

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Lesson 13

Interpersonal Relationships between Husband and Wife

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In order for Christianity to become relevant to one's life, must be practical and really work. If Christ does not produce changed lives, then there is really no Christianity at all and there is only dead orthodoxy. Christianity must work in our individual lives and then in our homes. If it doesn't work at home, then it most certainly isn't going to work anywhere else.
- B. A Christian home is not where Christians live, but where Christ dwells and is in authority. Love must be practical or it is only theoretical, and theoretical love is not love at all.
- C. The basis for communication between a Christian husband and wife is found in 1 Peter 3:7 which says, "Heirs of the gracious gift of life." Both are heirs of eternal life and both are to experience the grace of eternal life together. In a Christian marriage, the husband and wife are a team and the husband is the appointed captain.
- D. Many of the problems in marriage are simply communication difficulties. Someone has said that half of the world's problems are the result of sin and the other half the result of poor communications.
- E. I am going to give helpful hints to husbands and wives. It is not that we don't know these things, but that we do not apply them. We don't need more facts, but a changed heart. We don't need confession of our faults, but repentance.

II. HELPFUL HINTS TO HUSBANDS

- A. Take an Interest in the Wife's Problems: "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn" (Rom. 12:15). A woman needs the security of her husband's affection. A woman's world usually consists of husband, children, and home and she needs to know the husband is interested in her efforts at home. A wife desperately needs her husband to talk with her.
- B. Help the Wife Out: "Husbands be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner . . ." (1 Pet. 3:7). Sometimes the wife has more to do in a home than she can possibly manage, especially if she is a working mother. The husband can help out by picking up his dirty socks and underwear, hanging up his clothes, mopping floors, bathing the children, helping with dishes, etc. The husband will find out when he gives a helping hand that this will spark the wife to do better for she knows her husband cares.
- C. Remember The Little Things: "Love is patient, love is kind" (1 Cor. 13:4). The husband should try to remember important events which mean much to a woman—birthdays, Mother's Day, anniversaries, children's birthdays, etc. Bring the wife some flowers or a box of candy when it isn't a special occasion. Call your wife from work to tell her you love her. Tell her that she is the most precious person in the world to you. Give her a hug and kiss with no ulterior motives.

- D. Take Time to be Alone with Your Wife: Take her out for dinner or just spend time with her when the kids are gone to bed.
- E. Do Some Things Your Wife Likes: Take her to a play, concert, art show, ballet or even shopping.
- F. Be Well Groomed: A man should be clean and neatly dressed—shoes shined, hair cut and fingernails cleaned. The man should not get sloppy in physique or dress, for a woman is impressed with a man's appearance, although that is not the most important thing to her.
- G. Give the Wife Time Away from the Family: "Love is not self-seeking" (selfish) (1 Cor. 13:5). Real love is not selfish. A husband needs to remember a woman needs time away from the kids and this means that husbands must baby sit once in awhile. A wife must cultivate some women friends too. A woman needs female companionship more than a man needs male companionship.
- H. Take an Interest in the Children: If a woman sees the husband spending time with the children, this makes her happy, for her whole life is wrapped up in the welfare of her children.
- I. Praise and Encourage Whenever Possible: A woman needs praise and encouragement for her good deeds, her looks, her cute idiosyncrasies, etc.

III. HELPFUL HINTS TO WIVES

- A. A Woman Should Be Feminine: *"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight"* (1 Pet 3:4). Every red-blooded man desires his wife to be a lady not just a woman
- B. A Wife Should Be Well-Groomed: Men want their wives to dress attractively without being sexy. The outward appearance of the woman is very important to the men, for he responds to the physical. Most men, because of their jobs, are out in the world and see attractive women. When they come home from work, they want to see an attractive wife. It is easy to get a man; it is harder to keep him.
- C. Keep a Neat Home: (Titus 2:4). A man wants a neat and respectable home and doesn't want to be stepping all over junk that should have been picked up or thrown away days or weeks ago. Women who are poor housekeepers need to make this a constant matter of prayer, and seek by God's grace to improve in this ministry. This would apply also to a woman who is a poor cook. One of the major ways to a man's heart is through his stomach.
- D. Be Well Read: God doesn't put any premium on ignorance. A well read woman will always have something to talk to her husband about other than household chit-chat.
- E. Take an Interest In Your Husband's Work. If the woman doesn't know anything about her husband's job or business, she should read and find out. A man needs a woman to talk to at times, but he wants to have an intelligent conversation.
- F. Build Your Husband's Ego: A man must feel needed, important and significant. Nothing is more important than making your husband feel significant.

