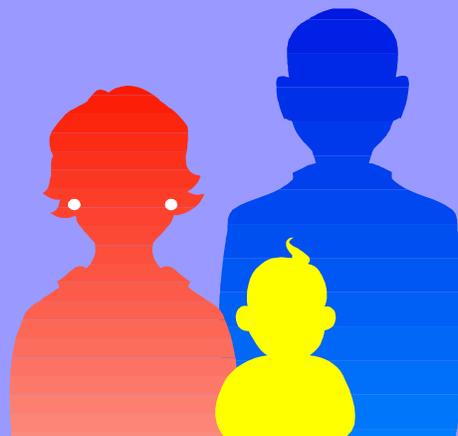


*The Family
As God Would Have
It*



12 Lessons

Prepared by

PAUL E. CANTRELL

2003

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Lesson One

“The Creation of the Home”

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)

Long held beliefs by the family of God in regard to marriage and the home are being more and more challenged by some in the religious world. They feel they also have Scripture for what they believe as well. But there is an obvious fact that must be looked at seriously—either God is trying to confuse men or men do not properly understand what God has said. I personally believe that the latter is where the problem lies. It is interesting to notice that the New Testament writers go back to the original creation of man, woman, marriage, and the home to base their conclusions on in regards to the various aspect of the home. (1 Corinthians 14:34) Thus, it is important to any study on marriage or the home to go back to the beginning of such.

The Facts of Creation

The Bible begins with assuming the existence of God and that He (through Jesus) is the creator of all things that exist (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3). Insights are given in the first three chapters of Genesis about man, woman, marriage, and the home.

1. Who was created first? (Gen. 2:7) _____
2. Who was given instructions in regards to their responsibilities? (Gen. 2:15-17) _____
3. Who named all the animals? (Gen. 2:20) _____
4. Why was woman created? (Gen. 2:18, 21-23) _____
5. Who was brought by God to whom? (Gen. 2:22) _____
6. Who named the woman? (Gen. 2:23; 3:20) _____
7. Who was deceived by Satan? (Gen. 3:1-3, 13) _____

The Creation of Marriage and the Home

Marriage is either a design of God or of man! The Bible makes the claim that God was the one who originated Marriage and thus the Home.

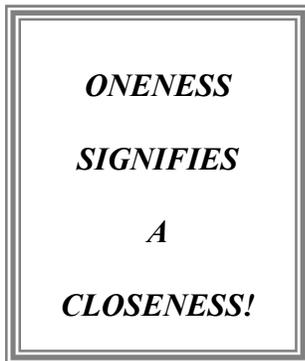
1. What are the elements that makeup the concept of “marriage?”
 - a) Genesis 2:24 _____

 - b) Matthew 19:6 _____
 - c) Romans 13:1-7 _____
2. What are the purposes of marriage?
 - a) Genesis 2:18 _____

- b) Genesis 1:28 _____
- c) Genesis 2:24 _____
- d) 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 _____

The Two Become One

Marriage is the making of two persons into a “**oneness.**” (Genesis 2:24); Matthew 19:5). It is important to see why God designed marriage to be this way, as well as to see the benefits from this “oneness” concept. It should be evident that husbands and wives need to keep developing that “oneness” in their marriage.



Close relationships are not easily developed—Why?

1. **Because each person is an individual, different from all others.**
2. **Because each person has his or her own ideas.**
3. **Because a person must be willing to share their inner self with others in order to develop closeness. There is a natural reluctance to do this with just anyone.**
4. **Because closeness requires acceptance of others, as well as compromises.**
5. **Because closeness usually takes time to develop. (etc.)**

A fact that should be self-evident—mankind needs this closeness in their lives! Some may obviously need it more than others, but all need it for their well-being and happiness. It offers a **richness** and **security** to one’s life that is very desirable.

Places Where This Closeness Can Be Found

1. **Family:**
 - a) Romans 1:30-31 _____
 - b) Ephesians 6:1-4 _____
2. **Friends & Associates:**
 - a) 1 Samuel 20:17 _____
 - b) 2 Samuel 1:26 _____
 - c) Proverbs 17:17 _____
 - d) Proverbs 18:24 _____
3. **God:**
 - a) John 15:14-15 _____
 - b) James 2:23 _____
4. **Husband & Wife:**
 - a) Genesis 2:24 _____
 - b) Ephesians 5:25 _____

- c) Ephesians 5:28-29 _____
- d) Ephesians 5:33 _____
- e) Titus 2:4 _____

If a person is able to develop several of these close relationships in a life-time, he is rich indeed. **Marriage** offers a person one of the **greatest opportunities** to develop this closeness to another person. It is generally conceded that there is no other relationship like it. The meaningfulness would be almost impossible to match.

What is Involved in “Oneness” in Marriage?

It should be obvious that marriage is unique among relationships among mankind. It has something that is not shared with other close relationships that is so fulfilling and uplifting. In marriage there is the opportunity to experience a full commitment to one another. It is a special “oneness.”

The Hebrew word, “**ECHAD**” can be translated: “*One, Altogether, Everyone, or Alike.*” It is the same word that is used with reference to God in Deuteronomy 6:4, “**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.**” But we know that God or Deity is made up of *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!* It is what we call “Three in One,” or “Tri-unity.” In a similar sense, this same oneness is said about the husband and wife relationship(Genesis 2:24). We believe this “oneness” is **emotional, moral, social, physical, and spiritual!** It is to **think, decide, do, and act together as one.**

Sexual involvement in this “oneness.” The sexual aspect needs to be an expression of that “oneness” between the two. God’s Word uses the expression, “**one flesh**” (Genesis 2:24). But there is also an intimacy involved in this. Genesis 4:1 states, “**Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain...**” The word, “**knew,**” carries with it a closeness or an intimacy between the two. The following quotations express the idea of these concepts.

“Sex is a mutual experience, entailing mutual satisfaction and the expression of affection, trust, and desire by both parties rather than the imposition of rights and the unwilling performance of duty.”

“In man, sexual experience is not limited either to the act itself or to a specific time. It is a part of an extension process of growth and new discovery. In its broadest sense it is one of the most fruitful sources for some of the deepest, richest satisfactions known.”

“Sex should point towards a unity of persons and not simply to a conjunction of bodies.”

“It is a oneness that is brought about by a mutual love: tender, intimate, and sacred.”

What Contributes to Oneness in Marriage?

If one is desirous of having the full extent of this oneness, what should he do? What will help to bring about that desired oneness that brings so much satisfaction? Again, we suggest that

we turn to the Word of God for some answers. The following four principles are vital to this oneness in marriage.

1. **1 John 3:16-17** _____
2. **1 Peter 3:7** _____
3. **Ephesians 4:25** _____
4. **1 Corinthians 7:3-5** _____

GOOD ADVICE

- 1. Be concerned about needs of one another.**
- 2. Deal kindly and patiently with inhibitions.**
- 3. Show a desire for closeness.**
- 4. Communicate what pleases.**

SOME OBSERVATIONS

- 1. Stress personal appearance and hygiene.**
- 2. Openness with one another.**
- 3. Togetherness in activities.**
- 4. Helpfulness.**
- 5. Giving—unselfishness.**

CONCLUSION

“Oneness” does not mean that two people are “carbon copies” of each other, but rather that there is basic harmony between the two that leads to a full, rich, and happy life together. Also, understanding properly the part that sexual activity has in a God-directed marriage is “*the first step out of the jungle and the barnyard.*” “Oneness” is an experience of full commitment to one another.

Lesson Two

“God’s Way—The Way of Happiness”

“Happy are the people who are in such a state; happy are the people whose God is the Lord!”
(Psalm 144:15)

A great Statesman of the 19th century observed about his life: *“During my whole life I have not had twenty-four hours of happiness.”* He was 83 years of age when he made that observation. He had wealth, fame, honors, power, influence, prosperity and triumph! And yet, he seemingly had not found true happiness in his life.

Happiness seems to be a great paradox of nature! It can be characterized in the following ways:

- 1) **It can grow in any soul;**
- 2) **It can live under any conditions;**
- 3) **It defies environment;**
- 4) **It consists, not of having, but of being;**
- 5) **It is not possessing, but of enjoying;**
- 6) **It is the tranquil condition of a heart at peace with itself;**
- 7) **Man might possess everything tangible in the world, yet be unhappy;**
- 8) **Happiness is a satisfying of the soul, not just of the mind or body;**
- 9) **Happiness cannot be bought or sought after as an end in itself.**

Jesus gave insight as to how happiness comes in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12. He shows that happiness (blessedness) comes from the following:

- “Blessed are the _____”*
- “Blessed are those who _____”*
- “Blessed are the _____”*
- “Blessed are those who _____”*
- “Blessed are the _____”*
- “Blessed are the _____”*
- “Blessed are the _____”*
- “Blessed are those who are _____”*
- “Blessed are you when they _____”*

Jesus ends these thoughts in verse 12 with the admonition: *“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.”*

Upon one occasion when Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment in the Law, He replied by not only answering the question, but added a second command to the first. And then stated that upon these two commands hang the Law and the Prophets (their teaching). It

would seem to be obvious that these two commands provide the way for man's happiness here and hereafter! What are the two great commands?

1. Matthew 22:37-40 _____

Happiness Comes From Listening to God

From a logical standpoint, God should know how happiness can be brought into the lives of His creatures! He created us in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). Therefore, he knows us (Psalm 103:14; Matthew 10:30). The real question here is: "*Does God desire the HAPPINESS and WELL-BEING of His creatures?*"

1. Who are happy people? (Psalm 144:15) _____

2. What does Jesus want to give to His followers? (John 10:10) _____

3. How does God give us happiness and blessedness?

- a) **Job 5:17** _____
- b) **Proverbs 16:20** _____
- c) **Proverbs 29:18** _____
- d) **John 13:17** _____

4. What happens to the person who will not listen to God's directions?

- a) **Galatians 6:7-8** _____
- b) **Romans 2:5-9** _____

Happiness Comes From Listening to God's Teaching About Marriage

God not only created man and woman, but also originated marriage for them (Genesis 2:21-24). Did He do this for man's happiness or for man's distress, discouragement, and unhappiness? The answer to this question should be an obvious one! But just as obvious is the concept that if God desires man happiness, everything that He teaches man should help lead to that happiness—especially about marriage!

