

How To Have A Happy Marriage

A nation is only as strong as its family unit. Today, divorce decrees outstrip marriage licenses in many big cities. Millions of Americans have “live-in” mates, freely cohabiting together without legal sanction, without full commitment. Millions of single parents strive to earn enough money to support abandoned or illegitimate children. Most of America’s problems, like crime, drug abuse, child abuse, kidnapping, even murder, can be traced directly to the door of a home—to the family. Why? Why are so many millions of marriages in trouble? Why such a skyrocketing divorce rate? Why cannot people live together in love, mutual respect, and harmony—fulfilling a life-long commitment?

How many truly happy married people do you know?

What about your own immediate family? Were your parents happily married? Divorced? What about grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other, more distant, kin? What about your fellow employees, acquaintances, friends?

One might answer: “Well, my parents divorced when I was very young, and I was raised by my grandparents. My dad used to beat my mother. She became an alcoholic, and got married two more times. My dad got on drugs, and eventually did a jail term.”

Another might say: “My brother divorced when he was only twenty, after being married less than two years. My sister got pregnant when she was sixteen, and had an abortion. Then she married another guy when she was only eighteen, and they split up in about six months. Now, she’s on her third marriage—but I don’t think it’s working out.”

Still another might say: “I was sexually abused by my dad. It just about destroyed any chance I might have had for a happy marriage. I finally told my husband about it, so he would understand why I was having so many emotional problems relating to our sex life. He was unforgiving. He seemed to think I was the one at fault, and he left me, and finally filed for divorce.”

Sound familiar?

All you need do is to interrogate your memory. Such tragic, wretched, painful

lives are all around you. Of course many who will read this booklet are themselves wretchedly, unhappily involved in heartbreak and disappointment revolving around a bad marriage.

Divorce, desertion, abandonment, child abuse, wife beating, violent crimes, like murder between family members, have become commonplace today. “Homicide” has become “*home-icide*,” for a significant percentage of murders are perpetrated by members of the same family.

For every *effect*—like our runaway divorce rate, our millions of single-parent homes, our abortions and illegitimate children—there is a *cause*.

What are some of the *causes* of our wretched, shattered homes, our staggering divorce rate?

You Are a Product

You are the sum total of all the influences and experiences that have shaped your mind. You are the product of a factory. That factory consisted of your parents, married or divorced, happy or unhappy; your peers in each phase of your life; your education; your choices in entertainment; in short, everything which has become lodged in your mind through the channels of the five senses.

You were born into a “ready-made” society.

You did not devise, plan, or invent any facet of society: its mores, its religions, its sociological, philosophical or political ideologies. Instead, through the process of digesting information and accumulating experiences, you are a *product* of a ready-made society—albeit a society in the throes of continual change.

One of the most dramatic changes within the past fifty years has been that of the disintegration of the family. As an avalanche of sexual information has poured out through the various entertainment and educational media; as the Supreme Court has relaxed laws regulating prostitution, homosexuality and pornography; as motion pictures and TV have saturated the public with raw sex scenes, the family has suffered accordingly.

Studies prove youngsters are now becoming “sexually active” in *grade* school; many fourteen and fifteen year-old girls are on the pill, while some schools

provide condoms for boys barely in their teens. Texas is currently considering passing laws requiring sex education from the first grade about homosexuality as an “alternative life style.”

What was your experience regarding sex education; counsel and advice concerning dating; how to select a mate; life-long commitment; fidelity; the awesome responsibilities of marriage?

When were you ever taught that Almighty God has set *living laws* in motion governing all human relationships particularly marriage—and that breaking those laws exacts fearsome penalties? The chances are more than ninety-nine to one against your having received such teaching.

Did your parents (if you came from a home consisting of two parents, or even one parent) ever teach you, painstakingly, as well as by example, how the living laws of God govern marriages? Were you ever taught principles concerning *how* to select a mate, how to prepare for marriage, what marriage is, how to insure your marriage is successful, happy?

If you are like most people, your formative years were largely devoid of any such teaching. Probably, you saw no ideal examples of happy, long-term, Godly marriage relationships, unless you idealized your grandparents. There are exceptions, of course, but the *average* person simply had no such example, no such teaching. As the population has grown, additional millions of children join the ranks of those already warped, twisted, grotesquely molded by lack of a stable family environment.

Were you an abused child? If so, you know how terribly you have had to suffer through life, how such painful childhood experiences and shameful memories have distorted and damaged your mind and innermost feelings, how difficult it is for you to be completely “normal” in your marital relationship.

Were you an orphan? An abandoned child? An illegitimate child? A child from a single-parent home? Reared by grandparents, or foster parents? In any case, your “factory” which helped shape you, make you what you *are*, was deficient in many ways. Therefore, the product: *You* are suffering deficiencies which are not your fault, and over which you should feel no guilt.

If you are of the millions who have gone through divorce, whose marriage is

miserably unhappy, perhaps you should commence the healing process by first looking to find the *root cause* of your marital failures. Come to understand all the influences which have shaped you, made you what you are. Then, where you can come face to face with your own responsibility for your attitudes and actions, *repent* of them. Where you can understand that other influences—an abusive parent, for example—was largely responsible for some of your psychoses, then you can conquer such attitudes by admitting their cause, analyze why you act the way you do, and work to overcome them.

Coming to understand that you are a *product* of your upbringing does not suggest that, as an adult, you do not accept responsibility for your actions. Rather, it should be the beginning of a healing process, a way of overcoming subconscious guilt, a first step toward a new and different outlook.

Learning by Example

By the time children are five, the die is largely cast. Most parents have no idea how indelibly, how powerfully, their examples are influencing their children and determining what they shall become as adults.

