:12) See references in chapter material.

Understanding Your Mate

Chapter VI

We are to be one, to walk together as one, and communicate in such a way that we meet needs, and solve problems! This often does not take place, for we do not really understand each other!

Building Understanding

A. The Biblical Imperative (I Peter 3:7)

1. This command is specifically to the man, but applies to both. We must work at understanding our mate.
2. This command insists that we go beyond the excuse or frustration of, "I just can't understand him/her." We must find some means of understanding him/her better.

B. The Biblical Teaching and Our Practice

1. Understand the Biblical distinction between men and women.
 - a. There is a **role difference**.
 - 1) The man is the head of the home. (Ephesians 5:23; I Corinthians 11:3; Genesis 3:9). He is the loving leader of the home. (Genesis 3:16; I Timothy 3:4; Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29)
 - 2) The woman is the helper in the home. (Genesis 2:18). She should be submissive, (Ephesians 5:22, 24; I Peter 3:1-6), and supportive. (Titus 2:5)
 - b. There is a **responsibility difference**.
 - 1) Men are the providers (Genesis 2:15), lovers (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29), fathers (Genesis 4:1), heads of discipline (Ephesians 6:1-4), protectors, pals, partners, prophets, and officers in the church. (I Timothy 2:12; I Timothy 3:1-13)
 - 2) Women are the house managers (I Timothy 5:14; Proverbs 31), mothers (Genesis 3:20), supporters of discipline (Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 6:20), workers in the church (I Corinthians 11:5,13; Romans 16:1-24)
 - c. There is a **physical difference**.
 - 1) Men are stronger in force (I Peter 3:7), and in body. (Genesis 1:27) 2) Women are the weaker vessel (I Peter 3:7), in body. (Genesis 1:27)
 - d. There is an **emotional difference**.

- 1) Men are more logical and assertive (I Corinthians 11:3), and less emotional (Ephesians 5:25).
 - 2) Women are more emotional and intuitive. (Colossians 3:19; Titus 2:4; Genesis 2:18)
2. Understand the observable natural distinctions between men and women.
 - a. Men are more vulnerable to criticism about their work, achievement, performance, and male "image."
Women are more vulnerable to criticism in areas relating to their female role of getting a husband, cooking, appearance, decorating, housekeeping, child training, etc.
 - b. Men basically get their self-worth and self-esteem from their employment. They find their identity in vocation, (I'm a _____).
Women basically receive their self-worth and self-esteem from their husband's response and acceptance. They find their identity in their relationships (I'm the wife of, mother of, daughter of _____).
 - c. Men more readily adjust to change (for instance, to moving) while women tend to need more time to adjust, since they become more intimate with their situation and relationships.
 - d. Men tend to follow cold logical analysis. Women tend to follow intuition. Note that intuition is neither mystical nor ridiculous. It is an unconscious perception of minute details, sometimes tangible, sometimes abstract. Since it is usually an unconscious process, the woman may not always be able to give specific explanation for the way she feels, although her feelings are not unfounded. Often she is right as she follows her intuition!
 - e. Sexually, men tend to respond to sight and novelty. The man is interested by what he sees! Women tend to respond more to touch, tenderness, words, and security. The woman is interested by what she feels.
 3. Understanding comes from communication: talking long, listening hard, sharing about goals, problems, needs, feelings, joys, regrets, and desires.
 4. Remember, people tend in some instances to change with age. You must keep talking, listening, and sharing through all your married life.
 5. Some differences between you can and must be changed if they are matters of Biblical principles of right and wrong. Some differences can never be changed. We must have forbearance, patience, and acceptance. We must lovingly choose to overlook. (Ephesians 5:25,28,29; Colossians 3:8-13; Titus 2:4)

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. List the significant roles and responsibilities for men and women.

Men

Women

2. Contrast the natural distinctions between men and women.

Men

Women

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3. What are some practical ways to share goals, problems, needs, feelings, regrets, and desires?

Practicing Love

Chapter VII

The Giving of Love Is An Act of the Will

Learning to Love Your Mate

The giving of love is an act of the will! We will to give love or to withhold love. The feelings of love come from right thinking, and then right actions! We must do what God commands regardless of our personal feelings. Doing right will bring the feelings that we desire!

We have been greatly influenced by the world's view of love! The idea that love is uncontrollable, and irrational ("If it comes, I can't help it; if it leaves, I can't help it.") has become a part of the believer's way of thinking. To the world, romantic love is the "be all, and end all" of love. Within that thought, anything goes! God's love is to be super-imposed on all love, and should control all the areas of man's love!

According to God, Who should know since God is love, love is right action that will later produce right feeling. (I John 4:8)

Sexual Aspects, a Source of Problems in Communication

Money and sex are our two biggest problems in life, in the home, in marriage, and in communication. The sexual aspect of marriage is very important. We have in our bodies sexual desires to be fulfilled. They are God-given, and pleasing to Him. Fulfilling our sexual desires sinfully is not pleasing to God. We must choose to communicate to meet needs, and to bring about the living of Biblical principles.

Love is giving, it is not taking. It is giving sexual satisfaction to our mate, not just desiring and seeking it for ourselves. Too often men are guilty of only taking, and causing their wife to hate the sexual act. It ought to be the capstone of love and the height of blessing.

When a wife's needs are not met she is so frustrated, so upset, and possibly becomes such a nervous person, that she will even hate the subject. We must communicate until needs are met. When we lose happiness in one area we will also lose it in another area.

A wife is the most sensitive person in the world! She is the most sensitive of all of God's creation. You must "make love" to your wife so that her needs are satisfied, not just your own. You must learn to communicate together, and be able to talk about what makes her excited, what is meaningful, and what she desires in love making. Meet the need or there will be anger, resentment, and frustration.