A great threat to a happy married life is giving in to low moral standards (immorality) that our society has accepted. The works of the flesh as listed in Galatians 5:19-21 will certainly not bring happiness to us as individuals, much less as a family. God's way is not only the RIGHT way, but the way of HAPPINESS as well! Thus, any problems that threaten family happiness can be solved by going to God's Word for instruction and comfort.

Sexual Infidelity

Sex outside of marriage is called "fornication" or "sexual immorality." Sexual immorality and sexual perversions are nothing more than lustful gratification, but mistakenly called "love." It has nothing to do with real "oneness."

1. How is sex outside of marriage characterized?
 - a) Hebrews 13:4 _____
 - b) 1 Thessalonians 4:2-7 _____
 - c) 1 Corinthians 6:9 _____

2. In what sense is there a “oneness” with a “harlot?”
 - a) 1 Corinthians 6:15-16 _____

3. How is “fornication” a sin against one’s own body?
 - a) 1 Corinthians 6:18 _____

4. What is the distinction between “fornication” and “adultery?”
 - a) Matthew 5:31-32 _____

5. What is the threatened punishment for those who practice “sexual immorality?”
 - a) Galatians 5:19-21 _____
 - b) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 _____
 - c) Romans 1:26-28 _____

Concluding Thoughts

Of all places, the home should enjoy God’s blessings! Marriage should be a blessing to those involved in it! But when we fail to listen to God, we will not find that happiness that we all desire.

Strong Advice

1. Seek out God’s instructions on Marriage and the Home.
2. Seek to know your individual responsibilities that God has given you.
3. Learn how to overcome barriers to happiness.
4. Learn how to motivate each other to do their part to have a happy home.
5. Seek to be a mature, complete person that can help to make your marriage the best.

Lesson Three

The Role of the Husband (#1)

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church....” (Ephesians 5:25-26)

As we have already studied, Marriage is ordained of God for man's happiness! Following the guidelines that God gives will help bring the greatest happiness to mankind in marriage. But the happiness of a marriage is determined by two people, not just one. Both husband and wife must contribute their part to help make marriage the best.

The role of the husband needs to be looked at from four views:

- 1. As a leader in his home;**
- 2. As one who loves his wife;**
- 3. As one who lives considerately with his wife;**
- 4. As one who honors his wife.**

God's directions and instructions are both pointed and practical for the husband. If followed as given by God, blessings are promised from God.

- 1. Who does James (1:25) say will be blessed by God? _____**
- 2. Who is the person who deceives himself? (James 1:22) _____**

The Husband Needs to be a Leader in His Home

- 1. How did man get the position of leadership in the family? (Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:3) _____**

If man originated this arrangement, then it can be changed by man. If it is a God-given role, then it is: **RIGHT, BEST, TO BE RESPECTED**. The husband's background that he brings into marriage can be more critical to the success of the marriage more so than the wife's because he is to be the leader.

- 2. What admonition is given in regards to our receptivity of God's Word (commands)? (James 1:22) _____**

Man must assume the leadership role or be in disobedience to God. He must have or develop the capacity to lead and to lead well. He must assume leadership in all areas of life (especially the religious). He must not delegate away all his responsibility to another. It is not a matter of choice

or indifference, but a matter of obedience to God. He must assume leadership, not just talk about it. While authority belongs to the man in the home, yet **SERVITUDE** belongs to both! (Ephesians 5:21)

3. With what kind of spirit should this role be shouldered?

- a) Numbers 12:3 _____
- b) Matthew 11:28-30 _____
- c) Matthew 20:25-28 _____
- d) 1 Peter 5:3 _____
- e) 3 John 9-10 _____
- f) Galatians 3:28 _____

4. How would you rate the following attitudes and approaches on the part of the husband to the wife?

GOOD BAD

- _____ 1. Give orders without asking or permitting questions.
- _____ 2. Make demands, dishes out directives, lays down the law, and is defensive if challenged.
- _____ 3. Requires compliance regardless of consent or agreement.
- _____ 4. Pushes and manipulates one-man rule in over-under position.
- _____ 5. Says, "You do, you must do, you ought to have done, you'd better do."
- _____ 6. Depends on his own external authority to motivate others.
- _____ 7. Generates friction, resistance, resentment.
- _____ 8. Separates and isolates people.
- _____ 9. Discusses & evaluates together with his wife before a decision is made.
- _____ 10. Does not give impression of superiority attitude.
- _____ 11. Makes requests of his wife in kind way.
- _____ 12. Never gives orders as a Boss.
- _____ 13. The type of approach that does not bring friction, resistance or resentment.
- _____ 14. An attitude and approach that unifies the two.

5. Does a husband ever have a right to force his wife to conform to his will?

_____ Yes _____ No

To try to force his wife to conform to his will denies the wife the right of choice as to whether she will conform or not to her obligations as a wife. There should never be a time where such would come up! **UNFORTUNATELY**, because of immaturity and selfishness and disobedience, it does come up.

6. If a husband and wife come to a confrontation, what then? _____

The husband is to be the head of the family—the final decision-maker, but no decision should be made without due consideration of the wife. Both must recognize that every decision made will not always be right. The wife is not responsible to God for the decision-making, but she is responsible for being in submission. The wife can make it harder or easier for the husband to fulfill his role. If she will not submit, then he has no authority over her. She must give recognition to the God-given role or else he cannot fulfill it. The smart wife is one who learns how to help her husband make good decisions. And.....she will not continually remind her husband of one wrong decision for the next 20 years—inferring that he can't make a good decision.

THREE CHALLENGES FOR THE HUSBAND

- 1. To learn how to make good decisions.**
- 2. To avoid problems of head-ship: Not have two heads, or no head, or the head and body reversed.**
- 3. To expect submission from his wife, as he himself demonstrates submission to his God, Government, Employer, and Parents.**

The Husband Needs to Love His Wife

A strong emphasis in Scripture is for the husband to love his wife! It is illustrated out for him to clearly see how this is to be done by examples and commands. The following will illustrate.

1. What relationship is used to show the proper relationship between husband and wife? (Ephesians 5:23-33) _____

2. How is the husband to accept his wife?

a) Ecclesiastes 9:9 _____

b) Proverbs 18:22 _____

c) Proverbs 19:14 _____

d) Genesis 2:18-20 _____

2. How is true love characterized?

a) 1 Corinthians 13:4 _____

b) 1 Corinthians 13:5 _____

c) 1 Corinthians 13:6 _____

d) 1 Corinthians 13:7 _____

e) 1 Corinthians 13:8 _____

Lesson Four

“The Role of the Husband (#2)

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (Ephesians 5:31)

Our study continues on the role of the Husband in the home. We have already looked at two aspects of his responsibilities: his leadership role and his need to love his wife. We would like to look at some additional thoughts quickly before going into the last two aspects of the role of the husband.

Have you ever wondered why God said that the husband is the head of the wife? Why is the woman to learn in quietness and to be submissive? Why are women to keep silent (not speak before the assembly as men do)? Why did the Holy Spirit tell Timothy that women are not to exercise authority over the man? These questions will be dealt with more under the "Role of the Wife in the Home." It seems obvious that God has an arrangement so that society can be orderly and function smoothly. The chart below would seem to illustrate this concept clearly.

AUTHORITY ROLE		SUBMISSION ROLE	
GOVERNMENT	1 Peter 2:13	PEOPLE	
MASTER	1 Peter 2:18	SLAVE	
HUSBAND	1 Peter 3:1	WIFE	
ELDERS	1 Peter 5:3	CHURCH	
OLDER	1 Peter 5:5	YOUNGER	
CHRISTIAN	1 Peter 5:5	CHRISTIAN	

1 Corinthians 11:3 emphasizes the authority role beginning with God, the Father, Christ, Man, and Woman. Ephesians 5:23 and Ephesians 6:1 emphasizes the authority role of the Husband over the Wife and Parents over Children. The arrangement of the man and woman is not one of Superior over an inferior, but equals with two different roles (Galatians 3:28). When God's plan is followed, the home will be blessed with happiness and security, peace and tranquility, and order and efficiency.

The Husband Needs to Live Considerately With His Wife

1. What does the expression "dwell with them according to knowledge" involve? (1 Peter 3:7) _____

2. How can the husband show he is doing the above? _____

It is important that the husband learn his wife's needs and problem areas. He needs to ask, "What does she need? What makes her happy? What makes her nervous? What makes her relaxed? What makes her depressed?"

There are generally problem areas that most wives would have to face that the husband needs to be aware of and help where he can.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| a) Low self-esteem | f) Sexual problems |
| b) Fatigue and Time pressure | g) Menstrual and physiological problems |
| c) Loneliness and isolation | h) Problems with children |
| d) Absence of romantic love | i) Aging |
| e) Financial difficulties | j) etc. |

There are some things that the husband needs to beware of in his dealings with his wife to help with their relationship.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| a) Criticism | e) Not recognizing her attempts to please you. |
| b) Little things are important | f) Unfavorable comparisons with other women. |
| c) Her need for security | g) Rejection of her opinions as unimportant. |
| d) Cruelty, crudeness, dirty language towards her. | h) Hurting her feelings |

The Husband Needs to Honor His Wife

1. What is another word for honor in 1 Peter 3:7? _____

2. How can the husband show that he honors his wife?

- a) Genesis 2:24 _____
- b) Matthew 19:3-12 _____
- c) Ephesians 5:25 _____
- d) Ephesians 5:28-29 _____

2. What are some reasons for honoring his wife?

- a) Genesis 1:27 _____
- b) Genesis 2:18 _____
- c) Genesis 2:20 _____
- d) 1 Peter 3:7 _____

Conclusion

There is a very important warning to be heeded concerning the husband's attitude and actions toward his wife. If there are children, they will learn the kind of attitude that is set before them.

Men need to be good husbands! It should be a decision of the heart as well as the head. It is not a question of whether the wife deserves it, but of doing it. It should be a permanent decision.

The church is made strong, as well as our society, by men who assume their God-given role in life correctly and effectively!

