

22. WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR MARRIAGE AND THE HOME?

LET THE SCRIPTURES ANSWER

Part 1

SOME ADVICE AND COUNSEL WE ALL NEED IN PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE— AND COUNSEL WE NEED TO PASS ON BOTH BY WORD AND EXAMPLE

INTRODUCTION

Marriage can be a vestibule to heaven. Where two godly people take the Lord into their marriage, there can be companionship, help, comfort, support, joy, happiness, fulfillment and a host of other blessings. In the following passages and others, one can read of the superlatives that can go with marriage: Genesis 2:18, 21-25; Proverbs 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 31:12; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:7. But on the other hand, without taking the Lord into one's life and plans, marriage can be almost a hell on earth. The following passages address what can be the negative side of marriage: Proverbs 17:1; 21:9; 21:19; 25:24; Matthew 19:9-10; etc.

Teaching God's law on marriage cost John the Baptist his life (Mark 6:17-18). The apostles understood our Lord's teaching on marriage to be very strict (Matthew 19:10) and such is reflected in both the teachings of Christ and the apostles. Most marriages today may begin with "Once upon a time" but they are not ending with "and they lived happily ever after." Most people are needing Biblical teaching and preparation for marriage that they are neither getting nor making.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

1. The Divine Factor. Seek God's help.

Like Hannah (1 Samuel 1:9-11) and Manoah (Judges 13:8), parents should start praying about their children before they are ever conceived, as well as after, and those prayers should also include those their children will someday choose to marry. Continually ask for God's help in raising the child. Pray that the child may be raised to love the Lord and seek first His kingdom. Pray that the child may be reared with a spiritual foundation that will someday insure the happiness and success of his or her marriage.

2. The Spiritual Factor. God's people should marry in the Lord. In the Old Testament, believers were commanded to marry believers,

and in the New, marriage is to be only in the Lord (Gen. 6:1-2, 4; Deut. 7:1-4; Ezra 9:1-4, 12-15; 10:1-5, 9-13, 44; Nehemiah 13:23-27; 1 Cor. 7:39; 9:5; 2 Cor. 6:14-16; cf. 2 John 9-11). In preparing for marriage, Christians should always ask, "What is God's will for our relationship, marriage, and home?" And do we enjoy Bible Study and prayer together as well as assembling with God's people regularly and doing things together that God's people are to be involved in? Marriage is hard enough where husband and wife are of the same faith, but for a believer to enter into a life long relationship with an unbeliever is an invitation to hardship and a lot of unhappiness along the way. Cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18

3. The Purity Factor. Preparation involves keeping one's self a virgin in youth for one's companion for life (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:9-10, 15-20). Should the golden rule of Christ not apply here?

4. The Provision Factor. Preparation for marriage involves preparing to provide for a family. A young man should prepare himself to support a wife and family before he allows himself to be bitten by "the love bug". So many marriages fail because of financial stress when couples fall in love and marry too soon before they are able to provide for themselves. Remember the following:

1 Timothy 5

8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

And today, providing for one's own includes many things from giving to the Lord, to groceries, to clothing, to housing to utilities, to furnishings, to transportation, to insurance, to health care, to taxes, to education, to repairs, to tools, etc., etc. So can you live together and pay all your bills on the available income?

5. The Responsibility Factor. Preparation for marriage demands looking ahead and giving consideration to who is going to be responsible for doing what. To ignore this is to invite disaster. For example, if and when children arrive, who will be responsible for walking the floor with them at all hours of the night, changing dirty

diapers, taking care of their feeding, etc., etc. So who is willing to do what to help make the marriage work? And is there enough maturity and responsibility to live within available income and to honestly pay back all debts and financial obligations incurred?

6. The Love Factor. Is the romance built on lust or love? A romance built on little more than puppy love can lead to a dog's life. *In marriage, regardless of how hot and steamy the relationship is at first, the passion may lessen with time and there better be something else to take its place.* How well do you communicate with each other? How great is your enjoyment in doing spiritual things together? How strong is your love for the other and does it meet the criteria of John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 and Ephesians 5:25-33? On the other hand, is there respect for 1 Corinthians 7:2-5? Can you keep yourself to your spouse and your spouse alone as long as you both shall live?

7. The "Looks" Factor. Outward looks certainly is not everything. There is the beauty of the heart that is far more important. But unless you are blind, if you are going to be looking at each other across the kitchen table for the rest of your life, have you selected a mate that is attractive to you and that will help you resist the urge to think the "grass is greener on the other side of the fence"? cf. Prov. 5:15-21

8. The Personality Factor. How attractive is your prospective mate's personality to you and vice versa? While some personality types attract, others can repel and put a marriage relationship on collision course. How flexible and adaptable are you to change? This is a very important factor that takes time to explore and is one of many reasons why marriage should not be rushed into.

9. The Maturity Factor. Marriage is for people who are mature, stable and will keep their commitments. Being self-willed and demanding to always have our own way reflects immaturity. Young people who have not put away childish things, who do not know who they are, or what they want to do in life, who are not responsible and who are not mature enough to take God into their plans—are simply not mature enough to take on the responsibilities that go with marriage.

10. The Stress Factor. How compatible are you under stress and when your mood swings

from sweet to sour? Can you handle each other's temper if and when it flares? How will you treat each other when you are angry? Will your relationship be able to survive the failures, discouragement and disappointments that can come your way?