A. Consider the Words used in Scripture to Describe Love.

1. Old Testament. "ahav"-- to have affection for, sexually or otherwise. (Genesis 27:27; Exodus 21:5).

- a. Proverbs 5:19. To be ravished with, to be enraptured with, to be intoxicated with. (Song of Solomon 8:6)
 - b. Hosea 2:14; 3:1. To allure, entice, flatter, and persuade.
2. Old Testament. "doth"-- to boil, to love; used of lovemaking. (Song of Solomon 1:2; 4:10; Ezekiel 16:8)
- a. Contrary to popular opinion, sexual happiness in marriage will not occur naturally or by accident. Sex is not the most important part of marriage, but it is a very important part that must be talked about and worked on!!
 - b. Some Biblical truths about sex
 - 1) Sex is for procreation, but it is also for PLEASURE. (Proverbs 5:19; I Corinthians 7:2)
 - 2) The foundation of it must be "*love and blessing*." Love is giving, giving, giving (Colossians 3:12-13); not "*lust*" but love. Give of yourself even when your mate has hurt you! (cf I Peter 3:8,9)
 - 3) Sexual happiness and satisfaction for both is essential in dealing with temptation. (I Corinthians 7:2-5)
 - 4) Your primary consideration in sex must be to meet your mate's need and desire, and not your own! You go to bed to please and satisfy the your mate. (I Corinthians 7:3,4)
 - 5) The pursuit of pleasure with your mate in bed is unlimited, except where a certain act would violate the moral law of God's Word or would do harm to the temple of the Holy Spirit, the body. (Hebrews 13:4)
 - 6) Communication about your sex life is imperative! This is where we most often fail.
3. New Testament. "philandros"-- literally husband-lovers, a compound of phileo, and the feeling of love in a relationship or fellowship. (Titus 2:4; Hebrew 13:1)
- a. This love demands a response. It takes two. It is a give-and-take love.
 - b. This love is fragile and easily injured or broken.
 - c. This love is based on something the other person is or does.
 - d. This love involves companionship, communication, and cooperation; a love that springs from being together, going together, and working together. (Philippians 2: 1-5; I Peter 3:8)
4. New Testament. "agape"-- a love that is a decision of the will to GIVE oneself. (John 3:16, the love of God); (Ephesians 5:25,28,29,30)
- a. This love finds its reason in the one loving, not the one being loved.

- b. This love finds its reason in God, not humans. (I John 4)
- c. This love is the only love that will endure. (I Corinthians 13)
 - 1) Agape love means action. It is an action love, not just an attitude.
 - 2) Agape love means involvement, not a comfortable detachment from others.
 - 3) Agape love means unconditionally loving the unlovable, the undeserving, and the unresponsive.
 - 4) Agape love means total commitment to the object of one's love.
 - 5) Agape love means constructive, purposeful giving of love based on the need of the one loved.
 - 6) Agape love means meeting the need of the "highest good" of the one loved.
 - 7) Agape love means edifying, building up the one loved in every way.
- B. Consider the Scriptures that Deals with "Rekindling Love". (Revelation 2:4,5)
 - 1. We must remember! We must examine our present life with the diminished love in the light of our past life when love flourished.
 - 2. We must repent! We must acknowledge the loss of love, realize such loss is our sin, and call on God for forgiveness. (I John 1:7-2:2)
 - 3. We must return! We must return and do the first works. We must sow a new crop of the deeds of love until they grow a new harvest, the feeling of love. (Galatians 6:7-9; Jeremiah 3:14, 22)

In rekindling our love, hate can be turned to love, suspicion to trust, loneliness to companionship, and loss to gain, if we will just do our part. Forgiveness, growth in love, grace, and kindness are not accidental. Having a successful sex life with your mate will never be an accident, but a fulfillment of obedience to Biblical principles.

The person who finds it most difficult to love again is the person who has fallen out of love. He doesn't want to love, and is sure it won't work for him. He is determined it won't work, feeling possibly he did not love his mate in the first place. We must get back to Biblical truth, back to God, and back to the true meaning of love.

Children can sense when love is not there. They must feel and sense the love between their parents. We can rekindle love in our lives; it can become a beautiful experience because we plan for it, pray for it, and work on it.

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. What can I do to become a more creative lover?
2. Do I really understand what my mate likes and dislikes about our lovemaking?
3. Work on a list of your spouse's likes and dislikes in lovemaking.
4. Do I make it easy for conversation about this?
5. How aware are you of your mate's sexual temptations?
6. What do you do to encourage and support your mate?
7. What can you do in a practical way to set the stage for a pleasant environment for lovemaking? (time, place, attitudes, cleanliness, actions)
8. What does the following statement mean to you?
Love begins in normal daily activities.

Finances in a home can be a fellowship or a fury!

Basic Biblical Principles

Problems with money are universal. Today one out of every five families are on the "abyss" of financial ruin. You either must deal with the problem of what to do with what we do have, or what to do about what we don't have. The nature of money problems is internal, and not external. It's not what we earn that hurts us, but what we spend. Over many a home could hang the world "till debt do us part."

We often look at problems differently. When it is not our problem, we will probably be indifferent. We must have empathy and feeling toward our mates concerning our financial differences. We must have an earnest desire and willingness to communicate until we meet the need, and solve the problems.

A. We Must Adopt a Biblical View of Money. (I Timothy 6:6-18)

1. Everything belongs to God. (Psalm 24:1; I Chronicles 29:11)
2. God is the one Who gives us the ability to make money. (Deuteronomy 8:18; I Chronicles 29:11, 12, 14; Proverbs 10:22; I Corinthians 4:7)
3. There are many things more valuable than money! (Luke 12:15; Matthew 16:26; Proverbs 15:16,17; I Timothy 6:6,9; Jeremiah 9:23)
4. Covetousness, discontentment and worry about money are sin!! (I Timothy 6:8; Luke 13: 14; Philippians 4:11; Colossians 3:1-3; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 6:25-34)
5. Our family financial practice must give priority to giving! (Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:7; Proverbs 14:21; Proverbs 19:17; Ephesians 4:28)
6. God expects the man to do honest, hard work! (Exodus 20:9; Proverbs 13:11; Proverbs 6:6-11; Proverbs 14:23; Genesis 3:17,18)
7. We must prayerfully and carefully plan how to spend the money which God has entrusted to us! (Proverbs 20:18; I Corinthians 4:2)
8. We must learn to live within our income! (Proverbs 22:7; Romans 13:8)

B. We Must Adopt a Practical Financial Plan of Action.

Reading good books on this subject will give you a basis of evaluation. You must formulate a good plan that will work in all kinds of situations.

1. Take time to determine your true income.
2. Take time to record exhaustive lists of expenses. Make the list detailed. Keep records of everything for a period of time. See how you are spending your money, even every cash usage.
3. Determine your spending priorities before you spend.
4. When there are more expenses than income, you must either increase your income, or decrease expense. Maybe you are spending money foolishly!

C. We Must Take the Time to Make Genuine Plans for the Future.

(I Timothy 5:8) Such as . . .

1. children's education.
2. care for family in the event of death,
3. care for parents in their old age,
4. retirement

Possibly use the 10/20/70 plan made popular by some. After the amount for taxes and giving to the Lord is set aside, then:

- a. Save 10% to be invested,
- b. set aside 20% for a buffer fund and
- c. use 70% for living expenses.