CHECK LIST FOR HUSBANDS

- | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> | |
|------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ___ | ___ | 1. Do you remain indecisive or blame others when things go wrong? |
| ___ | ___ | 2. Do you believe women are inferior to men and cannot possibly make important decisions? |
| ___ | ___ | 3. Do you feel the need to mistreat your wife physically at times? |
| ___ | ___ | 4. Do you use undesirable names to refer to your wife at times? |
| ___ | ___ | 5. Do you find it hard to say "I love you" and mean it very often? |
| ___ | ___ | 6. Do you allow nagging, bickering or picking to continually occur in your home? |
| ___ | ___ | 7. Do you have to contend with harboring resentments against your wife? |
| ___ | ___ | 8. Do you feel that housework is beneath your dignity? |
| ___ | ___ | 9. Do you refuse to help around the house to any significant degree? |
| ___ | ___ | 10. Are you stingy when it comes to spending money on your wife, but somewhat liberal with yourself? |
| ___ | ___ | 11. Is it hard for you to account for where most of your money goes each month? |
| ___ | ___ | 12. Are you inclined to buy things on impulse and have trouble meeting your bills? |
| ___ | ___ | 13. Do you use your spare time mostly with others rather than your wife? |
| ___ | ___ | 14. Do you treat your in-laws with disrespect? |
| ___ | ___ | 15. Are in-laws allowed to interfere or set policies for your family? |
| ___ | ___ | 16. Do you see something funny only at the expense of others? |
| ___ | ___ | 17. If you are wrong, do you find it hard to admit to her? |
| ___ | ___ | 18. Do your primary interests in life center around things more than people? |
| ___ | ___ | 19. Do you spend time looking within your life and analyzing your purposes? |
| ___ | ___ | 20. Can you express loving devotion to your wife without expecting physical remuneration? |
| ___ | ___ | 21. Do I have to be reminded of her birthday or our anniversary? |
| ___ | ___ | 22. We have discussed seriously about our family's spiritual, emotional, and economic future and goals. |
| ___ | ___ | 23. I eat at least one meal daily with my family. |
| ___ | ___ | 24. My wife assures me that the money she receives each week is reasonable and adequate under our financial circumstances. |

YES NO

- ___ ___ 25. I encourage my wife to develop her own potentialities by taking courses of training, leading to a richer spiritual, emotional, and intellectual life.
- ___ ___ 26. I am aware of what is going on in my house between my wife and our children.
- ___ ___ 27. I am more positive than negative in dealing with family members.
- ___ ___ 28. I regularly help my wife with the children and the "necessary drudgery."
- ___ ___ 29. I never ask others to our house without my wife knowing in advance.
- ___ ___ 30. I never tire in talking with my wife.
- ___ ___ 31. I still court my wife.
- ___ ___ 32. I feel that I am closer to my wife now than in the past.
- ___ ___ 33. I allow my wife to use her abilities and talents to their fullest.
- ___ ___ 34. I show patience in almost all situations.
- ___ ___ 35. I allow her to make many decisions.
- ___ ___ 36. I treat her as a partner, not as a servant.
- ___ ___ 37. I forgive her when she makes bad decisions.
- ___ ___ 38. She can talk with me about anything without my getting angry.
- ___ ___ 39. There is nothing about which she is afraid to talk with me.
- ___ ___ 40. I try basically to be unselfish towards my wife.

Lesson Five

“The Role of the Wife (#1)

“Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” (Ephesians 5:33)

Marriage is the joining together of two people by God to be a husband and wife. There are two different people with two different roles to play. A successful marriage will require both to work at their respective jobs. As with the husband, God's directions and instructions are also pointed and practical for the wife. James promises that the person who is a doer of God's word is the one to be blessed (James 1:25).

The Role of the Wife Should be Looked at from Four Views also:

- 1. As one who is submissive to her husband;**
- 2. As one who is a homemaker;**
- 3. As one who loves her husband;**
- 4. As one who beautifies the inner person.**

The Wife Needs to be Submissive to Her Husband

1. What reasons are given as to why women are to be in a submissive role?
 - a) Gen. 3:16 _____
 - b) 1 Cor. 11:3 _____
 - c) Eph. 5:22 _____
 - d) Eph. 5:24 _____
 - e) Eph. 5:33 _____
 - f) Col. 3:18 _____
 - g) 1 Tim. 2:11-12 _____
 - h) 1 Peter 3:1 _____
 - i) 1 Timothy 2:13 _____
 - j) 1 Timothy 2:14 _____
 - k) 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 _____

2. How would you understand the phrase *“a help meet for Adam?”* (Please check one of the following:
 - _____ 1. In competition to man?
 - _____ 2. Equal role and authority with man?
 - _____ 3. Supportive of man?
 - _____ 4. Other? _____

The husband has two loves: His wife and his job. The wife can compete with the job, or help with the job. The husband may find it hard to forgive a wife who stands in his way of succeeding in his job.

The wife must believe in her husband.....and show it! The only security she has is her husband's ability and drive.

Husbands must prove themselves in the eyes of their wives. If the wife makes her husband look bad in public, she is destroying his ego. She should support her husband's decisions as much as possible. They won't be right every time. But neither would they, if the wife were making them. Place emphasis upon the good and right parts of decisions—build on these!

Is the wife inferior because her husband loves and wants to dedicate his life to her? Is the husband inferior because his wife loves and wants to dedicate her life to him? Live for him and he will live for you—and vice versa!

3. What are some bad ideas about submission that must be overcome?

- a) **Ephesians 5:21** _____
- b) **1 Corinthians 11:11-12** _____
- c) **1 Corinthians 7:2-5** _____
- d) **Galatians 3:28** _____

Submission is expected of all—it is a way of life. The submissive role of woman is not man's doings, but God's. Each has roles to fulfill that God created us for. Subjection is not slavery—all are submissive to others. It does not belittle or demean the wife as less a person. Submission can show great strength of character. Jesus came as a servant of mankind. It did not belittle Him—because He knew who He was! (Matt. 20:28)

4. What are the dangers of a lack of submission?

- a) **1 Tim. 2:12** _____

The wife can keep her husband from fulfilling his God-given role. She can force her opinions and try to take over the role of head.

An example: A man's boss at work called to offer a new raise with a new job that he had gotten for him. It would require moving from Denver to Washington. But his salary would be doubled. The man was elated. That evening the wife of the man called the man's boss. *"What right do you have to offer a position to my husband before talking with me first. You have no right to require me to move from my family and friends."* The boss' reply to the woman was, *"Tell you husband for me, he is fired."*

- b) **1 Cor. 14: 34-35** _____

The indication from this passage is that women were up speaking before the congregation just like the men were doing. There is a sense in which women are equal with men, but obviously not the same role. The only way to secure full equality is to ***"Feminize" men***

or **“Manize” women.** As women assume masculine roles—sexual expression becomes confused and frustrating. She is a woman—she needs to be a woman, not a man.

c) **Prov. 19:13** _____

A wife can become a hindrance rather than a help. Instead of respecting her husband, she can run him down. Instead of boosting his feelings of importance and competence, she can destroy these feelings.

An example: A boy grew up in a real bad slum area. He did not know his father. He went into the service as soon as he was old enough. He saved his money and had \$10,000.00 by the time he got out. He bought a cab. One day he saw a woman and said: *“I am going to marry her.”* She was from high breeding—good background—college degree. She had all kinds of reasons to tell him to get lost, but she didn't. Instead, she believed in him—married him. He became a successful business man—partly because she believed in him.

d) **Phil. 4:11** _____

Discontent can make a person miserable—as well as others around him. **“Godliness with contentment is great gain.”** (1 Tim. 6:6). Some of the women's movements have brought on a lot of discontentment among women. Some is misleading. Some seem to infer that unless the woman seeks out the goals and activities characteristic of a man, she is inferior. It insultingly infers that a woman can only have dignity if she imitates the dignity of man. But woman has a dignity of her own! A masculine or neuter woman is a crippled caricature of God's creation. Women can become first-class females, but make very poor copies of males.

e) **Col. 3:19** _____

It is so obvious that when husbands do not carry out their responsibilities that the wife has real problems in dealing properly with him. So it is with the husbands when the wife will not carry out their responsibilities as they should.

5. Why do some women not submit to their husbands in some areas?

- a) **Acts 4:18-19** _____
- b) **Col. 3:19** _____
- c) **Gal. 6:7** _____
- d) **Tit. 2:4** _____
- e) **1 Cor. 7:13-17** _____
- f) **Tit. 2:5** _____
- g) **1 Cor. 7:10-11** _____

6. What principles will help a wife to submit to an undesirable husband?

- a) **Phil. 2:5** _____
- b) **Col. 3:18** _____
- c) **1 Pet. 3:5-6** _____

- d) 1 Pet. 3:1-4 _____
- e) 1 Pet. 3:6 _____
- f) Prov. 15:1 _____
- g) Matt. 5:43-48 _____
- h) 1 Pet. 3:7 _____
- i) 1 Cor. 10:13 _____

Conclusion

One fact that should stand out very clear in our study thus far—neither the man nor the woman can fulfill their role as it should be without the help, cooperation, and encouragement of each other. Once that a couple has come to the realization of what God expects of each, they should make a commitment to do everything they can to help the other to do what God expects of him or her.

Lesson Six

“The Role of the Wife” (#2)

“Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” (1 Peter 3:5-6)

The role of the wife and the role of a mother is not necessarily the same thing. Our emphasis in these studies is more designed to deal with the role of the wife in the home.

Our last lesson spent most of the time dealing with the thought of the wife's submissive role. A great number of Scriptures were studied to get an over-all understanding of the concept of submission. One thing that was not done was to approach the subject from the standpoint of the advantages of the submissive role. Following are some thoughts on this:

- 1) She is not responsible for the final decisions.
 - 2) She does not have the pressure of being head and its responsibilities.
 - 3) She does not have to do something she was not primarily designed to do.
 - 4) She is to be protected, cherished, and made to feel secure.
 - 5) She does not have to compete with her husband.
 - 6) She can choose whom she wants to submit unto.
 - 7) She can have the satisfaction of obeying God in this matter.
 - 8) She is not without her own great impact and influence when properly used.
 - 9) She can help her children see the proper roles of life.
- (Children often become confused. Homosexuality is brought on by confused roles. A woman as head usually happens because of weak, lazy and indifferent men.)

