

The background of the cover is a photograph of a sunlit forest path. The path is covered in green grass and leads into a dense forest. The sunlight is bright and creates a hazy, glowing effect in the center of the image, with rays of light filtering through the trees. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of green and yellow, creating a peaceful and natural atmosphere.

Sex and Marriage

In the Light of God's Word

by C. Parker Thomas

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Introduction

This booklet, first published in 1990, is simply the compilation of a number of articles by Brother C. Parker Thomas in the *Midnight Cry Messenger* from 1973 to 1980. When the first article was published, Brother Thomas made this comment in his Editor's Letter: "I trust and pray that our article on the subject of sex in this edition of the paper will be prayerfully considered by all who read it. It is my conviction that it will bring deliverance to many who have various mental hang-ups due to the traditional hush-hush attitude toward sex."

Who is better qualified to instruct us in the matter of sex and marriage than the God who created sex and instituted marriage? In Psalm 119:130 we are told: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

The reader of these articles will find very helpful teaching concerning the subjects dealt with, and will be blessed in the knowledge that the teaching honors the Word of God. Ignorance and misinformation which prevail in our day will be dispelled and corrected. This booklet is published with prayer that its readers will find in its pages truth that sets them free.

The reader is also invited to receive the *Midnight Cry Messenger*, free and post paid. Simply write to request it or to receive samples. At present we publish this tabloid paper four times per year.

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Chapter 1

SEX

Genesis 1:26-28. “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 air, and over 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 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.”

Much is being said, written and taught on the subject of sex today. Although sex has always been one of man’s most intriguing subjects, it has never been so widely and openly discussed as it is today. Tens of thousands of books and articles have been written on the subject in the last few years. Psychologists, doctors, marriage counsellors, ministers, educators, psychiatrists and even the schools are openly teaching and discussing the subject of sex. We might say we are in the throes of a sexual revolution.

This interest and open discussion of sex is not simply because our generation is more enlightened and sophisticated than our grandfathers and grandmothers were. It is the inevitable result of the almost constant exposure of the minds of the last two generations to sex through the movies, TV and various forms of literature. The glorification and exploitation of sex through these means has made this generation the most sex conscious of any that ever lived.

Beyond doubt much of the inhibitions, fears and taboos caused by ignorance and traditional attitudes needs to be dealt with – not necessarily by the many sex experts, some no doubt which are good and some which are bad – but by inspired truth which alone can set men free.

Truth that sets man free also reaches into the institutions of marriage and sex. Man’s greed, prejudice, hatred, bigotry and fear are caused by his benighted lack of truth. What we believe and think influences all areas of

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human life and conduct. This is also true of sex, a subject that is still taboo in some of our society today.

I do not believe God has left us in the dark on this important subject. Since God made sex in the beginning, when he created man, he certainly intends for us to know something about it. Although we cannot ignore nor discredit the true findings of science, I believe the Bible must forever be our basic source of information. True science will not conflict with the Word of God. With all of the interest and discussion of sex it certainly seems timely and appropriate that we examine the subject in the light of the scriptures.

ONE IN THE BEGINNING

When man is referred to in a general sense in the Bible it has reference to mankind as a whole. This, of course, includes male and female. When the Lord said, "...Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;..." he meant all the masculine and feminine qualities that distinguish the male from the female. These qualities are as much mental or spiritual in nature as they are physical. We are prone to consider or think of them more from the standpoint of the physical than we are the spiritual. This is because we are so carnal. Although there is the physical difference, I believe the spiritual aspect is just as important and must not be overlooked.

The qualities of masculinity and femininity came from God and reposed in the single entity of man when he was created. Genesis 5:2 says "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam (singular), in the day when they were created".

It is evident that Adam was alone when he was created and placed in the garden of Eden. Genesis 1:7-25. Although the qualities of masculinity and femininity resided in Adam there was a loneliness that could not be filled until Eve was separated from Adam and made into a distinct entity, which he called woman.

"And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him": Genesis 2:18.

Genesis 2:21-24 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 the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

It is most significant that the relationship of Christ to the Church is foreshadowed here with this very scripture being quoted by Paul in

reference to Christ and the Church. Ephesians 5:30-32. “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

As the woman was one with and in man in the beginning, Christ was one with and in God back in eternity. The separation of Eve from Adam was a type of Christ’s separation from God, the Father. This was also the means of Christ becoming a distinct entity in himself. Although God, the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, are two distinct entities they are one in spiritual substance with God, the Father, as the head of Christ the Son. This is also true of Christ and the Church and man and woman. I Cor. 11:3-9. Col 1:18.

By nature the man and woman are incomplete without each other. Since masculinity and femininity were both in Adam in the beginning, man and woman are incomplete without each other.

The masculinity in the man wants to shelter, protect and love the woman, the weaker vessel. Ordinarily the woman doesn’t have the large frame, muscles and even hairy body and face of the man. Aside from the sex organs, the woman has breasts which distinguishes her from the man and also enables her to nurse the infant.

The femininity of the woman likewise desires the love, shelter and protection of the man. Though all this difference is a factor the great physical difference in man and woman is sex.

This is also the greatest factor or power that draws them together. Eliminate sex and you would eliminate marriage in the normal sense. This is why a normal man or woman desires a mate from the opposite sex. Normal human beings have no desire for a member of their own sex. Homosexuality or sexual perversion of any kind is not normal. According to Romans 1:21-28, it is the result of mankind being given over to a reprobate mind.

Although the man’s and woman’s bodies are different in many ways, femininity or masculinity without sex would not draw them together. You find some men who are delicate and feminine in appearance and ways, but you won’t find a real normal man that wants to marry him just to love, shelter and protect him because of those qualities. Neither will you find a normal woman desiring one of these masculine type women. The very thought of such a thing is repulsive to a normal man or woman.

THE POWER OF SEX

Although there are other factors that serve to draw men and women together such as religion, culture, professions, hobbies, and other

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common interests, the greatest factor of all is the power of sex. Eliminate sex and you would eliminate marriage. It is because of this distinct difference in man and woman that God has ordained a place for each one in their relationship to each other. I Cor.11:3. I Peter 3:7. This is also the reason for God-ordained decrees concerning hair and dress. I Cor. 11:14-15. Deut. 22:5. Difference in dress and length of hair is to enhance the difference in male and female. God intends for the man and woman to honor and respect this distinction, which he their creator has subjected them to. Submission to divine order is submission to God.

NATURAL AND NORMAL

The attraction of male and female to each other is natural and normal. As surely as it is natural and normal for animals to mate and reproduce after reaching sexual maturity it is also for mankind.

The power of sex will overrule all barriers in its quest for gratification. Social, religious and national barriers are constantly swept aside by the power of sex. A fitting example of this is the marriage of service men to foreign women during their tour of duty overseas.

Some American girls asked some GI's what the Vietnamese girls had that they didn't have. Their reply was, "nothing, they were there and you were here". The Vietnamese girls were available and the American girls were not.

SEX ALONE

Beyond doubt sex alone is the great factor in most marriages. Time and again I have observed young men and women reject the offer of marriage to a good, clean moral person and marry some unsavory character, who would in the end make their life miserable. The usual reason for this is that they find the shoddy character more attractive. This attraction is usually sex appeal. It is not uncommon for such marital ventures to start out with the couple supposedly madly in love and end after a few months in hatred and bitterness.

Because of the power of sex we have always had some men who were Casanovas and some women who were vamps. They learned how to employ the power of sex to beguile and seduce. Demons are also actively engaged in prodding men and women into wrong marriages and illicit sex. The normal sex drive is powerful enough without the aid of a demon. II Timothy 2:22.

MARRIAGE

There is at work in the world today a calculated design to stimulate sex in man and destroy all honor and respect for marriage and sex in the

normal sense. This is the reason for a spirit of sexual permissiveness and perversion such as the world has never witnessed before. It is part of the great satanic conspiracy to defy God and destroy mankind.

Sex without honor, respect and love is base and animalistic. Because man is created in the image of God he must have more than just temporary sexual release. There must be mental and above all things spiritual compatibility. Sex without these ingredients is never really satisfying and complete.

Not only must the body be satisfied but man's spirit (intellect, knowledge and conscience) is very much involved. These too must be satisfied in sexual union. Psychiatrists, marriage counsellors and all knowledgeable people recognize the need for compatibility in marriage. The basis for true compatibility goes beyond natural, earthly things such as friends, professions, education, children and other common interests. I might add that oneness in Christ and spiritual things is even more necessary.

With our society more materialistic today than ever before, the world system is programmed to meet the needs of the natural man, consequently there is little room for Christ and spiritual things. This is another reason for the continued increase in the divorce rate, sexual infidelity and perversion.

Marriage is God's first institution for the well being of man. In the very beginning after God had created Adam he saw that it was not good for the man to be alone. Gen. 2:18.

From the scriptural account of earth's first marriage (Gen. 2:21-24) it is evident that marriage is indeed a holy institution originating in the wisdom and goodness of God. It is designed to promote human happiness and holiness before God and man. It is the foundation of home life and social order.

Sanctioned and honored by the presence of Jesus at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, it is declared by the Apostle Paul to be honorable in all. Hebrews 13:4. Being a type of our eternal union to Christ, God intended for marriage to be permanent.

Although God commanded Moses, under the law, to grant a bill of divorcement to irreconcilable couples it was not so in the beginning. Because they were despising God's law in breaking their marriage vows by separation and cohabitation with others, God decreed divorce. This was not God's best for them but it served to make their separation legal and preserve some degree of sanctity to the institution of marriage. Matthew 19: 3-9. Deut. 24: 1-4.

Sex outside of marriage is morally wrong and can only lead to shame and heartbreak. It is wrong because it is transgression of God's law. Heb.

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13:4. It is wrong because so many lives are involved; mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, wives, husbands, and illegitimate children, all have to bear the reproach of illicit sex.

SEX IS GOOD

However in its proper place, sex is good because it was created by God for a good purpose. Only in the corrupted thinking of man's mind is sex evil. The fact that sex is often associated with evil and Satan has perverted sexual behavior in some does not mean that sex is evil in itself. In addition to being the means of reproduction in the earth, sex serves to bring man and woman together into earth's most sacred and satisfying relationship. So much so that the scriptures use the marriage union as a type of Christ and the Church. Ephesians 5: 25-32. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, 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; For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Although sex is God's means of natural reproduction and many look upon it as serving only that purpose such is not the case. In Paul's treatment of the subject in I Corinthians 7, the primary reason given by the Apostle for marriage is sexual gratification. Although some desire children, they are, for the most part, the natural result of sexual union, in or out of wedlock.

NOT EVIL OR NASTY

As long as we think of sex as something nasty and immoral we will never be able to fully appreciate the pleasure and delight God has bestowed upon us through the enjoyment of each other's body.

The only thing nasty about sex is when we do not keep our bodies clean. And of course illicit sex without the honor and respect of marriage is morally and spiritually defiling. It is also a notable fact that most venereal diseases are transmitted through illicit sex.

When we despise God's law we must suffer the consequence. Sin leads to sickness and sickness leads to death. This is just as true of sexual immorality as it is of murder. Galatians 6:7-8 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he

that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Hebrews 13:4 says, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

SEX TO BE SHARED

Sex like every good thing that God has created is to be shared. If there is no mutual enjoyment of sex a marriage is not complete. The truth is lack of enjoyment and response often becomes a deterrent to a successful marriage. Failure in this area leads to frustration and beyond doubt has been the cause of separation and divorce. This is why Paul said, “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” I Cor. 7:3-5.

According to this teaching the husband or wife is guilty of defrauding their marriage partner if they withhold the right to each other’s body. It actually teaches that the husband or wife has the exclusive right or authority over the other’s body in the matter of sex. Only by mutual consent are they to abstain for a while that they might give themselves to fasting and prayer. Then they are exhorted to come together again lest Satan tempt them for their incontinency.

Lack of gratification of the sexual appetite can lead to temptation by Satan and sexual infidelity. This is also why Paul tells the unmarried and the widows to marry if they can’t contain. It is better to marry than it is to burn with desire. Verses 8 and 9.

SEX RELATIONSHIP

Most intimate of all human relations, sexual intercourse should be a sacred tender experience not to be shared with anyone but your beloved. It is the intimate climax of two people in love. The voice of the bridegroom (Christ) to his bride (the Church) expresses this sacred and tender relationship in Song of Solomon 7:6-9. “How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples; And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.”

In verses 10-13, the bride answers the bridegroom in equally tender tones. “I am my beloved’s and his desire is toward me. Come, my beloved,

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let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves. The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, my beloved.”

Foreshadowed here in symbolic language is the divine love of Christ for his bride, the Church. The intimate sexual relationship of two people in love is a type of this love. As such intimate expression of physical love leads to reproduction (children) the Church also brings forth when she spends much time in intimate spiritual union with Christ.

As proper attitude is necessary when we approach Christ through prayer, praise and thanksgiving, so is a proper attitude necessary in this most tender and sacred of all human relationships. It must not be cheapened by lack of consideration or coarse vulgar action. True love built upon mutual honor and respect for each other is a must. Affectionate concern for each other that their desire might be gratified will result in careful preparation for the marriage bed.

PREPARATION

Before man can be united to Christ there has to be spiritual preparation. The ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the people and get them ready for Christ. Matt. 3:1-12. This spiritual preparation that precedes the union of Christ and his body, the Church, typifies the physical and mental preparation necessary before man and woman come together in marriage and sexual union.

Jesus exhorted those that would follow him to count the cost before they started. Matt. 8:19-22. Luke 14:25-33. The purpose of such teaching by the Lord was to eliminate the superficial believer and prepare the genuine seeker of God for union with Christ. Lack of such teaching has filled much of the professing Church with unbelievers.

In the same manner lack of teaching and consequent preparation has been the cause of much marital failure. There must be a preparation of minds and hearts as well as bodies before a couple can have a successful marriage. This has always been so especially in this hour of sexual infidelity and permissiveness. The lack of a good home life and proper environment has spawned a generation that is not prepared for marriage. Not only must there be preparation for marriage in general but there must be continual preparation for the marriage bed when couples come together in sexual union.

CLEANLINESS

Husbands and wives should be very considerate of each other in the matter of physical cleanliness and appearance. Even as the Church, the bride of Christ, will be her loveliest at the time of her presentation to her perfect bridegroom, so should husband and wife desire to be their best when they come together. Rev. 19:7-8. Eph. 5:25-27.

Beyond doubt carelessness in these matters has dampened the ardor of some marriages and in fact it has been the beginning of the end for many.

As the priests washed their bodies and anointed themselves with the holy anointing oil before coming before the Lord (Exodus 29 & 30) man and wife should be clean and physically attractive when they come together. By this act of consideration they are setting themselves apart for each other. This not only makes them more desirable physically, but shows honor and respect that further enhances their delight in each other.

Needless to say personal cleanliness includes bathing, careful brushing of the teeth, liberal use of mouth wash and a breath sweetener, if necessary. Appropriate dress, grooming of the hair and modest use of lotion and perfume also make the marriage bed more attractive.

The woman, which is a type of the Church, is not usually as sexually aggressive as the man. Being the weaker vessel (I Peter 3:7) she is more timid and fearful than the man. Consequently she is more subject to mental hang-ups that hinder and keep her from yielding herself in sexual intercourse. Fear of others hearing or knowing, pregnancy and fear of failure itself can make a woman frigid and unable to respond.

For this reason the man, which is a type of Christ, must patiently and affectionately prepare his wife for sexual union. As the Lord through the word and operation of the Holy Spirit inspires faith in the Church, the husband through love and tender masculine assurance inspires faith in his wife for sexual intercourse.

A woman not only wants to be loved, she must be shown that love in tender endearments. This along with proper physical caressing prepares her both mentally and physically for sexual union. Since the wife is more timid and frigid by nature, the husband must patiently wait on her. Even as the Lord is patient while working with us and preparing us for spiritual response to him, the husband must be patient while preparing his wife for sexual response.

Since the woman's vagina is delicate and sensitive, the husband should be very careful not to hurt her. This is especially necessary until they get adjusted to each other. Even after adjustment and sexual rapport has been achieved the husband should be tender and considerate during

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the sex act. Ephesians 5:25 says, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it.”

This command to love our wives is something we have to do by word, action and deed. It is not just a feeling we try to conjure up toward them. We might not always feel love and affection toward them and have to do these things by faith. As we practice love and consideration the Lord will take care of the feeling.