Biblical Principles about Money. Dr. Gene A. Getz gives the following suggestions:

1. The "*love of money*" is wrong; that is, to value material things above spiritual things; to accumulate money for purely personal gain and advantage. (I Timothy 6:6-17)
2. To obtain money in deceitful and dishonest ways is a violation of God's laws. (Luke 12:15)
3. To use money in purposes for personal status and power is a selfish use of personal possessions. (Luke 6:38; Luke 16:8-13)
4. Every Christian is to give regularly and proportionally according to the way that God has prospered him. (II Corinthians 9:6,7; I Corinthians 16:1-4)
5. Christians are to use their material possessions to care for other Christians who are in need. (cf Acts 4:32-35; II Corinthians 8:15)
6. Christians are not to be lazy or irresponsible, living off other people. This is sin! (II Thessalonians 3:6-15)

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. Discuss plans for your children's educational future and how you will meet those needs.
2. What plans should you make for the future retirement years that would please and honor the Lord? How will you implement these?
3. What has God promised to the generous person who obeys God in his giving? (Proverbs 11:24,25)
4. Consider these guidelines before you buy anything over \$50.00.
 - a. Do I really need it?
 - b. Is the price reasonable?
 - c. Is it a bargain price? Is it a current model?
 - d. If it is on sale, is it a true sale?
 - e. Can I substitute something for this?
 - f. Does the product have a major disadvantage?
 - g. Have I checked and researched the item?
 - h. Do I know the retailer's reputation?
 - i. Is it pleasing to the Lord to spend money in this way?
5. What am I doing to help my children understand the management of money? Work on a list of things to do.
6. Do you think you are too frugal? too extravagant?
7. Do you communicate your financial goals well to your mate?
8. What are your immediate financial goals?

Rearing Your Children

Chapter IX

He who has lost his children, has lost everything.

God's Desire is a Godly Seed.

It is evident that Eli lost his family. His home was ruined because there was no instruction, no influence, and no restraint. (I Samuel 2,3,4) There must be unity, determination, and total dedication if we are to bring our children to live godly lives, and to live in the will of God. God's desire is for a godly seed. (Malachi 2:11-15)

Parents must decide to depend upon a single absolute authority, the Word of God. (Psalm 127:1; II Timothy 3:16,17; Psalm 119:128) Are you willing to hate every false way?

Rearing Children

What you are, you are producing in your child, for we reproduce "after our kind." They are being trained to be what we are! Build character, and become fanatical about it. Let your child see that you are "happy and free" as you walk with the Lord. Don't allow the television to steal communication and morals. You train them not just by the "yes's or no's" but by your modeling, and your example!

If you train them by your life, so they see consistency, happiness, and forgiveness, they will not long to get away from you, to "kick over the traces," to wallow in the slime of sin or do as they please. They must see the "genuine" article of godly living. Let them see what loving God, and denying self really does. (Matthew 16:24,25; Luke 9:23,24; Luke 14:25-33). Let them see that you don't lose by following God, but you gain. Let them see love and compassion, for we are to "train them!" Bring them up! Bring them up!

A. Responsibilities in Rearing Children.

1. The primary responsibility for rearing the children rests upon the father! (Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 6:20-23; Ephesians 6:4)
2. The secondary responsibility, assisting the father, is given to the mother! (Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 6:20-23)
 - a. Children should be able to live by the law of the mother and the command of the father.
 - b. The molding of a child's life with the Scripture should be so thorough that the child can enter adult life and know God's will and live for His glory.
 - c. These things should be so close to the child that the Bible becomes like laws written on the tablet of his heart.

- d. The Scripture speaks of it as if the Word of God were like an ornament worn around the neck. This means that the Scriptures should be so real and so vivid in a child's memory that it is as if it were written on something that he wore around his neck.
 - 1) Thus the child would make constant reference in his life to the truths planted in his heart by his parents. God says, "*When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.*" (Proverbs 6:22)
 - 2) The child should be taught that reproofs of instruction are a way of life. All of us, in every area of life, will find reproof to be a part of daily living. The commands and laws of God's Word become the reproof in the child's heart. They affect his conscience, and his will, his loves and his life.

B. God's Directive in Rearing Children. " . . . *but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" (Ephesians 6:4)

1. "Bring them up . . . ," is active, not passive! (Proverbs 22:6,15; Proverbs 29:15) It denotes deliberate, positive action! It will not be an accident; it won't happen by itself!
2. "Bring them up . . . ," is a command, not a suggestion! It is God's command as much as any other command in any area of truth.
3. "Bring them up . . . ," is a present and continuous activity. We are never done! We must watch for apathy, indifference, selfishness, and being too busy to obey God's will!
4. ". . . *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" reveals both the need for **positive** training and for instruction. The Greek word translated "**nurture**" means training by chastening.
 - a. As God chastens us, so we are to work with our children. Proverbs 3:11,12 tells us not to despise God's chastening, nor be weary of His correction. "*For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth: even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*"
 - b. Chastening or correction can take many forms, which we will note further in this section of study. The Greek word translated "**admonition**" means training by words, either of encouragement, warning, or reproof according as it is required! This means to use the Word of God in such a way that is brings godly character in the child's life through the daily teaching of the Word of God in the home.

C. Three Biblical Commands to be Obeyed in Rearing your Children.
(Ephesians 6:4)

1. **Don't Provoke them!** Notice this expanded translation from the Amplified Bible:

"Fathers, do not provoke or irritate or fret your children. Do not harden them or harass them, lest they become discouraged and sullen and morose and feel inferior and frustrated: Do not break their spirit."

Fathers, we are commanded here not to exasperate them to resentment, or literally, "Don't take the wind out of their sails."

- a. Don't frustrate them with inconsistency, hypocrisy, or changeableness. Our tendency is to love one more than another. (James 1:5-8; Philippians 4:9; Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
 - b. Don't forget to praise their efforts and accomplishments. **Discipline without praise provokes.** (I Corinthians 13:1-8; John 13:34,35; Romans 13:7,8; I Thessalonians 2:7,8)
 - c. Don't ask more from them than they are able to give. They are only children. We tend is to talk of our own childhood, and make it appear we were better than our own children. (Proverbs 22:6; I Corinthians 13:11; Romans 12:3)
 - d. Don't be abusive or degrading or belittle them when correcting them. (Proverbs 15:1; Ephesians 4:31; I Timothy 5:1,2; Ephesians 4:29)
 - e. Don't fail to help them know what you want, or expect. *Mean what you say, and say what you mean.* (Proverbs 1 :8; Proverbs 6:20-23)
 - f. Don't forget to enjoy your children. Take time to enjoy them, and never give them the impression that they are mainly a burden, a trial, a difficulty, etc., but instead let them know they are a blessing. We tend is to make the little statements that make them sense they are a problem to us. (Psalm 127,128; Matthew 18:5,6; Proverbs 15:33; Ecclesiastes 3:4)
 - g. Don't forget to encourage and help young children to succeed. Don't forget to let older children fail, make their mistakes and take the responsibility for their own mistakes. And yet you must still accept them for what they are -- your children! We tend is to fail to give them acceptance, or give time for maturity and growth. (I John 2:1,2; Ephesians 5:1,2; Colossians 3:12-14; II Timothy 2:24,25)
 - h. Don't change the rules, or standards without reason and explanation. We need to remember our rules, and maybe post them so that we'll be consistent. (Hebrews 13:8; James 1:5-8)
 - i. Don't forget to admit when you are wrong, and ask them for forgiveness! If we are to have spiritual healing, there must be confession of sin. (James 5:16; Luke 17:3,4; Proverbs 28: 13; Proverbs 16:2; Proverbs 21:2)
 - j. Do allow them to share their hearts, their burdens, concerns, and frustrations.
 - k. Do take time to meet their needs. Listen to them with an open, compassionate heart.
2. **Do Discipline Them.** "*bring them up in the nurture... of the Lord....*" Eph. 6:4
- a. There are definite Biblical commands to carry out discipline. (Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 22:15; Proverbs 23:13,14; Proverbs 22:6; 29:15,17)