Parents who fight in front of their children; an abusive father; a shrill, critical mother; parents who do not show the kind of love and understanding toward each other or their children represent a factory which is producing inferior, sometimes warped products. Most abusive adults were themselves abused. Children from broken homes are more likely to divorce; children who were reared in a stable home, with sound values and high moral standards, are more likely to have a longer lasting marriage.

In dozens of ways, many of them subconscious, virtually unnoticed, children learn by example. In a home devoid of lively conversation, a home dominated by television, it is likely children will be uncommunicative, intellectually incurious, more a product of the mindless insanity produced for children on television than the deliberately shaped product of two loving parents who are deeply concerned about what kind of adults their children will become.

In a hostile environment; with husband and wife shouting at each other in front of the children, using obscenities, perhaps smoking, abusing alcohol, you can virtually guarantee the children will imitate such behavior in later life.

Faced with the fact her child had committed a heinous murder, a mother said, “I can’t understand it. I always gave him everything he ever wanted.” Thousands of parents utter similar disclaimers, like the father in Dallas recently who displayed a picture of his son to the media, saying, “See? See how he is smiling? He was a good boy—always smiling...” His son had helped tie up three teenaged employees of a sporting goods store, tape their mouths, and then brutally slash their throats with a knife. When police arrived at the apartment where the boy was staying, he jumped into a pickup truck and tried to run them down. They shot him dead. The father could not understand.

Surely, *his* son could never have perpetrated such a vicious, brutal crime. But he did. Most people tend to smile when it is picture-taking time. But the momentary flash of a bulb cannot hope to capture even a clue as to what is going on inside a human mind. Somehow, that boy’s factory: his family, or lack of one; his entertainment, his peer group, his school; the things he watched on TV, or read in books and magazines, contrived to produce in him the brutal, calloused, pitiless character which could deliberately tie up, then slash to death three fellow human beings.

What kind of factory produced you? Think back to your childhood, your earliest recollections of family life. Believe it or not, much of your own psychological and emotional makeup may be traced to your formative years—from birth to about five—years of which you may remember little.

Were you the product of a warm, loving, stable family with a father who was a good provider, a mother who was a fine homemaker and mother to her children? Were you shown examples of honesty, integrity, hard work, thrift, loyalty, and a belief in God?

Millions today would answer, instead, that their parents were involved in a bitter divorce, or say they do not remember who their father was, or say they were brought up in a foster home, or by their grandparents. What were the examples of family life around you? What about your aunts and uncles, your grandparents? If you are a divorced person, a single parent, a mother of an illegitimate child, perhaps you should think deeply about why these things happened to you. What were the examples which helped form and shape your innermost emotional responses to life?

Most of us are unaware of the extent to which society affects us. Consider the case of Lot and his family. Christ said, “And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

“They did eat, they drank, and married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

“But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

“Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed ... *remember Lot’s wife*.

“Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lost his life shall preserve It...” (Luke 17:26-33). Christ said to remember Lot’s wife because she is a perpetual reminder of how deeply one can become calloused by society, how much a part of *this world* we can become.

Lot’s wife, even as she was being *saved* from certain destruction, was so attached to her home, her neighborhood, her environment, that she looked back upon Sodom with longing, and instantly became a “pillar of salt.”

Think about it. The account is found in Genesis the 19th chapter. God sent His angels to rescue Lot and his family. The perverted Sodomites of the town demanded the two (who were manifesting themselves as human beings) be brought outside the door of the house so they could perform gang rape! Lot, obviously knowing that these men were special, desisted. Yet, as a comment upon his character, and the extent to which the perverted society in which he lived had distorted his values, he offered his two virginal daughters to the perverts outside his door in place of his two guests!

Ponder this for a moment. Who, in today’s society, would consider such a choice? Who would rather see their virginal daughters viciously gang raped, possibly murdered, rather than *offend two perfect strangers*?

This is a powerful comment on how strongly one can become a *part of society*; can

inculcate the perverted, God-defying immorality of one's peers.

Yet, Lot was described thusly: God "...spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

"And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes [which demonstrates God's righteous WRATH against homosexuality] condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly;

"And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation [conduct] of the wicked:

"(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)..." (2 Peter 2:5-8).

So, though Lot was described as "righteous" so far as his avoidance of the perverted excesses of his society, "righteous" insofar as keeping God's Ten Commandments in the letter, notice how his *values* had become affected by his environment!

Lot's wife, even as God's angels were *saving her life*, found herself yearning for her old, perverted environment—neighborhood which had almost destroyed her two daughters. Therefore, Jesus Christ used her as a perpetual example, a powerful warning against being a *part of this world*!

You need to ask yourself just how much you are part of *this evil world*, and how much you have *come out* of this world, spiritually.

God says: "Love not the world [society], neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh [which destroys marriages], and the lust of the eyes [same comment], and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

Only by identifying the underlying *causes* of marital unhappiness and all forms of

sin can one begin the process of repentance, and begin to turn one's life around.

Man Did Not Invent Marriage

Marriage is not a passing social phenomenon, a creation of society, an institution established by the courts. The origin of marriage is the same as the origin of mankind. It is traceable to the creation, to God's divine laws given to our first parents, Adam and Eve.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the earth, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God [*Elohim*] created He him; male and female created He them.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26-28).

The Bible reveals that God has a torso, a head, legs, arms, hands, feet, and all the characteristics of His human creation. Jesus said, "If you have seen me you have seen the Father," and the Bible clearly says that God's "arm is not shortened" that it cannot help, and that His "eyes are upon all the earth," and makes many other references to the fact that we human beings are made in the image of God.

Therefore, the first man and woman were created absolutely *perfect* in every detail.

"And the Eternal God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into His nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [*nephesh*].