DELIGHT IN EACH OTHER

Husband and wife should delight in each other in the sexual union as well as in other things. This delight should be expressed to each other before, during and after sexual intercourse. Our minds and mental attitude make all the difference in the world as to how much we enjoy ourselves. Our expressed enjoyment and delight also has a positive effect in helping our wife or husband enjoy themselves.

I believe the sexual climax, which is earth’s greatest physical ecstasy, is a type of spiritual ecstasy experienced by believers when their cup of spiritual joy runs over. When their cup runs over they give vent to their feelings unashamedly.

Neither do we mind expressing ourselves in regard to good food or other earthly pleasures, why not sex?

Notice how the bridegroom delights in his bride in Song of Solomon 4:1-10. Behold, thou art fair, my love: behold, thou are fair; thou hast doves’ eyes within thy locks; thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!”

Sex in sanctification is nothing to be ashamed of. We can actually thank God for this provision of grace. In fact I have known of couples

being overcome with the presence of the Lord during the sex act and burst out in praise to God for his goodness to them.

Only the prudish and unenlightened take a negative attitude in thinking of sex as something to be enjoyed in the dark but looked upon as evil when it is light.

Chapter 2

CHOOSING A MATE

Choosing a mate is one of life's most important decisions. Although man still suffers from hardness of heart resulting in separation and divorce it should not be so. God intended for marriage to be permanent because it is a type of our eternal union to Christ. For this reason enlightened people should be careful and deliberate in choosing a lifetime mate. Christians should prayerfully choose their mates in the fear of God and the light of the holy scriptures.

Although our desire here is to deal with our subject from the standpoint of the scriptures, I believe every reader will find helpful information in their quest for truth. Some of the subject matter though not necessarily spelled out in the scriptures will be found to contain sound basic wisdom profitable to all who desire success in marriage.

HOW TO CHOOSE A MATE

First we need to realize that marriage is a union of two people. This union is not just physical but also spiritual and mental. In order for two lives to be fused into one there have to be plus factors or compatible qualities to effect such a union.

Although sex is vitally important in marriage it takes more than just sex for marriage to succeed. Too many marriages are the result of romantic delusion motivated by desire for the opposite sex, while the participants are ignorant of or blindly ignore many important factors. In addition to a harmonious sex life there must be enough plus factors that result in compatibility. Without compatibility it is most difficult for marriage to succeed in today's world.

The Bible teaches that the two shall become one flesh and he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. I Cor. 6:16-17. Just going before a minister or public official and making marriage vows does not make two people one. Even when there is reasonable compatibility there is still a great need for adjustment by both parties. It takes an understanding and condescending spirit for this adjustment to be effected. Paul said those who marry would have trouble in the flesh. I Cor. 7:28.

There are no two people exactly alike. Although their personalities may be similar they are still two unique and different human beings. It is at these points of difference that friction begins. This is where the oil of the Holy Spirit enables a couple to work out their differences and truly become one.

MOST BASIC NEED

For this reason the first great basic need for all who desire marriage is to be a truly born again Christian. I emphasize “born again Christian” because there are so many church members that are mere professing Christians. Of all the virtues that are needed for a couple to make a go of marriage in today’s world, the grace of God through union with Jesus Christ is the greatest.

Until God has given us a new heart, our wills are hard and unyielding. This is the hardness of heart that Jesus spoke of that made divorce a necessity to begin with. Matt. 19:8. This new heart, resulting from the new birth, is beautifully described in Ezekiel 36:26. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

UNEQUAL YOKE

The Bible strictly forbids the marriage of a Christian to an unbeliever. This also includes marriage to a professing Christian that has not been born again. In spite of his or her profession they are still an unbeliever until they truly believe in Christ and experience the new birth. II Corinthians 6:14 says, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” Read also I Corinthians 6:15-17 and I Corinthians 7:39.

OLD TESTAMENT TYPE

This truth is also borne out in type and shadow in the Old Testament. Abraham’s choice of a wife for Isaac is a good example. “And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.” Genesis 24:2-4.

The daughters of the Canaanites among whom Abraham dwelled at that time are a type of the unbeliever. Their ways, culture, nationality and religion were different from Abraham’s. A daughter from among his

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kindred is a type of the true believer. This is why Abraham strictly forbade his servant, a type of the Holy Spirit, to take a wife from among the Canaanites. This same principle is repeated in the lives of Esau and Jacob. Genesis 28:1-9.

The fact that a spiritual relationship is first necessary is confirmed by the bridegroom in speaking to his bride in Song of Solomon 4:10. "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" He first calls her his sister then his spouse. This is also repeated in Chapter 5, verse 1.

NEW TESTAMENT CONFIRMS

The Apostle Paul likewise confirms this principle in the New Testament. "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" I Cor. 9:5. It will be noted again that the relationship as sister (spiritual) is placed before the relationship as wife.

The consequence of yoking up with strange flesh or marrying an unbeliever is vividly brought out in the life of Solomon. I Kings 11:1-11. As in Solomon's case we are subject to the influence of those we yoke up with. We are prone to take on their ways, their habits, and their beliefs.

People who are instructed in the Word of God are either deceived or overcome by their lusts when they ignore the plain teachings of God's Word and marry an unbeliever.

Those with an unsavory past such as drinking, gambling, sexual immorality, dope addiction and perhaps several broken marriages are always a very poor risk for marriage. We know that when a sinner comes to the Lord and is truly born again, he is a new creature, old things are passed away and all things become new. II Corinthians 5:17. Because God can miraculously change a life, I would not rule out marriage for a person with such a past. However, I would certainly take a long prayerful look before taking such a step in spite of the fact the person might show strong evidence of being a Christian.

Strange as it may seem such people as described above often have a strong appeal to the opposite sex. Many morally clean girls and young men have made shipwreck of their lives because they blindly entered into marriage with such people. Often times such people temporarily reform and sincerely promise to live a different life. But reformation is not regeneration. I have personally observed this time and again. Christians need to be very careful when someone interested in them suddenly reforms and starts attending church.

OTHER FACTORS

The fact that two people are Christians and even belong to the same local church doesn't necessarily mean they are suitable for marriage. It is true, to believe and understand alike in the matter of church and doctrine is an important factor and should be considered by those contemplating marriage.

Divergent views in religion can become a source of argument and division. Children born into such a family and torn between loyalty to both parents often become embittered and reject all religion. To be united in the faith is certainly a plus factor and enhances a marriage.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

A third factor, education, could be added here, but since education is so related to society and culture I don't think it is necessary. Compatibility in this area is good for all who contemplate marriage. I would say this is even more necessary where people are not Christians.

For people to get along they must be able to communicate. They must have things in common they can talk about and share together. The greater the difference in our culture and society the more difficult it is to communicate. An educated and refined person would find an ignorant, uneducated type person dull and uninteresting. Perchance such a marriage should take place the ignorant, uneducated type person might feel ill at ease, inferior and out of place. Even among Christians such a marriage would likely be a mismatch.

COUNTRY VERSUS CITY

A country boy or girl who loves the rural way of life where they can dig in the soil and enjoy the quietness of the countryside should never marry one who loves the city. Likewise the city dweller who loves the din, the excitement and the bright lights of the city would be bored to death in the country.

NATIONALITY

Persons of different nationality are greatly handicapped in marriage. Their loyalties are often divided, their customs different and their way of life completely foreign to each other. There are many difficulties to overcome in such a marriage. They could be religion, language, dress, culture, food and the prospect of living in a strange land among strange people.

Even citizens of the same country with decidedly different national origins are handicapped in marriage. It is usually best that they marry their

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own kind. Where people with different national origins have been assimilated into the general society of a nation this is not so much of a factor. However, there must still be numerous other plus factors for such a couple to be compatible.

SECTIONAL

Even though our country (United States) is more cosmopolitan today than ever before, sectionalism can still be a factor in marriage. It is still surprising how many people insist that their part of the country, their state and their town is the best. Although this in itself is not so much of a factor today, couples contemplating marriage should be sure that their native way of life isn't a negative factor that might hinder their marriage.

RACIAL

Realizing this is a sensitive issue with many people today, I hesitate to deal with the subject because I do not want to hurt anyone.

However, I believe those desiring truth will receive it in the spirit in which it is given. Acts 17:26 says, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation:"

The spirit of the age today is to destroy all distinction of race, nationality, sex, religion and government. The idea is to make man one in every sense of the word. It is the same spirit that inspired men to build the original Babylon. Genesis 11:1-9. It is the spirit of Anti-Christ. But since this question is dealt with rather extensively in other publications, I will only discuss the racial aspect of the subject here.

It will be noted from Gen. 11 and Acts 17 that God is the one who scattered men abroad, made nations of them and appointed the bounds of their habitation. Though made of one blood God has given men different languages and physical appearances, such as stature, features, and color of skin. In addition to this he has placed them in certain parts of the world and appointed the bounds of their habitation. Certainly God had a purpose in making distinct races and nations.

God is a God of divine order, not chaos and indistinct uncertainty. Even the children of Israel, made up of twelve tribes, were appointed specific places of residence and service. It is the greed and selfishness of man in violation of this great principle that has caused most of the wars the world has experienced. It is the violation of this principle that has brought so much tragedy into the lives of human beings. Violation of this principle is disrespect for God's laws which are given for the good of all mankind.

Generally speaking when we cross national or racial lines we invite trouble. This is especially true in the matter of marriage. The greater the

difference in the national or racial makeup the less prospect of success in marriage. We have enough problems without crossing national and racial barriers in the matter of marriage. Such marriages are held in contempt by society and children from such a union often suffer great reproach and persecution. Although we are one in Christ we are still living in a world filled with prejudice, hatred and pride.

Though there are exceptions of interracial marriages in the Bible where little comment pro or con is made, I believe the overwhelming weight of evidence is against such marriages. Such was the case with Solomon and Israel as a whole.

“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?” Nehemiah 13:23-27.

DIVINE ORDER

Although this has already been referred to above I feel there is a need for further consideration of divine order with regard to the man’s and the woman’s place in the marriage union. Unless a couple have been properly taught and understand this truth it could be a source of trouble and division in their marriage. Since the spirit of the age is so hard at work to destroy God’s divine order in this area also it is necessary to consider a few scriptures. I Cor. 11:3 “But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God.”

The head of the man is Christ, the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Man as the head of the woman should take his place of responsibility as leader, provider, husband and father. To fail to do this throws the burden of responsibility on the woman who God’s word declares is the weaker vessel. This also makes her head over the man in direct violation of God’s divine order. When this happens the mother has to take the place of the father over the children.

I Peter 3:7 says, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and

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as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

It is also the responsibility of the man to provide for his family. If a man hasn't been consistent in working and holding a job before marriage it is not likely that he will be a good provider after marriage. He is a poor risk and a girl is foolish to think he will change later on. I Timothy 5:8 says, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

Woman's place in subjection to her husband is just as important as it is for the man to take his place as head.

Eph. 5:22-25 says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” Read also I Peter 3:1-6.

Regardless of what woman's lib or anybody else says, the woman was made to be a help meet for the man. Generally speaking, cooking, sewing, housekeeping, and rearing children is the woman's normal lot in this life. It is her feminine nature to do these things and thus relieve her husband to make the livelihood.

I believe obedience to this order is obedience to God. To disregard or try to change it is defiance of God's laws given for our own good. Any couple thinking of marriage should believe in and desire to obey these principles.

PERSONALITY

As we continue our study of the various factors that govern and regulate compatibility in marriage we need to consider the subject of personality. Personality is simply the varied manifestation or expression of the person. This includes conduct, intelligence, conversation and many intangible qualities too numerous to mention here. But for the sake of example we will mention a few that I trust will be helpful.

Some people like a quiet simple life and are content to stay at home most of the time, putting around in a garden, reading a book or working on a hobby. Some are the very opposite from this. They want to be on the go, where the crowd is, having fun and living it up.

Some people are more or less quiet and withdrawn while others are talkative and forward. Some are always serious and soberminded while others are humorous and witty. Some are conservative in the matter of dress and money while others are flashy dressers and liberal spenders.

Some like hobbies and sports and some don't. Still others are temperamental, jealous, proud and critical minded.

Persons living on the negative side of life in temperament and attitude can be very difficult and hard to get along with. As a rule they are not very good prospects for marriage.

These are simply a few of the things that make a person what he or she is. Although some of these personality traits can be and have been overcome, in marriage it is best if a couple can communicate on the same level and do things together that they both enjoy. For this reason couples should come to know each other well before considering marriage.

Where too many minus factors exist there can be little compatibility, without which marriage cannot succeed. Without compatibility there is no basis for marriage. To blindly ignore these factors and deceive yourself into thinking love and romance is sufficient is folly.

The faults, habits and virtues of a human being are often the result of a lifelong environment. He is not easily changed. After so long a time there is no change. When people marry they marry the whole person with all of his ways, good and bad.

A CHRISTIAN

A Christian seeking a mate needs to realize that in spite of all the things that are written here he still is incapable of choosing a wife or husband. We could take all of these minus and plus factors and feed them into a computer and still receive the wrong answer when it comes to choosing a mate.

These things are common sense factors that we cannot afford to ignore but there are so many complex qualities about a human being until we must have God to lead us. In the strictest sense it is not up to us to choose a mate. Like Abraham who sent his servant after a bride for Isaac, God knows our needs better than we do. If he can't provide for us in the matter of a wife or husband then he can't save us from our sins.

Only God knows our needs and our weakness as well as our virtues and who is a proper mate for us. It is my belief that our great sovereign God has made special provision for his elect. He knows who needs a wife and who needs a husband. And he knows exactly the kind of wife or husband we need. Nothing is left to chance. We can trust him in the matter.

The one he provides may not be according to our ideal of a husband or wife. Truth of the matter is our ideal may not be what we need. Prayer and patience to wait on the Lord are greatly needed by the Christian that would trust God to make the choice for him.

This waiting is sometimes much longer than we would like. One of the hardest things in the world to surrender is our wills in the matter of the

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opposite sex. As stated elsewhere the sex drive in a normal human being is a powerful adversary to deal with. Much prayer with a desire to please God is an absolute essential.

The fact that God will provide doesn't mean we are to sit back and wait for a husband or wife to be delivered to us by parcel post. Neither should we advertise for one through the matrimonial bureau.

As a general rule people will marry their own kind or one from the society they are a part of. One desiring a Christian husband or wife or one with certain good qualities should have fellowship with that type people. Although it doesn't always happen it is usually through this means that people are brought together.

Always they should be careful and deliberate in who they go with. In one sense every person you go with is a potential candidate for marriage. For this reason it is dangerous to get too involved before you know the person very well. It is morally wrong to lead anyone to think you are serious before you have had sufficient time to really know them. Playing with people's emotions just because you can is wrong. A string of broken hearts by some Lothario or sex kitten is no badge of honor.

Those desiring a husband or wife should be honest and frank with each other. Above all things, they should agree to be just friends until they come to know and appreciate each other. If the feeling is not mutual it is a one sided affair with one of the parties likely to be hurt. An affair of this type should be broken off before it goes too far.

LOVE OR DELUSION

Love at first sight is usually a romantic delusion. When people are suddenly and powerfully attracted to each other they may be the victim of seducing spirits. I Tim. 4:1. And there are times when a vacuum created by loneliness, a desire to love and be loved, is seemingly filled when some magnetic personality walks into your life. This powerful attraction could be caused by any number of factors with sex appeal often times at the center.

This is always a dangerous situation that can lead a couple into illicit sex or a wrong marriage. These sudden torrid love affairs are not love but infatuation which usually, if given time, will blow over. Of course the principals involved in such an affair are positive they have at last found their one and only. Determined restraint and sufficient time to come to know the person is very essential.

True love is not a sudden mystical magnetic force that overpowers two people in their desire for each other. Such affairs can turn into despicable disgust in a matter of days, weeks, or months. Even though sudden attraction might in time develop into true love it is usually physical

attraction or the personality of the person to begin with. And often the person we see to begin with turns out to be altogether different after we come to know them.

Conjugal love must be based upon honor and respect for each other. This is why sufficient time to come to know each other is so very important. Although the physical attraction and sex are very important, this is no basis for marriage. There must be common interests and understanding that enables two people to communicate plus honor and respect for each other. Love is not some mystical force that suddenly hits you like a thunderbolt.

Love for God likewise comes as a result of knowledge or faith that brings us into union with him through Jesus Christ. We love him because of who he is in the matter of his divine character and his love for us. It is not just some senseless mystical force but rather a love born out of honor and respect for one we have learned about through a knowledge of the truth.