All discipline has a Biblical reason:

- (1) because of the sin nature, (Romans 3:9-12, 23);
 - (2) because of going astray, (Psalm 58:3; Jeremiah 17:9);
 - (3) because of the rebellion of the heart, (Proverbs 22:15).
- b. Discipline is preventive by teaching, exhortation, reproof, instruction, etc. (Proverbs 13:1,13; Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 6:20-23; Proverbs 15:32,33; Proverbs 3:21-23; Proverbs 4:10-13)
- c. Discipline is corrective by exhorting, rebuking, reproof, etc. (cf II Timothy 3:16,17; Titus 2:11-15; Proverbs 2:1-11; Romans 15:14)

*The **Purpose of Corrective Discipline** is to help the child put away habits of sin, to determine and change character weaknesses, and to mold the life with godly, Christian character. (Ecclesiastes 11:9,10; Ecclesiastes 12:13,14) Often parents do not have a goal in mind, and do not work towards a goal. If we do not understand our child intimately, his strengths and weaknesses, we will not truly be able to help him grow spiritually.*

- d. Discipline is **punishment** or punitive when it is a practice of using the rod to bring about change. There is a definite Biblical method for using punishment to bring about repentance and change.
- 1) We must use the rod. It must hurt, but not damage! (Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 22:15; Proverbs 23:13, 14; Proverbs 29:15)
 - 2) We must use the rod with instruction. (Proverbs 29:15)
 - 3) We must use the rod "in one accord, unified, being of one mind." (cf. Philippians 2:2,3; I Peter 3:8; Mark 3:25) Parents, AGREE!
 - 4) We must use it consistently!

Spanking should be reserved for three basic things:

deliberate disobedience, rebellious actions, obvious disrespect (back talk).

We must realize that we are under higher authority than our own to bring about obedience, and we must carry out discipline as "under Christ" to build character in the lives of our children.

When discipline is connected to emotions, it will always be inconsistent.

In examining God's discipline of His children (you and me) we see His consistent working with us to bring about the desired results (cf. Hebrews 12:5-12).

Discipline is not to be an emotional release of anger, but a decided, consistent response to ANY REFUSAL TO OBEY A COMMAND!

The actual circumstances of the disobedience may be (or seem to be) insignificant, but any disobedience is significant in that it is rebellion against authority. (Proverbs 1:1-10; Jeremiah 4:1-4; Jeremiah 6:17-19)

Carrying Out the Correction:

1. Get alone with the child, take them from the place of their misbehavior.
2. Get your heart right, put away your anger.
3. Make an ordeal out of it, asking questions, "What, Why, etc.?"
4. Tell them how many swats, and why, and then spank them with a paddle, not with your hand.
5. Allow them to cry quietly. It is a release of emotion.
6. Before you leave the room, pray with them, give them forgiveness, and give them a lot of love. Do it right!

What is often wrong in discipline:

1. The wife keeps threatening the children with the father, and what he will do when he gets home. This is wrong. Don't wait until he gets home.
2. The husband, being out of the home all day long, does not want to correct the children. He often becomes permissive, or expects the wife to do all the correcting, because she has "been doing it anyway." He must do his part.
3. The mother seeks to guard her children from the husband, assuming the father spanks too hard and too much. They must cooperate and seek to agree.
4. 80% of the discipline in the home is done wrong. It is done to pacify someone's anger or to cover someone's shame. What if God punished us that way?

3. Do Teach Them. " . . . bring them up in the admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4

- a. To teach is to "put in mind", or to get truth into their heads. It is to "so train them up" that their thoughts are God's thoughts. (cf James 1:19)
- b. The children of Christian parents should have two agreeing sources of instruction to remember. " . . . the law of thy father, and the law of thy mother." (Proverbs 4:1-3; Proverbs 4:10-13; Proverbs 1:8)
- c. The child should be able to live by what his father has taught him and by what his mother has taught him. (Proverbs 6:223)
- d. This necessitates a "family altar or daily devotional time" when the Word of God is taught, studied, meditated on, read and memorized. The out-working of that should be the continuous informal teaching of God's Word throughout the daily routine of each part of the child's development. (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)
- e. The following goals should be involved in our teaching and training of our children with the Scriptures.
 - 1) Share the spiritual heritage of the past generations, that they might know what God has done for their family. (Deuteronomy 4:9,10)
 - 2) Share God's doings, His ways, and His works so that your children will know the availability of His power in their lives. (See Judges 2:6-13.)
 - 3) Share the importance of God's authority in their life. (Deuteronomy 31: 11-13)

- 4) Share the importance of God-given goals.
(Compared with Judges 1:21-36)
- 5) Share the importance of convictions, and the seriousness of apathy and indifference. (Joshua 1: 16-18; Joshua 24:31;
compared with Judges 2:6-13)

Do Teach Them--Do Know Them

1. Understand the child, their different characteristics at different ages, their difficulties, and problems, so you can teach them right. Understand their different stages, changes, for they do change and you better had recognize the fact. Hold the reins, and let them grow up, mature, and develop properly.
2. Agree as parents. Agree to love them, to not provoke them, and yet to teach them. Set down principles, how you are going to do it. God puts the accountability upon the parents. We must do right.
3. Character and instruction must come from the home. Parents, you are the ones who put true character into the child's life. If you do not have standards at home, rules for their sake, they will have a great difficulty being what they ought to be.

The devil will make it difficult, or try to influence you so you will not 1) pray, 2) use the Word of God, 3) nor tell anyone else about the Lord.

You must have strong standards, rules, and mold the child with the Word of God. (Deuteronomy 6:6) The Word shines in "thine heart" and from your hearts to their hearts, as you seek to diligently teach them. This does not mean we are to preach at them, but in a natural way relate everything to God, from God, and back to God. We are to teach the Bible, not just by formal time as a course of study, but applying every incident to the Word of God. "What does the Bible say? or what does God say?" should be our response to difficult situations.

