

# Teaching

## God and Marriage

January 27, 1017

I was asked to post a short writing on FB regarding marriage and God's inclusion in it. In order to address the topic, I will draw upon what my wife and I have learned from our marriage and revelation from God.

To be clear, when anyone speaks of marriage, or being married, it is with the full understanding it is a marriage between a man and a woman. Period. The Bible has multiple references to a man leaving his father and mother and being joined to, cleave to, his wife. References: Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7, and Ephesians 5:31.

For a moment, let's address the word, 'wife.' The word, wife, in the Hebrew, is the transliteration and phonetically pronounced word, 'ish-shah,' which is clearly translated as 'female,' 'woman,' not male or man. In the Greek, the word, wife, is translated to mean, phonetically, 'goo-nay,' the same as 'woman,' 'wife,' 'my lady.' God created male and female, in His image. What image? How we look today.

So, a male and female love one another enough to want to spend the remainder of their days upon the earth, together. They are two distinct people with distinct personalities, idiosyncracies, habits; etc. Due to the immediate foregoing, they have some incompatibilities, but not severe enough to not become married knowing they will have to 'work through' the rough spots.

Marriage is difficult enough for Christians, considering the aforementioned, but exceeding difficult if it is without the thought and consideration for creator, God. There are 'Christian' marriages where God's presence in the marriage is an afterthought. As a home must have a firm foundation; so, too, must a marriage have a firm foundation. What is the purpose of a foundation?

There are several functions of a foundation. According to civil engineering there are at least six functions;

1. Reduction of load intensity - Foundation distributes the loads of the super structure, to a larger area so that the intensity of the load at its base
2. Even distribution of load - Foundations distribute the non-uniform load of the super structure evenly to the sub soil. For example, two columns carrying unequal loads can have a combined footing which may transmit the load to sub soil evenly with uniform soil pressure. Due to this, unequal or differential settlements are minimized.
3. Provision of level surface - Foundation provide leveled and hard surface over which the super structure can be built.
4. Lateral stability - It anchors the super structure to the ground, thus imparting lateral stability to the super structure. The stability of the building, against sliding and overturning, due to horizontal forces (such as wind, earthquake etc.) is increased due to foundations.

5. Safety against undermining - It provides the structural safety against undermining or scouring due to burrowing animals and flood water.
6. Protection against soil movements - Special foundation measures prevents or minimizes the distress (or cracks) in the super structure, due to expansion or contraction of the sub soil because of moisture movement in some problematic soils.

Based upon the foregoing a statement may be said, with all confidence, a building, such as a house, even a marriage, is only as stable as the foundation supporting it.

Upon what foundation is marriage laid? According to 1 Corinthians 3:11, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Psalm 127:1 says, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. . . “ A Christian marriage, if it is to survive the test of time must be based upon Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father. Jesus, the foundation functions in a marriage much as described, earlier, but not all, for His foundation is both spirit and life; it is living, but exhibits the traits of the aforementioned. Without the firm foundation, the winds of life come, the storms, floods, or whatever else house will fall, be destroyed, washed away. A foundation may initially sound, solid, but if neglect sets in an otherwise great foundation can fall into disrepair, and ruination; thus, the requirement to maintain vigilance in the marriage, under God, in faith.

Is faith toward God, His living Word and Son Jesus coupled with empowerment from the Holy Spirit essential? We see in Hebrews 11:6 the following: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him . . .” The writer is talking about active faith in God, our Father. The fact is God will not go the way of people, people have to go His way.

A life of a married person, in Christ, is a daily matter, not a ‘fire and forget’ activity as it is a moment by moment, day by day journey. Looking toward God for His help is key to success in marriage. Praying together, praying for each other is essential. The power to help directly comes from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the mediator between a married man and woman; that is, He helps the married couple overcome differences to His honor and glory and God will be magnified in the marriage. Respective of the foregoing, there are pitfalls, and in the world of hunting, deadfalls, to avoid. What follows are but a few:

1. Supremacy – No one person in the marriage is better, superior, than the other, for any reason. If one should think so, then they have no business being married and should go themselves a job as a boss. Marriage is not about who is chief. Marriage is about companionship, love, trust, integrity, honesty.

There is a statement out of the Bible which men seem to know by heart even if they are not a Christian; namely, “. . . [W]ives, be in subjection to your own husbands. Men will take this statement entirely out of context. In context, it is saying the men would be won over to God by the wives! The Bible says in Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” 1 Timothy 5:8 says, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” An infidel is a person who is an unbeliever, unchristian, incredulous.

2. Assignment of Responsibility – Each person in a marriage is 100% responsible for the marriage. There is no such thing as anyone thinking each person is 50% responsible. To

live a thought such as just described provides opportunity for one or the other to hold back not being responsible and accountable. Marriage partners are responsible and accountable to each other.