This same principle applies to man and woman contemplating marriage. You don't marry an ideal, you marry a human being compassed about with infirmity like yourself. If we are wise we will know something about the person we are about to yoke up with for life.

If a man or woman desiring marriage will carefully and prayerfully observe these principles they need not make a mistake. God's word says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James 1:5-7.

God wants to give us wisdom in all matters pertaining to this life. Surely this is true of marriage which is one of life's most important decisions. It is my belief we can have rest and assurance born of genuine faith when we are led of God.

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BIRTH CONTROL

Aware of the fact that there are some things not clearly spelled out in the scriptures we subsequently have controversy in which sincere people often take opposite views on the same question. I might add that on some issues there are several views or interpretations, none of which agree with the others.

These differences of opinion are the result of numerous factors, two of which I will mention briefly. Number one: Many simply believe the traditional viewpoint of their group or church. It's their church, their denomination and their people. Some followers of such a group are simply sheep that believe their leaders can do no wrong. Others have been fully persuaded by their teachers who adeptly wrest the scriptures to confirm their traditional views.

The other group is not necessarily being loyal to their group, neither have they been fully convinced that their doctrine is true. It is simply a case of selfish expediency. They choose to believe a particular doctrine because it serves their purpose. That purpose might be religious ambition, financial gain or a license for sin.

Within the confines of all groups are people who need to prayerfully consider their position and form an honest conviction based upon the scriptures and their own conscience. God has given us liberty in many doubtful things which we can wisely use or abuse. It is in this area that many legalistic concepts have been formed and come forth as doctrines which bring men into bondage. I believe this is true of birth control as well as sex in general.

Paul says, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Romans 14:14.

A study of the above chapter clearly reveals that Paul has been dealing with numerous things over which Christians have different opinions.

Verse 15 reveals that we are not to abuse our liberty by using it in such a way as to offend our brother. Even though we might have faith and feel

no condemnation in some things we do, we are not to despise our weak brother who lacks such faith.

Verse 22 says, “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” This verse is simply saying we are to keep such faith to ourselves before God not making a public display of it where there is a danger of offending our weak brother.

This whole chapter is devoted to Christian liberty in doubtful things where there is a difference of opinion. It is admonishing both sides to be considerate of each other and to be fully persuaded in their own minds. In the subject we are now considering, I, likewise, admonish every reader to be fully persuaded in his own mind. My desire here is to simply get you to examine your present position in the light of the scriptures rather than traditional beliefs.

I must add that it is not an easy thing to change our views when we have been taught to believe a certain thing all our lives. It takes much prayer with a desire to know the truth of God’s glory alone. This plus a willingness to walk in the truth revealed is a great stumbling block to most people.

Needless to say, birth control is another controversial aspect of the subject of sex in general. Many poor souls are intimidated and live in mortal fear when they think of any type of birth control. Having been taught that it is the command of God to bear children they consider it a great sin to do anything to prevent conception.

Many couples are in great bondage because of this. Sexual intercourse is never fully satisfying as long as there are mental hang-ups caused by fear or condemnation. Afraid they will get pregnant and afraid to do anything to prevent it, they cannot approach the marriage bed with freedom necessary to fully enjoy sexual union. This fear seems to affect women more than it does men.

This is caused by a number of factors. Being the weaker and more sensitive vessel, the woman is more subject to intimidation than the man. Then too, women as a whole are more religiously conscientious than men. This is proven by the fact there are far more women who attend church than men.

The woman’s fear of pregnancy is caused by the knowledge of the consequences of her pregnancy. Nine unpleasant months of carrying the child, perhaps already burdened with small children and taking care of her home, can and does strike fear to the heart of many women. This with the fear and anxiety of the birth itself, plus twenty years of responsibility in mothering the child can have a traumatic effect on some women. This is the great reason Paul says, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ

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also loved the church, and gave himself for it;” Eph. 5:25. A kind, considerate husband can greatly alleviate the fear and anxiety of his wife during pregnancy.

Because so many ignorantly think the only purpose of sex is to beget and bear children, there is a great need to examine this question in the light of the scriptures. One of the chief scriptures used to justify this extreme position is Gen. 1:28, where among other things the Lord told Adam and Eve to “... Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth...”

Let’s not forget this was in the beginning of the creation and the Lord said the same thing to the other creatures, (Gen. 1:21-22) which have no moral conscience about reproduction. Just suppose we took the same attitude toward all creatures including the stray dogs and cats that roam the cities of the world, starving and diseased. These animals, as well as many other creatures, are often a nuisance and a menace to the health of society. Remember God blessed them as well as man, saying “... be fruitful and multiply...”.

Although it is true God set in motion the law of reproduction, he certainly didn’t intend for man to stand aside and be destroyed by the law. If man was to have dominion over all the earth as Gen. 1:26 says, he certainly gave him the intelligence to exercise that dominion for his own good.

This dominion would include man’s own natural earthly reproduction as well as the animal world. God has given man an intelligence far above that of the beast which moves by natural instinct only in obeying the lust and desire of his flesh. He has no capacity to think nor consider the consequence of his act. Yet some, under the guise of religion, would confine or put man in the same category as the beast when it comes to sex and reproduction.

Few would argue against birth control for people with certain diseases, physical handicaps, or mental retardation. Yet they, under the guise of religious conviction, would impose the law of unfettered reproduction upon all others regardless of condition.

POPULATION EXPLOSION

With respect to Gen. 1:28 where Adam and Eve are told to be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, I think most everyone will agree this scripture has pretty well been fulfilled.

One of the many great problems facing our world today is the population explosion. At the present tremendous rate of increase we will soon need another world to populate.

This population increase is rapidly shrinking our habitable world, increasing pollution and will soon make it impossible to produce enough food to feed earth's great multitude.

At the beginning of the Christian era it is estimated the earth's population was somewhere between 250 and 350 million. It took 1700 years for the population to double the first time. From 1700 to 1850 or 150 years later the population doubled again. It was during the nineteenth century the first billion was reached.

From 1850 to 1940 it only took 90 years to double again reaching the figure of 2,300,000,000. The 1969 population was estimated by the United Nations to be 4,309,000,000 or almost twice as many as the 1940 population. At the present rate of increase there will be 6,994,000,000 or almost seven billion people by the year 2000.

This means that the world's population will more than triple itself from 1940 to the year 2000 or a period of 60 years. A million babies a month are being born in India, a country where undernourishment and starvation has been prevalent for many years. With American food supplies scheduled to stop in a few months what will happen to them?

These statistics taken from Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopedia, Volume 19, pages 272-274, by Funk and Wagnalls, Incorporated, 1973, should tell us something. Surely it seems the handwriting is on the wall. Although hunger, starvation and disease are no stranger to millions who have already lived and died it seems that Revelation 6:5-6 is pointing to famine on a world-wide scale such as man has never experienced.

Another scripture used by some to impose their extreme views on others is I Timothy 5:14 where Paul says, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

A study of the context relating to this scripture (I Tim. 5:9-15) will show that Paul is not so much interested in the bearing of children as he is in keeping the younger women out of mischief. Marrying, having children and taking care of their home would serve to keep them from wandering from house to house as idle busybodies bringing reproach upon Christ and the Church.

None can deny that it has always been normal for all of God's earthly creatures to mate and reproduce. This is the law of nature. This is also true of man. Though created in the image of God, he is a physical being. As such it is his nature to mate and reproduce.

Since he is created in the image of God and has an intelligence that goes beyond that of the beast God has given him specific instruction concerning sex, marriage and the bearing of children. I might add that the true children of God are spiritual and not just physical. All Biblical

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instructions actually are given in the ultimate sense for the benefit of God's spiritual family. Were this not so neither Jesus nor Paul would have emphasized the spiritual over the natural. Matthew 12:47-50, Rom. 9:8, Gal.4:22-31.

Another traditional saying used as scripture to condemn birth control comes from Gen. 38 where Onan went in to the wife of a brother whom the Lord had slain to raise up seed in his brother's name. Under the custom which later became a part of the law (Deut. 25:5) it was the duty of the brother to marry the widow and raise up children in his brother's name. Knowing the seed would not be his, Onan spilled the sperm on the ground and the Lord also killed him. The moral principle involved here was Onan's contempt for his deceased brother whom he should have honored with seed that would perpetuate his name in the earth.

Judah the father of the two slain sons promised a third son, Shelah, to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, as soon as Shelah was old enough. Upon failure to keep his promise to her after Shelah was grown, Tamar pretended to be a harlot and tricked Judah into having intercourse with her that she might have a child to carry her deceased husband's name.

The father of the child had to be a close kinsman. This custom, which was later incorporated into and became a part of the law, was a type of the seed of Christ which must be perpetuated. The fact that Christ's seed must endure forever is borne out in Psalms 89:20, which says, "His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven."

From this story has emerged the saying, "it is better to put the seed in the belly of a whore than to let it fall upon the ground." This, of course, is not scripture but more man-made tradition that has served to bring people into bondage. How could such a saying be true when God's word plainly says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Heb. 13:4.

In Paul's treatment of the subject in I Cor. 7, he teaches that the principal reason for marriage is gratification of sexual desire lest the person be overcome by his passion and commit fornication. That is why he says in verse 9 it is better to marry than to burn.

Further on in the chapter, in verses 32 thru 35, the apostle actually says that it would be better not to marry at all that we might give ourselves to Christ without distraction. If begetting and bearing natural children were as important as some insist then Paul's emphasis or reason for marrying and not marrying was wrong.

Some ignorantly take the position that if God wants them to have children they will, if not, they won't. Just let nature take its course. Suppose a stockman took this attitude when a male from one breed of cows gets into a pasture with another breed. Letting nature take its course

would soon destroy a purebred herd. It's also a good thing the farmer knows when, where and how to sow his seed.

In the beginning the earth was unpopulated and there was ample room for expansion. Neither was there a pollution problem and none can deny that even 50 years ago the world held more of a future for mankind than today. The norm was to marry, reproduce and have families. For this reason God has given his people instructions concerning marriage and the bearing and rearing of children.

CONDITIONS A FACTOR

The last fifty years have witnessed a tremendous change in the earth. The population explosion, pollution, moral decay and the threat of world annihilation with nuclear weapons are part of this change. There is a great possibility that millions of babies now being born will either starve to death, or be killed in war or die from disease. World catastrophe from many standpoints seems imminent.

Of these great problems facing our world today the population explosion may be the greatest. More people means more cars, more fuel, more pollution, more utilities, more homes, more food, more materials and less land and natural resources to produce these things. The shortage of these things which we are now experiencing will increase as the population increases.

Already in many of these things, consumer demand exceeds man's ability to produce. As this condition worsens man's greed and selfishness to expand at his neighbor's expense will increase. This, of course, means more war and threat to world peace. All this is playing into the hands of the spirit of Anti-Christ which is increasing pressure upon mankind for a one world super government.

Aside from giving ourselves more completely to the cause of Christ, I certainly believe world conditions should be considered when we think of bringing children into the world. Jesus spoke of a time of trouble and said, "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days". Matt. 24:19. Paul likewise recognized that conditions should be a factor in these things. I Cor. 7:26-32.

In consideration of the scriptures and world conditions I see no reason for not practicing sensible birth control. This is especially true where a couple desires to more completely give themselves to Christ. However we must admit that in most cases Christ nor his kingdom is a consideration in the practice of birth control. But even in this, though the motivating factor may be selfish, it seems to be a blessing in disguise in not bringing innocent children into today's world.

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Not being a doctor I could not say with certainty which method is best. Although birth control pills seem to be the most popular means used at this time, some women cannot take them. I am also personally apprehensive about anything that would affect the natural chemistry of the body over a long period of time. It seems some natural means recommended by a specialist in this field of medical science would be preferable.

Where some desire to limit the number of children in their family or not have any children at all, they might consider sterilization. This is a comparatively simple and painless operation especially for the man. Although the operation is effective and does not hinder a couple from having normal sexual relations it is permanent. Because of this I would not recommend it until they have prayerfully determined they do not want any more children.

EUNUCHS

Since some, no doubt, will object to the very thought of an operation to keep from having children, I think it would be well to briefly consider the subject of Eunuchs. In Matt. 19:12, Jesus said, "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

Generally speaking a eunuch is a human male that has been castrated to prevent him from being able to have sexual intercourse or beget children. This was a practice in ancient times where kings or rulers would have male children castrated because they wanted to use them in positions of service where they would be in contact with women. This was especially so where the eunuch, sometimes called a chamberlain (Esther 1:12), took care of the king's wives or concubines. Rendered sexually impotent by this operation the eunuch could also give undivided attention to his job.

For the most part those who were born Eunuchs simply do not have the capacity nor desire for the opposite sex. This could be caused by a birth defect or other reasons known only to God. Although normal in every other way they do not have the capacity for sex physically nor psychologically.

Those who make themselves Eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake may simply have the will power to restrain themselves that they might give themselves wholly to the work of God. And no doubt some have had themselves castrated or sterilized in order to achieve this.

There is still another group of people who are born sterile but normal from the standpoint of sexual desire. They can marry and have normal

sexual relations but they cannot beget or have children. Certainly none can deny that for whatever the reason a person is rendered impotent it results in birth control. These are some of the doubtful things that I think a Christian ought to be persuaded of in his own mind, free from the dictates of the church.

GOD'S BEST

God's best and highest is for a Christian who has power over his own will to remain single and serve the Lord without the interference of marriage. Wives, husbands and children require much time, thought and energy that could otherwise be spent on serving God. This is what Paul is teaching in I Cor. 7:32-33.

The teaching of celibacy or forbidding anyone to marry is false and without scriptural foundation. The fact is God condemns this teaching as one of the doctrines of devils that would come forth in the latter times. I Tim. 4:1-3. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

For most of us God's gracious provision of grace is marriage. This is why Paul said, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." I Cor. 7:1-2.

Although childbearing is the natural result of marriage and sexual union, there is no scripture that forbids birth control or planned parenthood.

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PREMARITAL SEX

Needless to say all premarital sex or sex before marriage is wrong. As has been said elsewhere, all illicit sex is sin. Sin is transgression of God's law and the transgressor will reap what he sows. Gal. 6:7-8. Even couples anticipating marriage should respect God's law in this matter.

It is estimated by most authorities that at least one third of all teen-age girls getting married are pregnant. Family counselors inform us that in many such marriages the only object is legitimization for the child, with divorce agreed in advance.

One of the clever lies that Satan tells many couples anticipating marriage is that since they are going to be married anyway why deny themselves the pleasure of sex before marriage? This sounds like a logical argument to many couples who give in to their desire only to regret it later on. Very often this happens to young people who have been raised in a good moral religious environment.

Others come out of environments where morals are low. Therefore they have little or no scruples against illicit sexual activity, many times starting at a very early age. However some of these people are later reformed or converted and live wholesome productive lives in spite of their past.

Others coming out of more or less good homes with high moral standards engage in premarital sex because they want to be accepted. Still others feel a sense of insecurity and lack of love. Sex to them is simply a futile search for love and security they desire.

ROAD TO ILLICIT SEX

Courtship and heavy petting is the road that leads most couples into premarital sex. Normal human beings cannot continually be satisfied with just physical affection and caressing. God has made our bodies sensitive and responsive to love making with the opposite sex. This is the way passions are stirred and our minds and bodies are prepared for sex. Embracing, kissing and fondling along with persuasive endearments will ultimately lead to sex. They may start out with no intention of going too far

but one step in the wrong direction leads to another until they have gone all the way.

I would say that many with good morals who are led into premarital sex start out this way. Once caught in the web of sexual immorality, some of these go on into lives of sin and shame. As the saying goes, “if you play with fire long enough you will get burned.” This is the reason Paul admonished young Timothy to flee youthful lusts. II Tim. 2:22.

Love making with the opposite sex, especially someone you find physically attractive is thrilling and hard to resist. But it is also nature’s prelude to sexual intercourse which is the climax of physical love. Therefore it must be with restraint outside of marriage. Heavy petting, if engaged in long enough, will lead to sex.

CHRISTIANS TEMPTED ALSO

This is actually what the apostle is dealing with in I Cor. 7:36 where he says, “But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let him marry.” From a study of other translations it is evident that Paul is teaching Christian men and women joined together in the Lord by the Spirit that when the sexual urge toward each other becomes too great a temptation they should marry. This same truth is borne out in verse 9 where Phillip’s translation says, “I think it is far better for them to be married than to be tortured by unsatisfied desire.”