Relate everything to God, the whys, the ways of God, what God has done in your own life, etc. (Hebrews 3:7-10; Hebrews 4:1-7; Deuteronomy 31:11-13; Deuteronomy 4:9,10; Deuteronomy 5:27-29)

If we give only a part of Sunday, part of the week to God, we are going to rear a "secular generation" if we think all the rest of the week belongs to us!

When your child has a need, pray with them, right then. Training a child is not done through a few "crisis" events but by a "million" different things, a "million" words, acts, deeds, shared events, conversations, decisions, tears, sorrows, laughs, and actions of love. Yes, it is by a stream of endless things that make up life. You are rearing a child by "what you live." It is done by "how you relate your own life to everything."

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. Who is training your child? (by the number of hours spent influencing them-- mother? father? TV? teacher?)
2. Who does God command to train your child, and what is involved in Proverbs 6:20-23?
3. What is the purpose of training your child to do what is right?
List some Biblical goals.
4. Name one thing you talked over this week and arrived at what you will or won't allow your child to do.
5. What did you do this week to change a negative response or attitude? (in yourself or in your child)
6. The best discipline you will ever carry out is: _____
(Proverbs 13:1,13; Proverbs 15:32,33)
What did you do in this type of discipline this week?
7. When a child is unaware of doing wrong, what kind of discipline is effective?
Describe how you would use the Word of God to correct your child.
8. What three particular things are serious enough that a child should be spanked?
9. What must you do for yourself before you can teach your child?
(Deuteronomy 11:18: II Timothy 2:15)
10. How did you relate the Word of God to life this week?
11. Who is the most important role model in your child's life at this time?
Is this person a good role model?
12. What are you doing to share the numerous things listed that would mold your child's life?

Saving Your Marriage

Chapter X

The journey of a long mile is done one step at a time.

Seeking to Save Your Marriage Alone

Sometimes it is the man and sometimes it is the woman that must seemingly stand alone! The situation may be a unsaved partner, or a saved mate with a very carnal nature. Or the situation may be that the mate will not admit that there is even a problem. If they do admit it, there may be a refusal to do anything about it. They may be seeking a separation or divorce.

There may seem to be viable decisions or solutions at hand, but many times the one under pressure (trying to do right) makes the wrong decision and seeks solutions which are out of the will of God. Those solutions may include such things as separation or divorce, endurance of the situation or bitterness. The right solution is to enlist God's power for change. (Numbers 23:19; Luke 1:37; Jeremiah 33:3; Jeremiah 32:17,26,27).

Fulfilling all the things set forth in this chapter does not guarantee that a mate will stay with his or her spouse. No one can persuade someone against his/her own will, even God does not do that.

- > While on one hand we must do our part in obeying the principles of Scripture, on the other hand, only God can change a life.
- > We must learn to put our mate in the hands of God and leave that person totally with Him. Much frustration and sorrow comes from self-induced or selfish efforts to change our mate, which brings about a lack of expectation in God's working.
- > Blaming God for not changing a person is sin against a holy God.
- > Consider the fact that there are numerous illustrations in Scripture of people whose lives were never changed because they were determined to live in their sin.
- > God made us a free moral agent, which fact He will never negate.
- > All of life is a series of choices to either obey or disobey God's Word and will. The one who loses his mate, be it through adultery, homosexuality, or some other determined sin, must leave that in the hands of God and believe that God has something great in store for him/her no matter how difficult life may have been. He is still alive, He still loves, and His grace is still sufficient.
- > The bigger problem is that too often we are too late at working to save our marriage. The following things, if practiced soon enough, would have saved many a marriage.

Far too often the mate desires the spouse to change merely for the purpose of making his/her life easier to live. We must decide that God's glory and honor are at stake in our spouse's life. If we only want to be freed from a difficult life for our selfish ends, we may well expect that God will not answer our prayers or make the following principles of any great benefit. Many a wife has wanted her husband changed because life is difficult. When he got saved and was dramatically changed, then he went further than the wife even wanted him to, problems arise which reveal that her whole intent was a selfishly motivated one.

A. Biblical Steps in Saving Your Marriage.

1. Build a strong walk with the Lord. Make much of your private "quiet time" with the Lord. Only out of a victorious walk with the Lord will you see change. God can overcome the obstacles. (Ephesians 4:22-24; Romans 12:1,2; I John 5:4; I John 2: 14)
2. Make up your mind, decide, whether you want to save your marriage or not. What is God's will about the matter? (Romans 7: 1-4) Do you want your mate back or do you want revenge? (I Peter 1: 13- 16; Daniel 1 :8; Proverbs 4:24-27)
3. Learn to love him/her again. Rebuild the love that was once there!
 - a. Desire, and determine to forgive him/her even before repentance. (Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:32)
 - b. Make restitution about any wrong. Ask for forgiveness. (Proverbs 28:13) You are in the worst kind of danger when you are right! When your mate sins against you, and you feel you are right, it is so easy to respond wrongly, to sin in reaction, and/or to desire to give up.
 - c. Demonstrate genuine love for him/her while not receiving it. It may seem to go unnoticed by him/her, but it isn't unnoticed by God. (Galatians 6:7-9; Colossians 3:9-13) When your mate is difficult to live with, you must conquer your own emotions, and give genuine love, even if things are unbearable. Remember Daniel who did right no matter what happened, even if death might have come. (I Corinthians 1; Colossians 3:9-13)
 - d. Demonstrate consistent, genuine change made by God in your life. (Galatians 6:9; Romans 12:2)
 - e. Stop trying to change your mate by criticism or ridicule. Stop the criticism and the ridicule, or the desired results will never come. Often we have dug the hole ourselves, and brought our home and marriage to ruin. We keep on talking and continue to bring ruin. (Colossians 3:12-15; Ephesians 4:30-32)
 - f. Trust God's plan and promises. It is so easy to have pride hurt, to feel we deserve more than this and become angry. It is so easy to rationalize defeat and to give up. We must look at the CROSS, (cf Hebrews 12: 1-4), for we do not have a reason to give up. God will use your demonstration of love and consistency. (Romans 4: 18-23; Hebrews 11 :6)
4. In all this you must stabilize and have victory over your emotions. Memorize verses, and meditate on the Word of God. Get your strength from Him. Find fulfillment for your emotional needs in Christ. (Psalm 119: 165; Isaiah 26:3; Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 41:10)

Don't separate, unless it is of extreme necessity. You won't save the marriage by leaving. It is said that 40% of all wives murdered in this country are murdered by their own husbands. It has been proven in 10,000 cases that is a man has hit his wife three times, that kind of husband will never change without counsel, and help. He will probably promise, but will never change without God's power and help. If your child or you are in danger, then it is best to leave. If immorality is there, and if there is no other recourse, you may have to leave the home. Don't divorce, separate if necessary.