IV. PROBLEMS TO AVOID IN MARRIAGE

- A. Jealousy: Jealousy is a subtle poison which can destroy a marriage. There must be complete trust. If both partners are Christians, they have the Holy Spirit to bring conviction when they are doing something out of excessive selfishness which is sin.
- B. Controlling: A partner is so possessive he or she wants to control every move of the other partner. Control, domination, excessive possession smothers a marriage.
- C. Finances: The problem of finances is no small matter in a home.
1. The first principle in finances is that there should be trust between the couple. A warning sign is when husband and wife have his and her bank accounts.
 2. The person who is best at handling money should be in charge of the books.
 3. There should always be discussion and agreement when possible over the way funds should be spent.
 4. If the husband handles the money, the wife should be given adequate sums of money to carry on the household activities and have some personal spending money. If the woman handles the money, the man should be given an adequate allowance.
 5. There are three fundamental things to succeed in making money stretch in a Christian:
 - a. Give regularly to the Lord's work.
 - b. Do not incur insurmountable debts.
 - c. Make every effort to save money.
- D. Pettiness: Neither partner should ever threaten the other in order to get something. For instance, a woman might say, "If you don't buy me that new dress. I won't fix your breakfast," or a man might say to his wife. "If you don't clean the house, I'm leaving home." Threats always break a partner's confidence in a mate.
- E. Breakdown of Rapport: Do not cut your partner down in public. This is simply a sign of immaturity Do not tell funny stories on your partner if it will embarrass him or her. The way some people talk about their mates in public is terrible.
- F. Voice Raising: The marriage partner who raises a voice will be distrusted, for this shows the situation is not under control. Yelling never solved anything.
- G. In-laws: The scriptural principle is to leave parents and cleave to the married partner. In-laws must never interfere with the hare life. If need be in-laws should be talked to in a very straight forward manner. They will get over the hurt in time.
- H. Stubbornness and Pride: The magic words in a marriage are, "I have sinned" or "I was wrong" or "Please forgive me."

V. PROBLEM SOLVING

- A. Wrong Ways To Solve Problems:
1. Deny that there is a problem.
 2. Run away from the problem.
 3. Endure the problem in a "grin and bear it" attitude.
- B. Biblical Basis For Solving Problems:
1. The first major concept is to realize your mate has an old sin nature and, at times, it flares up. Every person has areas of weakness and sin, even as a Christian, and God must work in these areas. Faults must be committed to the Lord so growth can take place in the Christian life.
 2. The second major principle is to become aware that nothing is too hard for God and

that through Christ every problem can be solved. A Christian can do all things through Christ who keeps pouring power into him. “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philip. 4:13).

3. The third principle is that the husband and wife must learn to forgive as Christ forgave. “Bear with each other and forgive what every grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:13). Each partner must be willing to forgive 70 times 70 if there is genuine repentance.

C. The Biblical Way To Solve Problems

1. What?
 - a. Determine the problem and face it squarely.
 - b. See if the Bible gives a clear-cut solution.
 - c. If the Bible is silent, use the Biblical principles and common sense and logic to solve the problem.
2. How?
 - a. Study the Bible individually and collectively.
 - b. Pray as a family
 - c. Be honest with your mate in everything. Keep emotions to a minimum. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor. . .” (Eph. 4:25).
 - d. Have complete freedom of discussion. Always keep the channels of communication open and speak to one another with kindness. “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” (Eph. 4:29)
 - e. Don’t play games or be deceptive with your partner. *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift” (Matt. 5:23-24).*
 - f. Relate every problem to Jesus Christ and ask yourself what Christ would do in this situation.
 - g. Do not let the sun go down upon your anger. *“In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold” (Eph. 4:26).* Every problem should be solved or at least agreed to be solved before the couple retires for the night. Anger expresses itself by blowing up or shutting up. Nothing unforgiven, unsettled or uncovered should be carried over to the next day.
 - h. When upset, instead of attacking your mate for all the things he or she has done in the past or is doing in the, learn to share with your mate what you are feeling so the focus is on you rather than on your mate.
3. So what?
 - a. The spiritually nature person is one who can solve his or her own problems by dependence on Christ.
 - b. God has never promised to deliver us from problems but He has guaranteed grace to get us through the problems.
 - c. Remember, if Christianity does not work in the marriage and family, then it will not work anywhere.

I. **CONCLUSION** Formulas do not always work but the “BEST” principle, set forth by Ed Wheat in his book, *Love Life*, always works when applied with a genuine heart.

B - Bless the marriage: By kind and loving words
By doing kind actions
By showing thankfulness and appreciation
By praying for the marriage.

E – Edify your partner: Seek to encourage
Compliment
Build up your partner, not tear up

S - Share with your partner: Give time to your partner
Be a good conversationalist
Be a good listener.

T – Touch your partner: Hugs, pats and kisses bring
satisfaction and emotional security to a marriage.

We need the **BEST** principle because Christians do have problems in their marriages, but Christ can and does enable the Christian to solve them or cope with them.

When communications are not good between husband and wife, prayers will not be answered. *“Husband, be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers” (1 Pet. 3:7).* This may be the reason why many prayers offered up by married couples do not get a positive answer from God.