The old pharisaical adage that if you are a Christian you won’t be subject to evil thoughts or temptation by the opposite sex is certainly wrong according to what Paul is teaching here. Christians are human beings like everyone else and their mind and flesh are as subject to sex appeal as anyone. It is because of this they have to die daily and look to the Lord for grace to help in time of need. Heb. 4:15-16.

The sooner Christians become realistic about their depraved nature and recognize their only sufficiency is Christ they will begin to look to him rather than trust in the arm of flesh. Isaiah 45:22 says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and beside me there is none else.” He is God and beside him there is none else. All virtue, strength, wisdom and knowledge come from him. He is the Lord of hosts; all angels, powers and principalities are under his dominion and control.

David understood this great truth when he said, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Psalms 51:5. He also understood as God wants us to understand where his help came from. This is why he said, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help, My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” Psalms 121:2.

CAUSE OF MANY PROBLEMS

Premarital sex often leads to distrust and suspicion that can wreck a marriage. Situations can and often do arise which make it easy to remember and cause the husband or wife to become suspicious and jealous. Unless a couple knows the Lord and has a genuine spirit of forgiveness it is easy for the enemy to remind them of the past.

Then sometimes it is hard for the individual to forgive himself. A young couple who were Christians belonging to the same Church became intimate before marriage and the girl became pregnant. Although they were married and eventually had a fine family, this premarital pregnancy so preyed upon the mind of the young woman until she literally went insane. After extensive psychiatric treatment her husband was told there was nothing more they could do to help her and that she would have to be committed to a mental institution. However the Lord was gracious and merciful to bring her into contact with a Christian group that recognized she was demon possessed. After much prayer and quite a long battle she was gloriously delivered by the Lord. This was done to the utter amazement of the doctors who had treated her and finally said there was no hope.

She became demon possessed as a result of mental harassment from the enemy who took advantage of her guilt complex. This often happens when people sin or fail in some area of life. When a person's will has been broken by giving in to immoral desire the door of their mind is opened permitting evil spirits to come in and possess other areas of their life. Once this has happened it is possible for these people to descend into unmentionable depths of immorality. And in some cases they are literally driven insane by the invading spirit whose ultimate aim is to destroy them spiritually, mentally and physically.

Not only is premarital sex subject to open the door to mental harassment by evil spirits but it can be the cause of mental hang-ups concerning sex in general. Persons with any degree of moral conscience cannot enter into illicit sex relations with real freedom. Guilt and fear are ever present to distract and hinder them from achieving real sexual pleasure.

Very often after marriage, the guilt and fear complex remains as an indelible reminder upon the mind of the person. Since it is necessary for complete mental concentration during sexual union this can keep the person from fully yielding themselves and enjoying intercourse. This can grow and develop into a mental hang-up that can keep the person from enjoying sex or ever having a climax.

Once a person begins to experience failure it is easy to develop a fear that soon has the person defeated before they start. Some even go so far as to detest sex in general. A negative attitude on the part of either partner also affects the other one and hinders them. It seems that women are more prone to develop mental hang-ups over sex than men are. However it can happen to men as well as women.

VIRTUE ENHANCES MARRIAGE

Another great reason for abstaining from premarital sex is because it causes the wedding night and the honeymoon to lose its luster of joyful anticipation. It's perfectly normal for those anticipating marriage to look forward to the time when they can come together in sexual bliss.

The joyful anticipation of the marriage bed and sexual union with the one you love shouldn't be marred or spoiled by premarital sex. The knowledge that your beloved comes to you virtuous and unspoiled by immorality is a tremendous psychological boost toward honor and respect for each other. This results in faith and trust in each other and is a great aid toward sexual harmony and success in marriage.

Man is so constituted that he desires that which hasn't been spoiled by others. Virtue is something that demands honor and respect. Honor and respect are a must if a marriage is to succeed.

Even those with previous marriage experiences should honor this principle. Virtue is not just restricted to single persons. Although people have been married before they will have the honor and respect of others by abstaining from sexual promiscuity. Chastity and moral decency is a condition of the heart and applies to all whether married or single.

It is possible for a single person to technically be a virgin so far as sexual experimentation is concerned and yet not possess the virtue of heart that we are talking about. I might also add that it is possible for a person who has sexually lost their virtue to be saved by the grace of God and become a decent virtuous person in a spiritual sense.

The word of God puts a premium upon chastity and virtue which we cannot ignore. Paul says in II Cor. 11:2, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Although he is speaking here of the Church it is plain and simple that God desires purity.

Proverbs 31:10-11 says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."

In spite of the fact that today's generation is very adept in the use of contraceptives, premarital sex can lead to pregnancy, abortion or

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illegitimate children. Resorting to abortion can also lead to a guilt complex which in turn can cause mental problems in the future.

Needless to say illegitimate children, if not put up for adoption, are often unloved and unwanted. Many of them become wards of the state and a burden to society, If kept by their mothers or raised by relatives they may have to bear the reproach of their illegitimacy before a cruel world.

As stated elsewhere most venereal disease is transmitted through premarital or illicit sex. One of the great tragedies of venereal disease, especially syphilis, is that it is very contagious and can infect an unborn child and permanently injure the brain. This, of course, is the main reason the law requires a blood test before marriage.

These are simply a few of some of the tragic results of premarital sex. But they do not begin to tell the tragedy of many lives that take this road. Once caught in the web of sexual immorality it is very easy to follow the crowd and continue on into greater sin. Alcohol, drugs, crime, prostitution, prison, disease, misery, shame and suicide are some of the evil companions of sexual immorality.

Thank God for the abounding grace that can save and deliver those that turn to Christ in repentance and faith. Within the ranks of Christianity we find many who have been saved and delivered from deep sin. Such were some who belonged to the Church of Corinth. I Cor. 6:9-11.

Although God can and often does save some like the Corinthian believers from sin, it is a great mistake for enlightened people to presume upon the grace of God. Luke 12:47-48 says, "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

There is no limit to the depths of iniquity a human being can fall into when he rejects light and gives in to his depraved nature. Romans 1:21-32 tells of the terrible consequences of such sin.

Thank God for the grace that saves us from such sin and enables us to forget the past and press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:13-14.

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SEXUAL PERVERSION

In our treatment of the subject of sex it is necessary that we consider sexual perversion. This is especially necessary in this day of sexual permissiveness which can lead to perversion. Like sexual permissiveness in general, sexual perversion is also being condoned, approved of and defended by many in high places of influence.

Some doctors, psychiatrists, teachers and even some churches and ministers are approving of it. There are actually some churches that welcome sexual perverts into their membership.

It isn't just confined to the scum of society but there are many educated, intelligent people from refined social backgrounds that practice some form of sexual perversion. Under the guise of civil rights and human liberty, the sexual pervert has come out in the open, waving the banner of gay liberation. Attending political rallies and conventions he is demanding respectability and freedom to practice his degeneracy as well as a voice in government.

According to a recent Associated Press release (Dec. 16, 1973) the trustees of the American Psychiatric Association voted 13 to 0 against the classification of homosexuality as a mental illness. These trustees are the policy making board of the 20,000 member, American Psychiatric Association.

In advance of the above mentioned meeting the "National Gay Task Force" issued a statement saying, the diagnosis of homosexuality as a mental illness has been the cornerstone of oppression for a tenth of our population.

The trustees also urged repeal of laws in 42 states and the District of Columbia, "making criminal offenses of sexual acts performed by consenting adults in private." They further urged enactment of laws at all levels to insure homosexual citizens the same rights and protection now guaranteed to others.

Beyond doubt the trend toward unnatural sex in general is being greatly accelerated in this hour. As I have brought out in the article on "The Loosing of Satan", I believe that sexual permissiveness and the

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change of attitude toward perversion are the result of greatly increased demon activity. I might add that this is also one of the last signs of moral decay before divine judgment falls upon mankind.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

This was the case with Sodom and Gomorrah before God destroyed them with fire and brimstone. Gen. 13:13 says, “But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.”

In Gen. 19 we see just how low the men of Sodom had descended the ladder of moral corruption when he sent two angels in the appearance of men into Sodom to bring Lot out. The men of Sodom surrounded the house of Lot demanding that the men (two angels) be given to them that they might have relations with them. Their perverted desire was such that they spurned the offer of Lot to give them his virgin daughters instead.

From this Biblical account of the wickedness of the men of Sodom we get the word ‘sodomy’ meaning unnatural sexual intercourse between men. However there are many types of sexual perversion between men, between women, and between men and women. Some forms of sexual perversion are so sordid and vile until they are unclassified and unmentionable. This includes sexual relations with animals as well as human beings.

FOUR TYPES

Although there are many, many forms of sexual perversion there are only four general types of people guilty of perversion that we want to consider here.

PRESSURE OR INFLUENCE

The first group we wish to consider are those who submit to sexual perversion because of influence or pressure from others. They may do so out of fear or simply a desire to keep the peace. The prisons are rampant with this type of sexual perversion as well as confirmed perverts. Older hardened criminals practice perversion simply to gratify their lust. Younger ones submit out of fear or promise of reward.

This same type of perversion can very often happen when a woman unknowingly marries a sexual pervert or a man that later on develops into one. Though she does not want to and in fact may detest unnatural sex, she submits out of fear or to please her husband.

Also among this group you have those who, under the influence of alcohol or narcotics, engage in unnatural sex with those who take advantage of their condition. It is easy for a perverse sex devil to temporarily take control of some people when their mind is distorted by

alcohol or drugs. Also there are many that are forced into unnatural sex by intimidation or rapists who threaten them with bodily harm or even death.

Secondly there are those who experiment with unnatural sex seeking a super sex thrill that is simply a fantasy in their minds. Some of these may become disgusted and simply quit. Others go on and become a confirmed sexual deviate.

PROSTITUTES

The third group we consider are those who submit to perversion for money or gain. They are your unnatural sex prostitutes. Among your prostitutes in general you will find some of this type. This type, although not a sexual pervert in the strictest sense, has little or no moral scruples and will do most anything for a dollar.

BORN PERVERTS

The fourth type we want to consider is perhaps the most destitute of all. Whether we want to recognize it or not man is born with a corrupt depraved nature. His depravity alone unless tempered by moral or Christian influence is bent in the opposite direction from God and righteousness. Admittedly stronger in some than in others, I believe there is a tendency toward perversion in all.

Although the normal or natural sex drive overrules this tendency toward perversion in most people, there are manifestations of homosexuality at a very early age in others. They are born with that strong overruling tendency toward unnatural sex. The reason for this is we not only inherit the physical stature, intelligence, and traditions of our forefathers, but also their moral weakness.

There are spiritual principles involved here as well as physical and intellectual. Deut. 5:9 says, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

We not only bequeath to our children what we have and what we are naturally but also what we are spiritually. Jesus said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him, When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

Stephen likewise confirmed this same principle before he was stoned to death. Acts 7:51-52. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted: and they have

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slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:"

It will be noticed that this spirit of antagonism and hatred of God and truth was ministered and handed down from generation to generation. Likewise the cesspool of moral corruption and decay that is so manifest in today's generation is the progressive result of man's rebellion and consequent hatred of God and truth. Born sexual perverts are, I believe, the result of an iniquitous legacy. Due to various environmental conditions some are slower in giving themselves to the spirit (evil spirit) of perversion than others. For this reason it is manifest at an earlier age in some than in others.

Romans 1:21-32 gives us a progressive picture of man turning away from God and truth and being turned over to the depravity and corruption of his own vile nature. It is a picture of man that finally reaches the place where he does not want to retain God in his knowledge. God eventually gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

Romans 1:25 says, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." Changing the truth of God into a lie is what is happening today to those who are condoning, approving of and defending sexual perversion. This scripture has been fulfilled in the lives of many in high places of influence. They have become vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart is darkened. Abandoned by the God of truth they have been given over to a reprobate mind. Controlled by the power of darkness they have actually come to believe these things and take pleasure in them.

Verses 26 and 27 says, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."

It is evident that Paul had reference to vile unnatural passion which went beyond the normal passion of male for female and female for the male. God created man and woman to desire each other which is normal and right. The fact that the passions referred to here are vile and unnatural is borne out by other translations. Let's note some of these:

"...unto vile passions." (American Standard Version).

"For this cause God delivered them up to shameful passions." (John A. Broadus et al).

"God therefore handed them over to disgraceful passions." (J.B. Phillips).

“And, in return, God abandoned them to passions which brought dishonor to them selves.” (Knox).

“That is why God has given them up to passions of dishonor.” (Helen Barrett Montgomery).

THE ROAD TO PERVERSION

When a man or woman begins to play the field in sexual experimentation they are subject to be taken captive by their own lusts ever looking and searching for the sexual thrill that doesn't exist. The further they go in this direction the more difficult it is for them to ever be satisfied or settle down with one companion or sex in the normal sense. Such persons are a poor risk for marriage as they are ever subject to lapse back into their habit of sexual infidelity.

What often happens is they are taken captive by a demon of lust that keeps prodding them on from one partner to another. Like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, sex becomes an illusory experience they are ever searching for but never able to find.

The presence of one demon may open the door to others more vile and perverse than the first one. This principle is confirmed by the Lord Jesus in Matt. 12:43-45. This, I believe, is the way many are led step by step into various forms of sexual perversion. When sex in the normal sense fails to gratify their burning desire they become an easy prey for evil spirits that prod them into unnatural sex.

The thing we need to understand is that basically we are all subject to like passions and stand in need of restraint and temperance. Giving ourselves to excess in any carnal (fleshly) form is subject to lead into demonic bondage. Undisciplined minds are fertile ground for such passion.

Although our wills vary in their desire and ability to resist any given or specific temptation we are not born with disciplined wills to overcome. This comes as a result of moral and environmental influences that form certain convictions within us. It is these convictions which serve to hold us back from temptation and excess.

GREATEST DETERRENT

The greatest deterrent of all is conversion to Christ and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. However even Christians have their carnal nature with its inherent weakness to contend with. There is no supernatural presto experience this side of the grave that delivers us from the power and influence of temptation. Although Christ within gives us an inward desire to overcome we are often ignorant of the Word and the

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necessary faith to overcome. This is why even Christians must be properly taught to discipline their minds if they are to overcome.

Disciplined minds come through a knowledge of the truth (Word of God) and earnest heartfelt prayer that brings the presence of God into our life. It was knowledge of the truth that enabled Jesus to resist Satan and overcome him in the temptation in the wilderness. Matt. 4:1-11.

Even in the unconverted where they have moral scruples that enable them to resist certain temptations, it is because they have been taught to believe that way. Though not Christians they have come to believe certain principles as a result of Christian influence or good moral environment.

Peter speaks of those who escape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. II Peter 2:20. This doesn't mean these people are Christians or justified by faith but simply that they have been sheltered and protected by the influence of Christian knowledge. From a study of the context of scripture it is evident they can be overcome by the corrupting influence of the world and the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

Genuine conversion plus a knowledge of the Word are a must if we are to overcome. Peter said, II Peter 1:2-4, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Please note that Peter says grace and peace is multiplied to us through the knowledge of God. All things are given to us that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. It is by exceeding great and precious promises that we are made partakers of the divine nature.

Notice how Peter over and over again points out that it is through divine knowledge we receive grace and peace and partake of the divine nature. Knowledge means, to know or believe something that you base your hope upon. This is faith which cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17.

Knowledge along with heartfelt prayer is our greatest resource when it comes to overcoming temptation. This is why Jesus said, "...men ought always to pray, and not to faint." This is also why Jesus made it a habit of rising early and going out alone and praying to the Father. He was acutely aware of his need of grace and help to overcome.

Jude had this in mind in verse 20 when he said, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”

THOSE ANTICIPATING MARRIAGE

Because of the prevalence of sexual perversion those anticipating marriage surely need to be led of the Lord. One of the tragic results of people marrying without being led of God is that they may awaken to the revolting reality that they have married a sexual pervert. Often when this happens the normal innocent partner will give in to the perverted desires of their mate and sooner or later partake of the same spirit (evil spirit). God’s word, Ephesians 5:31, says that in marriage the two become one flesh. As we have said elsewhere, just going before an official and repeating certain marriage vows does not make a couple one. There has to be a meeting of the minds in which this unity of thought and purpose is achieved. This principle applies to saint and sinner alike.