The Wife Needs to be a Homemaker

1. List the things that older women are to teach younger women as found in Titus 2:3-5.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____
- g) _____
- h) _____

The expression, “*keepers at home*,” that is found in the King James Version has posed a problem with women who need or want to work outside the home. It may be worthwhile to spend a little time looking at this expression in the original language and other passages that may help to shed light on the subject. Other translations used the following expressions: “*Homemakers*” (NKJV); “*Workers at home*” (ASV); “*Homekeepers*” (Willians);

“Housekeepers” (Berkeley); “Domesticated” (TCNT); Home lovers” (Phillips). The Greek word is made up of two concepts—one of them, obviously, being “home” or “house.” The second part is where the problem comes from—how to properly translate the idea. The term is defined by Young in his concordance as: **“one who keeps his own house.”** A similar concept is found in 1 Timothy 5:14—**“Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”** These young widows were not to be **“idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.”** (1 Timothy 5:13). It would seem obvious from the above thoughts that whether a woman works out of the home or not that one of her primary responsibilities is to “guide, manage, or keep her home,” and not to be idle, a gossip, or a busybody in other people’s lives.

2. What are the reasons given for women to do the things found in Titus 2:3-5?

- a) Titus 2:5 _____
- b) 1 Timothy 5:13 _____
- c) 1 Timothy 5:14 _____

3. What do you consider the primary responsibilities of a “homemaker?”

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

The Wide Needs to Love Her Husband

The passage in Titus 2:4 expresses this injunction from God to wives and mothers—that they are to, **“love their husbands, to love their children....”** There are two Greek words that our word “love” attempts to translate—*Phileo* and *Agape*. *Agape* is the highest concept of love, and is exemplified by God, Himself, by sending His Son to die for us. This kind of love is commanded of God’s people, not only towards our brothers and sisters in Christ, but even to our enemies; while *Phileo* is never commanded (one exception). It is usually a natural development of friendship and companionship between people. The one exception is here in this passage. The wife is commanded to love her husband and children.

1. How can this love be expressed or shown to the husband?

- a) Ephesians 5:24 _____
- b) 1 Cor. 7:3-5 _____
- c) Titus 2:3-5 _____
- d) Proverbs 19:14 _____
- e) Ephesians 5:33 _____

There are some important questions that could be asked to help give insight on how to show concern for one's husband—such as the following:

- 1. What are his goals in life?
- 2. How can I help him reach these goals?
- 3. What signs does he give to let me know of a need?
- 4. What are his secret ambitions?

- 5. How does he differ from me?
- 6. Etc.

A Wife Needs to Primarily Beautify the Inner Person

Males are more oriented towards seeing, while females are more oriented towards feelings. The tendency on the part of women is to over-dress outwardly in order to attract the male, rather than to get his admiration from her inner beauty. God wants to reverse that and says so in two specific New Testament passages: 1 Tim. 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:1-6. But there are other passages that also give emphasis to the woman beautifying the inner person.

1. Where should the emphasis be placed on woman's beauty?

- a) **Prov. 31:30** _____
- b) **1 Pet. 3:1-6** _____
- c) **1 Tim. 2:9-10** _____
- d) **Tit. 2:3-5** _____
- e) **Isa. 3:16-24** _____
- f) **Prov. 19:13** _____
- g) **Prov. 31:25-26** _____
- h) **Prov. 31:28-30** _____

There are special passages that need to be considered in light of the two Scriptures above: 1 Tim. 2:9-10 and 1 Pet. 3:1-6. When these passages are properly understood, it will make it easier to understand 1 Tim. 2:9-10 and 1 Pet. 3:1-6. Study carefully the following, and relate them to our two special passages above.

2. How do you understand the following Scriptures?

- a) **John 6:27** _____
- b) **Matthew 6:19-20** _____
- c) **1 Cor. 1:17** _____

Conclusion

A happy marriage and home is not one-sided—it takes both working at their special roles to find the peace, contentment, and happiness that God has intended to come from this special relationship between a man and a woman in the bonds of marriage. Ladies, evaluate yourselves in the following check list for wives.

CHECK LIST FOR WIVES

YES NO

- _____ 1. Are nagging, bickering or being picky a part of your activities in the home?
- _____ 2. Are you in subjection to your husband?
- _____ 3. Do you place him in the position of leadership?
- _____ 4. Do you take life, generally, without complaint?

-
- ___ ___ 5. Are you a positive, affirming person?
 - ___ ___ 6. Are you a forgiving person?
 - ___ ___ 7. Do you often interrupt your husband when he is talking or telling a story?
 - ___ ___ 8. Do you put your husband down in public?
 - ___ ___ 9. Are you sexually responsive to your husband most of the time?
 - ___ ___ 10. Are you able to handle problems and pressure, or do you remain indecisive or blame others?
 - ___ ___ 11. Do you call your husband by ugly names? (Those he does not like)
 - ___ ___ 12. Do you express any resentment against your husband?
 - ___ ___ 13. Is your house reasonably organized and clean?
 - ___ ___ 14. How do you feel about housework?
 - ___ ___ 15. Are you extravagant when it comes to spending money?
 - ___ ___ 16. Are you inclined to buy things on impulse, then have trouble paying your bills?
 - ___ ___ 17. Do you spend at least one-half of your leisure time together?
 - ___ ___ 18. Do you treat his mother with disrespect?
 - ___ ___ 19. Are in-laws allowed to interfere or set policies for your family?
 - ___ ___ 20. Do you see something funny only at the expense of others?
 - ___ ___ 21. If you are wrong, do you find it hard to admit it?
 - ___ ___ 22. Do your prime interests in life center around things more than people?
 - ___ ___ 23. Have you thought what you would be like in 25 years?
 - ___ ___ 24. Is your husband bitter for marrying you?
 - ___ ___ 25. Do you store up grudges or resentments?
 - ___ ___ 26. Do you resent the submissive role God has selected for you?
 - ___ ___ 27. Is your house generally attractive and in order?
 - ___ ___ 28. Are you dressing as he would wish you to?
 - ___ ___ 29. Do you dress "your" age?
 - ___ ___ 30. Are you keeping up-to-date with his interests?
 - ___ ___ 31. Do you have good conversations about church and Bible topics?
 - ___ ___ 32. Do you have a daily time for Bible study and prayer?
 - ___ ___ 33. Do you try to be creative in your approach to everyday problems?
 - ___ ___ 34. Do you serve meals that have some variety and attractiveness?
 - ___ ___ 35. Are you childish: want your own way; pouting or making a fuss over trifles?
 - ___ ___ 36. Are you fun to be around?
 - ___ ___ 37. Do you have any bad habits your husband wants you to change?

Lesson Seven

“Learning to Communicate Effectively (#1)

“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”
(James 1:19)

All marriages face adjustment problems to some degree or another. If these adjustments are not made, the marriage is heading for trouble and possible break-up. The following list will give an indication of some of the main reasons for failure of marriages:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. Immaturity (65%) | 5. Personality conflicts (27%) |
| 2. Selfishness (48%) | 6. Poor Sexual adjustments (25%) |
| 3. Financial problems (39%) | 7. Third party entanglements (18%) |
| 4. Lack of mutual interests and goals (37%) | 8. Burden of children (4%) |

However, it is believed by many that there is a basic problem underlying the above reasons—A LACK OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION! Their reasoning is—when people lose the ability to communicate well with one another, resentment continues to build, mutual trust between the two will vanish, and the relationship dies. Statistics were compiled by a Marriage Counseling Service that came up with the following list of things that break up a marriage:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Bad Communication | 6. Quarreling |
| 2. Selfishness | 7. Sexual incompatibility |
| 3. Infidelity | 8. Lack of affection |
| 4. Money disagreements | 9. Lack of trust |
| 5. No common interests | 10. Untidiness |

As you can see—bad communication was at the top of the list and possibly the underlying factor that help cause the other factors. Another survey was taken of 2,000 marriages with the question—**“What is the most vital ingredient for married bliss?”** The following are the top ten items listed:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Togetherness | 6. Children |
| 2. Consideration | 7. Shared interests |
| 3. Discussing things | 8. Sexual compatibility |
| 4. Mutual trust | 9. Financial security |
| 5. Love and affection | 10. Happy home life |

Again, it is obvious that good communications is indicated as helping to make for a happy home situation. A quote from Corrales and Miller indicates the same: **“Couples in which**

both husband and wife were high in accurately understanding their partner's view on a number of issues were more satisfied with their marriages."

How Does God Value Good Communications?

Since speaking (communicating) is such an important factor in human relationships, the Bible has much to say about such. The very fact that God chose to make known the "good news" (Gospel) through preaching and teaching should certainly indicate how He values good communication (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:21; etc.). Man's salvation eternally actually depends upon an accurate and effective communicating of that message(Galatians 1:6-9).

1. What does God have to say about good communication?

- a) James 1:19 _____
- b) 1 Peter 2:1 _____
- c) Eph. 4:29 _____
- d) 1 Peter 3:9 _____
- e) Colossians 4:6 _____
- f) Ephesians 4:25 _____

2. What is a basic requirement of good communication? (James 1:26; 3:8)

3. How does God describe the tongue? (James 3:1-12)

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____

To communicate effectively, there must first be the desire to do so! Then, the desire needs to be followed by a conscious effort to use more than one means of communicating.

How Do We Communicate?

- 1. Verbal.** The use of speech or words are basic in communicating to others our thinking and intentions. However, it is important that correct words and understood words be used or there will be a mis-communication to the other person. Accuracy is very important in order to communicate correctly.
- 2. Non-Verbal.** We not only speak with words, but we speak in a certain way, with a certain attitude, and with a certain spirit. Even our very presence and appearance says something not confined to words. It is estimated that as high as 93% of the communicating we do is in a **non-verbal** form! The following chart shows the outcome of a survey that compared communication between **verbal** and **non-verbal**. Their research indicated that at least 55%

was **non-verbal** and only 7% was with actual words. The other 38% was a form of the **non-verbal**—the tone of one’s voice! It should be obvious to all that people often respond more to our **Actions** than to our **Words!**

A sad fact is that an unethical act can cancel the words of my mouth. Our spirit and attitude can be communicated in a powerful way both positively or negatively by **non-verbal** actions. It places a strong importance upon the speaker’s character if he is to communicate effectively.

Some Examples of Non-Verbal Communication

It is obvious that our very presence and appearance says something not confined to words. **Affection** can be communicated between two people by a **meaningful glance, a smile, or a touch of the hand.** **Disapproval** can be shown by a **frown** or a **threatening gesture.** **Attitudes** and **Spirits** are communicated in a powerful way, both positively and negatively.