"And the Eternal God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed ... and the Eternal God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

"And the Eternal God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

“And the Eternal God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet [“fitting”] for him ... and the Eternal God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

“And the rib, which the Eternal God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man.

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: She shall be called Woman [*isshah*] because she was taken out of Man [*ish*].

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be *one flesh*.

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2).

For hundreds of years, countless thousands of theologians and laymen have labored under the false assumption that the first sin was a *sex sin*. Millions have assumed the “forbidden fruit” merely *represented* the sex act, which is a completely ludicrous assumption when one looks at what the Bible plainly says about the very *purpose* for the creation of both sexes: (1) God told our original parents to “be fruitful and multiply.” (2) He commanded man to “cleave unto his wife.” (3) He said they were to “become one flesh.” (4) The Bible plainly says “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Hebrews 13:4).

God performed the first “marriage ceremony” when He presented Eve to Adam, and Adam acknowledged that she was “bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.”

Not only did God establish the institution of marriage, His laws revealed to man deal specifically with the *family unit*. Read through the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 again. Notice how many apply either indirectly or directly to *the family*.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Eternal thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the *fathers* upon the *children* unto the third and fourth generation [implying families, generation after generation of them] of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:3-6).

Notice the Fourth Commandment: “Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Eternal thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates...” (Exodus 20:9,10). Again, this commandment presupposes a family unit, with children present; a landowner and provider who is responsible for his wife, children, and employees.

Notice the Fifth Commandment: “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Eternal thy God giveth thee” (Verse 12). Once again, the presupposition is that of a strong *family* unit, with honorable parents in the home; respectful, obedient children who enjoy “long life” as a result of listening to their parent’s instructions, as well as being blessed of God.

The Seventh Commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (verse 14). Adultery is sexual intercourse with someone other than one’s spouse. This law is aimed right at the very heart and core of the institution of marriage, and is intended to *protect and preserve* it. The breaking of this law is at the root of millions of broken homes, wife and child abuse, knock-down, drag-out fights, desertion, divorce—even murder!

Notice the Ninth Commandment: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor” (verse 16). A “neighbor” is presupposed to be another family, living nearby, not merely a single person. Of course, by extension, one’s “neighbor” is any other human being, but the indication here is more of a communal one, as the next commandment proves.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s” (verse 17).

Thus, several of God’s Ten Commandments, which are the very foundation of all of God’s laws, relate directly or indirectly to the institution of marriage.

Christ's Magnification of God's Ten Commandments

In the famous "Sermon on the Mount," Christ *magnified* the Ten Commandments, lifting them to a spiritual plane, showing how the *spirit and intent* of the law applied to every human act and thought.

He said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery:' But I say unto you, that whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her in his heart hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27,28).

Thus, it literally *breaks God's law* for any married person, male or female, to *lust* after someone other than his or her married spouse. James wrote:

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man:

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13,14).

Temptation is one thing, lust another. Temptation occurred to Christ Himself. He was "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Christ could look upon the beauty and desirability of young Jewish women of His day, and experience the momentary *temptations* of the flesh. But He did not dwell on it, did not allow His mind to imagine the sex act with them. He prayed to God, received the strength to *resist* the temptation so that it never grew into *lust*.

Christ showed how God's law not only prohibits *acts* which would destroy a marital relationship, but prohibits *thoughts*, lust, which would essentially do the same thing! Christ applied God's laws in a *spiritual* sense, showing how they apply in every aspect of daily life. Specifically, He urged people to obey God's laws concerning *marriage*, to avoid breaking those laws, to avoid *divorce*!

Does the Bible Allow Divorce for Any Reason?

Shortly after addressing the subject of lust, and how it can break the law against

adultery, Christ addressed divorce: "It hath been said, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:' But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication [Greek, *porneia*, from which "pornography" and similar words are derived] causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced [for reasons other than those covered by *porneia*] committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:31,32).

Again, Christ is expounding God's laws which are set in motion to preserve and protect the institution of marriage.

He says divorce is allowable because of *porneia*, but constantly emphasizes the sanctity of marriage, urges married people to avoid divorce.

"The Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

"And He answered unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

"They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

"He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered [allowed] you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication [Greek, *porneia*], and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:2-9).

Thus, Christ showed there can be exceptional situations where divorce is allowed, but His emphasis was clearly on maintaining the family unit, commanding "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder!"

The Bible reveals only *three* reasons for divorce:

(1) Fraud. If either partner takes marital vows fraudulently; not revealing certain things (such as a false claim of virginity, [Deuteronomy 22:13-21]) which, if revealed, would preclude the marriage, then the Bible views such a “marriage” as never having been bound in the first place—not a real marriage at all. While a civil divorce might ensue, the biblical approach would be that such a marriage was completely fraudulent, and is rendered null and void by the discovery of the fraud. An example would be a marriage where one partner or the other had been homosexual, and, after a time, reverted to such behavior, but the spouse was completely unaware of such characteristics prior to the marriage ceremony.

(2) *Porneia*, which means adultery or fornication, incest, “to act the harlot,” or to “indulge unlawful lust (of either sex), or practice *idolatry*.” Adultery constitutes biblical grounds for divorce, as does homosexuality, child abuse incest, transvestism, voyeurism (indecent exposure, etc.) or any other sexual perversion such as sodomy or bestiality. Christ’s famous “exception clause” in Matthew 19:9 makes it clear that marriages can be dissolved *because of porneia*. This includes *idolatry*, for *porneia* is not limited to sexual aberrations.

(3) Unbelief: paganism, rejection of God’s truth. Paul was inspired to write, “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord [Paul was quoting directly from Christ at this point], Let not the wife depart from her husband.