In marriages such as this it is most difficult to live with a husband or wife possessed by a spirit of perversion without giving in to them. One possessed by such a spirit continually seeks to bring their marriage partner into their own iniquitous sexual indulgences. Where the normal partner, possessed by moral scruples, resists their advances they are subject to intimidation by demanding threats and harassment.

Numerous cases of sexual perversion have come to our attention in which one marriage partner desiring to live a good moral Christian life found themselves in a situation they did not know how to cope with. In most cases it is a wife, sometimes with children, that feels helplessly trapped with an inconsiderate demanding husband. Only God knows the anguish and despair of such an one.

However regardless of the consequence, a wife or husband finding themselves in such a situation must stand true to God and their own conscience. This is their only hope for peace with God and ultimately helping bring deliverance to their mate. In doing this you can depend on God to fight your battle and the Lord can use your chaste behavior to speak to the heart of the erring one.

In all other things the innocent partner should honor their husband or wife as long as they are pleased to dwell with them under these conditions. I Cor. 7:12-13, I Peter 3:1-7.

This rule, of course, does not apply when a situation becomes intolerable. This may very well happen when the innocent partner begins to resist their perverted desire. When the home life becomes unbearable or the erring mate turns to outsiders to gratify his or her perverted desire, I believe the innocent party is justified in leaving them.

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God is faithful and will bring a permanent solution to such cases where his child dares to be faithful to him. In some instances the perverted one will be delivered and saved. In other cases they will choose to separate themselves and join one of their own kind, thus freeing the innocent party to serve God without interference.

ROAD TO REPROBATION

Regardless of the type of sexual perversion or the conditions under which people indulge they are in danger. As is brought out in Romans, chapter one, sexual perversion is one of the outstanding signs of reprobation. A reprobate is one who has been abandoned by God. He has been given over to his vile passions and without a moral conscience takes pleasure in his sin.

This is the bottomless pit of moral corruption from which there is no hope of deliverance. Although there are numerous other signs of reprobation in Romans 1:21-32, sexual perversion is set forth as the outstanding characteristic. When you indulge in sexual perversion of any type for any reason you may be on the road to reprobation whether you have reached it or not.

Although many sexual deviates justify themselves and continue to masquerade under a false cloak of respectability, others make no pretense as they sink lower and lower into the cesspool of iniquity. Molesters of children, sadistic cruelty, dope addiction, witchcraft, Satan worship, defiance of law, crime and unmentionable perversion all lie in the path of the sexual deviate.

IS THERE HOPE?

Although some sexual perverts have, no doubt, been given over to a reprobate mind and there is no hope for them there is hope for others. Only the God of all grace knows who these are. For this reason it is not our prerogative to turn any away that express a desire for help.

Paul says in I Cor. 6:9-10, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

It is obvious Paul had reference to sexual perversion when he included in this list of sinners the effeminate and abusers of themselves with mankind. But thank God he goes on to say in verse 11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

SEXUAL PERVERSION

Beyond a shadow of doubt God had delivered and saved some of these Corinthians from sexual perversion. Yes there is hope for the sexual deviate if he desires help and will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise God the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin including sexual perversion. I John 1:7.

Chapter 6

LOVE

Ephesians 5:25. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

Although we have said much about love elsewhere in the subject on “Sex,” it seems that a more exhaustive treatment of the subject is necessary. After all is said and done, love is the one thing that is absolutely necessary. Without love it is well nigh impossible for a couple to succeed in marriage.

This is especially true in this day of over emphasis of physical attraction and sex. Of all the virtues and qualities of character that we might mention, love alone will hold people together. For this reason we certainly need to know what love really is.

Although sex is important, apart from love it is base and animalistic. Love must be mutually real for two people to experience true sexual satisfaction. The harmony of hearts and minds as a result of love based upon honor and respect for each other is absolutely necessary. Not only must sexual desire be gratified during intercourse but the mind, the heart or the spirit of the persons must experience satisfaction also.

Illicit sex or sex without true love violates these principles and makes it impossible for a couple to achieve true sexual harmony. Anything that a man does or needs to do, whether physical or spiritual, is governed by certain God-given principles. Consequently it has to be done right or in accordance with these principles.

In the final analysis the privilege and enjoyment of sex is not just physical but spiritual also.

It is the testimony of many couples who married in unbelief that their sex life was revolutionized after coming to Christ. After salvation, sex became a sacred and blessed experience with spiritual significance. They not only became thankful to God for the privilege of sex but experienced a fuller and more complete satisfaction in the sexual union. The sanctifying presence of God makes a difference in all things including sex.

MANY TYPES OF LOVE

Although there are many words translated “love” in the Bible, the love we are concerned about here is true conjugal love, or the love that a man and woman must have for each other if their marriage is to succeed. Conjugal love is based upon many factors that cause a man and woman to be ideally suited for each other.

However, it might be well to consider some of the various types of love mentioned in the Bible. For example, three types of love are mentioned in II Timothy 3. Paul speaks of men who are lovers of their own selves, lovers of pleasures and lovers of God. In each instance the word “lovers” came from a different Greek word.

There is a love which means to be fond of and can apply to a person or an object. There is also a fleshly or carnal love which is based upon physical attraction or the tie of kinship such as the Pharisees had for their own. And lastly, there is a deep abiding love that endures and overcomes such as is translated charity in I Corinthians 13.

But our question here is, “What kind of love does it take to build a marriage?” It is evident from a casual observation that many do not have this type of love. The breakup of marriages and divorces is ample testimony that this type of love is lacking in many marriages.

Yet many couples say during their courtship and early days of marriage that they are madly in love. Later on these same people come to literally despise each other.

This usually happens after they live together awhile and come to see each other’s faults. Being ignorant of their true condition, this results in a conflict of personalities with each blaming the other. With neither the wisdom nor the desire to work their problems out, separation and divorce are the inevitable result.

MUST HAVE FOUNDATION

Much of this could be avoided if couples desiring marriage knew what love really is and would take sufficient time to come to know each other. The saying that love is blind is false; conjugal love must have a basis or foundation if it is to endure when the trials begin to come. In the matter of salvation or coming to Christ, Jesus said, we must dig deep and build our spiritual house upon the rock if it is to stand when the storms begin to come against it. Matt. 7:24-27. In Luke 14:28-30, Jesus gave us a parable about counting the cost before we begin to build. If this is true of spiritual things, how much more is it necessary concerning marriage.

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Although conjugal love cannot be compared to God's love, it must exceed all other earthly ties. Jesus said, "For this cause (conjugal love) shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife." Mark 10:7.

The union of man and woman is a type of the union of Christ and his church. Failure to understand and count the cost is why so many marriages go on the rocks. Mere professors of Christianity fail because no true union is ever effected between them and Christ. Marriages, likewise, fail because there is never a true marital union effected between the man and the woman.

MANY SUBSTITUTES

Many things other than love have been responsible for drawing people together. Sometimes it is infatuation which is defined as intense unreasoning passion or desire. Suddenly you are overwhelmingly attracted to a person whom you may know very little about.

Infatuation may be the result of any number or combinations of things in both parties that causes them to be so powerfully attracted to each other. This situation is often referred to as love at first sight. After a more thorough look, love at first sight may turn into hate.

Infatuation is often the result of physical attraction or personality impression. First impressions of people can be false or very misleading. It is not always a deliberate effort on the part of either sex to attract and deceive, they are simply trying to make the best impression they can. Although there are always some charlatans out to deceive and seduce, it is normal for those interested in the opposite sex to put on their best front.

Though is it possible for infatuation to develop into true love after a period of time, infatuation in itself is not love.

The great need in such cases is for the couple to go together long enough to really get to know each other. It is easy for people to be in love by way of long distance. As the saying goes "familiarity breeds contempt." Couples need to be together with their eyes and ears open long enough to see the real person.

Some marry to get away from home and the dominion of their parents. Marriage to them seems to be a way of escape from parental correction and restraint. In many instances the problem is in them and not their parents. Although most parents are at fault to some degree in raising their children, it is a great mistake to think that marriage will solve the problem.

Many marry because they are in love with love. They have romantic illusions about love, marriage and sex. Someone comes along and they simply make that person the center of their dream. Too often this type of love turns into a marital nightmare.

Still others want a husband or a wife with all the trimmings that go with married life. They want a home, security, companionship and sex. They don't necessarily have to be madly in love, just physically acceptable and able to fill the bill.

Others marry for money, social prestige, or ulterior motives. To them, marriage is secondary to their own selfish aspirations. In spite of the fact that people marry for many reasons who are not truly in love, some actually come to love each other in the process of time.

However this is certainly no recommendation that people marry for any of these reasons. Many of their marriages are doomed to fail in process of time. All it takes is sufficient time to see each other's faults.

Although there is no real love between them, some couples manage to live together for varying lengths of time. This is because of mutual benefit or other common interests. It may be because of children, religion, positions or advantage or other factors. However, like the wall built with untempered mortar (Ezekiel 13:10-11), they are subject to fall when the storm comes.

ONLY BASIS FOR MARRIAGE

The only real reason for marriage is love. As said elsewhere in this subject on "Sex", love is not some senseless mystical force that suddenly hits you like a thunderbolt. Love, like everything else, must have a basis. Charming ways, physical attraction and sex appeal might all be present but this in itself is not love nor the basis for marriage.

It is my conviction that people marrying in unbelief or out of Christ have far less chance of success in marriage. This also includes nominal Christianity or mere professors. Without God, who is love (I John 4:8), it is difficult to love someone. The natural man is too often motivated by his own selfish and depraved nature.

This is also the reason sex is often the ruling factor in marriage. Beyond doubt, this is the greatest thing that draws man and woman together. This is as it should be. God created the two sexes so they would be attracted to each other. But he also gave them wisdom to not be ruled by the sex urge alone. There is certainly nothing wrong with sex providing a couple have a genuine love for each other. And this love must be the result of many intangible qualities that make them suited for each other.

BEGINNING OF LOVE

The question is, how does conjugal love begin? It starts in the heart of the person who has the capacity to love and be loved. Love is not just a desire for a woman that you call a wife who supplies your sex, has your children, keeps your house and cooks your meals.

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Neither is love the desire for a man you call husband, who gives you his name, brings in the groceries and supplies your sexual need. The desire for a man or woman called husband or wife who supplies the physical or material necessities of life is not love. Love has to have a more enduring foundation than sexual gratification and the creature comforts of life.

TRUE LOVE

Love, as we have said elsewhere, is a two way street. It must be an unselfish desire to give as well as receive. True conjugal love involves the whole personalities of two people – not just any two people but the man and a woman who are uniquely suited for each other, suited for each other by the many intangible and complex qualities that make them the persons they are. These qualities have to be such that they cause the two to blend together and make one complete whole.

With the capacity to love and be loved, it is a matter of finding the person that God has made whose life can become one with yours. In the process of searching and finding that one person you can truly love, the woman should never be the aggressor. This is contrary to divine principle. Being a type of the Church, the woman should be more timid and reticent than a man. I Peter 3:1-6. The man, being the head of the woman, should be the leader and the more aggressive of the sexes.

Although the woman may be attracted to the man first in recognizing in him the type of man she could fall in love with, she should modestly and discreetly wait for him to notice her.

As Christ takes the initiative in wooing and winning his bride, the Church, the man should take the initiative in wooing and winning his bride, the woman. I John 4:19 says, “We love him because he first loved us.” It is when we learn of his love, his concern and care for us that we love him. In like manner the woman with the capacity to love and be loved, responds to the love of the man. In his seeking, the man is not just looking for a woman with a beautiful body or a cook, housekeeper or companion but a woman with spiritual, mental and physical qualities that cause him to love her.

A man can be in love with a woman’s spirituality or moral virtues. He can be in love with her mind or intelligence. He can love her companionship because they understand and are able to communicate with each other. He can be in love with her sentiments or emotions. In addition to honor and respect, plus the ability to communicate, a couple must need each other and feel needed.

As the man expresses his love to and for the woman, she simply responds to his love. With the capacity to love as well as be loved, her love deepens and grows for the man as she comes to know and understand him.

His love, likewise, deepens and grows for her as he comes to know and understand her better.

LOVE IS NOT BLIND

This is the great reason why a couple should really come to know each other before considering marriage. If they will take their time and keep their eyes and ears open, they will discover whether it is really love or something else.

However love is more than a sum total of certain qualities residing in two people. Compatibility, communication, moral virtues, and physical attraction help form a specific personality but they are no guarantee of love. Although these things are important there might actually be certain negative factors that are just as important in bringing two people together. The person you fall in love with might not be attractive or desirable to others but they are the only one for you.

GREATEST MANIFESTATION OF LOVE

Perhaps the greatest manifestation of conjugal love is the unselfish desire to make the object of your love happy. On the part of the man, he has a tender longing desire to shelter, provide for and protect his lady love. On the part of the woman, she wants to please the man in her life and make him happy. Their greatest joy and happiness is to be together and see the other happy. This desire to make each other happy is the result of mutual admiration and respect plus the knowledge that they both need each other.

Real love is not self-centered and just interested in its own gratification. Although all normal human beings desire to be appreciated and loved, true love is more concerned about the other party than itself. I cannot over emphasize the fact that two people in love feel needed by each other and have an intense desire to meet that need. When apart, their thoughts and concern are about the other and they long and look forward to the time when they can be together. When together they experience a joy, a peace, a rest, a strength and a completeness they do not have with any other human being. This is because they have become one. This is love.

Chapter 7

THE HONEYMOON

Hebrews 13:4. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

In our treatment of the subject of sex it certainly seems appropriate that some analysis of a newly wed couple’s sexual problems should be considered. It is usually the honeymoon where they begin to learn about each other in a sexual sense. This is where the marriage bed begins. This is the long awaited climax of their courtship and love for each other.

At least this is where their first experience together in sexual union should take place. I might add this should be the moral rule for all regardless of whether it’s their first marriage or sexual experience. Newly married couples, regardless of their past experiences, have certain adjustments to make.

As is brought out elsewhere in our writings there are many sexual myths that have to be dispelled through truth. It is on the honeymoon that newlyweds have to come to grips with the sexual myths they have come to believe. Some are frustrated and greatly disappointed when their honeymoon fails to bring the sexual bliss and happiness they anticipated.

Sexual myths or mental hang-ups are simply wrong thinking or wrong believing. Early sexual frustration can lead to greater mental hang-ups that will continue to hinder sexual harmony and bliss long after the honeymoon is over. This is caused by ignorance on the part of one or both the bride and groom.

MAN THE HEAD

Man as head of the woman is a type of Christ, the head of the Church which is his body. Even as Christ through love, patience, and truth takes the initiative in working with his body the Church, so should the man in helping his wife sexually. It is my conviction that the man is more responsible than the woman in making a success of marriage including their sex life.

God did not make man the head of the woman by accident any more than he made Christ the head of the Church by accident. I Cor. 11:3. By

virtue of his creation man is the stronger vessel. Although we are aware of the spirit at work today to eliminate this God-ordained distinction between the man and the woman, this difference remains. I Peter 3:7 says, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered." This same order is confirmed by Paul in I Tim. 2:9-15.

The fact that this principle is not understood nor honored by much of the world does not eliminate it. Our purpose here is not to convert the world on this issue but to help those who sincerely desire truth that will help them in their marriage and sex life. Everyone will profit by obedience to divine principle whether they are a Christian or not.

Man, as the head of the woman, is endowed by his creator with greater strength both physically and intellectually. Generally speaking the man has more discernment, greater will power, courage and initiative than the woman. Although there are varied exceptions to these qualities in men, it is these general characteristics that enable them to take their place as leader and head of the woman. In reference to Melchisedec (type of Christ) blessing Abraham, Hebrews 7:7 says, "And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." Likewise the woman, in the subordinate position, should be blessed by her head the man.

In contrast to these qualities in the man, the woman, as a result of being the weaker vessel, is more fearful, timid and less discerning. This is why she is the helpmeet instead of the head. Genesis 2:18. This is also why it is necessary for the man and the woman to assume their God-given places in the marriage union. This in itself is the beginning of success in marriage and subsequent sexual harmony.

In taking the initiative man must exercise patience, love and moral constraint and not force or coercion. The fact that the man is stronger and more aggressive and the woman is weaker and more timid does not eliminate this God-ordained method. Eph. 5:25-33, I Peter 3:7.

Christ, the head, is always sufficient and available. There is no lack on his part. But the Church, his body, has to be aroused and prepared. Faith is necessary before she can respond to his wooing. Therefore faith must be ministered to her through love, the Word and the Holy Spirit. Rom. 10:17. She has to be quickened or made alive (conscious) of his love for her.

