



December 31, 2021

Some Thoughts on Marriage

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from back here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Several years ago at a Youth Camp I was asked to teach the daily Bible Class to our campers and any staff who wished to sit in. Our Theme for that year was "Building Your Relationship with God". I added an element to accentuate this theme with "God Has Personality...Let's Get to Know Him".

During this class the discussion segued from personality traits of men and women and several asked questions that centered around the concept of "marriage". Interestingly, it seemed to be on several of the campers minds.

Marriage is such an important relationship in any society, and paramount for a healthy society. It is a source of stability and harmony and the nucleus of a functional family. However, marriage has been under assault for some time. Lack of commitment at the start of the marriage, confusion of gender roles, the impact of evolution and many other factors have led to the erosion of the marriage relationship as ordained by God.

Marriage was "created or invented" and ordained by our Creator in the beginning at the Garden of Eden. Human beings and human marriage did not evolve by blind chance. Elohim through the Word of God created by determined and planned creation the first male human being Adam, followed by a perfect companion for him, the first female human being Eve. "*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*" (Gen 1:27) It's a powerful and awesome description ""in the image of God!"

The creation of Eve followed the creation of Adam and there is important meaning in this sequence. "*And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.*" (Gen 2:21-22)

They were made of the same flesh and bone and this itself indicates a "oneness" intended by our Creator. The woman was brought to the man as a comparable helper and companion. (v.20) It was like bringing a gift to someone, a very special gift, to be valued and appreciated. Then a statement is made to be applied to the future relationships of the progeny of Adam and

Eve. *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* (Gen 2:24)

Jesus quoted this in referring to a man and his wife and in a way clarified it even more. *"the two shall become one flesh."* (Mt 19:5) The apostle Paul also stated it this way in Ephesians 5:31. Our Creator does not support polygamy, adultery, or same sex marriages.

I know it is not "popular" to write what God's Word instructs, but never the less, those who believe Him and trust and obey Him will clearly follow His instructions.

Maintaining a happy marriage does not just happen. The newness can soon wear off and marriage partners can easily take each other for granted and step by step withdraw from one another and let other things occupy their interests and passions.

Over the years, one resource I've at times suggested for both preparing for marriage and/or rebuilding a marriage is the information found on the marriagebuilders.com web site. The information has been developed by marriage counselor and psychologist Dr. Willard F. Harley. He writes of the Love Bank and the need to deposit love units in the bank rather than make withdrawals. He labels the withdrawals Love Busters.

He observes, "But in order to deposit enough love units to fall in love with each other, they must follow rules that they don't feel like following. The feeling of love brings out the Giver in each of us, and the Giver's instincts make marriages great. . . But when we are not in love, and our Taker calls the shots, we don't feel like doing any of those things. In fact, we feel like doing the opposite. That's why so many marriages become so painful when love is lost. It's because all of the ways that they used to care for each other are a faint memory when there is no love to inspire them. The love and care once shown is replaced by neglect and thoughtlessness. Who would want to be married under those conditions? The Giver's instincts deposit love units, but the Taker's instincts withdraw them. So I have created four rules to override the destructive tendencies of the Taker."

We'll briefly look at these four rules in a letter in the future.

In the paragraph above notice how often Dr. Harley uses the word "love".

The apostle Paul too emphasizes this frequently and quite powerfully such as in 1 Cor. 13:13 *"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."*

In Ephesians 5 in what we might label "the marriage chapter" the apostle Paul instructs husbands three times to *"love his wife"*. (vv. 25, 28, 33) He also instructs wives three times to submit to or be subject to and respect her husband. It seem that Paul here is focusing on how

to deal with the usual shortcomings and negative tendencies of each marriage partner. Some thoughts for all of us to consider, whether married or not, as we near the end of another week, and look forward to God's Sabbath. May you have a blessed upcoming Sabbath, in worship and fellowship with Him and with one another.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

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