1. **What does the apostle Paul admonish Timothy about this important subject?**

- a) **1 Timothy 4:12** _____
- b) **1 Timothy 4:16** _____

2. **What does Jesus say in Matthew 5:13 that indicates non-verbal communication as being so important?**

One of the grave dangers that parents need to watch for with their children—to be sure that their **verbal** and **non-verbal** communications do not contradict each other day after day. If they do, we can expect our children to become confused and discouraged! The same could obviously be true of our mates!

This may be one of the reasons why Christians are not as effective in communicating the gospel to their friends and family—they see too much inconsistency between our verbal and non-verbal communications.

3. **What does the apostle Paul have to say about this in Philippians 2:14-15?**

Facial Expressions communicate by: (1) Tightly closed mouth; (2) Open mouth; (3) Lips stretched tightly; (4) Gritting teeth; (5) Tongue sticking out; (6) Chewing one’s lip; (7) Quivering lips; (8) Moist lips; and (9) Dry lips. Such **Gestures** as closing one’s fists, pointing a finger, or folding arms across our chest can communicate things to others.

Our **Physical Appearance** will have some influence—such as: carriage, poise, dress, forcefulness of personality, etc.

Our very **Character** can come through in our speech: both **verbal** and **non-verbal!** The following can illustrate:

1. Integrity	Dishonesty
2. Morality	Low Morals
3. Open-mindedness	Close minded and stubborn
4. Fair	Bigoted
5. Selflessness	Selfishness
6. Courage	No backbone
7. Impartiality	Partial
8. Sympathy	Unsympathetic
9. Sincerity	Insincere
10. Sensitive	Insensitive

It is important to understand some of the factors that causes bad or no communications between husband and wife (and others, as well). The following will help to illustrate:

- 1. Differing backgrounds and experiences in life.**
- 2. Taking each other for granted.**
- 3. Reading something into the other person's words and actions that were not intended.**
- 4. A sense of competition between the two.**
- 5. Low self-esteem on the part of one or both.**
- 6. A failure to listen properly.**
- 7. That communication is more than just words.**
- 8. The difficulty of the listener having the same understanding of the words used to try to communicate.**
- 9. Being too judgmental in words and attitudes.**
- 10. Male and female variations as well as individual variations.**

If we want to effectively communicate with our mate, it is important that we realize the many factors that enters into communicating. It is not a simple process, but a complex one that requires some diligence on each of our parts. The next lesson will continue to enlarge upon many of the things that need to be taken into consideration.

Lesson Eight

“Learning to Communicate Effectively” (#2)

“If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.” (James 1:26)

In the previous lesson we looked at the importance of communicating effectively and how we communicate to one another through **Verbal** and **Non-verbal** means. In this lesson we want to see some of the things that hinder good communication between husband and wife.

Some Symptoms of Communication Break-Down

The following list gives some general areas that would indicate that a couple have begun to have a break-down in their ability to effectively talk to one another:

- 1. Long periods of silence (“He won’t talk to me.”).**
- 2. Cruelty (Physical or Mental).**
- 3. Quarreling.**
- 4. Self-Pity (Low self-esteem).**
- 5. Neglect and laxity towards one another.**
- 6. Revenge feelings and manipulation.**
- 7. “Too busy” (Over-Scheduled).**
- 8. Self-Defensiveness. (Quick to justify one’s self).**
- 9. Basic needs not being fulfilled.**
- 10. Resentments, bitterness, hostility.**
- 11. Dishonesty towards one another.**

Often-times a couple may not realize what their problem is and how to solve it. This is the reason why an outsider with some skills and training can pick up on problem areas not realized by the couple themselves.

1. What admonition is given to the husband to help prevent communication problems?

a) Colossians 3:19 _____

b) Ephesians 5:28-29 _____

Hindrances to Good Communication

There are many factors or reasons that enter into bad communications between people. It is quite obvious that the problems are not one-sided, but rather both the speaker and the hearer can cause mis-communications to take place. For instance, the speaker can have a poor evaluation of a situation, make wrong assumptions about people, or even choose inadequate words to try to communicate his ideas. While the hearer can be a poor listener, or have a personal

bias against the one speaking, put wrong understanding on his words, or even honestly not even understand his words. These and many other factors enter into making communicating a problem that has to be worked at to overcome. Following are a list of Scriptures that would suggest some of the hindrances that must be overcome if we are to communicate correctly and effectively:

1. **Luke 21:26** _____
2. **Prov. 17:9** _____
3. **Col. 3:19** _____
4. **Matt. 7:1-5** _____
5. **Eph. 4:26** _____
6. **Eph. 4:25** _____
7. **Eph. 4:29** _____
8. **Eph. 4:31** _____
9. **Eph. 4:32** _____
10. **2 Peter 1:6** _____
11. **Prov. 15:1** _____
12. **Prov. 17:14** _____
13. **1 Cor. 2:11** _____

Special Barriers in Verbal Communication

When communicating with another person verbally, it is important that we watch out for those words and actions that distort or destroy the ability to get a good understanding between two parties. The following can illustrate the kind of things that prevent effective communications between two parties:

1. **"Allness" or "Over-generalization."** It is to use such words as: "All," "Always," "Every," "No such," "Best," "Worst," "Highest," "Least," etc. It is an over-emphasis, making mountains out of molehills, or building small isolated incidences into great calamities. It is hard to separate the true and factual from the exaggerated.
2. **Either-or statements.** Everything has to be black or white, of yes or no. There is only two sides—your's and mine. They fail to see the possibilities of other factors involved.
3. **Invalid Cause and Effect.** Their conclusions may be incorrect from too limited knowledge of a situation.
4. **Lying with Statistics.** Statistics can be misleading.....innocently or deliberately. Use of such requires great integrity in order not to misuse such.
5. **Distorted Definitions.** A word must be defined in the context of the moment; otherwise, it will confuse, mislead, and frustrate communications. Arbitrary definitions of words pose real problems.
6. **Appeal to inappropriate "Authorities."** Not everything that is stated by an "Authority" is necessarily correct. "Authorities" can be and often are wrong about things even in their fields of study.
7. **Begging the question.** To assume the truthfulness or falseness of something without the facts. It is to assume something to be true or false that the person should be proving. It is often referred to as "reasoning in a circle."

8. **Attacking the person, not the issue.** Cast reflection on character of the person, calling him names that are derogatory, unjust labeling or categorizing of a person rather than dealing with the issue at hand.
9. **Guilt by Association.** Drawing conclusions based on coincidental contact or association with persons who have been found guilty.
10. **Clouding the issue.** Trying to make application of something that is not suitable. Misusing words in a context to prove something that is untrue.

Practical Suggestions to Insure Good Communication

1. **1 John 1:9**

This will help to clear the air quickly. It softens the heart of the other. It makes forgiveness available (Eph. 4:32). It helps to kill bitterness and resentment (Eph. 4:31).
2. **Rom. 12:10**

We are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). Actions need to accompany affectionate words (1 John 3:18).
3. **Eph. 4:31**

Self-control and self-restraint need to be shown. Bad attitudes cloud the issue, rather than being a help.
4. **Matt. 18:17**

It is important to listen carefully and with an open-mind to the other person (Prov. 18:13). God wants us to be swift to hear, but slow to speak (Jas. 1:19). We listen in order to sympathize, empathize, or console.
5. **Rom. 3:23**

No one is perfect—all have sinned and fall short. Acceptance is giving what one needs, not what one deserves.
6. **Prov. 12:25**

Don't begin with criticism. Try to focus on the person's strength as much as possible.
7. **John 7:24**

Make use of God's standards, God's word to make judgments. Don't be unfair or unjust.
8. **Rom. 12:15**

All of us have our high times as well as our low times. Learn to recognize when such occurs and act accordingly.

Conclusion

From our brief study on communications it should be quite obvious how important it is to learn to communicate correctly, accurately, and with the best of attitudes both verbally and non-verbal.

In order to encourage you in your efforts to improve your communication skills, please go through the check-list on the next page.

TEST YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- ___ 1. I encourage good communications.
- ___ 2. I am sensitive to another who is troubled.
- ___ 3. I interrupt others when they are talking.
- ___ 4. I try to avoid criticizing others.
- ___ 5. I try to pay close attention when others are talking.
- ___ 6. I like to ask other's opinions about things.
- ___ 7. I tend to be sarcastic to others.
- ___ 8. I enjoy listening to other people.
- ___ 9. I try to monopolize conversations.
- ___ 10. I encourage others to share their thoughts, feelings, convictions.
- ___ 11. I am able to speak the truth in a loving manner.
- ___ 12. I get upset and defensive when others disagree with me.
- ___ 13. I tend to be too detail and complex when sharing ideas or opinions.
- ___ 14. I ask questions or make statements which are irrelevant.
- ___ 15. I share so little of myself that others cannot get to know me.
- ___ 16. I try to use the "We" concept rather than the pointed "You" or "I."
- ___ 17. I let my intentions be my guide rather than letting the effects determine my actions and words.
- ___ 18. I try to fully state my ideas to another and do not assume they know what is in my mind.
- ___ 19. I try to avoid hindrances to good communications such as: nagging, yelling, whining, or arguing.
- ___ 20. I take time to think through what I am saying.

GENERAL TECHNIQUES FOR SOLVING DIFFICULTIES

1. **Squarely face the conflict.** There must be a strong motivation to improve in the problem-facing process. Willingness to listen to and trying to understand the other persons thoughts will help.
2. **Discussions versus Arguments.** In discussion, there is a willingness to listen and learn the other's point of view with a desire to understand. In argument, the antagonists are out to win by any fair means or foul. It is with desire to twist the other's statement. It is characterized by emotion and a desire to wound the personality of the opponent. It is easy for discussion to degenerate into argument. Argument does not relieve tension and end in making up. It is a strain on marital relationship rather than a strengthener.
3. **Sticking with it.** Don't give up too easily. Old habits cling and new habits are difficult to acquire. Patience and persistence are unavoidable requirements for marital problem-solving.
4. **Taking it easy.** Changes like these usually don't happen overnight. Give it time.
5. **Get help if needed.** Doctors, Ministers, Lawyers, etc. Often only a third person sympathetic listener is all that is required.

Lesson Nine

“The Necessity of Commitment”

“And Ruth said, entreat me not to leave you, or to return from following after you: for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.” (Ruth 1:16)

The woman Ruth is often referred to as a prime example of loyalty and commitment! She was willing to leave her family and homeland and go and live among a different people with different customs and beliefs. She was committed to Naomi, her people, and her God.