3. Not Working Together – Amos 3:3 says, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” The obvious answer is, ‘No,’ but people try. The power of agreement is staggering and even the Bible discusses it where Jesus said, “Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. gain I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”
4. Not treating each other with respect – 1 Peter 3:7 says, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” Note, the husband is to give honor to his wife, as to the weaker vessel, not that she is a weaker vessel but in so doing the husband prefers, uplifts, his wife with honor and respect. Notice the last part of the sentence, “that your prayers be not hindered.” Does a husband desire to have his prayers answered or is he more interested in his personal wants? If he does want his prayers to be answered, then he needs to observe to do what the scripture says. If a husband is treating his wife as he should, he will pray for her.
5. Using prayer as a weapon – Conflicts arise, perhaps with the mate. A tendency is to pray for the mate, which is correct to do; however, if a personality conflict arises, rather than praying for the other person to change, they should pray for themselves, which may be the real root of the problem.
6. Downplaying the mates concern – There is, at times, a tendency to downplay a mates’ concern. Realize the issue may not be high in importance to the one without the complaint, but it is important to the mate with the complaint. Take their complaint seriously and try to help them through the issue. Sit an pray together asking God to intervene.
7. Unforgiveness – Forgiveness is a powerful force as it is freeing. Unforgiveness is a powerful force as it holds in bondage. When an apology is given, rather than saying, “It’s all right,” or some other words, say the following: “You are forgiven.” The first illustration does not actually relieve the other of the injury as it is weak. When the latter phrase is stated, “You are forgiven,” the action is actually over never to be resurrected.
8. Neglecting getting together to read the Word and pray – Make a point of getting together and sharing the Word together. The Lord ministers throughout the day and sharing opens conversation and opportunity to share what God has taught and learning is achieved. Praying together opens the door for unity and honesty as prayer together exposes the heart of a person and much is to be learned through praying together. Openly pray for each other telling God how much the other mate means to the one who is praying and how beautiful they are and what a blessing they are to the immediate mate, family, friends, and strangers.
9. Not understanding the strength of the bond in marriage – In Ecclesiastes 4:12 we read, “And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” There is strength is a godly marriage; strength to prevail against the works of the enemy.

10. Neglecting God – God is central to any marriage! Psalm 91:9-10, “Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; <sup>10</sup> There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. <sup>14</sup> Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. <sup>15</sup> He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. <sup>16</sup> With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

God honors marriage and must be central to it, if not, there shall be failure. Neglect of God can prove to be fatal to a marriage. He loves and cherishes, and a godly marriage magnifies the Lord God.

11. Do not ignore courtesies – Being quick to anger, ready to interrupt, mocking, verbally cruel, condescending and more are direct violations of courtesy and absolutely do not reflect nor demonstrate respect on any level. First Corinthians 13 is known as the love chapter and should be read and re-read until the truth of what it says makes its way into the heart to the point to love is what a person wants to do. Ridiculing a person is not the way to gain respect. Bitter and sweet water cannot come from the same spigot. Only through a mouth changed by God can love be honestly spoken. Love is entreating and does not lift up itself.

There is much more which may be said; however, this writer has gleaned from his 42 years of marriage and written it here, as a snapshot.

We had a foreign exchange student who told us he would like to have a marriage like ours. I appreciated his desire and told him so; but, at the same time told him a good marriage does not just ‘happen,’ it is the result of constant vigilance, trust, honor, and, above all, devotion to God. It does not happen without spending time in the Word of God and it does not happen without making Jesus the Lord of marriage.

There was a couple who fought a lot, mostly verbally. Although they had begun going to church because they wanted to ‘do the right thing,’ they still argued, were rebellious toward each other, were independent and each demanded their own way. But one day, the husband was reading through the book of Philippians and stopped at the following verse in chapter two. Verse eleven states, “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

He called his wife to him. After she sat next to him and after he read to her the scripture asked two questions, “I am tired of fighting, are you?” His wife emphatically said, “Yes!” Next, he asked, “Do you think it is possible Jesus could be the Lord of our marriage?” Both of them did not know as the possibility was never anything they had heard from the pulpit of any church. Nevertheless, they bowed their heads and prayed. They told the Lord they did not know whether such a possibility existed, but if there was a possibility, they asked the Lord to become the Lord of their marriage. There was not an immediate resounding answer to the question from searching and honest hearts, but in the ensuing years, the result of the prayer that day has become apparent; they are still together after 40 years; Jesus IS Lord!

In the years since that time, they had several children and faithfully taught them the Word of God; Jesus was the Lord of their teaching and their children are grown, strong Christians with Christian wives.

The inclusion of God in a marriage and the individual's lives is in the imperative.

To those who would seek to become married, build your marriage upon the foundation, Jesus, and verbally make Him the Lord of your marriage. God ordained pure marriage; so, ask Him for His wisdom, knowledge, and understanding and face the future with, not without, Him.