9. The Children Factor. What are the attitudes of your spouse toward having children? If your spouse is not a Christian, in what religious background will the children be raised? Will this be pleasing to God? Will this make for harmony or friction in your relationship?

10. The In-law Factor. How well do you get along with your prospective in-laws? No, you are not marrying them, but they can have a bearing on the happiness of your marriage or the lack thereof. Will your prospective spouse respect your right and responsibility to see your loved ones when you desire and vice versa?

11. The Economic Factor. Can you share in the accumulation, use and distribution of money? Will money be looked upon as yours, mine or ours? Who will control the purse-strings?

12. The Recreational and Leisure Time Factor. How will it be spent and with who? Will alcohol, drugs or dangerous activity be involved? Will it make for a compatible or incompatible relationship—and what about one's relationship with the Lord?

13. The Geographical Factor. Where will you live and in what kind of environment? What kind of accommodations will you be living in? What is okay with one may not be with the other.

14. The Vow and Covenant Factor. Vows and covenant are made in marriage and the breaking of either is a most serious thing in the eyes of God (Numbers 20:2-4; Eccles. 5:4-6; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2; etc.). *"Do you promise to love and to cherish, do you take your companion for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, do you promise to stand by him/her in sickness and in health, through good times and bad, and do you promise to keep yourself to this one and this one alone so long as you both shall live?"* This, if it is to be of any value, must be tied to the covenant of faithfulness one makes with the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Read Joshua 24:14-15; Psalm 127:1

Part 2

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL FOR MARRIAGE?

What is the purpose of marriage? What is God's will concerning husband-wife relationships? How long is the marriage bond to last? What dissolves the marriage relationship? What is God's will regarding separation, divorce, remarriage, and adultery? What are the consequences of adultery and fornication? Are some, such as church leaders, forbidden to marry? Are bishops (elders) and deacons to be married or unmarried? Were Christ's apostles permitted to be married? May a Christian marry a non-Christian? And, will marriage continue after the resurrection? These are some questions to be considered as we "Let the Scriptures Answer".

1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE?

Genesis 2

18 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

Genesis 1

27 So God created man in His own image; ...male and female He created them.

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it..."

Ephesians 2

10 ...we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

1 Corinthians 7

2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

8 But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: it is good for them if they remain even as I am;

9 but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. *—the apostle Paul*

2. WHAT IS GOD'S WILL REGARDING HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIPS?

Malachi 2

14 ...the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you

have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

15 But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

16 "For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," says the Lord of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

1 Corinthians 11

3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Ephesians 5

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

1 Corinthians 13

4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; ...does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Ephesians 4

32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 3

18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

1 Timothy 5

8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

14 Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Titus 2

4 ...admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

1 Corinthians 7

3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

1 Peter 3

1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,

2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

3. HOW LONG IS THE MARRIAGE BOND TO LAST?

Matthew 19

4 "...He who made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

4. WHAT DISSOLVES THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP?

Matthew 19

9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

Romans 7

2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

5. ARE SOME, SUCH AS CHURCH LEADERS, FORBIDDEN TO MARRY?

1 Timothy 4

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

Hebrews 13

4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

6. ARE BISHOPS (ELDERS) AND DEACONS TO BE MARRIED OR UNMARRIED?

1 Timothy 3

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;

12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. cf. Titus 1:5-6

7. WERE CHRIST'S APOSTLES PERMITTED TO BE MARRIED?

1 Corinthians 9

5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas (*Peter*)?

Matthew 8

14 Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. [*Note: Peter was an apostle.*]

8. MAY A CHRISTIAN MARRY A NON-CHRISTIAN?

Matthew 6

33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..."

Amos 3

3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

2 Corinthians 6

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

2 John

9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;

11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

1 Corinthians 7

39 A wife is bound by law as long as her

husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. (*Note : In the Old Testament times the Israelites were forbidden to marry unbelievers: Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Joshua 23:12-13; 1 Kings 11:1-4; Ezra 10:2-3, 10-44; Nehemiah 13:23-27.*)

Part 3

1. WHAT IS GOD'S LAW REGARDING SEPARATION, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND ADULTERY?

Matthew 5

31 "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

32 "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

Mark 10

6 "But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.

7 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,

8 and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.

9 Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

11 ...Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.

12 And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Luke 16

18 "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.

Mark 6

17 For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.

18 For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Romans 7

3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free

from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

1 Corinthians 7

10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.

11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

Matthew 5

27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

2. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF ADULTERY AND FORNICATION?

Hebrews 13

4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

1 Corinthians 6

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness,

lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

3. VOWS ARE MADE IN MARRIAGE. WHAT IS GOD'S LAW REGARDING VOWS, AND WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF LYING?

Numbers 30

2 If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

3 Or if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by some agreement while in her father's house in her youth,

4 and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand.

Ecclesiastes 5

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed --

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?

Revelation 21

8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

4. WHAT ARE SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS FOR REMARRIAGE?

1 Corinthians 7

39 A wife is bound by law as long as her

husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

5. WILL MARRIAGE CONTINUE AFTER THE RESURRECTION?

Mark 12

25 “For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.” –*Jesus Christ*

--David W. Echols Sr.