Commitment is an important principle in every area of our lives! The automobile manufacturers say they are *“committed to excellence.”* Professional athletes are committed to be the very best they can be. People in general talk about being committed to their job, their company, or their community. Some even talk about being committed to the Lord and His church. We are fully convinced that commitment is not only foundational to a successful Christian life, but to marriage and the home.

To some, commitment is a trap that is suffocating to the one that wants to get out of the trap. It is compared to being in bondage to something that is failing and going down hill. But, there is possibly nothing more important to the marriage relationship than a determination that it should last. In a survey of 186 couples, commitment was one of the top three things listed that makes for strong and lasting marriages.

“A commitment to stay married settles it and allows no other choice. It means that Divorce is out of the question!”

What is Meant by Commitment?

Words are often used in various shades of meaning. Good communication requires making sure that my thoughts are being expressed accurately and clearly. How are we using the word, commitment?

“To entrust one’s self to someone or something.”

“To put one’s self in another’s hands.”

“To pledge one’s self to another.”

“It is to promise to do something and keep it.”

Ruth is certainly a good illustration of what is generally meant by commitment. She made a promise and certainly kept that promise. Four passages of Scripture help to illustrate what is involved in commitment:

1. Hebrews 10:23 _____
2. 1 Peter 2:23 _____
3. 2 Timothy _____
4. John 8:34 _____

God's faithfulness and commitment to his promises is emphasized in many passages. It is also pointed out that man can commit his ways to God and righteousness or to Sin and wickedness. We are encouraged to commit our ways to the Lord!

1. **Ps. 37:5**

2. **1 Peter 4:19**

Commitment to marriage and the home is a MUST just like our commitment to God and His will in our lives.

Clarifying our Commitment about Marriage

1. It is a commitment to the concept of marriage! God created a male and female, not two males or two females. His purpose for creation was to institute the institution of marriage. He brought Adam and Eve together and Adam got the message as indicated in Genesis 2:24: ***“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”***

Many in our society are questioning the very concept of marriage. This is shown not only by their statements, but by their actions that belittles marriage as an acceptable arrangement. While some may questions marriage, they enter into a relationship of co-habitation. If this arrangement does not work out, they can break it off and try to find another person with which to co-habitat. What is obviously missing in this arrangement is **Commitment!** A bumper sticker illustrates an attitude on the part of these people—*“The major cause of divorce is marriage!”* The idea is...if you do not get married (make a commitment to one another), then there is no divorce! But in reality there is a “divorce” between the two; and if children are involved, they will suffer just as much as if there was a “marriage” or “commitment” between the two parties. Such actions are a sad commentary on man's ignorance and disregard of God's Word on this subject.

It is God's will that marriage be entered into for life!

a) **Romans 7:2**

It is up to those who are “committed to God” to also be “committed to the concept of marriage.”

2. It is a commitment to each other as well! A person can be committed to the concept of marriage, but not necessarily to their mate. To illustrate: *“Yes, I believe in marriage, but I want to divorce this mate and marry another.”* And this is what has been happening for centuries. The problem again comes down to a lack of full commitment to each other for life. A couple can even be committed to marriage and keep the marriage together, but become alienated from each other.

“To have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death us do part...”

When a couple makes their vows, they are vowing to love and be concerned for each other for life! These vows must be taken seriously and not like a young lady expressed to her boy friend on the back of her photograph: *“My dearest Tom, I love you with all my heart. I love you more*

and more each day. I will love you forever and ever. I am yours for all eternity. Signed, Dianne.” “P.S. *If we ever break up, I want this picture back.*” This kind of shallow commitment is one of the reasons for failure in many relationships.

A President of a Bible College was faced with a momentous decision. His wife had contacted Alzheimer’s disease. It had gotten so bad that he could no longer continue as President if he took care of his wife. His closest friends advised him to put her in an institution to be cared for, so he could continue with his work with the college. They reminded him that he was still young, only 57 years old. But he made the decision to resign and spend his time caring for his wife. He had committed himself to her 42 years ago—in sickness and in health—to love, honor, and cherish. It was a matter of integrity with him. He later wrote of the joys and blessings he had received as a result of the special time spent with his wife.

The Value of Commitment

Anything that is good should have value to mankind. We believe that commitment in marriage has great value to offer to those willing to make the decision. We suggest that at least the following three things can help illustrate this value.

- 1. It puts away selfishness in marriage.** The marriage doesn’t just last as long as things are going well.
 - a) It is not just holding on until someone better comes along.
 - b) It is to show concern for each other’s happiness.
 - c) It is to love and cherish one another.
 - d) It is to show my concern for what my mate thinks, his/her values, his/her goals, and his/her dreams.
 - e) It is to say that your life makes a difference to me and others.
 - f) It is to invest unconditionally in the well-being of the other person.

- 2. It shows our integrity.** It is more than being bullheaded about keeping a marriage together.
 - a) It is a sacred promise to a mate—before God and others.
 - b) It is to hate what God hates (divorce), knowing the terrible consequences of such.
 - c) It is to hold steady when the temptation is to run from a difficult situation or relationship.
 - d) It gives staying power to preserve a needed relationship.

- 3. It can bring joy, satisfaction, happiness, and contentment.**
 - a) Such commitment gives peace of mind, security, and a sense of well-being to those in the relationship.
 - b) This is especially true for children that have come out of such a relationship.

What Cost Does Commitment Require?

Anything worthwhile usually comes at a price or cost to the person. The greater the value, the greater the cost may be! Since commitment is of such great value to mankind,

especially in our relationship situations, we can expect a high price that may have to be paid for it. The four following thoughts help to illustrate this.

- 1. It requires Trustworthiness.** That my word is my bond. I will live up to my promises. Unfortunately, children often learn not to trust others or to be trustworthy themselves in their young years that carry over into adulthood. One of the reasons why “unfaithfulness” on the part of a mate is so devastating—it destroys the trust that had been built between the two persons. The price must be paid to keep this trust strong between husband and wife. It is worth the cost! God wants us to put trust in Him as well (Proverbs 3:5)
- 2. It requires Endurance.** It is not just to stay married, but it is to help one another to make the marriage richer, happier, etc. The rewards of the Christian life comes from endurance. **“.....be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”** (Revelation 2:10). The same endurance in marriage brings its rewards as well.
- 3. It requires growth and development.** It is to make a real effort to keep ourselves attractive outwardly and inwardly. It is to be desirable company—a joy to be with. We should not just get old, but grow and mature in our attitudes and actions. **“Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”** (2 Corinthians 4:16). It is a determination not to let the marriage become stale and boring.
- 4. It requires the responsibility of making the choice.** To be committed is not something forced on us, but a choice we can or cannot make. God does not force us to become His children, but rather gives us the choice. It is a great choice, the right choice, a choice that has great and eternal blessings. The same is true of commitment in marriage. It is a great choice, the right choice, a choice that will bless many lives for here and hereafter.

Concluding Thoughts

There should be no question about it....there should be no P.S. in our marriages....*“If this breaks up, I want my picture back.”* Marriage should be for life....and hopefully, for a richer life! Neither should there be a P.S. in our commitment to serve God. We have made a commitment to follow Christ. It is a commitment for life—until death. We must never turn back, for He will never turn His back on us (Hebrews 3:12-15)

Lesson Ten

“Control of Emotions and Actions Towards Each Other

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:27)

Self-control must characterize the Christian! For the same reasons, self-control is needed by both husbands and wives to build a strong marriage. Self-control is a result of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives through His inspired Word! (Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:5-11) It comes as a result of a decision that we make to bring our lives into conformity to the will of God (Romans 12:1-3). A lack of self-control can show the insincerity of our religion, and as well, it can also show the insincerity of a person’s efforts at making his marriage acceptable and right in the sight of God (James 1:26). The emphasis in our study is on self-control, indicating that it is a choice that we must make to bring ourselves under the control of God’s will for our lives. Paul illustrated how strong this emphasis should be when he said he had to discipline his body and bring it into subjection so that he would not be lost.

We believe that strong and happy marriages come from people who make a diligent effort to exercise self-control:

1. In their Speech (James 1:26)
2. In their Emotions (Ephesians 4:31)
3. In their actions (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Such people are in control of those things that are destructive to close human relationships of all kinds. We have spent two lessons trying to show the importance of controlling of speech. In this lesson we want to look at control of our Actions and Emotions.

The Need to Control Our Actions

Strong marriages require correct or righteous actions! It is striving to do that which is just, fair, and right in the sight of God and man. It is striving to live up to the righteous law of God....striving to die to sin (disobedience) (1 John 2:1; Romans 6:1-2). The apostle John states clearly who is righteous in the sight of God: **“Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.”** (1 John 3:7). So, right actions should come from “righteous” people...or from one who allows God’s truth to dwell in him, control him, and guide him.

To follow all of God’s law is to practice right actions. There are, of course, many actions that could be listed. But we feel that there are four that are very important for married couples to place their emphasis upon.

1. **Submission to one another (Ephesians 5:21).** It is the willingness to submit to one another because of our respect and reverence of God. Jesus is the perfect example of this submission for the good of mankind:
 - a) He submitted to death for mankind’s salvation;

b) He submitted to the need of mankind.

c) Philippians 2:5-8

Mutual submission is found in all areas of life. People submitting to governing powers (Romans 13:1-7). We pay taxes and submit to their laws. But government must also submit to the needs of its citizenship....protection, etc. Wives are to submit to their husband's headship...be submissive in all things (Ephesians 5:24). But the husband is to submit to his wife's needs as well...protection, security, etc.

Mutual submission destroys:

- a) The problem of who is the boss around here.
- b) Selfishly getting my own way in things.
- c) Family decisions that are one-sided.
- d) Money spent one-sided.
- e) Wife and children forced to be content with left-overs.

2. By having a servant attitude (Ephesians 5:22-29). It is the recognition that both husbands and wives have needs that should be met and that can be supplied by each other if there is a willingness to be a servant to others. Jesus again showed us the perfect example of servanthood on the night of his betrayal (John 13:1-17). His disciples were arguing over who would be the greatest in the kingdom. So Jesus let them know clearly that the servant is the greatest (Matthew 20:21-28). He made His point clear by washing the disciples' feet. A servant attitude will end the battle among husbands and wives over who is the greatest!