“But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord [He spoke under divine inspiration; as an apostle, but was not quoting directly from Christ in this instance], If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she *be pleased to dwell with him* [even if she is not a member of God’s church, is not converted, is not a “believer”], let him not put her away.

“And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

“For the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

“But if the unbelieving depart [from the spouse—from the marriage] let him [or her] depart. A brother or a sister is *not under bondage* in such cases: but God hath called us to peace” (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).

The expression “is not under bondage” has been variously interpreted. To some, it appears to imply the believer is not “under bondage” to renounce his or her religion in order to remain with an unbelieving spouse. To others, it infers the believer is “not bound” to remain married with an unbeliever who is “not pleased to dwell” with his or her spouse. In any case, it is obvious that when an unbeliever “departs” he or she is negating the marital vows, and the believer is loosed from the marriage.

Notice it is not the *believer* who precipitates the breaking of the marital bonds, but the *unbeliever*. The believer, bound by God’s laws, must make *every effort* to preserve the marriage. Notice further: “Art thou bound to a wife? Seek *not to be loosed*. Art thou *loosed* from a wife? [have you been previously married, but are now single—“loosed”—as a result of divorce for a biblically approved reason?] seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou has not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned...” (1 Corinthians 7:27,28).

Clearly, there were those who had been “loosed” from a previous marriage, either as a result of fraud (annulment), or *porneia*, or because an unbelieving spouse had deserted the marriage. There were also those who had been divorced, for whatever reasons, before becoming believers. While Paul’s advice was (“for the present distress”, verse 26) that such a person, now loosed from a previous marriage, would be better off to remain single, he clearly says that if such a person remarries, he or she has “not sinned.”

Tragically, some have perverted these Scriptural principals concerning marriage. In some cases, a so-called *believer* has divorced another *believer* simply because his or her spouse was a member of another church organization which believes and teaches essentially the *same thing!* Each shall answer to Christ in the judgment for his *own* decisions.

Are you a person who has been contemplating divorces? If so, have you taken all the steps you ought to take to prevent it? Have either of you sought marriage counseling? Have you prayed together, studied books on marriage and divorce together, sought solutions such as a temporary separation? I urge any person

contemplating divorce to go to a book store and purchase *The Case Against Divorce* by Diane Medved, Ph.d., published by Donald L. Fine, Inc. It explains all the temptations associated with divorce—the lures, the lies, and the “emotional traps of divorce—and the seven vital reasons to stay together.” I highly recommend it.

What does God say about divorce? He says He *hates* it!”For the Eternal, the God of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Eternal of hosts: therefore take, heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously” (Malachi 2: 16).

Dating: Preparation for Marriage

Modern “romance” revolves around the sudden attraction between two members of the opposite sex which happens some night “across a crowded room.” Hundreds of “romantic” songs, novels, movies, TV shows deal with how people “fall in love.”

But it is *impossible* for any human being to “fall” in love. Love is not an *accident*. Love is a deep, outgoing, selfless emotion of concern; a desire to *share, to give*, not to get; to preserve, defend, protect. Love involves sacrifice more than gratification, giving rather than getting, sharing instead of taking.

When the romantic movies and novels deal with what they call “love,” they are in reality dealing with *lust*. A pretty face, a marvelous body, an athletic physique, while attractive to the eye, have nothing to do with character. Some of the most attractive people can be the most egocentric, selfish, spoiled, grasping, greedy, emotional, fiery tempered human beings you will ever meet. Many of your grandparents’ old adages: “Beauty is as beauty does,” or “Beauty is only skin deep,” were right on the mark. *Quality of character* is what is important, not the way the skin happens to be stretched over your face.

In today’s promiscuous world of hedonistic abandon, it is openly discussed on various of the television interview and talk shows how youths of only fourteen are “sexually active.” Young teens freely talk of their attitudes toward whether they believe it is all right to have sex on the first or second “date.”

Decades ago, a concerned father might have warned a young teen-age daughter how boys have “only one thing on their minds,” and cautioned them about rape.

Today, all of society, including the social structures of elementary and junior high schools *assume* “dating” has, as its primary objective, sex. Dating for the purpose of mutual enlightenment—a trip to a theme park, a museum, a library, a documentary film, to one’s parents’ home for dinner—such would elicit yawns of total boredom from millions of youths.

Practically all entertainment, especially the semi-pornographic magazines available in practically any quick stop grocery store, urge young boys to view women as an object of *lust*; just so much meat, to satiate physical appetites. How many millions of girls grow up to *detest* this attitude in young men? Millions of young women desperately want to be loved because of who they are, because of what they believe, their likes and dislikes, their personalities, their hopes and dreams, their goals in life. They want to be loved *for themselves*, not callously taken for granted as an object to satisfy sexual lust.

Of course, it works both ways. Many men are shocked to realize women flock to male strip joints, to tuck dollar bills into the skimpy “G strings” of male dancers especially chosen for their muscular builds and good looks. Men seem to think that voyeurism, lust; gazing on naked women is the private right of men, only. For women to avidly study the centerfolds of *Playgirl* magazine outrages many of them.

All such “entertainment,” all such “literature” is *sin*; it is of Satan, completely evil, and should be shunned as one would shun deadly poison. A mother of three or four; a grandmother who has worked all her life to raise her children, cook for and keep the home for her husband, was not meant to compete with teen-aged models willing to pose stark naked before professional photographers—like a kind of photo session prostitute.

It is because of this avalanche of sexual trash that millions of young people’s values are as twisted as a licorice stick.