B. Some Practical Aspects to Ponder.

1. Don't use the children as a weapon.
2. Don't use the children as a substitute.
3. Don't separate, if at all possible. (I Corinthians 7:5)
4. Don't agree to a divorce. (Ephesians 5:11)
5. Don't involve your friends and family, or line up sympathizers on your side. They will likely turn you the wrong way.
6. Don't expect immediate change. Give God time and be patient.
7. Don't expect progress without set-backs.

Always remember the warning and promise of Galatians 6:7-9.

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: For in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not."

Questions for Discussion and Personal Application:

1. What are some practical things you can do to build a stronger walk with the Lord?
2. Make a list of things that would help you demonstrate and rebuild genuine love toward a difficult mate.
3. Make a list of Biblical promises meaningful to you which you are planning to claim.
4. What are the practical things you are doing to help your child understand the circumstance and not be hurt through it?
5. Do you have a positive attitude about your mate when around others, in spite of the problems you face?
6. Are you giving genuine forgiveness, which means not bringing up past problems to yourself, to them, or to others?
7. Make a list of things you need to do to effect change in your own life so that you might have greater impact on your mate and avoid future problems.

Appendix

For Further Reference

Principles of Communication:

Guidelines for Discussion . . .

1. Don't disagree in the wrong way.
2. Don't be guilty of power grabbing. Discuss kindly. Men are especially prone to grab the power, speak dogmatically, and close the door.
3. Watch the "righteous" attitude. Men often feel their wives are more righteous, so they give up and she wields the power.
4. Avoid the quarrel that never ends. Bury it, don't let it haunt you, get rid of it, forgive and forget.
5. Always avoid character assassination.
6. Never bring up conflict or contradiction before others.

Children or any others will take sides, and then hate you, or one of you. When we degrade one another, cut up one another, contradict and criticize in public, we ruin our testimony, and destroy each other. Then more and more, the children will lean toward one or the other, and will think less and less of the parents. In the process they will also feel guilty, as the child becomes but a pawn in the parents' conflict.

The Wrong Approach in the Home

Too often in the home we seek to hire someone to do for us, or for our children what we are not willing to do for ourselves. This is wrong, as we often do what the government does . . . "throw some money at a problem rather than honestly seeking to face truth and solve it in a Biblical way."

We need to be humble enough to admit sin, and to discuss lovingly the things we must change. We must put away our greedy, selfish, self-centered, proud ways and honestly seek to establish a real Christian home.

1. Pride will stop communication.
2. Fatalism will stop communication.
3. Sin will stop communication.
4. Indifference will stop communication.

Problem Areas in Communication Rules for Relationships with In-laws

1. You must treat your mate's parents like your own.
2. You married your mate, not the family. Yet in a sense you marry the in-laws.
3. You must never talk wrongly about your own parents, as your mate will also feel the freedom to do so. That will bring problems.
4. What you do for one, you should do for the other.
5. When one parent interferes, the mate who is their child should go to them and get it corrected, not the other mate who is unrelated.
6. You should show respect to them both equally.
7. You should seek to share your life with both in a meaningful way, even if you live closer to one set of parents than to the other.
8. You should be equitable in your dealings with your parents. Remember everyone's birthdays, and anniversaries. Do the same for one as for the other.

"Neither mate should say anything against their own parents to the other. One day your mate may repeat what you have said. Never criticize your own parents to your mate, for next to God comes the grandparents."

"They brought you into the world, and they mean the best for you! Lovingly care for your own parents."

Discipline in the Home, a source of problems

Almost always agreement on principles of discipline should be settled early, even before marriage. Many argue time and time again in this area, and things are never settled.

What are some rules to be set down about communication, in the area of rearing children?

1. No child should be corrected, or punished, when you are mad. You are not correcting them, you are merely punishing, and there is a difference. (James 1:19,10) You should seek to build character. But so often they are hurt because we feel we have been embarrassed by them, or they have taken our time, etc. (Prov. 3:11, 12) All discipline should be for correction. So to do it in anger is to sin, and they will receive more than when spanked when we are not angry.
2. The parent who saw the child misbehaving should do the correcting. We should not expect the other parent to do it.

Problems in Financial Matters (the need for communication)

We look at problems differently. When it is not our own problem, we will probably be indifferent. We must have empathy and feeling toward our mates. We must have honest feeling and willingness to communicate until we meet the need, and solve the problems.

Principles in Finances:

1. We must tithe, have our hearts right about giving, and serve God in this area.
2. We must live within our means, and never above our means, and seek to stay out of debt.
3. We must live by a budget, getting the bills paid, knowing where out-go is and keeping track of what we are doing.
4. We must talk about everything that we spend. We must communicate about financial matters coming to unity and harmony.

Men Need to Share with Their Wives in Every Subject

1. Talk about anything and everything. Talk and learn to solve problems, meet needs, and come to a God-honoring conclusion without getting mad.
2. Really fast and pray about it, until you can talk about anything!
3. Give your wife the freedom to discuss anything, any subject without getting angry. Don't just "live and let live" but share your whole life. Don't shut your mate out of your life. Learn to discuss everything.
4. Be able to speak of personal habits, about anything without degrading the mate.

Showing Affection

A wife wants to hear it; she wants to see it shown. A wife hates it when the only time her husband shows affection is publicly. She wants it "day by day" in the routine of life. She wants it privately, or publicly means little.

Teach Them, Love Them, Not Just Discipline Them

1. If you discipline without teaching, without love, without a consistent life of your own, all you will do is drive your children to anger and rebellion.
2. If you only live by negatives (harranging, spanking, and with-holding), the negatives are going to cause them to resist everything that God stands for. *"Provoke not!"*
3. If you just have rules and enforce them like a staff sergeant, you will drive them away into the slime of sin, rebellion, hatred and resentment. Your children will love you above a normal love if you have taught them right! They will want to be with you, be like you, and will seek to pattern their lives "after you."
4. Never take away spiritual activities as a corrective measure, as this will not please God and will not be helpful to the child. You cannot take away something good to bring about good.
5. Decide when, where, and how you are going to spank your child. Someone may report you as a child abuser, or your child may report you and you will lose your child. Then you will have to prove your innocence as you will already be considered "guilty". You need the love and respect of your child, as they respect your authority. You must spank in the right way.
6. Never, never spank in anger. You must have control over your own spirit.
7. Whoever does the correcting must also take the time to ask the child two questions.
 - (1) Do you understand why you were corrected? and
 - (2) Do you understand that I love you?

Thus there must also be the time taken to give the child love, acceptance, and forgiveness. You must pray with them, and build a right relationship. To the child it may seem that a giant is coming after them with a paddle that looks like a boat oar, and they are terrified. We must carry out discipline in the right way so they know our love, and sense that it is just.