- a) Hopefully, they are servants to one another.
- b) The husband serves his wife's needs.
- c) The wife serves her husband's needs.
- d) He loves her as Christ loved the church.
- e) She loves him, as the church is to love Christ.
- f) He cares for her as he would his own body.
- g) She cares for him, as she would like to be cared for.

A servant attitude should help one to deal with a selfish outlook. Philippians 2:3-4

- a) A selfish person cannot be a servant to others as he should.
- b) He is too concerned about his own wants and wishes.
- c) The most unhappy people are selfish people.
- d) The happiest people are those who are servants—unselfish people.

3. By Valuing one another (Ephesians 5:30-31). We need to help our mate feel good about themselves, so they can rest secure in our love for them. It is when one feels good about himself that helps him to reach out to serve others. Jesus knew who He was and was able to humble Himself in washing His disciples' feet. Each mate in a marriage has things to offer to the other to help make the other a better or more complete person. This showing of value of each other needs to be done in words and in actions (1 John 3:18).

4. By showing proper respect for one another (Ephesians 5:33). Love and respect for one another are shown by little things as well as big things. When we interrupt, badger, put down, ignore, or condemn our mates, we are not showing proper respect or love for

them. The shame of this is.....we would not think of doing these things to others who are not as close in relationship to us. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 shows the proper attitudes and actions that should be shown:

- a) **Be patient with one another.**
- b) **Be kind to and do kindnesses to one another.**
- c) **Not be envious of one another.**
- d) **Not put self above others.**
- e) **Not act unseemly in front of others.**
- f) **Not just seek one's own will.**
- g) **Not easily offended.**
- h) **Thinks the best of the other.**
- i) **Is not happy when the other one is down.**
- j) **Bears one another's burdens.**
- k) **Puts trust in each other.**
- l) **Hopes for the best for the other.**
- m) **Willing to suffer in the other one's place.**

It is also obvious that the Golden Rule certainly applies here as well (Matthew 7:12). It is the little things that often make the big difference!

The Need to Control our Emotions

Emotions often dictate our actions unless we have them under the control of our will and God's will. One of the more destructive emotions that needs to be brought under control is anger! Passages that help to show this:

- 1. **Psalm 37:8** _____
- 2. **Proverbs 16:32** _____
- 3. **Ephesians 4:26-27, 31** _____
- 4. **Colossians 3:19** _____

Anger can be shown or expressed in various ways. Men have tried to express these variations by special terms to identify each:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Bitterness | 6) Intolerance | 11) Seditions | 16) Unforgiveness |
| 2) Malice | 7) Criticism | 12) Jealousy | |
| 3) Clamor | 8) Revenge | 13) Attack | |
| 4) Envy | 9) Wrath | 14) Gossip | |
| 5) Resentment | 10) Hatred | 15) Sarcasm | |

Uncontrolled anger can cause great harm to mankind in general. There is no telling how many wars or how much ruin to nations have been fought or caused because of uncontrolled anger. Following are some of the possibilities that anger can cause in the home:

- 1) **Wives and children who are battered and abused.**
- 2) **Children alienated from parents by such.**
- 3) **Most emotionally scarred persons are the results of someone's anger.**

- 4) Many physical illnesses are brought on by continued anger.**
- 5) Endless damage done to the Lord's Cause and Kingdom.**
- 6) Family relations badly damaged that can't be mended.**
- 7) It can even end in murder (Cain).**

Being bitter towards one's wife is condemned by God (Colossians 3:19), which shows that there are grave dangers of such to the home. For anger to be dealt with correctly, one must see the need of forgiveness from God and the one sinned against because of anger (1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:31-32). Also, the wise man said, ***"Hatred stirs up strife: but love covers all sins."*** (Proverbs 10:12). We also need the wisdom from above that helps us to be peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, and full of mercy (James 3:16-17). Patience is also needed as well (Luke 21:19).

Concluding Thoughts

From the above thoughts, it would seem obvious that good marriages require that we exercise self-control of our emotions and our actions, as well as our speech. It should also be obvious that what makes me a better Christian can also make me a better husband or wife. Strong marriages do not just happen, they are made by God and man working together.

Lesson Eleven

“The Value of Knowing Each Other’s Temperament

“I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.” (Psalm 139:14)

The Psalmists expressed clearly why the study of man is a most fascinating experience—because he is *“fearfully and wonderfully made”* (Ps. 139:14-16). Each man is unique, different from all others, with many variations, and yet there is much similarity to be found as well. This uniqueness is due in part at least to what we call heredity. The process comes about by contact of the male sperm with the female egg, uniting and producing an individual that is unique in all the universe. Each has been discovered to have twenty-three chromosomes that in turn are made up of many genes. It is the combination of these genes from the child's parents that determines much of the individual's temperament and make-up.

Just What is Temperament?

What are we trying to describe when we talk about someone's temperament? Is it something he has inherited, something he has been trained and conditioned in, or something that he has caused to be developed by the exercising of his will? We use several terms to try and describe what we observe about individuals: **Disposition, Inclination, Qualities, Traits, Nature**, etc. It is obvious when we observe babies as well as adults that we see certain "God-given" talents, abilities, gifts, characteristics, temperaments, etc. Twins have been a most fascinating study in observing the differences between the two even though being born at the same time. Why these differences? Are they something we are all born with and will have until the day we die? Some advocate that we are given our basic temperament at birth and will have it until we die (Tim LaHaye: **Your Temperament: Discover its potential**). The Bible does give indications of difference of temperaments within a family at birth. An example is found in:

Genesis 25:27

This lesson is planned in order to explore the possibilities of "God-given temperaments" and how such can help us in our marriages and families.

Temperament, Character, and Personality Defined

TEMPERAMENT is the combination of inborn traits that subconsciously affect man's behavior. These traits are arranged genetically on the basis of nationality, race, and sex and other hereditary factors. Such factors will determine if we are outgoing and extroverted or shy and introverted as a person.

CHARACTER is "the real you!" What you really are! The Biblical term might be one's "soul;" one's inner being; or the "hidden man of the heart" (1 Peter 3:4). One's character is the result of

our natural temperament being modified by: (1) Childhood training; (2) General education; (3) Basic attitudes; (4) Beliefs; (5) Principles; and (6) Motivations. It is like taking some "raw material" and making something nice or unpleasant out of it.

PERSONALITY is "the outward expression of the person." It may or may not be the same as our character, depending upon how genuine we are. Man is capable of putting on a pleasing facade to cover up a weak character. Many people feel compelled to act the part of what people expect of them, rather than what they really are. What is the warning God gives:

Matt. 15:8, 18-20 _____

Prov. 4:23 _____

The place to change behavior is inside of man, not outside only! Personality is the "face" we show to others.

The Four Basic Temperaments

The study of temperament is not new! Four hundred years before Christ a Greek Philosopher and Physician suggested the concept of four basic types of persons. Even the names that he gave them are still used today by some writers. They are: **Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholy, and Phlegmatic**. However, it is obvious that no one is a single temperament person, but rather a combination of temperaments; yet, one type usually predominates in a person's life. Following are some characteristics of each of these four types that help to show their differences.

- SANGUINE.**
1. Warm, buoyant, lively, open, an extrovert.
 2. Receptive by nature, easily impressed.
 3. Emotionally identifies with people's joys and sorrows.
 4. Decisions based more on feelings than facts. Usually quick decisions.
 5. He enjoys life and helps others to enjoy life by his actions.
 6. Good conversationalists and excellent story teller.
 7. Always has friends everywhere.
 8. Likes to be with people and is often the life of the party or the group.
 9. Never at a loss for words, but often speaks before he thinks.
 10. His open friendly ways make him seem more confident than he really is.
 11. He bluffs his way through at times.
 12. People usually excuse his weaknesses because of his strengths.

The world is a much better place because of Sanguines! They make good salesmen, social workers, teachers, actors, speakers, and sometimes good leaders.

A Bible Example: Acts 4:36 _____

- CHOLERIC:**
1. Hot, quick, active, practical.
 2. A strong-willed person, self-sufficient, and independent.
 3. Decisive, opinionated.

4. Thrives on activity.
5. Has endless plans, ideas, and ambitions for long-range projects.
6. Keen mind, sound judgment, makes decisions and stays with them.
7. A crusader against social injustice.
8. Not easily frightened.
9. Often succeeds where others fail because he sticks with the job to the end.
10. His emotional nature is the least developed.
11. Has problem sympathizing with others.
12. He does not show his feelings easily.
13. He can be embarrassed by tears.
14. He has little appreciation for the fine arts.
15. Quick to recognize opportunities and how to best use them.
16. Well organized mind, but details can bore him.
17. Not given to analysis, too much detail work.
18. He tends to be a domineering person and bossy.
19. He uses people to accomplish his goals.
20. Considered an opportunist.

The Choleric person is hard to reach with the gospel after adulthood. Even when he is a Christian, it is hard to actively feel a need to depend upon Christ for his daily living. It is hard for them to realize what Christ meant when He said, "***Without me, you can do nothing.***" Many of the world's greatest leaders have been Choleric. They make good executives, idea men, producers, and even dictators and criminals when turned that way. They are usually extroverts, but not as intense as the Sanguine person.

A Bible Example: 1 Cor. 9:27 _____

- MELANCHOLY:**
1. The richest of all temperaments.
 2. Analytical, self-sacrificing, gifted, a perfectionist.
 3. He has a sensitive emotional nature.
 4. He enjoys the fine arts.
 5. He is usually an introvert, given to moods, and varies in his moods.
 6. When he is up, he seems to be an extrovert.
 7. When he is down, he seems to be an introvert, depressed, withdrawn, and can even be antagonistic.
 8. He is a faithful friend, but makes friends slowly.
 9. He does not usually go to people, but lets them come to him.
 10. He is the most dependable of all temperaments.
 11. He likes others, has a strong desire to be loved, but doesn't push himself on others.
 12. He finds it hard to take people at face value because of past experiences
 13. He is good at analyzing and diagnosing problems.
 14. He is slow in pushing projects because he can see too many problems.
 15. When he is in an emotional high, he may produce a work of art or genius.

16. He finds his greatest meaning in sacrificing, choosing a vocation that is demanding and sacrificing.
17. No temperament has so much potential.