MUST BE PREPARED

This same principle applies to the man in regard to the woman. Most men are quickly excited and ready for sexual intercourse. But this is not so of most women. Although she is more sensitive than the man in many

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ways, God made her far less aggressive and sexually excitable than the man. She has to be patiently and carefully prepared for sexual response.

More fearful and easily intimidated than the man, conditions have to be just right before she is able or feels free to yield herself in sexual intercourse. Although the woman is more subject to such distraction, this is also true of the man. Since the mind controls the various functions of the body, including man's and woman's sexual organs, there must be complete mental concentration for sexual union. As we have said elsewhere, sex is more psychological than physical.

Here again we have a type of principle that must be honored. Man is saved by faith and faith cometh by hearing. Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 10:17. What a person believes brings him into union with God. Works or corresponding action is the result of his faith. Likewise there must be mental and physical preparation before sexual union can be effected.

PRIVACY NEEDED

To facilitate this a young married couple should get away from friends, relatives and acquaintances where they can have those first few days of married life in privacy. The Lord himself recognizes the need for newly wed couples to have this time of adjustment and coming to know each other as man and wife. Deut. 24:5 says, "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken."

This need for privacy on the honeymoon where they can feel free to give vent to their love and desire for each other is very necessary. Along with this there should also be time and opportunity for wholesome entertainment sandwiched in between their love making. Going and doing some things together will enhance the honeymoon and their first few days together as man and wife.

PHYSICAL ATTRACTION IMPORTANT

Needless to say these first days together are very important and many times vital to the future success of their marriage. Each should be at their very best in physical appearance and cleanliness. This includes looking good, acting good and smelling good. Song of Solomon 4:10 says, "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices."

The bridegroom speaks of the physical love of his bride as being better than the love of wine and the smell of her ointments than all spices. This has reference to perfume and her physical loveliness which has an intoxicating effect upon the bridegroom. These things help to

psychologically prepare a couple where they can say, “Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.” Song of Solomon 4:7.

With privacy and conditions conducive to sexual relationship, the next thing in order is mental and physical preparation.

This is accomplished through tender endearments and physical expressions of love and passion for each other. Intimate love making which comes naturally for most young people is the means ordained of God to prepare minds and bodies for sexual union. The natural love of a man and woman is a type of the spiritual love of Christ and the Church.

The spiritual love of Christ and his bride the Church is foreshadowed by the natural love of the bridegroom and his bride in Song of Solomon. Song of Solomon 1:2 says, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.” Verse 13 of chapter one says, “A bundle of myrrh is my well beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.”

Using symbolic language, this entire book sets forth the love and desire of the bridegroom and bride for each other. Although it typifies spiritual love it uses physical terms which natural man would readily understand. This is accomplished by pointing to and extolling the various parts of the human body. Head, eyes, hands, hair, teeth, lips, cheeks, belly, feet, navel, mouth, neck, legs, thighs and breasts are all referred to. In summation chapter 7 verses 6 and 7 says, “How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights. This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.”

It will be noticed in verse seven that the word “stature” is used, doubtless referring to the physical whole. This is because it is the overall physical attribute of the sexes that so powerfully appeals to the senses and draws them together. Sadly to say, this too often is the ruling factor in marriage.

It is also significant that “breasts” are mentioned eight times, or more than any other part of the body. This is because the woman’s breasts are the most obvious part of her body that distinguishes her from the man. Fully developed breasts are a sign of feminine maturity or the fact that she is ready for marriage and subsequent physical love.

This truth is confirmed in chapter eight, verse eight, where the writer says, “We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?” It is because of this that young ladies are very concerned and, I might add, proud when their breasts begin to develop and fill out. They desire this distinguishing mark of femininity which is nature’s way of saying, I am ready for courtship, marriage and love. This is why so much effort is made to make the woman

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appear to have a full bosom. This is also why many with well-developed breasts like to wear low neck, breast revealing dresses.

SEXUAL STIMULATION

Even as sex wasn't created just for reproduction, neither were the woman's breasts made only to nurse the infant. The breasts are a beautiful part of the woman's body and actually linked to her sexuality, physically and psychologically. This is why the woman's breasts are associated with sex in her own mind and also the mind of the man.

God intended for it to be that way. This is also why in preparation for sexual union along with general love making, the woman's breasts are a chief source of sexual stimulation.

Although physically mature men and women are potentially capable of indulging in and enjoying sex, it is mental preparation through love making that actually triggers the chemistry of their bodies and prepares them for sexual intercourse. Careful preparation is even more necessary with the woman who is a type of Christ's body the Church. This truth is borne out by medical science which says, "there must be mental or emotional excitement which conveys its message to the woman's sexual apparatus."

This results in a congestion of her sexual organs with blood causing a swelling of the clitoris which becomes extremely sensitive to the touch and friction. This also results in a release of lubricating fluid by the Bartholin's glands necessary to facilitate ingress of the male member into the vagina. Simultaneous with this, the entrance of the vagina relaxes in order not to impede the entrance of the penis.

The clitoris is a small organ in the woman's vagina capable of erection comparable to the male penis. It is through repeated contact of the penis and the clitoris that sexual excitement is intensified until there is a climax resulting in orgasm. Without proper mental preparation there can be no sexual excitement. Without sexual excitement there can be no erection of the penis or the clitoris. And of course without this there can be no intercourse nor subsequent sexual gratification.

Through this we are made to see how man's mind affects and regulates the chemistry of his body. Although this is somewhat of a tangent from the subject we are studying here, I must add, all emotional stress affects the chemistry of our body in some manner. This can be negative or positive resulting in good or bad effect upon us. Surely we are "fearfully and wonderfully made..." Psalms 139:14. I am persuaded this scripture has reference to the whole man and not just his body.

What a person believes not only influences the chemistry of his body, but also regulates or governs his entire life in words, deeds, and emotions.

Although our subject here is designed to promote sexual harmony and happiness this principle applies to every area of man's life, both spiritual and physical. Proverbs 3:6-8, 4:20-22, 17:22.

MEN NEED WISDOM

How greatly we need men with the wisdom of God to take their place as head of the woman. Beyond doubt ignorance and a lack of love and patience on the part of the man is responsible for many sexual problems that lead to marital troubles and many times divorce. And likewise there is a need for the woman to be cooperative and patient.

Since the woman is by nature more timid and fearful, she needs gentle loving assurance from her husband. Comparable to Christ ministering to the Church, she needs faith to respond and cooperate in sexual union. More subject to have mental hang-ups than the man it takes wisdom and patience to dispel her fears and prepare her for the marriage bed.

Above all the husband should never be critical or negative toward his wife concerning their sexual relations. A positive attitude with patient encouragement will work wonders with a timid or fearful wife. This is especially true during the time a new couple is getting adjusted to each other sexually. In fact this is a good rule to practice regardless of how long a couple has been married.

Regardless of past sexual experiences every new couple has to become adjusted to each other. This takes time, patience and cooperation. If the bride is a virgin the groom needs to be especially gentle and easy with her. It is also wise to use a lubricant in the beginning and after normal relations are achieved, if necessary. If the bride is the least bit fearful or reluctant, the groom should be considerate and wisely wait. When this happens the process of courtship should be resumed until the bride is ready for sexual relations.

Even though you are legally married when the vows are made and the minister or official pronounces you man and wife, biological marriage is not consummated until sexual union and harmony by both man and wife is experienced.

VIRGINS

Where the bride is a virgin, the hymen of the young wife will occasionally present real difficulty. It is so resistant in some instances that considerable effort may be necessary to break it. In rare cases it may require the help of a physician in removing this obstruction. The hymen is the seal that God, in creation, has placed upon a woman's virginity. Occasionally there will be some pain and there may be slight bleeding as a result of the first union.

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In such cases the greatest of care should be taken, and the wife, by all means, granted the privilege of being the active party. An aggressive intensive husband can, at such a time, hurt a sensitive, frightened and unprepared wife. This can lead to fear of sex and mental hang-ups by the wife that may wreck their marriage before it gets started. Where there is any problem at all, the husband should let the wife be the aggressor while he, with infinite patience and tenderness, remains her gentle lover subject to her slightest whim.

With respect to the hymen being infallible proof of the bride's virginity, the groom needs to understand that this is not necessarily so. It is commonly known that many virgins have lost the hymen due to horseback riding, athletic or other physical activities. Ignorance of these facts has been the cause of unjust accusations and jealousy by the husband.

PATIENCE AND COOPERATION

With love, time and patience, there should be no reason for the average couple not having a normal and gratifying sexual relationship. Sex, like love, is a two-way street. It takes cooperation on the part of both parties to have real sexual harmony. This is as necessary for the wife as it is for the husband. Even as it is necessary for members of Christ's body to cooperate with Christ, their head, if they are to be blessed.

Physical cooperation helps both parties to concentrate mentally, which is necessary to shut out distracting thoughts that hinder sexual union. Both partners must be wholeheartedly involved in giving themselves to each other; without this it is like faith without works. James 2:17.

Cooperation brings concentration, concentration brings faith and faith brings results.

Unlike the man, the woman can remain passive or pretend. But the man cannot because normal sexual intercourse is impossible without erection of the male member. This, of course, makes the woman completely dependent on the man even as the Church is dependent on Christ.

However sex is never complete or fully satisfying if either party is not fully cooperating with each other and enjoying the relationship. Sex, like love and every good thing that God created for man, is to be shared. Lack of mutual enjoyment has an adverse psychological effect on both parties and can lead to serious marital problems if not corrected.

EXPERIMENTATION HELPFUL

Until a couple becomes adjusted to each other and achieve sexual harmony, it is perfectly normal to do a little experimenting as to technique

or position. No two people are exactly alike and what might work fine with one couple might not with another. The important thing is to find the position or technique that is best for both man and wife. We are not by any means suggesting sexual perversion but simply a change of position which might help one or both to achieve a more complete physical union.

Even after a couple becomes adjusted to each other a change of position sometimes breaks the monotony of the usual form or routine and results in a new sexual adventure. Although the change may not be desired permanently, it does serve to give variety which can enhance the sexual union.

Change of position also causes each partner to contribute to the sex act in a new and different way. This is sometimes psychologically good as it requires a special effort of mental concentration as well as physical cooperation. Since it is so vitally important that the mind be completely involved during intercourse, a change of position may greatly facilitate this need. The enjoyment of sex is a beautiful, undefiled, God-given experience provided for mankind. Although it is to be enjoyed in the private intimacy of the bedroom, it is nothing to be ashamed of by man or woman.

Chapter 8

THE MYTH OF SEX

Isaiah 60:2, “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people...”

Our text may seem strange to be used in connection with the subject we are dealing with here. But let’s not forget the darkness referred to would include all things affecting mankind, both spiritual and physical. This, of course, would also include sex which God created for the good of mankind.

Immediately someone will say, “You are wrong, sex is no myth, it’s real.” When we refer to sex as a myth we are not talking about sex in its true light or proper perspective, but sex as is seen and understood by many people. In fact, I would say the vast majority of society today mistakenly believes many myths or illusions about sex that do not exist.

God created sex as a means of bringing man and woman together in a physical and spiritual union, symbolic of Christ and his union to the church which is his body.

In creation God meant for sex to serve a purpose, beneficial for mankind. He likewise made it to be a pleasure and delight to be mutually shared by both sexes. This is especially true when the two people know the Lord and are free of the many mental hang-ups that hinder sexual union.

Because of the joy and thrill of sex, it has played a vital and most important role in the history of man. Without it there would be no history of man and nothing to bring man and woman together in such an intimate relationship.

Because of the importance of sex, Satan has distorted its true purpose and meaning by many illusions or myths that do not exist. Like everything else that God has created for good, Satan has used sex to serve his own evil cause. To do this he has blinded the minds of men through many myths that can only be dispelled by truth. When Jesus said, “...Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” (John 8:32) he had reference to sexual myths as well as all others.

Very few would deny the importance of sex in the lives of most human beings. As we have said elsewhere, the sex drive is a fact of life, a reality

that we cannot ignore. We further admit that it is indeed the greatest factor that draws men and women together. Because of the power and influence of sex it has, from ancient times, literally been worshipped and has become an idol to man. The Latin goddess Venus was absorbed by the Greek Aphrodite and became known as the goddess of love.

OVEREMPHASIS

Because of this, sex has been exploited, overemphasized and magnified all out of proportion to reality. This mania and myth about sex has greatly affected many areas of human life and conduct.

Although today's society is perhaps far more learned and sophisticated than any before it, we see evidence of this worship of sex on every hand. The human body, especially the woman's, is a symbol for sex. Clothing manufacturers design their clothes to make the person look sexier. Most entertainment, including the movies, stage, popular songs and even athletic contests, exploit sex in some manner. The night clubs and taverns have their topless dancers and go-go girls. Baser forms of sexually oriented entertainment are pornographic literature and X-rated movies which are available in most cities. Even toothpaste is advertised on the basis of sex appeal.

This might not be so bad if it didn't result in the eclipse of the total human personality and proper relationship of man and woman to each other. It has resulted in both sexes trying to walk, talk, dress, smell and act sexy. This is especially true of the woman who is more of a sex symbol than the man.

The thing we need to understand is that God himself has differentiated between the sexes in making man and woman different in their creation. The femininity of the woman in contrast to the masculinity of the man is obvious in her physical appearance, voice and bodily movements. To enhance this, the Lord has decreed a difference in dress, length of hair and divine position with respect to each other.

This normal, God ordained difference in creation plus a modesty in the decreed difference in dress, hair and divine order is sufficient to attract the opposite sex. I personally believe this rule of chaste moderation is, in the ultimate sense, more attractive than the gaudy, flesh revealing overemphasis of sex through other means. God intends for some things to be left to our imagination and the bedroom.

The idea that outward appearance of being sexy really turns the opposite sex on is a myth so far as many people are concerned. To those who respect and appreciate modesty, it is gaudy, cheap and vain. The true beauty and attraction of sex loses its God given appeal when cheapened in such manner.

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Above all things, we need to realize that sex isn't everything. This exploitation and glorification of sex is the cause of many myths and especially a blindness toward other important factors that has resulted in tragic results.

OFTEN DECEPTIVE

The outward appearance of being sexy and true sexuality are often far apart. There is as much difference in looking sexy and true sexuality as there is in playing doctor and being a doctor. Some of the glamour girls and boys that appear so sexually exciting might indeed be a colossal failure in reality. If the truth were known, some of Hollywood's so-called sex pots and male examples of virility have been anything but sexual. On the other hand, many who are not so physically attractive are often more sexually passionate than more physically beautiful types of humanity.

This false impression of sexuality has resulted in the same sexual standard for everyone regardless of what they really are. Sooner or later many discover to their sorrow, that their illusion of sex being the answer is a myth. Indeed sex isn't the answer to everything.

Whether we recognize it or not, men's and women's capacity for sex, like everything else, varies. The fact that their sexual appetite isn't as great as others doesn't mean they are less virile or sexual. Nor does it necessarily mean there is something wrong with them. No doubt, Paul had this in mind when he said, "For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." I Cor. 7:7.

Paul knew that men and women were made different in their creation, physically, mentally and sexually. No doubt he also understood the influence of environment in molding them into unique and specific personalities. Understanding this, he knew that you cannot impose the same sexual standard upon everyone. Because of this and many other factors, people need to be very careful and deliberate in their choice of a mate.

As a result of prayerful and studied consideration, it is my opinion that the various factors or intangible qualities that contribute to the whole personality of a man or woman determine their sexuality.

Since the mind or brain regulates or controls the various functions of the human body, it is a giant step toward sexual harmony when we operate on the same wave length in our thought life. This is not saying that a man and woman have to be exactly the same in temperament and personality, because no two people are exactly alike. We can still be compatible and vary in our weaknesses and strengths as well as other things. There are always adjustments that have to be made.

Compatibility is the result of common interests and the ability to understand and communicate with each other. It is through this means that two people are able to make up the lack in each other's life and thus become one flesh. Every person is so constituted by creation and environmental influence that he needs a specific type person to complement his or her life. Being a Christian and believing that God has left nothing to chance. It is my conviction that God will lead us to that specific person if we will wait on him.

Man and woman are made to love and be loved. Since love is not just some mystical force or feeling there must be a means of expressing this love toward each other. Each must feel needed and thus make a contribution to each other's life. This is the way love is expressed and our need for each other is met.

