

7. Marriage

November 15, 2009

As we've been learning that the Book of Proverbs is the best manual we'll find on practical wisdom including people skills. It is because it came from the Lord who created us and He teaches us what we need to know about human relations, especially in marriage. If we just can practice what we learn from the Bible, we would have the best marriages in the world.

According to Scripture, God established three human institutions: marriage that leads to family, government and the church. Out of these three, the basic institution is the family. As goes the family, so does the church and the nation. That is why the biblical views of marriage and the family have been attacked so much and ridiculed constantly in modern society.

Marriage between one man and one woman for a lifetime has been challenged by the perversion of homosexuality and the concept of free sex. If that is not bad enough, it is becoming all out war against the family by trying to remove the authority of husband and father from family; making wife and mother as a silly old fashioned ignorant woman; and insisting that children be in charge.

Adultery committing Hollywood actors and actresses become role models for our children; liberal educational systems would not tolerate biblical principles for students. They think that it requires a parental consent for a teenage girl to take two Tylenols for her headache, but they don't want her parents to know if she wants to have an abortion. Tell me that is not wrong.

Though chapter 31 of the Book of Proverbs is known for describing a virtuous wife, I believe that throughout this Book, we can find the proper and godly relationship husband and wife should have.

A. TO HUSBAND

Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the Lord.

Proverbs 19:14 Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord.

It is easy for husbands to think that their wives should get a clue from chapter 31 to serve them better. But I say to those silly husbands to get clues from the rest of this Book to become more godly and wise husbands and fathers.

When a husband takes his wife for granted, he grieves both God and her. He should love her and be loyal to her all the days of his life.

In this selfish world, it is not difficult to think about ourselves first and only. Actually, it is very natural. But the Lord demands husbands to be the priests of their families to lead them to the Throne of God with their own examples of gentleness, unselfishness and love. This Book places on the husband the responsibility of guiding his family according to the wisdom of God. Gentlemen, don't expect your wife to love you first and serve you first. You didn't marry a maid, but a helpmate and soul mate of your life.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Remember this, gentlemen, the idea that “marriage is 50-50” is not from God. Because the way God intended for marriage is two becoming one. It means that it is 100 percent devotion to your wife. You practice this and you will see that your wife will be pleasantly surprised and she will treat you so much better than ever before.

If we concentrate on loving our wives just as Christ loved the church, God will transform our marriages. As a result, He will then transform our families, our churches and yes, even our country. The breakdown of the family is why our country is in the state that it is in.

Someone once said the family can survive without a nation, but a nation cannot survive without the family. We have children today who are being raised with no values and no consciences because their families are weak. We need the family to be strengthened by the Word of God again.

The transformation of the family and then our country depends on you, husbands. You can't solve all of America's problems – but you can start by doing what God has called you to do. Love your wife and make all other earthly relationships secondary.

This carnal world belongs to satan and he uses it very effectively against men in general, especially against Christian males. Do not open yourselves up to anything immoral, such as pornography, flirting with someone other than your wife. The consequences of these are far worse than you can possibly imagine.

Proverbs 6:23-25 For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life, 24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. 25 Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids.

Proverbs 22:14 The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit; He who is abhorred by the Lord will fall there.

B. TO WIFE

I am sure that you've heard a phrase “Behind every great man, there's a great woman.” Every wife either can build the home or tear it down. If she walks with the Lord, she will be a builder. But if she disobeys His wisdom, she will be a destroyer.

Proverbs 14:1 The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.

Proverbs 12:4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones.

A crown or a cancer – what a choice! As much as a husband can build or destroy his family, so can his wife.

I am sure that many of you have read or heard this verse from Proverbs:

Proverbs 25:24 It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

Actually, it is mentioned three other times in this Book. A wife who quarrels constantly creates the kind of atmosphere in a home that would tempt her husband to look for attention elsewhere.

Some of you men are thinking, “You go, preacher. I like your sermon today. Are you listening to him, Sweetheart?” Don't get so excited, because this can apply to you, too. There are some husbands who love to argue for the sake of winning the argument. How childish is that! You are supposed to cherish her.

1 Peter 3:7 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.

Please be mindful that God hates family discord and we should do everything we can to practice the kind of love that produces unity and harmony in our homes.

I believe that I've said this before, but it is worth repeating. The reason for the continuation of an argument between husband and wife is that they are trying to get their last words in for a selfish reason which is to hurt the other person.