A Bible Example: Numbers 12:3 _____

- PHLEGMATIC:**
1. Calm, cool, slow, easy-going, well-balanced.
 2. Life is happy, unexcited, and pleasant.
 3. Hard to get ruffled—high boiling point.
 4. Keeps emotions under control.
 5. Consistent every time you see him.
 6. Appreciates the fine arts and the better things in life.
 7. Enjoys people—has many friends.
 8. He has a natural dry sense of humor.
 9. He can have a crowd "in stitches" and never crack a smile.
 10. He has a good retentive mind.
 11. He enjoys needling and poking fun at others.
 12. He likes to be a spectator, and does not get too involved in activities and programs.
 13. When finally moved to action—very capable.
 14. He will not take leadership on his own, but when given to him, he is a good leader.
 15. He is a natural peace-maker.
 16. He makes a good diplomat, accountant, teacher, leader, and scientist.

A Bible Example: 2 Timothy 1:6-7 _____

PROCEDURE FOR TESTING:

1. Look over entire chart before making any marks.
2. Check the appropriate box (1,2,3,4,5) after each word or phrase in all four sections.
3. Let (5) represent what is closest like you—and (1) represent what is least like you.
4. Add all 3's, 4's, and 5's in each section to see which one you scored the highest in.

FINDING YOUR TEMPERAMENT

(Place an X in front of the one word that most often applies to you)

STRENGTHS

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Animated | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous | <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Playful | <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Submissive | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-sacrificing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociable | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong-willed |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Considerate | <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled | <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Convincing |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshing | <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful | <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-reliant | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirited |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Planner | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive | <input type="checkbox"/> Promoter |
| 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Sure | <input type="checkbox"/> Spontaneous | <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduled | <input type="checkbox"/> Shy |
| 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Orderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Obliging | <input type="checkbox"/> Outspoken | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic |
| 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful | <input type="checkbox"/> Funny | <input type="checkbox"/> Forceful |
| 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Daring | <input type="checkbox"/> Delightful | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed |
| 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful | <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultured | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident |
| 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Idealistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> Inoffensive | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring |
| 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Decisive | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry humor | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep |
| 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Mediator | <input type="checkbox"/> Musical | <input type="checkbox"/> Mover | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixes easily |
| 16 <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenacious | <input type="checkbox"/> Talker | <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant |
| 17 <input type="checkbox"/> Listener | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal | <input type="checkbox"/> Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Lively |
| 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Contented | <input type="checkbox"/> Chief | <input type="checkbox"/> Chart maker | <input type="checkbox"/> Cute |
| 19 <input type="checkbox"/> Perfectionist | <input type="checkbox"/> Permissive | <input type="checkbox"/> Productive | <input type="checkbox"/> Popular |
| 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Bouncy | <input type="checkbox"/> Bold | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaved | <input type="checkbox"/> Balanced |

WEAKNESSES

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Brassy | <input type="checkbox"/> Bossy | <input type="checkbox"/> Bashful | <input type="checkbox"/> Blank |
| 22 <input type="checkbox"/> Undisciplined | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsympathetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Unenthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Unforgiving |
| 23 <input type="checkbox"/> Reluctant | <input type="checkbox"/> Resentful | <input type="checkbox"/> Resistant | <input type="checkbox"/> Repetitious |
| 24 <input type="checkbox"/> Fuzzy | <input type="checkbox"/> Fearful | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetful | <input type="checkbox"/> Frank |
| 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient | <input type="checkbox"/> Insecure | <input type="checkbox"/> Indecisive | <input type="checkbox"/> Interrupts |
| 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Unpopular | <input type="checkbox"/> Uninvolved | <input type="checkbox"/> Unpredictable | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaffectionate |
| 27 <input type="checkbox"/> Headstrong | <input type="checkbox"/> Haphazard | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to please | <input type="checkbox"/> Hesitant |
| 28 <input type="checkbox"/> Plain | <input type="checkbox"/> Pessimistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Proud | <input type="checkbox"/> Permissive |
| 29 <input type="checkbox"/> Angered easily | <input type="checkbox"/> Aimless | <input type="checkbox"/> Argumentative | <input type="checkbox"/> Alienated |
| 30 <input type="checkbox"/> Naïve | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative attitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervy | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonchalant |
| 31 <input type="checkbox"/> Worrier | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn | <input type="checkbox"/> Workaholic | <input type="checkbox"/> Wants credit |
| 32 <input type="checkbox"/> Too sensitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactless | <input type="checkbox"/> Timid | <input type="checkbox"/> Talkative |
| 33 <input type="checkbox"/> Doubtful | <input type="checkbox"/> Disorganized | <input type="checkbox"/> Domineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed |
| 34 <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Introvert | <input type="checkbox"/> Intolerant | <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent |
| 35 <input type="checkbox"/> Messy | <input type="checkbox"/> Moody | <input type="checkbox"/> Mumbles | <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulative |
| 36 <input type="checkbox"/> Slow | <input type="checkbox"/> Stubborn | <input type="checkbox"/> Show-off | <input type="checkbox"/> Skeptical |
| 37 <input type="checkbox"/> Loner | <input type="checkbox"/> Lord over others | <input type="checkbox"/> Lazy | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud |
| 38 <input type="checkbox"/> Sluggish | <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious | <input type="checkbox"/> Short-tempered | <input type="checkbox"/> Scatterbrained |
| 39 <input type="checkbox"/> Revengeful | <input type="checkbox"/> Restless | <input type="checkbox"/> Reluctant | <input type="checkbox"/> Rash |
| 40 <input type="checkbox"/> Compromising | <input type="checkbox"/> Critical | <input type="checkbox"/> Crafty | <input type="checkbox"/> Changeable |

Lesson Twelve

“The Need for Strong Spiritual Lives”

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Romans 8:5-6)

One of the hardest lessons for human beings to learn is *“I am not the center of the universe!”* Those who have studied “Earth Science” remember the name of Copernicus. He advocated a revolutionary thought—that the earth was not the center of the universe. The Sun does not move around the earth, but the earth moves around the Sun. In making an application of this idea, another man advocated that *“Each child must experience his or her own ‘Copernican revolution’.”* In other words, they must learn that they are not the center of their world. This is a radical adjustment for a child because:

- 1) **Each infant has always had its wants met.**
- 2) **He desires that things continue that way.**
- 3) **Walls should move out of his way.**
- 4) **Floors should automatically become soft to his fall.**
- 5) **Everyone should give up their toys if I want them.**
- 6) **The rules of the game should change so I can always win.**

Unfortunately, life does not cooperate and the child receives some hard shocks! But what about adults? Have we been slow in learning this great principle? Do we still have the concept, even in marriage, *“what are you doing for me?”* Do we still look out for #1’s interests, feelings, and opinions?

A strong spiritual life will drastically change this outlook! **Philippians 2:4** _____

_____ We are convinced that **strong spiritual lives** will help make **Strong marriages!** This can be seen from experience, statistical surveys, and Scripture teaching. There is a very strong emphasis in Scripture on **Servanthood, Sacrifice, and Love.** All three of these reflect a strong spiritual life.

Identifying a Strong Spiritual Life

People have differing ideas of what makes for a strong spiritual life. There are many things that are indicated in Scripture that would identify the spiritual person. Of these, I would like to suggest the following three things that should be obvious to all.

1. It is one that learns to trust in God. Abraham was a good example of this (Hebrews 11:17-20). He is called the *“Father of the faithful.”* That is....the father of the trusting ones! It is more than just believing that God exists. It is believing that He is good (Psalm 100:3-5). It is believing that He cares (1 Peter 5:7). It is to be able to say with Job: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”* (Job 13:15). Until God becomes a personal friend, our religion is more outward than

inward. As our religion becomes more inward, it becomes stronger and more effective in helping my attitudes and actions.

2. It is one that allows God to be in control. Jesus is Lord and Master only if I am willing to be submissive to His Will! (Luke 6:46) It is to realize how much I need God's guidance in my life. It involves a realization that I am not capable to direct my life by myself (Jeremiah 10:23). It is to be able to say with the apostle Paul: ***"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*** (Galatians 2:20). This statement shows who was in control of the apostle's life.

3. It is one that has die to the old life. Jesus made it clear that for one to live he has to die! (Matthew 16:24-25). Men naturally want to live and resist death. Mankind wants Christianity's benefits without a cross to bear. We want to live our lives the way we want to without interference from anyone. But God calls upon us to die to sin, to self, to the old way of living. Then, and only then, does Christ take charge in our lives.

Why Spiritual Living is so Important to Strong Marriages

When surveys are made in our society concerning marriages that survive and are good, we can get an insight as to why a spiritual life is important to strong marriages. The following three things should be obvious to the reader and their value to helping to have good marriages.

- 1. Selfishness is at the root of all our sin and troubles.** The strong spiritual person has died to selfishness and has become concerned for the interests of others about him. He or she becomes concerned for the interests of their mate. ***"Love....does not behave itself rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil."*** (1 Corinthians 13:5). When there has been a misunderstanding or a wrong done, the spiritual person will be the first to initiate the healing process. Their concern is not only for the physical needs, but spiritual needs as well. Of all people, the Christian should want his mate to make it to heaven!
- 2. People who are secure make for strong marriages.** Anxieties and worries plague the weak in faith. The strong are secure in their faith and trust in God's care (Matthew 6:31-33). They can handle the tribulations of life with God's assurance and help (Romans 8:28).
- 3. Strong marriages come from good decision making.** Right or wrong moral decisions can make or break a marriage. Drinking, Gambling, Drugs, Dishonesty, Infidelity, etc., all play a part in helping to undermine or destroy marriages. The willingness to say "NO" to sinful and destructive activities will go a long way to help strengthen a marriage.

a) **2 Corinthians 6:14-18** _____

b) **Hebrews 5:11-14** _____

A strong Christian is a mature Christian—one that makes good decisions that build relationships, not destroy them.

Concluding Thoughts

The church at Corinth had weakness and carnality in their midst (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). They needed to become strong spiritually so they could properly deal with the other problems in their midst—Envy, Strife, Division, Sexual Immorality, Marital problems, False Teachings, etc. To be carnally minded leads to death, but to be spiritually minded leads to life and peace.

Just as the church needs strong spiritual persons, so does the home, the family, and marriage. Strong marriages and strong families are a blessing to themselves and others as well.