Work with your child, and for him. If there is a lot of arguing between the parents at home, some day you will wonder why you allow it. Work things out, what was so big, so bad that you argued all your days anyway? The child may well give up on the home, and desire to leave.

PRAY daily for your child, by name every day. Seek to protect them, and build around them a "hedge of protection" that they may be kept from sin, from Satan's power, and from wicked people around them.

Do Discipline Them

Do not just punish them, but correct them. It is for "correction" that we might build character. Too often it is done to rid us of our own anger, and to cover our own shame. (cf James 1: 19,20)

Discipline is to be Correction, for the purpose . . .

1. To correct what is wrong, to mold a life, to correct the lying or stealing, so that the child will not continue to do the wrong.
2. The child has a sin nature and one of the worst things for the child is to be able to "get away with sin, or present evil." We should desire to help the child sense that there is judgment for sin. (cf Ecclesiastes 11:9,10; Ecclesiastes 12:13,14)
3. We should have the purpose to correct a "character flaw", to prevent more evil.

All Discipline has a Biblical Reason. . .

1. because of the sin nature, (Proverbs 22:15; Proverbs 29:15)
2. because of going astray, (Psalm 58:3; Jeremiah 17:9)
3. because of the fact that a "foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." (Proverbs 10:1; Proverbs 29:15, 17)

Suggestions in the Biblical Use of the Rod.

1. Don't ever do it in anger. It may hurt, but it must not damage.
2. Put yourself in the child's place, and realize the power of the sin nature.
3. The crime and the punishment (correction) must fit together. Maybe you should only scold him or talk to him.
4. Punishment varies with age. Never do it in delight.
5. Father must do his part. In many cases surveys have shown that 50% of the children have never been corrected by their own father.
6. Be sure they understand what is the reason they are being disciplined. It is easy for the child to be terrified, and not even remember the reason why they are being spanked.
7. It ought to be for the purpose of correction, instruction. (cf Proverbs 29:15, 17). Do it in love, and in compassion.
8. Parents must "stand" together. There will be resentment when the rod is only used by one parent. They will respect those who really love them enough to have them do right.
9. One of the great tragedies is that 90% of the correcting has been done by mothers. The mother demonstrates her love. (Proverbs 13:24) Fathers must become the "corrector" when they walk in the door. The child must have the balance.

Carrying Out the Correction

1. Get alone with the child. Take them from the place of their misbehavior.
2. Get your heart right. Put away your anger.
3. Make an ordeal out of it. Ask questions, "Why, What happened, etc."
4. Tell them how many swats and why and then spank them.
5. Allow them to cry quietly. It is a release of emotion.
6. Before you leave that room, pray with them, give them forgiveness, and give them a lot of love. Do it right!

Mother, Are You a Problem?

Do you dislike the way father does it? Do you sort of guard the children? Do you carry out all the correction, so he can't do it? Do you assume all of this responsibility because you feel he does it too hard, too much? Do you cooperate with your husband, and support him in carrying out discipline? Do you seek to agree?

Saving Your Marriage Alone

At least one person in most homes does desire to save their marriage. There are important things to take into consideration in saving it alone.

1. Believe God, what God has said, what God means, and that He will do it. (Luke 1:27)
2. Decide once for all that you are going to work on the marriage "till death do us part." Purpose in your heart that you are never going to give up. (I Peter 1:18; Daniel 1:8)
3. You must steadily, and constantly stabilize your emotions. You must do right even if your partner does not work at it. Don't allow yourself to get angry, or bitter because your mate seemingly does not care. Don't decide, "If he doesn't care, then I don't care either." Wait on the Lord, trust HIM!
4. Learn to love in spite of their indifference. There must be forgiveness, with no desire for revenge. (I Corinthians 7:9-12) You must start sowing a new kindness, a new happiness, a new attitude, and a new concern whether you receive anything back right away or not. (Galatians 6:7-9)
5. Love is "born in giving, not getting." If you want to save your marriage, you never answer back! If the husband is unreasonable, difficult, maybe impossible, you must continue to do right!
6. Continue to believe God, no matter what. God is not a liar, so trust Him and continue to work on your marriage. Die trying if necessary, but determine that God will keep His Word.
7. Your efforts will be of no avail if you "lash out, hate, pout, become bitter, or quit." You must continue on! (Numbers 23:19; Psalm 27:14; Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 40:10; I Corinthians 12; Colossians 3:9-13)
8. Look at the cross, at the Lord Jesus Christ, and the way He gave Himself. Hebrews 12:1-4 sets forth His enduring as also does Hebrews 5:7-9.

Love in the Marriage. (Adapted from Dr. Ed Wheat's book, "Love Life")

1. I can learn to love and what it is from the Word of God.
2. Love is not easy or simple. It is an art that I must want to learn and pour into my life. I can learn to love.
3. Love is an active power that I control by my own will. I am not helpless or a slave to love, as I can choose to love or to not love.
4. Love is the power that will produce love as I learn to give it rather than to strain to attract it. Love is not produced by trying to attract it.
5. Love is to be given and given wisely. Is it to affirm the value of the beloved always and do the best for the beloved ones.

A Man's Leadership. (Adapted from Dr. Gene A. Getz in his book, "Measure of a Man".)

A man may have a well-ordered business, very well-ordered, and yet he may have a family that is falling apart. The family is the true test! It is very easy to fool other people regarding our spirituality. But we cannot fool our wives and children. They live with us twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Their experience with us is wall to wall. They know us as we really are. When our message does not conform with our lives, we are in serious trouble with our children. We are in danger of driving them away from Christ, the very One we want them to serve.

- > There are some men, even Christian men, who use the concept of headship to justify authoritarian attitudes and behavior in marriage.
- > They try to run their homes like an army sergeant.
- > They shout orders, demand instant obedience to every whim and wish, and meet opposition with psychological, if not physical force.
- > This is not headship! It's childishness and selfishness. It is the opposite of love!

Looking for Symptoms of Over-discipline and Over-restrictive Behavior!
(adapted from the book, "Measure of a Family", by Dr. Gene A. Getz)

The following will help you isolate problems and enable you to make corrections. These things are often seen in children in moderate amounts, but for some the effects may be very persistent because of our mishandling of the child.

1. A withdrawn and overly quiet child.
2. A very aggressive and angry child. One who is always striking out at others.
3. An oversensitive and fearful child.
4. A child who is never satisfied with his accomplishments; a perfectionist.
5. A child with anger turned inward upon himself--a desire to die.
6. A very uncooperative child, particularly at the age of three or four.
7. A sneaky child, or one who is constantly misbehaving to get attention.

Children Need to Love and to be Loved.

Two basic needs are "to love and to be loved." If either of these needs are not met, people tend to break emotionally. "The supreme happiness of life is in the conviction that we are loved." (quote by Victor Hugo)

The tiny tot, the growing child, the teenager, the unmarried adult, the parent, and the aged--all need affection and expressions of love. And love dare not be taken for granted.