Dating *should* be for the purpose of *getting to know* one another, not getting into bed with each other. Whether you want to believe it or not, if all the necessary parameters of mutual likes, hobbies and interests, intellectual curiosity, socioeconomic, political and spiritual values were perfectly compatible, sex *would automatically be mutually enjoyable, satisfactory in every way in marriage!* Sexual compatibility is the result of outgoing concern, tender *giving*, sharing, not in

going *lust*, which is utterly selfish.

Years ago, when I was teaching classes on the subject of Family Relations, I would ask mixed classes of one hundred or so, “How many of you young men would want to marry the town prostitute?” No hands went up.

“How many would like to marry the girl who only went to bed with ten other men?” Same response.

“What about only two or three men?” No hands up.

“How many of you would like to marry a virgin?” All the hands were in the air immediately. Of course, this was a church-related college, and the young people had, in the main, come from church members’ homes. Still, even though one must be willing to forgive a loved one’s past, and one may feel very blessed to marry a person who has had a few sexual experiences in the past, repented of them, and is now in love with a potential spouse, there are millions of people with no church affiliation whatsoever who secretly hope and dream to marry a virgin.

I would ask the women the same questions. I would receive the same response. Each sex wanted to find a mate whose first intimate sexual experiences would be shared in *marriage*.

Today, upwards of eighty-five percent of young males have experienced sexual intercourse prior to marriage, and approximately sixty-five percent of young women.

For every effect, there is a *cause*. It may take *years for* hidden scars to affect one’s marriage, but you may mark down, and never forget, that premarital sexual relations will *seriously scar a marriage*; those who marry after having been promiscuous have seriously diminished their chances of experiencing a truly happy, fulfilling, long-lasting marriage.

God’s Instructions About Marriage

God inspired Peter to write, “Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [conduct] of the wives; While they behold your chaste conduct coupled with fear.

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

“But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

“For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

“Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement” (1 Peter 3:1-6).

To seriously propound such instructions today would result in hoots of derision and scorn from the vast majority of women.

Instantly, it would be pointed out how many husbands are dolts, lazy, gluttons, drunkards, wife-beaters, child molesters, deserters, unfaithful; unable or unwilling to provide for their wives; not worthy of the slightest bit of honor, let alone subjection.”

Unfortunately, there are literally millions of disappointed, frustrated, angry wives and divorcees whose horror stories about their husbands would read like a litany of crime from a desk sergeant’s arrest report. But wait. God’s laws concerning marriage are neither unfair nor unreasonable. If only women could realize God’s laws concerning the woman’s responsibilities in marriage could *save* their marriages; could work to *cause* their husbands to become the kind of husband they might wish!

Notice how Peter brings up the same situation that prevailed in Corinth, where Paul spoke of the believing wife that had a husband that “believed not,” and urged the believer *to keep the marriage together*. Peter says a God-rejecting husband, one guilty of various crimes and sins against God and man, might well be “*won by the conduct of the wives.*”

Poison plus poison does not equal no poison. Two sins do not equal no sin. A husband like one described above does *not automatically* represent an excuse for a wife to disgustedly reject God’s laws regarding *her responsibilities*. If her husband is a sinner, a ne’er do well who will not provide for her, perhaps using

excessive amounts of alcohol, speaking abusively to her, this does not automatically release her from *obeying God's laws of marriage!*

Let's suppose, hypothetically, that a married woman is called into God's truth; repents, is baptized, and becomes a true Christian. Now, she seeks to *obey God* in every aspect of her life. Studying her Bible, she reads passages like that above. Perhaps she studies diligently such passages as Proverbs 31 (please read it thoroughly), and Titus 2.

Because she knows repentance means *change*, she begins *to change* her entire life as it relates to her home, her family, and her husband.

Suppose her husband is astounded by the example she begins to set: He notices she is a much more diligent housekeeper; the beds are neatly made, the floors vacuumed, the closets neat. His clothes are washed, dried and folded in their place. The kitchen is spotless; the bathrooms gleam. He comes home one evening to find the lights low, a couple of candles on the table, which is set with tablecloth and their best dishes and crystal. She has prepared a special roast, and is serving it by candlelight.

Suppose she is completely changed in the manner of her personal hygiene. Her hair is done up beautifully, her clothes are tastefully chosen. She acts like she thought the governor of the state had shown up for dinner.

What would be the response of the average man?

Suppose she sees to his every need, makes him as comfortable as she can, and, later that evening, spontaneously puts her arms around him, tells him how much she loves him,, and kisses him?

One could write a book of such suggestions. Such books *have* been written, of course, as have many articles in women's magazines. Little notes saying "I love you" in hubby's lunch pail; special treats for dinner; planned social events you know he likes—all play their part. Those who believe their sexual relations are not what they should be can find help easily by perusing the many titles available in any large book store and purchasing one or two for careful study. Dozens of articles are published each year aimed at precisely such needs.

But how many people actively pursue such avenues really *look* for help in making

their marriages work? Sadly, too few.

If you are a woman, ask yourself how you would act if a dignitary—say, the President of the United States—were coming to dinner?

What would you be doing for the day or so prior to his visits? What would your home look like? What kind of dishes would you prepare? How would it be served?

Of course, one might say, “Oh, sure. But this is only my *husband* we’re talking about.” Christ said it perfectly: “A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house” (Mark 6:4).

Familiarity does, unfortunately, breed contempt.

Peter’s reference to Sarah calling Abraham “lord” does not presuppose the use of any such titles today. Nor does it require wives to call their husbands “Mister.” But “dear” or “honey” goes a longer way toward happy marriages than “dinner’s ready,” (with a whisper behind the hand, “you jerk!”).

God’s Word strongly implies that any husband whose wife begins treating him like she might if he were *Jesus Christ Himself* would be completely *won over* by the wife! Talk about melting hard hearts, about causing a man to feel shame for his own shortcomings—such conduct on the part of a wife would almost *guarantee* wonderful results.

