

Families in the Family of God

Restoration

Lesson #3 for January 21, 2006

Scriptures: Gen. 1:26-28; 2:24, 25; Gen. 3:1-24; Matt. 19:3-5; Luke 17:21; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 1:4; 6:2; Eph. 3:17-19.

1. We recognize the family as the core social unit in our society and in our world. The ideal for marriage was established in the Garden of Eden. **Is it possible to restore that Edenic ideal to marriage in our world today?**
2. "Marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty." Ellen White, *Thoughts from the Mountain of Blessing*, page 64. **In what ways was marriage distorted by the entrance of sin?** Is it possible to restore the ideals of marriage through the principles of the gospel? If so, how can this happen?
3. "In today's world, marriage is the butt of many sarcastic and suggestive jokes. The general assumption is that after the sensual joys of marriage fade, it becomes a yoke of bondage and a battleground between husband and wife, as well as a breeding ground for adulterous intrigue; and the best that can be hoped for is a seldom-violated truce between mates. This is a cynical travesty of the true purpose and potential of marriage. God's stated ideal for marriage is that husband and wife should blend into a sanctified unity that preserves, while it enhances, the individual identity of each partner." (Teacher's comments: Witnessing)
4. It has been suggested that **"men marry women hoping they will not change but they do, while woman marry men hoping they will change but they don't!"** What is implied by these suggestions?
5. As we know, marriage was originally designed by God to be a permanent, monogamous union of one man and one woman. Did God ever intend for any other kind of marriage to exist? How will David relate to Solomon and Bathsheba and Uriah in the world to come? How will God recognize the results and complexities of these other kinds of relationships?
6. **Why do you think Christ never married?** Or did He? Some modern reinterpreters of Scripture have suggested that Jesus may have been married to Mary Magdalene!
7. Can Christ's life and His sacrificial death teach us anything important about the marriage relationship? "With Christ, however, a new day dawned for the institution (marriage), as well as for the marital experience of couples. In Him, husband and wife may know a restoration of God's plan for marriage." How could someone who has never been married show us the way to marital bliss?
8. There are three great principles the Bible sets forth to ensure the sanctity of the marriage relationship. 1) The husband must leave his father and mother, 2) cleave unto his wife and, 3) the two must become one flesh. Why is it important for the husband to leave his father and mother? What is implied by cleaving unto his wife? Is a sexual relationship essential to becoming one flesh? Did God really invent sex? What is implied by this idea? Why would God create something which He knew by looking into the future would create so many problems for His children here on planet Earth? We do not have any evidence that beings in any other part of the universe have these kinds of relationships. Why has "sex" become the predominant advertising theme in our world?
9. Did Adam and Eve question God about the meaning of the words "father" and "mother" when these instructions were first given? What was God's intention in forming this kind of relationship?
10. It is interesting to note that these three principles (#8) say nothing at all about the presence of children. Are children essential to a marriage relationship? Why does God seem to imply

that a man's loyalty to his wife supersedes his loyalty to his parents? Or does He? What about loyalty to children? Does a wife have to choose between children and husband?

11. **Is the main purpose of marriage procreation?** Our teachers Bible study guide mentions these following elements as being essential to marriage: "the man and woman form a new distinct family unit; marriage was established for companionship, for procreation, and for sharing responsibilities; the family has specific God-given boundaries that should not be violated." (Teacher's Outline)
12. "When sin entered the world, the trusting relationships between man and woman and between humankind and the Creator were broken. But **God, through Christ and the indwelling Spirit, seeks to restore unity in the marriage relationship and ultimately restore humanity's relationship with himself.**" (Teacher's Summary) **How does this actually work?**
13. **How far does God expect each partner to go in trying to meet the needs of the other?**
14. Review Genesis 3: the fall of mankind. What is implied by the statement "they knew they were naked"? (3:7) They were naked before but felt unashamed. (2:25) What did sin do to them? What does sin do to us?
15. **Why did God apparently feel it was necessary to place Adam as head of the household after sin entered?** "But after Eve's sin, as she was first in the transgression, the Lord told her that Adam should rule over her. She was to be in subjection to her husband, and this was a part of the curse." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, page 484. Doesn't this imply that the subjection of wife to husband was a result of sin and a part of the curse? Can we in this life ever overcome sin and the curse?
16. **One of the very first things that Adam and Eve did after sin entered was to begin blaming others for their mistakes. Why do you think this is?**
17. Two Christian counselors have compiled a list of bad and good reasons for entering into the marriage relationship: Bad reasons:
 1. To spite their parents
 2. Because marriage will make you feel worthwhile and will give meaning to your life
 3. To be a therapist or counselor to your fiancée to try to *fix* your fiancée
 4. The fear that you might never be married
 5. The fear of independence or thinking you need to be with someone to feel safe and/or fulfilled
 6. To ease the pain of just having broken up with someone else
 7. Being worried over what will happen to your fiancée if you break up, even though you know this marriage should not occur
 8. To escape an unhappy home
 9. Because your fiancée is pregnant
 10. Because you already have had sex

(Adapted from Wes Roberts and H. Norman Wright, *Before You Say "I Do"* [Irvine, Calif.: Harvest House Publishers, 1978], pp. 6, 7).

In addition to these ten negative reasons, the experts listed five healthy reasons why couples marry:

1. Companionship
2. To work together and fulfill your own and each other's needs
3. To fulfill sexual needs in the way God intends
4. Love
5. Because you are convinced that it is God's will for you to marry this person

(Wright and Roberts, p. 7).

18. What ideas does the Bible mention (Ex. 20:14,17; Prov. 5:15-20; Gal. 6:2; Phil 2:4) in maintaining a good marriage relationship? Avoid adultery and avoid even setting your affections on another; be content even excited about your own marriage relationship; bear one another's burdens; look out for each other.
19. **Close relationships always imply limiting one's freedoms for the benefit of the other. Why would we choose to do this?** ("Your freedom ends where my nose begins!")
20. When a young couple enters in to a marriage relationship what is it they're looking for? Happiness? Or death to self? "Why is death to self so important in keeping any marriage strong?" Doesn't death to self sound like a contradiction to marital bliss? Is it possible to find real happiness through death to self?
21. Repeatedly Paul and Jesus seem to stress the idea that in order to live in close fellowship with others we must serve them. How does this work in the marriage relationship? **Is there any way in which making your partner happy makes you happy? Could service to one's partner actually produce happiness?**
22. What is implied by submission? Husbands and wives are instructed to submit to each other. What does this mean?
Rulership. "Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for rulership. The Lord has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes the church. And the wife is to respect and love her husband. Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 47.
23. We live in a sinful world. How are married couples supposed to deal with death, divorce, even separation?
24. How can the church make it clear that divorce is never an ideal outcome for a marriage but at the same time reach out to put their arms around those who have been thus torn and broken?
25. Entering marriage intelligently. "The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities."—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 18.
26. What could you do to make your marriage more Edenic?
27. What did Paul have in mind when he spelled out his marriage ideals? What was the typical marriage in Roman times like?
28. It was God's original intention that marriage serve as a way of learning about God Himself. Husbands were to learn about the more female virtues: gentleness, caring, nurturing, etc. from their wives, and wives were to learn the more male virtues: leadership, strength, protection, etc. from their husbands.
29. With so much at stake, is it any wonder that Satan set about immediately to break down the marriage relationship?

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