Sex and physical attraction alone is no substitute and cannot possibly make up for the lack in this area of our lives. It has been proven over and over again that even sex loses its appeal and power to hold people together where there is a lack of compatibility and communication.

The reason for this is because our minds are adversely affected when compatibility and communication are lacking. Sex is more psychological than it is physical. Lack of compatibility leads to wrong mental attitudes which in turn lead to sexual problems between a couple. We don't just marry a person's body, we marry the whole human personality. This includes many intangible qualities such as intelligence, patience, sensitivity, kindness, understanding, ability to communicate, courage and faith. And I must also add you marry the whole human personality that may be lacking in these qualities.

To ignore these factors and marry someone incompatible to your own personality and way of life usually leads to marital shipwreck and tragic results. This will happen in spite of the powerful physical attraction or sex appeal which so many mistake for love. It is indeed a myth to think that such love (sex) is all sufficient to make people happy and successful in marriage.

MANY MYTHS

This false premium put upon sex is responsible for leading immature people, including many teenagers, into wrong marriages and illicit sexual relationships.

Sexual intercourse to some is a false hope of solving nonsexual problems. Through this means many poor souls who feel unloved, neglected and lonely seek acceptance and love. While in the arms of their sexual partner they imagine they have found the warmth, the love and

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acceptance their hearts cry out for. This, of course, is another myth they will soon discover to their sorrow.

Still other insecure people use sex as a means of proving their femininity or masculinity. Instead of winning respect and acceptance on the ground of personality and accomplishment they resort to sex. The person who doesn't have the personality and success of accomplishment to prove these things will also find that his substitute of sex is a myth.

The weakest and most vain human beings are usually capable of indulging in sex. Even animals with low intelligence and without conscience are created with a capacity for sex. I might also add that some human beings, morally lower than an animal, are usually capable of sexual indulgence. Sex, in itself, does not prove anything about a person.

Some embittered souls mistakenly use sex as a weapon of revenge to get even or punish others. It is not uncommon for a husband or wife to engage in an extra marital affair with another woman or man as a means of revenge. This usually happens, when one or the other feels they are neglected or not appreciated. Their deceptive reasoning is to get even or prove that they are desirable to someone else. In the same manner this also happens between sweethearts or couples going together.

Another way sex is used as a weapon of revenge is by children who want to punish their parents for the way they think they have been treated. Where children come to feel they are unjustly treated or restricted during their childhood they can very well give vent to their inward bitterness by striking back through illicit sex, alcohol, drugs and crime. I believe that today's generation, in many cases, is an example of this. To use sex as a weapon of revenge in any manner is another myth that can only bring disastrous results.

Another myth of sex is caused by false or premature expectations. Due to the distorted understanding of sex many are greatly disappointed with their first sexual experiences. Looking for some mystical thrill comparable to bells ringing, sirens blowing and fourth of July fireworks going off, they are disappointed when it does not happen.

This is especially true in the early days of marriage before a couple becomes adjusted to each other. Inexperience of the groom, mental hang-ups and the girl being a virgin, all can contribute to this disappointment. Lack of sexual gratification in the early stages of marriage by one or both man and wife are not uncommon. This is more often true in the case of the woman than the man.

Sex, like love, is a two way street. Man and woman not only need love but they must have a means of expressing their love. Sex being the most intimate relationship between a man and woman can and should be a

common meeting ground or place of expressing and receiving this love. Because of this, true sexual harmony is never achieved until there is mutual enjoyment by the man and the woman in sexual union.

It is a mistake to think that all it takes to have mature sexual satisfaction is Prince Charming, Lady Fair and a bed. It takes love based upon honor and respect for each other, mutual cooperation and patience to get adjusted to each other. Like success in everything else, sexual bliss does not always come easily nor quickly. But even in this the Lord teaches his people some valuable spiritual lessons.

In their efforts to achieve sexual harmony, newly married couples should not be ashamed to seek help from the God that created sex in the beginning. Paul's advice in Philippians 4:6-7 is good with sexual problems also. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Although sex can be a frustrating disappointment in the beginning, it can through tender loving care and faith become the beautiful experience God intended it to be. For sheer thrill of physical ecstasy there is nothing that compares with sexual union between people in love. It is, I believe, a type of spiritual ecstasy and joy that often overwhelms God's people as they approach him in the intimate spiritual relationship of praise and worship.

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PASSION

James 5:17. “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.”

It is evident from this reference by the Apostle James that God is encouraging us to have faith in spite of our carnal natures. He is letting us know that the great prophet Elijah, who did many exploits through faith, was a man of normal passions like we are.

We are using the word passion as a title for our subject here because it is so commonly used today to denote sexual desire or sexual intensity. The word occurs only once in the Bible (Acts 1:3) and it has reference to Christ’s sufferings on the cross.

However, the word passions is used twice (Acts 14:15, James 5:17) and it has reference to man’s carnal (fleshly) desires or emotions which are the results of the nature he is born with. It simply applies to the nature of man which manifests itself through his emotions. It could be anger, love, hate, enthusiasm or strong desire for anything. This also includes sex.

The use of the word today is often applied to sex. When someone is said to be passionate, it means they have an ardent desire or intense sexual capacity. When the Bible refers to men as being of like passions it is simply speaking of the various manifestations of their nature including sexual desire.

COMMON TO ALL

This is a common bond all men share regardless of their faith or spirituality. This applied to the Apostles and the Prophets, according to Acts 14:15 and James 5:17, as well as all other men. There is a great need that we understand this because of the legalistic concept that sexual desire is wicked. Many poor souls are intimidated and brought into great bondage as a result of such reasoning.

Wrong interpretation of the scriptures is used by legalistic teachers to intimidate and condemn many that God hasn’t condemned. Although the

Lord would have us to know how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honor (I Thess. 4:3-4), we are, nevertheless, subject to like passions as all other men.

Recently I was talking to a man who confided to me that he was greatly tempted by the opposite sex. This man, who was divorced and not welcome in many of the churches, was in a state of condemnation because he couldn't measure up to their legalistic teaching.

LAW CONDEMNS MAN

Such scriptures as Matt. 5:28, where Jesus said, "... whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" was used to condemn this man. Because of his divorced status he was considered undesirable for church membership and an adulterer if he ever married again.

Imposition of any aspect of the law condemns man. It makes manifest that he is a sinner by nature and practice. He learns what Paul meant in Rom. 7:18-21, "For I know that in me (that is my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

CHRIST REDEEMS

All men are transgressors of the law because they are sinners. Sin is transgression of the law. This is why it was absolutely necessary for our sins to be placed upon Christ and for him to bear the wrath of the law on the cross. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" Galatians 3:13.

Until we see that sin has been condemned in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ on the cross, Satan will use the law to condemn us. Rom. 8:3. It was on the cross that Jesus became sin for us. II Cor. 5:21, I Peter 2:24.

It was the cross that destroyed the power of the law to condemn man. Col. 2:14-15 says, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Romans 10:4 says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

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It is not a matter of law but Christ. “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:18.

ALL FLESH ALIKE

Having faith and being in Christ does not change our flesh. We still have the same adamic nature with its inherent weaknesses and are subject to like passions as all other men. The idea that Christians should never be tempted nor have an evil thought is very desirable but also very misleading. I believe all true Christians delight in the law of God after the inward man, but like Paul, they often find that when they would do good, evil is present with them. Rom. 7:21.

The weakness of our flesh is a reality we cannot escape from until we learn that “...by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight...” Rom. 3:20. Measuring ourselves by the law can only bring condemnation.

This is also why Jesus imposed the law in all its severity upon the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20, 27-28), who made their boast in the law. This is why he spoke as he did in Matt. 5:28. Jesus was not teaching the law as a means of justification but simply exposing the self-righteous condition of the Pharisees who professed to be keepers of the law. In their deluded condition they felt no need of a saviour and indeed rejected their only hope of salvation in the person of Jesus Christ.

It is because of our inability to keep the law that Christ died for our sins. This is why Paul said, “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Gal. 2:21.

FAITH ONLY

Our reason for expounding this great truth is not to condone sin but to show the believer that his standing before God is not the result of keeping the law or resisting temptation but faith in Christ. We are saved by faith, we walk by faith and we live by faith. Rom. 5:1, Eph. 2:8-9, II Cor. 5:7, Heb. 10:38-39. In fact without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6. This is the only righteousness we have. Rom. 4:3-8 and 10:4.

God was fully aware of the weakness of the flesh in desiring the opposite sex. If desiring the opposite sex consigns us to hell, then most of us will certainly go there. Although we do not condone nor approve of sexual infidelity, the possibility of fornication or illicit sex is very real. This is why Paul said “...to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” I Cor. 7:2.

This was written to Christians, not unbelievers. In verse nine of this same chapter the apostle says, “But if they cannot contain, let them marry:

for it is better to marry than to burn.” It is very evident from other translations that the apostle had reference to burning with sexual desire.

Let’s note some other translations:

“For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.” RSV.

“I think it is far better for them to be married than to be tortured by unsatisfied desire.” Phillips.

“For it better to marry than to burn with passionate desire.” Norlie.

This same principle is brought out in verse 36. “But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let him marry.”

From an examination of several other translations it is obvious this verse also has reference to the time when sexual desire becomes such a great temptation until the man can no longer behave himself properly toward his female spiritual partner. The idea is brought out in the James Moffatt and New English Bible translations that the woman is a spiritual bride or a partner in celibacy.

Although this verse of scripture is to some degree obscure, there are two outstanding thoughts worth mentioning here. It is obvious that a spiritual relationship or union between the man and the woman already existed. The woman is likened to a spiritual bride or partner. Their relationship, though spiritual in its beginning, reaches the place where sexual desire becomes such a problem the recommendation of the apostle is that they marry.

GOD UNDERSTANDS

Our purpose in bringing these things out is to show that God himself understands what manner of men we are. Luke 9:55. We also desire to give hope to those who are condemned and intimidated by the carnal nature that they were born with. It is good to know that, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” Psalms 103:13-14.

Manifestation of the sex drive has always been a fact of life among all mankind including God’s people. From kings to peasants, all have been affected. David, a man after God’s own heart and Israel’s greatest king, was as weak as other men when it came to sex.

Although he had many wives and concubines, he took another man’s wife and she became pregnant by him. When his cleverly contrived plan failed to hide his sin, he had the woman’s husband sent to the battlefield and killed. For this great sin David had to reap all the days of his life. II Sam.12:10.

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David's great sin was not because of another woman or sex. Under the practice and culture of the Old Testament God not only permitted a plurality of wives but also concubines. In verse 8 of II Samuel 12, the Lord said he would have given him even more. His great sin lay in the fact that he took another man's wife and had her husband killed.

Solomon's unfettered desire for the opposite sex, likewise, was a great source of trouble to him and Israel. The scriptures declare that he loved many strange women. I Kings 11:11. Once again it wasn't the seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines that Solomon had. His sin was in going after strange women (foreign women) whom God had forbidden Israel to marry. These women turned Solomon's heart to their many heathen gods. It is for this very reason the New Testament forbids a believer to marry an unbeliever. I Cor. 7:39, II Cor 6:14-16.

POLYGYNY

Sex has been a great factor in shaping the history of man, including God's people. By reason of their creation, the sex drive has always been more of a factor and problem to men than women. This no doubt was one of the main reasons for the origin of polygyny or the practice of having more than one wife. More popularly called polygamy today, it can be traced to most people of archaic civilization. Beyond doubt the ancient Hebrews were simply a part of the culture that believed in and practiced polygyny. This, of course, is why this practice was continued as a part of the culture of God's people during Old Testament times.

Although monogamy (one wife) was always practiced by many among the Hebrews, a man could, in many circumstances, have a plurality of wives and there was no difference in the legal status of different wives, nor was there any limit to the number of wives a man might take.

Polygyny has been found even in Christian Europe. In the middle of the 6th century Diarmait, king of Ireland, had two queens and two concubines. Charlemagne had two wives and many concubines; and one of his laws seems to imply that polygyny was not unknown even among priests.

In later times, Philip of Hesse and Fredrick William II of Prussia contracted bigamous marriages with the sanction of the Lutheran clergy. In 1650, soon after the peace of Westphalia, when the population had been greatly reduced by the Thirty Years War, the Frankish Kreistag at Nurenberg passed the resolution that thenceforth every man should be allowed to marry two women. The Anabaptists and the Mormons have advocated polygyny with much religious fervor. (Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 18, pages 186-187.)

History records that polygyny has often been practiced when there was a surplus of marriageable women. One of the great causes of this is depletion of the male population during times of war. Very often religious groups find themselves with a surplus of marriageable women due to the lack of male converts and their strict teaching against marrying outsiders.

TIME OF CHRIST

Although monogamy (one wife) seems to be the general practice of the Jews at the time of Christ, it is my belief that polygyny was still believed in, if not so widely practiced. At least there is no scriptural evidence in the Old or New Testament where the practice was done away with or forbidden. However, in the case of Elders, the scriptures specifically say they are to be "...the husband of one wife..." I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6.

These scriptures are misinterpreted by legalistic teachers as having reference to all marriages past and present. They consider a person to be living in adultery if they have been married more than once and their former mate is still living. They do not understand the great truth that we are dead to the law by the body of Christ. Rom. 7:4. This includes former marriages which were governed by and a part of the same Mosaic law. If Christ's death on the cross doesn't cancel out transgression of the law through broken marriages then we would have no reason to believe any other transgression was blotted out. There would certainly be no hope for such sinners as are described in I Cor. 6:9-11.

ALL THINGS NEW

They do not understand the great truth that "...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17. All of our past is blotted out. This includes marriage failures and every other thing done in unbelief. The way God calls us and saves us is the way we are to stay or abide. I Cor. 7:20 & 24.

It is my conviction that when Paul said the Elders were to be the husband of one wife, he had reference to their present marital status and not marriages of the past. This in itself would strongly suggest that polygyny was still practiced by some.

Even though most of the Jews practiced monogamy (one wife) the practice of polygyny (more than one wife) was still part of the culture of many nations where the gospel was to be preached. Let's not forget also that Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. Romans 11:13, II Tim. 1:11.

Fact is this has been a problem even in modern times in some places where missionaries have gone. There have been many instances where men having more than one wife have heard the gospel and been converted.

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When this happens the family unit, often including numerous children by the various wives, is allowed to stay together. Generally they are not allowed to be an Elder or take more wives.

GOD'S BEST

With the revelation of the kingdom of God and the urgency of the proclamation of the gospel, the Apostle actually says it would be best if both men and women could remain single and serve the Lord without distraction. When they cannot contain themselves (sexually) the Apostle recommends that they marry. To avoid fornication the man is to have his own wife and the woman her own husband. I Cor. 7:1-2, 8 & 9.

From Paul's teachings here and other epistles I would say that monogamy, or one wife to a man, was God's best for his people during the Church age. However, there is no specific teaching favoring either except in the case of Elders.

GOD, THE TRUE JUDGE

The weakness of the flesh and the power of the sex drive make this one of man's most vulnerable weaknesses. Men and women may be strong in other areas of life and yet very weak when it comes to sex. Even in sex not all are alike. Some are very passionate while others are not. What would overcome one would not overcome another.

Not understanding this, it is easy for one who hasn't been overcome by a particular weakness to judge another who has. And yet that same person may be far more guilty of something else than the one he would condemn. Only God knows man's true state and is able to judge aright. I Sam. 16:7 says, "...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

An example of this is the woman taken in the act of adultery who was brought to Jesus by the Scribes and Pharisees. Their spirit was to condemn this woman, using the law of Moses which said that such should be stoned to death. John 8:3-11, Lev. 20:10, Deut. 22:22. Isn't it strange the Scribes and Pharisees didn't bring the man who was involved? They wanted to minister death through the law but Jesus ministered life through grace and truth. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17.

Until recent years, and in some cases even today, society imposes a double standard when it comes to sex. Men are more or less expected to give vent to their sexual desire with little or no reproach. But women guilty of the same are often branded for life with a stigma of reproach.

Thank God for the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Some of the Lord's most devout followers have been fallen women redeemed by

his marvelous grace. Another example of this is the woman who washed Jesus' feet. Simon the Pharisee thought that if Jesus was indeed a prophet he wouldn't let such a vile woman (unchaste) touch him. But Jesus gladly received her attention and worship, commending her for loving him very much. Luke 7:36-50.