Almost.

Unfortunately, there are some men who would only become *more* abusive as a wife becomes more compliant. In such cases, it is important for the “believer,” in this case the wife, to *obey God* in all particulars regarding the marriage *first*. Her husband’s doltish behavior does *not negate her responsibility before God*.

This is not to imply the wife has no further options if, even after she has gone the extra mile, her husband is still unmoved by her example. If he is unfaithful, guilty of *porneia*, then she has the option of divorce. If he is a dedicated unbeliever, and is *not pleased to dwell with her*, she need not remain bound in such a miserable relationship. However, God says he *hates divorce*, and it is far better to *save the marriage* if it is at all possible.

Now, notice what the Bible says about the husband’s responsibilities: “Likewise

ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge [with wise consideration], giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life [partners together, sharing God's precious gift of human life]; that your prayers be not hindered [because marital strife is only possible where prayer has been neglected]" (1 Peter 3:7).

Paul wrote, "Husbands, love your wives, even as [in the same manner as] Christ also loved the church, and I gave Himself for it;

"That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word [metaphor for baptism and conversion],

"That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle [like a beautiful bride, virginal, chaste], or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Ephesians 5:25-30).

Just as the wife is told she should reverence and love her husband as if "unto the Lord," so the husband is told he should love his wife as Christ loves the church.

How does Christ love His church? First, it is called "the body of Christ." As Paul wrote, no man hates his own flesh (Ephesians 5:29). Christ so *loves* His church that He gave His back to be lashed to ribbons; gave His body to be smitten, kicked, beaten; a crown of thorns jammed down upon His head, ripping His scalp; a spear thrust in His side; cruel spikes driven through His hands and feet—He *died for* His church!

God's instructions toward husbands show that a man should so tenderly love, revere and honor his wife that he makes a sacrifice of his life for her! By becoming her protector, her provider, her life's partner, her only lover—he devotes his *life* to her, sharing the "gracious gift of life."

Any woman so loved would be moved to reciprocate.

Today, millions of men treat their wives with disrespect, even contempt. Many speak of "my old lady" (when they are perhaps in their twenties or thirties), or use slang, profanity, crude nicknames.

To countless husbands, their wives are objects to satisfy sexual lust from time to time, and little else. How many wives could tell you how their husbands “take them for granted,” treat them as they might a chattel, an employee?

But a marriage is like an herb garden, waiting to be tenderly cultivated, groomed, and harvested; like a masterpiece of a painting, waiting to be completed. Any husband who treats his wife with the utmost *respect*; who tenderly *honors* her; who uses only terms of endearment toward her; who provides for her, protects her, continually shows her how much she means to him, will be very pleasantly surprised at how she reciprocates!

Think for a moment of God’s laws regarding the responsibilities of each partner in marriage. Marriage is *not a* “fifty-fifty proposition.” Too many people wait on their spouses to measure up to their idea of what is required. The concept of half and half implies one goes only to the point of one’s “half” of the marital obligations, and then impatiently, angrily, demands the spouse measure up by accomplishing the other half.

But if *either* partner applies God’s laws of marriage, as seen above, *one hundred percent*, without waiting for the other partner to “measure up” in any way, there is a great deal of room for overlap! If both were to *give* one hundred percent effort to the marriage, there would be enormous room for overlap!

In other words, there would be a virtual *guarantee* of a truly *happy*, fulfilling, rewarding, exciting, wondrous marriage—one which would *last* for a lifetime!

Modern Marriage: Upside Down

We’ve all heard it: “My wife and I only argue about the really big issues. We’ve been married twenty-five years now, and a big issue has never come up,” or, “I make all big decisions, and my wife makes all the little ones. We’ve never faced a big decision yet.”

Dozens of adages characterize marriages which jokingly acknowledge that the husband has abrogated his responsibilities, that the wife is in charge. God says, “For the husband is the head of the wife, *even as Christ is the Head of the church*: and He is Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:23,24).

Paul wrote, “The aged women ... [should] ... teach the young women to be sober [wise], to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5).

In a marriage characterized by the examples listed above, there would be little room for acrimony, for violent disagreement, and loud arguments.

Today, however, millions of marriages are in a shambles. Millions of couples are away from the home—both parents working, children farmed out to expensive day care centers, or with baby sitters or grandparents. America’s sagging economy has slipped so badly that even though both parents work, it is still barely enough to get by; millions cannot afford a home.

Once God’s laws have been cast aside, once the woman has abandoned her God-ordained role in life, and entered the work place, unusual and unnecessary stresses are placed on the marriage. Jobs and salaries are in comparison. Women’s lib, and feminist considerations enter in. Is she working just as hard, perhaps longer hours, and paid less?

Job relationships enter in. Is she attractive? Do other workers make passes at her? Is she sexually harassed on the job? Is he attracted to other women he meets where he works?

God prophesied through Isaiah: “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths ... moreover the Eternal saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet [an ancient custom was to wear tiny bells on the feet]: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Eternal will discover their secret parts.

“In that day [The Tribulation and the Day of the Lord] the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their [various pieces of personal decoration and jewelry] ... and it shall come to pass that instead of a sweet smell there shall be a stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

“Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

“And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground” (Isaiah 3:12 -26). Here, the “daughters of Zion” picture the whole of Israel. God uses, by analogy, the decadent state of women to depict the character of the nation, and prophesies national punishment in warfare—the Great Tribulation.

God says: “And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, ‘We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.’ “In that day shall the Branch [Christ] of the Eternal be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel” (Isaiah 4:1,2).

Take a close look at the covers of a dozen women’s magazines sometime. Look at the ads inside, and compare them carefully with the lengthy description of the “daughters of Zion” in Isaiah 3. Study the eye shadow ads, the lipstick ads, the perfume ads, the ads for under garments, facial creams, beauty aids of all kinds. Think about it.