In a "foundling home" in New York it was observed that when nurses were too busy, and a baby had one tenth of a mother (in time given), thirty percent of the babies died before they were a year old. "Emotional starvation is as dangerous as physical starvation," says Dr. Spitz. "It's slower but just as effective. For without emotional satisfaction children will die."

When a parent is asked if he loves his child, we expect him to answer, "Of course, I love my child." Yet, we are told, the more important question is, "Do your children know they are loved?"

1. Love is a learned response. The child needs daily warm, outgoing affection.
2. He needs love the most when in trouble, when unlovely, and when in need.
3. Love between parents affects a child's ability to love.
4. Love must be spoken. Also by holding, embracing, by giving a pat on the shoulder, or a look of love into the eye, the parent can communicate deep love to the child. There needs to be the verbal expression, and the physical as well. As there are verbal expressions of disapproval, so there must be verbal expressions of approval.
5. Love calls for action. It is proven by giving ourselves, our time, and our person for their sake.

6. Love involves trust. When parents love their children wisely, they try to help them feel that they are persons in their own right.
7. Love requires a willingness to listen. Listen to their hurts, complaints, and joys. Take time with them early in life, and they will take time with you later in life.
8. Love means sharing experiences. Doing things together as a family brings a sense of unity, understanding, and togetherness. The good times we recall late in life are the blessed times of doing things together with our families.
9. Love builds openness and comfortable relationships. As we support words with caresses, embraces, care, comfort, merriment and laughter, the child will be absolutely assured that he is loved.

Children Need Praise (adapted from the book, *“Seven Things Children Need,”* by John M. Drescher.

1. Praise the child's performance, not his personality.
2. Praise what the child is responsible for, rather than that which he cannot help.
3. Recognize that praise is especially needed from those who are important to the child.
4. Praise sincerely.
5. Praise a child for what he does on his own initiative.
6. Keep in mind that the sooner praise is given, the better it is.
7. Remember that parents' attitudes are just as important as their words in giving encouragement.
8. Praise should point out progress.
9. If the child lives with praise, he will learn to be thankful.

A national survey proves that the average child receives ten times more negative comments from his parents than positive comments. People seldom change because we point out their faults. Sincere praise and encouragement are the warmth and tenderness all of us need to change for the better.

Children Need Acceptance.

1. Expecting too much of a child builds feelings of unacceptance.
2. Expecting the child to fulfill our dreams makes him feel unaccepted. Recognize your child to be unique. Allow him to be himself.
3. Comparing your child with others conveys a lack of acceptance.
4. Help the child to find satisfaction in achievements.
5. Let the child know that you love him, want him, and really enjoy him.
6. Maintain an honest, genuine relationship with your child.
7. Listen to what the child is saying.
8. Constantly criticizing a child creates feelings of failure, rejection, and inadequacy. Treat the child as a person of worth.
9. Allow the child to grow and develop in his own, unique way.

Teen Complaints

1. *"I can't do anything right. They never see anything good that I do!"* Parents, think about it -- Do any of us ever outgrow the need of praise?
2. *"My parents won't forgive me!"* Parents, think -- Don't we all need forgiveness, along with forgetting?

3. *"My parents won't listen to me!"* Parents, think -- Is it not true that too often we only talk to them when we feel they are wrong? And then there is conversation that degrades, compares, and belittles.

Advice Concerning Discipline of Children

1. Never tell the child he is a bad person to have done such a thing. The act may be bad, but the person is not rotten. The act may be serious, but the child should still know he is loved. We tend to use terms that are permanent, and classify the child.
2. Never withdraw love as a punishment, either by word or action. Love the child no matter what the act he has done. Suicide takes place because of feelings of little if any worth! Parents too often say things that are terrible, like, *"I can't love you anymore!"*
3. Match the intensity of the discipline with the severity of the transgression, not with the severity of your displeasure, or shame.
4. Structure the child's responsibility according to their ability to succeed.
5. Teach them to forgive. Have the "grace of God" in action.
6. Never take away a spiritual blessing or need to bring punishment, or correction. Example: Do not forbid them to be in a youth activity because of some disobedience. A wrong on your part can't make a right!

Making Your Marriage What it Ought to Be.

Christian psychiatrist Paul B. Meier says that there are only three choices for any person involved in an unhappy marriage:

- (1) get a divorce, which is the immature choice and a cop-out,
- (2) try to tough out the marriage without expecting any change, or
- (3) face personal failure, take responsibility for one's own part and then choose to build a victorious marriage, which is the only real, mature choice to make.

Most every Christian knows, from the experiences in marriage, that there are naturally many pressures.

- > Some experience the depth of hurts, rejection, emotional confusion, and temptations to bitterness.
- > When one realizes that all experience these things to a lesser or greater degree, then one can take heart that there is some way out. That way is to obey God's principles.

Some, in marriage, come to the extreme of severity and heartaches in their life.

- > When trying to see your way through a difficult marriage, you must settle in your mind, have your thoughts clarified, and your commitment made that you are going to listen to God, and to Him alone.
- > Then you will no longer lie at the mercy of outside events. You will no longer react to every new circumstance with fresh pain and bewilderment. Your heart's resolve will be to count on God's wisdom, and trust Him for the right course of action based on His Word. No longer will you feel the need to listen to the myriad of human voices.

Someone must take the initiative and begin the loving process. Robert Louise Stevenson spoke the truth when he said, *"Here we are, most of us, sitting at the window of our heart, crying for someone to come in and love us. But then we cover up the window with the stained glass of pride or anger or self-pity so that no one can glimpse the lonely self inside."*

A wife expressed her desire of love in this way: *"I just want my husband to keep telling me that he loves me and approves of me. Not only with words but also with kisses and thoughtfulness and understanding and protectiveness. I suppose what I'm really saying is that I want him to love me the way the Bible says--to love me the way Jesus Christ loves the Church!"*

We must remember that we become loved by loving, not by straining to attract love.

- > So be careful how you love.
- > Loving your mate in God's way means a "giving love."
- > Too often we try to get love by clinging, complaining, or making demands. By our anger, moodiness and temperamental displays, we actually hinder our efforts to be loved.
- > We must quit playing games. We must quit trying to get love by inspiring jealousy, or insecurity, or playing hard to get.

The Connection between Love and Forgiveness. (Adapted from *"The Key to a Loving Heart"*, by Karen Mains.)

The key that opens the door to the locked rooms of our hearts is forgiveness. It is only when we have experienced forgiveness . . . that we find the locks are sprung, the doors are flung open, the windows are tossed high, the rooms are inhabited, the fires are lighted on the hearths. It is then we discover that our hearts are finally free to love. They have become what the Creator intended them to be, places with immense capacity to embrace.

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