How about forgiveness? How about extra measure of love for one another? You may say, "I cannot do that, because I am angry now. He hurts my feeling." Or "She makes me mad." But aren't you glad that our Lord Jesus didn't say that to us while we were His enemies or while we still commit sins against Him? Then someone would protest, "I am not a God, so I can have an attitude." For that comment, I have another question, "Are you a Christian which means Christ-like? Are you acting as a Christian or a heathen?"

C. CHARACTER COUNTS

Proverbs 31:10-12 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.

Just as wisdom is more important than wealth, so godly character is more important than beauty.

Marriage doesn't change a person's character. If there are character weaknesses in either the husband or the wife – of course, everybody has at least one weakness, marriage will only reveal and accentuate them. A husband or wife who hopes to change his or her spouse after the honeymoon in the way they want is destined for disappointment and frustration. Ladies and gentlemen, don't imagine you can change your spouse – unless he or she is in diapers.

If you've lived with your spouse for sometime, you probably know your spouse better than anyone including your spouse's parents. As much as you are not perfect, do not expect perfection from your spouse. There is only one person who is perfect and you are not married to Him.

If the husband and wife trust each other, there will be harmony in the home. If brides and grooms take seriously the vows of love and loyalty they repeat to each other and to God during their wedding ceremony, they will have a wall of confidence around their marriage that will keep out every enemy.

D. SHE CAN DO IT ALL

Proverbs 31:13-24 She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands. 14 She is like the merchant ships, She brings her food from afar. 15 She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants. 16 She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard. 17 She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms. 18 She perceives that her merchandise is good, And her lamp does not go out by night. 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hand holds the spindle. 20 She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she

reaches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, For all her household is clothed with scarlet. 22 She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies sashes for the merchants.

This lady can do it all. She'd say, "Move over, Martha Stewart." She is a wheeler and dealer. She works out at the gym according to v17 – "strengthens her arms".

V23 brings an important point for us to make a note. Even though she is an industrious person and he is an elder of the town – "known in the gates", she does not disrespect him.

The NT clearly tells husband to love his wife. At the same time, it tells wife to submit and respect her husband. This is specially important during the time we are living. As I have said before, just about every single TV sitcom and movie degrades the role of father and husband and portrays them as a bunch of idiots. I will be the first one to admit that we can fit in that category from time to time.

Ladies, please don't jump on their band wagon. You are disobeying the Lord by doing so. The wife needs to respect her husband as much as she wants to be loved by him. It is not about worthiness, but it is God's commandment.

Ephesians 5:22-23 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.

Let me be a little more practical here, ladies. Do not flaunt your higher income, your knowledge or your better education to your husband in any form or shape. If you do, you are literally giving an opportunity on a silver platter for satan to destroy your marriage. There is not a whole lot of men can handle that kind of disrespect from their wives. I've seen horrible results time after time.

A husband and wife should complement each other as they each seek to fulfill their roles in the will of God. Wise is that husband who recognizes his wife's strengths and lets her compensate for his weaknesses. Doing this isn't a sign of personal failure, nor is it rebellion against the divine order. Both leadership and submission in a home are evidences of love and obedience, and the one doesn't nullify the other.

E. THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

Proverbs 31:25-31 Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come. 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness. 27 She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: 29 "Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all." 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates.

She is a woman of faith who knows that God is with her and her family. She has wisdom that comes from the Lord and her husband is wise enough to listen to her. She is not idle. She does her work faithfully day and night. Husbands, if you think that you are the one who carries the majority of loads for your family, think again. Try to fill your wife's shoes for a week. You will be glad that it is not you who has to do all that for the rest of your life.

Before the last Women's Retreat at the end of this September, one of the husbands in our church was just about to have a heart attack because he realized that he was going to have his children over a weekend without his wife's help. He survived.

Ladies and gentlemen, please note v28-29. Her family praises and blesses her for who she is and what she does. Isn't it true for us to see flaws and shortcomings of others and be critical against them even though some of them might be the exact same things we do? Our lame excuses are "Can't help," or "Am not perfect."

When was the last time for you to give a good hearty praise to your spouse? If you have to think for sometime, you are well overdue. Please look for good things that your spouse does even though he or she may not meet your high standard. You will be surprised how much your spouse is pumped up and looking for next good thing to please you.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) Easy on criticism against your spouse, but high on praise for him or her.

2) Never, ever take your spouse for granted.

3) Trusting your spouse brings harmony in your home.

4) Take your wedding vow seriously:

To have and to hold,
from this day forward,
for better for worse,
for richer for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish one another
til death do you part.
Remember, you've promised.