On the positive side, there are dozens of articles which are aimed at women in the home; recipes, decorating ideas; articles mentioned earlier which are written by marriage counselors, aimed at troubled marriages.

In the main, however, as the Virginia Slims cigarette ad says, “You’ve come a long way, Baby.” A long way *down*; a long way *away* from God’s laws; a long way toward marital unhappiness, frustration, disappointment, unhappiness, and divorce!

Who is ultimately held *responsible* because “children are their oppressors, and women rule over them”? Men. Think about what you have read concerning God’s laws of marriage. Laws which command women to be “obedient to their own husbands,” and “keepers at home.” You and I both know that such assertions, publicly preached from pulpits today, would be met with hoots of derision and scorn from millions of women.

Why? Because so few men *are worthy of being over their families*; because so few men are *worth the effort*.

Long since, the word “obey” was taken out of the wedding ceremony. “Till death do us part” has been replaced by “I’ll take the house; you get to keep the car.”

Like it or not, accept it or not, marriage is a microcosm of God’s Kingdom. Whether or not we will *be* in God’s Kingdom depends very substantially on the *kind of home life* we maintain!

You Need God in Your Marriage

There never has been a perfect marriage—not in the Garden of Eden, not between David and a single one of his wives, not in the age of the Puritans, not in or out of any church.

This side of the Millennium—and likely not even then, there *never will* be! Does your marriage fall short? Probably. But by obeying God’s laws, marriage can be infinitely better, happier, than by paying the penalties when those laws are broken.

When troubles come, how do you cope?

When arguments ensue, how do you solve them?

If God is a part of your marriage, there is a way which is *so simple, so effective*, that it seems elementary. If God *is not* a part of your marriage, then the way to solve family troubles is to *invite Him into your life, into your home!*

God says “...the carnal mind [fleshly, physical—apart from God’s Spirit] is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7).

The human mind, apart from God’s Holy Spirit, is filled with vanity, jealousy, lust and greed. It is inordinately egocentric, grasping, haughty, imperious, scornful, combative, disdainful, self-centered.

When two people who fell “in lust” with each other (before he became a slovenly pig in a soiled T-shirt with a two-day stubble on his face, burping beer in front of a football game on TV; before she put on forty pounds, developed a muddy complexion, and started wandering around the house in hair curlers and a ragged terry cloth robe) suddenly look around and realize they have little in common, a wretched home life is the result.

Without *God* in their life, without God's laws of marriage being fully understood and *obeyed*, they have little or nothing in common. A sure formula for divorce is "two carnal people, by dawn's early light—too much in lust to say goodnight."

What goes wrong? How do so many marriages fall apart?

A frustrated wife might say, "I don't know what's gotten into George. When we were first married, he was romantic, attentive; he would bring me flowers, leave me little notes in the refrigerator. He was on time for dinner, and would buy me gifts. Now that we've been married fifteen years, and have two growing children, all the romance is gone. He even forgot our anniversary last year. We almost never talk. He gets home exhausted, takes his dinner in to eat it in front of TV, and then goes to bed in a couple of hours. And we fight. Every time I bring up something, he seems to react angrily."

A frustrated husband might say, "Blanche has turned into a harridan. When we were first married, she was loving, sweet—a lot of romance; fun and games. She would pin notes inside my jacket, have cards delivered to me at the office—you know, saying she loved me an' stuff. But after the kids came along, she acts like she's bored and tired all the time. We have almost no social life. When I come home, she hits me with stuff like how the refrigerator went on the blink, or one of the kids got in a fight, or the goldfish died. Then, she gets in my face and chews me out for being uncaring when I don't seem to show her the interest she wants. Lately, we've been yelling at each other a lot."

Sound familiar?

Marriage counselors will recognize elements in each hypothetical case that are present in practically all of their counseling sessions—usually, sessions with married women in their thirties and forties.

Because of ignorance of God's laws regarding marital relationships, because *carnality*, millions of selfish human beings find the first flush of romance slowly dying; find that the harsh realities of struggling to make ends meet, dealing with in-laws, children, a bad environment, sickness; an endless series of frustrations, failures and disappointments, contrive to strangle the last vestiges of romance. One day, they wake up to realize their marriage is empty, boring, unfulfilling.

How Not to Solve Family Arguments

Here are several formulas which are guaranteed *not to work* in your marriage, formulas for failure:

(1) Be sure to *place the blame* on your spouse for every problem. Make sure, in your most acidic, hateful tone, he or *she understands* that you hold your spouse responsible for the current situation. Pontificate. Show him or her you are perfectly unassailable, that you are totally innocent. *He* or *she* is wholly in the wrong.

(2) Clam up. Give your spouse the “silent treatment.”

After a period of time (perhaps months, or years, or a lifetime, depending on how stubborn your mate really is), the other will relent, and admit it is really his or her fault.

(3) Call your spouse names. Get ugly. Use four letter words; sound like a mule skinner cursing out a mule. This will contribute to the tender, loving environment you really want. Also, it will surprise you what an elaborate vocabulary your spouse really has. Be sure to say these things in front of the kids, so they can grow up using them.

(4) Always use the word “always,” or “never.” Like, “You *always* embarrass me...” or, “You *never* do anything for me.” This will guarantee instant agreement. Your spouse will immediately agree he or she *invariably* acts the way you insist.

(5) Play a role from the latest movie, or novel you’ve read. Be petulant, or withdrawn, or play hurt. Act out a role—that way, your spouse will be sure to fulfill your fantasies. You imagine he or she will wonder, “I wonder what I’ve done wrong now?” and be moved to find out, and repent. They will ask, “What have I done to hurt you, dear?” Then, they will dissolve in heart-broken repentance, and do better.

