

The Christian Marriage

I do not expect that this will agree with the philosophy of *Playboy Magazine*. I do not expect that this teaching will agree with what the world says—because the information the world receives doesn't often come from God or His Word. But for those people who want to hear the truth of God's Word, it is our opportunity and our joy to present it to them. Then if they want to believe and obey it, wonderful. We know from experience that the only thing that ever lives and that really works is that which is built upon the reality of God's wonderful Word.

Now Genesis 2:7 says, "And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The Lord God formed man. When God formed man, He knew what He was doing. It seems to me if God was not satisfied with how He formed man, He should have re-formed him or done something else to get man to the place that He was satisfied with His own handiwork.

God made man as He desired. Now it's our job to find out why God did it; we need to go to the Word to see what God really said man was all about, what woman was all about, and then to get our lives lined up with what the Word says. We shouldn't expect God to get lined up with what V.P. Wierwille or somebody else might want to think. But V.P. Wierwille and everyone else must line themselves up with what the Word says as to why God formed man and woman.

Verse 15 of this same second chapter of Genesis says, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." So the Lord God not only formed man and woman, Adam and Eve, but man and woman were given a very definite responsibility.

God said He put man in the garden to dress and to do what? Where did we ever get the idea that Adam and Eve had nothing to do in the Garden of Eden? Some have called the Garden a utopia, a place where there's nothing to do. Oh, my goodness. When God formed Adam and Eve He put them in the Garden of Eden and He said, "Look, Adam, go to work." Adam said, "Come on, Eve. Let's get busy dressing and keeping the Garden productive." Adam and Eve had to work in the Garden of Eden.

Now if the government says "no work," that's its privilege. But that's not the law of the order of the Christian man and woman in the plan of God in our world. God planned for people to work. My Bible says that if you don't work, you don't eat. God planned for man to do something, not sit around and idly waggle his tongue. Again, God had a purpose for setting up certain guidelines. Besides, a person never feels quite so good as when he or she can work. It's a wonderful joy, people, and it's a privilege to be able to work—to have strength and health and life so we can work. The time to complain is when a person is sick or crippled and cannot work. Then a person would have something to complain about. But to be able to work is a wonderful privilege.

We have adults in the Ministry who are in business who work in shops, in factories, on farms, in the homes. They know it's a privilege to work, living the greatness of God in their lives. All I need to hear to make my skin crawl is for a believing woman to tell me that she is "*just* a housewife." When I hear that, I'm bothered. Just a housewife?! That's a disgrace. No woman of God is *just* a housewife. That kind of teaching in our country has pulled out from underneath us some of our very roots. That women think they're slaves just because they have to wash the dishes or clean the floors or keep the house in order. I should say not. You're wonderful women of God and you've got a tremendous opportunity. You're not "just a housewife." You're a Woman of God with a ministry, a mission, a purpose in life.

Look at Genesis 2:18. Did the Lord God say, “It’s real good for man to be alone”? He said, “*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*” A help meet, or helpmate, is a companion. The word “companion” means “one who works alongside.” That’s what it says. I can’t improve on that. God said He would make man a helpmate, a companion. She’s not “just a housewife.” She’s a companion, one standing alongside of—not one standing underneath, not one that’s a slave to her husband.

Notice also that God gave man a *woman* as a companion. He didn’t design another man for Adam. He didn’t form men for men and women for women. Where did we ever get that idea? You get it from the type of culture which Satan is trying to promote that everybody who is an adult has the right of consent as to what “is right for them.” But this isn’t what God’s Word declares. The Word of God teaches that man was made for woman and woman was made for man. And if you don’t like it, you ought to call up the Management and complain to Him. He’s the one that set up the pattern.

Verse 21 of that great second chapter of Genesis says, “And the Lord 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 from behind the rib “which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her [the woman] unto man.” And that is how man received the companion. That’s how he is complemented.

Generally a man is happiest when he has a woman that will stand with him, someone that is a companion to him. It’s the woman who brings out the best there is in her companion. The thirty-first chapter of Proverbs talks about the beauty of a woman. She is blessed because her husband sits in the gate of the elders. She’s blessed because her husband is a success. And every time he succeeds, she succeeds. It is she who really controls the heart stream, not only of the man, but of the whole family. Yet the man is to be the head in that family—not to lord it over the wife, but to be the leader, the one who sets the example, the one who says, “Look, Honey, this is what will bless our family.” The husband doesn’t sit down at the table and say, “Well, Mom, you ask one of the kids to pray,” because Dad doesn’t know how to pray or he’s ashamed to pray. The father sits down at the family table and he prays. At another time the father may say, “Johnny, I want you to pray” or “Maggie, I want you to pray.” It’s the father that puts that spiritual depth in his family.

Now, God made Eve as a companion. That means that woman’s primary responsibility to man is companionship. At no place in the Word of God does it say that a wife is just a childbearing machine. That is a denominational teaching in order to increase the number of church members. That’s all. To have a child in a family is a blessing. But that isn’t the primary purpose of marriage. The primary purpose of it is companionship: someone you can talk to, someone who understands you, someone who endeavors to love you, someone to pursue goals with. I tell all of our young people (not tell it in the sense they have to, but I advise our young people) not to have any children for two or three years after getting married. Even if you’re thirty when you get married, you can still have babies at thirty-three. It says so in the Book.

One of the reasons I advise our newly-weds to wait a while before having children has to do with our American culture. In Biblical times a newly-married couple went on a honeymoon of a year’s duration. During that year they accepted no invitations from anybody except the immediate family on both sides. The couple could then learn to live with each other. And they learned to get along with the in-laws. That’s not too bad an idea.