(6) Withhold sex. Resist every intimacy. Turn a cold shoulder. Kick your spouse away from you in bed, even if he or she should accidentally touch you. Tell them to “get over,” and say, “Don’t touch my body with your body!” That way, you will be sure your spouse will eventually get so wound up, and so deprived, he or she will repent in a flood of tears, and confess what a jerk, or a harridan, he or she

has become.

(7) Resort to physical abuse. That way, the neighbors will call the police, or the wife can sue, and the children will run next door screaming, "Daddy is killing Mommy!" Also, the wife can display her black eyes and cut lips for the newspaper photographers, and the negatives will be impounded by the court when your trial for assault comes up.

(8) Develop bad habits. Take up smoking, drinking, and/or drugs, or all three. See how far you can degenerate. That will "show" the spouse how much you really love her or him; he or she will get the obvious message that you are really only doing these things out of frustration; to get his or her attention. It will show your spouse that what you really want is love, kindness, consideration, respect, and honor.

(9) Start staying out late. Never tell your spouse where you are going, where you were, or who you were with. Keep him or her guessing. This will make your spouse jealous, and he or she will realize it's time to shape up.

(10) See a lawyer about a divorce. If you are doing all the above, it is a sure thing you're going to need one.

Of course, any such tactics are a hateful violation of God's laws, and guaranteed to make a bad situation even worse. Yet, such tactics are resorted to by millions of people on a daily basis.

When you want him or her to change, do you resort to abusive language, indictments, accusations? Do you use words for clubs, hitting the other over the head with plenty of verbal blows?

Why not sit down, and calmly ask yourself, "What *result* do I seek?" If the result is one of peacemaking, one of rekindling love, consideration, respect and honor, then why not *show* love, respect, and honor? Does the average person react lovingly to verbal abuse?

How to Solve Family Arguments

If you really want to *solve* family problems, then *invite God into your family life*. Turn to God's Word in contrition and humility, and *study it*.

Find out what repentance is; what sin is, and follow God's miraculous formula for overcoming hateful, despicable carnality. Change from vanity, jealousy, lust and greed; from egocentric, hateful contempt to the qualities of God's Holy Spirit.

God says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness [both physical and moral], lasciviousness [lawlessness], "idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, "envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I told you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, "meekness, temperance: against such there is no law..." (Galatians 5:19-23).

What a contrast! Any couple conducting their marriage with "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, etc." is pursuing a formula which *guarantees* success!

Study the beautiful "love" chapter of 1 Corinthians 13. Here, the Greek word *agape*, which is rendered "charity," is better understood by our English word "love."

Paul wrote, "Love suffers long, and is kind; love does not envy; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

"Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not its own way, is not easily provoked, does not immediately leap to wrong conclusions, thinking evil;

"Does not rejoice in sin and lawlessness, but rejoices in the truth;

"Endures and desires to cover all things, believes the best, hopes for the best..." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, paraphrased).

A person in whom dwells the Holy Spirit of God, which is the mind of Jesus Christ, will not use the terribly sinful, abusive and abrasive tactics listed in the previous section.

Instead, he or she will be *living* by God's instructions involving marriage, exemplifying the attributes of God's Holy Spirit as shown in the scriptures we have just read.

Want to solve a family argument? Then approach your spouse with love and humility. Recognize and humbly acknowledge your own faults and shortcomings. Choose the right time, the right place, and use the right *manner in* presenting the problem you hope to solve.

First, *pray* about it. Pray on your knees, by yourself, not only for the wisdom and the guidance you will need in presenting the problem to your mate, but also asking God, as did David, to “search me and try me, and see if there be any evil thing in me,” acknowledging and confessing your *own* faults and sins!

Then, if your spouse is willing, get on your knees *together*, and take the entire problem to Almighty God *in prayer*!

The prayer should *begin* with the acknowledgment of one’s own shortcomings; a prayer for forgiveness for various oversights, bad attitudes, harsh words, or whatever has contributed to the problem that is currently troubling your marriage. After acknowledging one’s own faults and sins, the person leading in prayer should ask for God’s direct intervention in the marriage, citing several of the scriptures you have read in this booklet, asking God to help *each partner* to use, as a daily guide; to literally *live by* God’s instructions!

What wife would not be moved to tears if her husband, contritely and humbly, perhaps with tears in his own eyes, is asking God to forgive him for having failed to treat his wife with the same tender love, care and honor that Jesus Christ has bestowed upon His church? What husband could remain unmoved if his wife is asking God’s forgiveness for having failed to treat her husband as if he were the Lord Jesus Christ Himself?

A truly *converted* person should be fully equipped to successfully solve family difficulties, problems, arguments as they arise. But *only* by inviting God into your family life!

It is because you live in a Godless, sin-sick, decadent society of carnal-minded, self-seeking people who are daily *violating* God’s laws that you see the wretchedness of divorce, wife beating, child abuse, and even *murder* that characterizes so much of society today!

This brief booklet cannot begin to claim to be the “last word” on how to have a happy marriage. The yellow pages of your telephone book probably list a large

number of marriage counselors, and many of them are well qualified to help. The shelves in a large book store in practically any city of any size contain many titles dealing with troubled marriages. A few I can heartily recommend are *Marriage and Sexuality (Vol. 1)*; *Doctor Dobson Answers Your Questions*; and *False Love and Other Romantic Illusions (Why Love Goes Wrong and How to Make it Right)* by Dr. Stan J. Katz and Aimee Liu, published by Pocketbooks.

There are many, many others.

But the best book of all and the one which I recommend the most, is the Holy Word of Almighty God—the Bible.

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