In our current culture, people get engaged today, married tomorrow, and the following morning each one goes to separate jobs. She goes to work at four in the afternoon to twelve at night; he goes from eight in the morning till four in the afternoon. And so two people live together for twenty years, have three children, and still don’t know anything about each other. Isn’t that something? That’s why I say to our couples that they should learn to live with each other. If a child comes in the first year of marriage, a

challenge arises to bring that marriage together. It offers a further opportunity to build that companionship. I think all of us know many families who have children, but lack that companionship. And in that companionship is the sweetness of the walk.

So the first requirement of a marriage is companionship. And if you're going to have companionship, you've got to be able to talk. The husband can't say something and the wife immediately get angry; or the wife can't say something and the husband get upset and walk out of the house. You've got to have talking sessions. You have to be able to sit down and talk things over. If you don't have time or if you don't take time to communicate, you just cannot put a Christian family together. Exactly what do a husband and wife learn sitting in front of a television all night watching an outer space movie or a political convention? How do a husband and wife learn to communicate if they sit and watch some actor on the tube even if eight men die with a six shooter! What does one learn? It would be better for a couple to sit down and hold hands and look at each other's beautiful eyes and simply say, "Honey, I think you're the sweetest person." At least that would get a reaction and it wouldn't be the TV causing it. You see, you've got to have time to talk. You have to have time to relate one to another.

Another dimension that needs to be emphasized in a Christian marriage is the awareness of each other's presence. It's knowing that the other is nearby. Sometimes the husband is aware that the wife is in the kitchen while he's in the garage or something. Just to be aware of her presence gives a husband pleasure. Whether you talk all the time, that's not what I'm talking about. It's just knowing the other is nearby. That's why a husband can't call "the boys" every night and say, "Hey John, let's go bowling." Tomorrow night, "Hey, Herman, let's go bowling." When you get married, you aren't marrying the guy you've been bowling with. In a Christian family you got married to your spouse and should spend time building and maintaining that relationship.

I'll tell you one more thing. You don't marry the in-laws. That's why the scripture says in Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." You don't become one flesh the night you first have sexual relations. "One flesh" means to bring two individuals with different minds, different backgrounds different mothers and fathers, into a companionship where those two mold their lives together so they become one. Somebody said that marriage would be much easier if it were like the old wagon, just one tongue. Sorry; there happens to be two tongues. Hers and his. Spouses can't become one flesh and be molded together unless they want to be. If the wife says, "I'll do it my way" and the husband says, "I'll do it my way," you might as well call the attorney now or pay him before you ever get married because for sure you'll be seeing him.

Genesis 2:24 says that a man has to leave father and mother. And, Dad and Mom, let him go! You made it when you got married. I think maybe your son and his bride can make it too if you just quit breathing down their necks.

When a boy and a girl get married, they ought to move out of Dad and Mom's house. To live with the parents and to work out of there, that's not the family way to do it. A married man and woman have a right to make their own life and their own decisions and grow together in one flesh. And if they live with parents, this will be an extra challenge because the Word says that they're to leave father and mother.

Furthermore, in-laws should stay out of family arguments. If the new wife can't burn the toast correctly, let her learn. Mother or mother-in-law doesn't have to go over and burn the toast. Look, if you have to teach her how to burn the toast after she's married, what kind of mother were you before she got married? You mean to tell me you didn't teach her anything before she's married, but now after she's married you want to go over and run the family?! Let those young people work it out. And the first time the young wife calls and says, "We're not getting along so good," you say, "Look, Honey, burn your own toast."

That's right. There will indeed be challenges because there are two heads in a marriage, and two tongues. And to build a life together takes the renewed mind with the love of God, putting God first.

Without putting God first and having a rule book to go by, a marriage can never be put together. People will stay together for convenience sake. It costs less to stay together than it does to pay alimony. Or they'll stay together because somebody said that it would be better for the children's sake. Wrong. A true marriage has to be built on God's Word.

In the Christian family God comes first for both the husband and the wife. It's God's will that the husband and the wife have God first and follow God. Now if a husband doesn't renew his mind to God's Word or if a wife doesn't renew her mind to that Word, then what does the husband do? He still has the responsibility of putting who first? God. If the husband doesn't renew his mind and walk on the Word, the wife still has the responsibility of putting who first? God. That's right! That's the order. God first. Luke 10:27 clearly teaches this: "And he [Jesus] answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." Love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. That's our highest priority. That's the requirement. And the same God that lives in the husband, lives in the wife; therefore, both have to put God where? First.

The twenty-eighth verse of Genesis 1 says that God blessed man and woman. And then God said to man and woman that they should be "fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." And He said they were to have "dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Man was made to have dominion. Man cannot have dominion if he and his wife are always fighting. Then Satan is already defeating them and together as husband and wife they cannot have dominion in the home—over the children, over the environment, over the work in which he is engaged. It's impossible because it's contrary to God's Word.

So the Christian man and wife have a wonderful opportunity to share their adult lives with each other. There will be challenges in the relationship. But if you never had a challenge, there wouldn't be anything exciting about a relationship. It's the challenges with which you are confronted and subsequently work out that make a marriage gratifying and that build depth in it. I don't know if two people, a man and wife, ever see eye to eye on everything. But I do believe that two people can so work things out that they can overcome any challenge. But, most basic of all, the marriage has to be built on God's Word. It is the Christian family which gives the greatest positive wholeness of life—the companionship and joy and peace and happiness which God intended when He set up the original pattern for man and woman as told to us in the first chapters of Genesis.

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