Jesus' rapport with the publicans and sinners was a source of great indignation to the self-righteous Pharisees who made their boast in the law and felt no need of repentance. This is also why Jesus said, "...verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you:" Matt. 21:31.

HUMAN NATURE

Surely we need to understand that passion or sexual desire is simply part of the nature we are born with. With rare exceptions both men and women are born with sexual desire. It doesn't take boys or girls long to discover the fascination and desire for the opposite sex.

When sexual desire has been aroused in a person they long for gratification. In those too young to marry they may resort to masturbation. This is more true of boys than girls. For the most part man in the natural will gratify his sexual desire through some means. It may be masturbation, fornication, adultery, or marriage.

A human being goaded by sexual desire can become desperate in his or her desire for gratification. This accounts for so much illicit sex and also sexual perversion. Pretending that sex isn't a factor or that sexual desire is evil is denial of the very nature that man was created with. Refusal to honestly and frankly deal with the subject is hypocritical and foolish. Such an attitude is the cause of great ignorance and much harm, physically, mentally and spiritually.

DIFFERENCE IN INTENSITY

Although we have already touched on this elsewhere, there is need for further emphasis due to the great ignorance in this area. The difference between the man and the woman in their sexual intensity or ability to respond to the opposite sex must be made plain. Usually the woman is far less aggressive and slower in preparation for intercourse than the man.

Being a type of the Church, the woman is more timid and fearful than the man. And, as a whole, sex is more intimate and sacred to the woman than it is to the man. Consequently she is far more subject to mental intimidation or hang-ups than the man. Lack of proper attitude by the man, privacy or other fears can completely hinder the woman. I might add that men also vary in their sexual intensity and some are adversely affected by conditions.

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However, as head of the woman (I Cor. 11:3) and a type of Christ the head of the Church, it is the responsibility of the man to lovingly and patiently prepare his wife for sexual union. She cannot fully enter in or cooperate until she is prepared. It is true some are more quickly prepared than others and some few respond as quickly as the man. But generally this is not true of most women. And in some cases it is the man that is slow to be sexually aroused.

Sex in the normal sense can be likened to a normal healthy appetite for food. This, no doubt, is the general rule of thumb for most people. But you do have the two extremes. Some have a sexual appetite that goes beyond the normal. For this reason the husband and the wife should be considerate of each other's sexual need.

Although the Apostle exhorts the husband and wife not to defraud the other (I Cor. 7:5), any demanding or unyielding attitude is wrong. There will be times when each will have to yield or abstain in consideration of the other. Where there is a difference in sexual desire or intensity, this gulf of difference can be greatly reduced or eliminated by mutual understanding and cooperation.

ONENESS

It is my conviction that with a proper attitude and patient cooperation, sexual harmony will be achieved in process of time. This is a divine principle or law that is set in motion by God himself who ordained that man and woman become one flesh in the marriage union. But spiritual or psychological oneness has to first be operating in a couple before they can indeed become one flesh.

In the same sense that Christ is made one in the Spirit because the people are willing, pliable and teachable, a man and woman become one in marriage. This oneness or unity of the Spirit is the key to many of our problems, both spiritual and physical. This is the reason Jesus prayed that we might "...be made perfect in one..." John 17:23.

Paul also understood the great need for "...the unity of the spirit..." Eph. 4:3. Man cannot be blessed or accomplish anything until he gets his thinking straightened out and comes to one mind and purpose. This is true of the natural realm as well as the spiritual. This also applies to marriage and sex. Let me repeat again that sex is, for the most part, psychological.

Psalms 133:1-3 says, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." This Psalm beautifully

expresses the consequent blessings that come as a result of unity. Although this prefigures spiritual blessings that come upon God's people as a result of unity, it applies to natural things also, including sex. Natural things are types of spiritual or eternal things.

Until sexual harmony is achieved man as the head is more responsible than the woman. As the God-ordained head of the woman he has been endowed with ability to lead his wife into a harmonious marriage and sexual union. This does not relieve the woman of her responsibility to cooperate but it does place the greater responsibility on the man where it belongs. I Peter 3:7.

GREATEST HINDRANCE

The greatest hindrance to achieving harmonious sexual relations is ignorance and impatience on the part of the man. The man must realize that, in most cases, the woman is not sexually aroused as quickly as he is. Not aware of this fact, many husbands quickly gratify their own desire before their wife is sexually aroused, much less satisfied.

The marriage of one couple who belonged to a church I pastored almost went on the rocks because of this very reason. It was a continual habit of the man to enter into relations with his wife when he had the urge for sex. Time and again he would reach a climax and gratify his own desire just as his wife was being aroused and prepared. Being left in this condition, she would get up and walk the floor, tortured with unsatisfied desire while her husband went to sleep.

As a human being cannot receive Christ nor respond to his love without preparation, neither can a woman receive the man nor respond to him sexually without preparation. God purposed that sexual union be the intimate climax of human love.

Therefore patient and tender love making should precede and be present during sex relations. Because of the psychological influence on the mind, the man and the woman should be at their very best physically. Lack of cleanliness, physical charm or proper mental attitude can greatly hinder sex relations.

The man should always have a positive attitude in encouraging his wife to have confidence in herself. She must believe in her ability to perform sexually. Even in sex people must have faith. The man not only must encourage his wife during sex relations but must also patiently give her sufficient time to be sexually aroused and have a climax. Many virile young husbands find this a very difficult thing to do because their sexual passion is far more easily aroused and they are more quickly brought to a climax than their wife.

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Even during sex relations preceded by preparation, the man will often find it necessary to hold back until his wife is fully aroused and reaches the very threshold of climax. In the process of doing this a couple must not anxiously strive nor work too hard to get results. Learning to relax and take their time with each patiently waiting upon the other is very necessary.

Another great essential is not just to seek sexual gratification but to actually enjoy the intimate physical closeness of the one you love. This gives honor to your relationship and results in a fuller and richer sexual experience as you share this most intimate of all earthly relationships.

Properly prepared and aroused the woman is as passionate or even more so, than the man. Although it might be considered ideal for a couple to reach a climax at the same time, the man must lovingly and patiently work with his wife until she is sexually satisfied. The God of all truth who created sex and made the man and the woman different says, “Defraud ye not one the other...” I Cor. 7:5.

In order to do this each must understand the sexual need of the other and seek the gratification of their mate as well as their own. Although sexual passion is part of our nature and as real as life itself, it varies from person to person. Because of this it takes wisdom, patience and love to achieve a harmonious sex life, which is a giant step toward a successful marriage.

Chapter 10

UNFAITHFULNESS: WHY MARRIED COUPLES CHEAT

The reasons husbands and wives cheat on each other or become unfaithful are varied and complex. However we do need to consider the question to the degree we are able, as it will help some. These simple and practical truths could be the means of saving some marriages and will certainly enhance and strengthen others. Such truth is especially needed in this hour of sexual permissiveness.

However, the spirit of this age is moving man toward a sexual permissiveness not classified as infidelity or unfaithfulness. Without guilt or conscience, sex among single people is no longer considered wrong by much of today's generation. Likewise many married couples take the same attitude toward extra-marital affairs. Realizing that very few in this category will be helped, it is to those who still have a conscience in these things that this message is directed.

TWO EXTREMES

On most questions or issues you will find two extremes, neither of which is right. One of these extremes relative to sexual infidelity is to condemn all violators regardless of conditions. And the violation is according to who is interpreting the law or moral code. The other extreme is exemplified in today's philosophy called "the New Morality": there is nothing wrong with sex between two people so long as they both desire it.

This is in no wise intended to justify the transgressor nor mete out judgment on the guilty, but simply to say that God alone sees things as they really are and is the true judge of human affairs. Because of this there are some cases that God would be more lenient toward than man. Likewise there are some that God would be more severe toward than man. Thank God there is forgiveness for all sin through Christ, including sexual infidelity.

THE POWER OF SEX

Because of the sex drive or the power of sex itself, it is not uncommon for both men and women to be tempted with sexual desire for someone other than their mate. It is estimated by one authority that one in four wives commit adultery at least once in her life. I would say there is an even larger percentage of men. Although there are many that do not give in to such temptation, some do at sometime in their life. Some of these go on into a life of sexual infidelity while others quit after an escapade or two and remain loyal to their mates the rest of their lives.

Although there is no apparent reason other than the power of sex itself for some becoming unfaithful, there are some things we need to consider. These are factors, some of which are more important than others, that cause both men and women to turn to others for love and sexual gratification.

NO REASON

As there are some people who will passively remain loyal to their mates regardless of conditions, there are some who will cheat regardless of conditions. These people are simply prone to infidelity. If it were possible for them to have a perfect wife or husband it would not prevent their unfaithfulness. They may have a fine family, good profession, friends and other interests but they're never satisfied with the same sexual partner.

There is nothing especially wrong with their mate or their sex life together, they simply find they can't resist the challenge of a new conquest. Sex with someone other than their mate is always a thrilling prospect of sexual anticipation. The person's ego may also be involved in thinking they are desirable to others.

Others in this category think of an extra-marital affair as an adventuresome escapade in which they are getting away with something. The power of the sex drive and the high premium put upon sex by man is greatly responsible for this.

LACK OF SATISFACTION

Lack of sexual satisfaction, real or imagined, is often responsible for husbands and wives cheating on each other. The reason I refer to this condition as real or imagined is because there are some whose problem is more psychological than real. This often is the result of an anticipated sex thrill that is slow in coming or does not measure up to expectation. Perhaps the greatest cause of this is the glorified overemphasis of sex on every hand.

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One newly wed wife said she expected bells to ring, sirens to wail and psychedelic lights to flash on and off. When this didn't happen she thought she had been cheated. This negative thinking soon resulted in her thinking the trouble was with her husband. He wasn't the romantic lover she thought he would be. Consequently she turned to another man for love and sexual satisfaction. However it didn't take her long to discover this wasn't the answer to her problem.

A young man who married a fine Christian girl was greatly disappointed when his young bride failed to respond to him sexually as he thought she should. He had read too many romantic novels that pictured the woman aflame with passion at the touch of a man. He thought surely something must be wrong and took her to a doctor to find out what the trouble was.

Without doubt untold thousands of couples have had similar experiences and some of them have turned to others for the sexual satisfaction they felt they were being denied. Very often the real problem in such cases is simply ignorance and impatience. Sexual harmony does not always come quickly nor easily. It takes patience, work and cooperation. A proper mental attitude and a certain amount of hard work is necessary.

And there are cases in which one marriage partner is actually guilty of withholding themselves from sexual union with their mate. It could be the man or the woman. When this happens it makes it difficult for the one whose sexual appetite is not being satisfied. A prolonged situation such as this can lead to the deprived mate turning to another for sexual gratification.

God's word says, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto her husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." I Cor. 7:3-5.

Although God's word instructs both husband and wife not to defraud the other in the matter of sex there should be consideration for each other's feelings. God can give a woman and man harmony in their sex relationship as well as all others.

DISAPPOINTMENT WITH MARRIAGE

Some men and women who do cheat on each other are not necessarily as disappointed with sex itself as they are with the concept of marriage in general. They may be immature or simply unable to accept the

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responsibility that goes with marriage. To them marriage is a form of bondage or a yoke they do not want to wear. In their frustration they think another woman or another man is the true answer to their problem. It is very easy to imagine that the grass is greener in another pasture.

GROW APART

After a few years of married life with the home, children, business and other activities taking more and more time, it is easy for the man and the woman to take each other for granted. Instead of sharing together they become lost in their own little world. Instead of the two becoming “one flesh” they actually grow apart. Eph. 5:31.

This is when the woman becomes more of a wife than a sweetheart. Her greatest concern in life is the home, the children and all that relates to them. She occupies herself with making a nice livable home, cooking meals and looking after the children. Some go even further in getting involved with various clubs and sometimes working on a job.

This, of course, leaves her tired and weary at night with little time or interest in her husband, much less sex. In many such cases it is midnight before she goes to bed. Even if her husband hasn't given up and gone to sleep she is in no mood for romance. When she does reluctantly submit to his advances it is with the attitude of “hurry up and get it over with so I can get some sleep.” This is the type situation which makes it easy for the husband to look elsewhere.

Likewise some men become so engrossed in their job or business until they have little time for their wife and family. They become obsessed with their business and spend long hours and sometimes days and nights away from home. Success becomes their great objective in life. When home for a few hours he is preoccupied in mind with his business.

About the only attention his wife gets is when he wants sex and then it's back to business. It doesn't take a woman long to feel neglected and unloved under these conditions. Some will turn to another man for the attention and affection their hearts cry out for. When this happens it is very easy to become sexually involved with the man that supplies her with attention and affection.

TO BE ENJOYED

Sex is not something that a man or woman can be passive about. Everything that God made to be mutually shared and enjoyed requires wholehearted participation. This includes sex. Submission just to satisfy the husband or wife is not enough. It is psychologically unhealthy for a sensitive person to think their mate is not being satisfied or enjoying their sex relationship.

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Being the most intimate of all human relationships sex should be that special time when a couple expresses their love and delight in each other. When this is lacking, sex loses its true meaning and leaves the man and woman feeling cheated and denied. A major part of the enjoyment of sex is in knowing your mate is also being satisfied.

Very often a mental hang-up caused by fear or a false guilt complex hinders the man or woman in their sexual union. Whatever the problem, if not eliminated, it can cause the man or woman to turn to another for love and sexual gratification.

ATTENTION AND LOVE

In many cases where men and women become unfaithful it is not necessarily sex they are after. They simply want attention, love and companionship. Normally speaking it is the person who gives you attention, love and companionship that you share sex with. When these ingredients are missing in a marriage, that marriage is in trouble.

An example of this came to my attention several years ago. The young woman worked on a job as well as her husband and had all of her housework to do when she came in from work. Her husband used his leisure time for fishing and hunting. When he was home he sat around while his wife cleaned the house and waited on him. About the only interest he showed in her was when she got her pay check or he wanted some sex.

Under these conditions it didn't take the wife long to feel unloved, neglected and unappreciated. And certainly such conditions were not conducive to a harmonious marriage or sex relationship. Likewise these conditions were ideal to turn the wife away from her husband to another man who came along and showed her some attention. Although she wasn't the type that ordinarily becomes unfaithful, she was starved for love and attention and simply responded to the man that gave it to her.

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

It is said that the greatest cause of trouble among many married couples leading to separation and divorce is money problems or lack of finances. This also leads to infidelity or unfaithfulness. Actually most of the financial problems that come are the result of poor management caused by ignorance and inexperience. Many today do not know what it means to be frugal and live within their means.

With our credit system of "buy now and pay later" too many young couples soon find themselves swamped with bills they can't pay. This frustration leads to arguments and fights with each blaming the other for their trouble. Not understanding their real problem it is easy for them to

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turn to another man or woman not identified with their trouble. From a distance the grass always looks greener in another pasture. And you are not as subject to notice the thistles, cockleburs and weeds in the other pasture as you are in your own.

TOGETHERNESS OR UNITY

Another mistake that leads to infidelity or unfaithfulness is a lack of togetherness or unity. Sexual infidelity is the result of division. There never was any unity or the breach has already taken place when a man or woman becomes unfaithful. The real problem is not sexual infidelity but the root cause that leads to it. Because of this men and women need to be careful and deliberate in choosing someone for a lifetime partner. Incompatibility becomes very manifest after the honeymoon is over.

Even though a couple is compatible and able to communicate with each other, there is a need to cultivate togetherness after the honeymoon is over. It is after the light of that first love has dimmed that a couple is subject to drift apart with each one doing his own thing, thus creating a world of his own not shared nor understood by his mate. Doing things together, going places, sharing and taking an interest in each other's activities is very important. This becomes a bond that strengthens a marriage and holds a couple together.

True marriage is the fusion of two lives. The greater the fusion the stronger the marriage. The sharing and mutual enjoyment of sex certainly enhances a marriage but that alone will not keep a couple together. Children, religion, hobbies, friends and other common interests all add to a happy marriage.

It is when a man or woman is left out of the other's life in these things they are subject to turn to another. God made man to share with others. When he is denied this privilege he is lonely and unhappy. A vacuum is created that must be filled. In this condition a man or woman will give their affection and love to the one that fills the vacuum.

Psalms 133:1 says, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

Although this verse of scripture is usually applied to Christian unity, the unity of man and woman in marriage is a type of this blessedness. Paul likened the marriage union to the union of Christ and his body, the Church. Eph. 5:30-32. We can very well say, "How good and how pleasant it is for man and wife to dwell together in unity."

CLEANLINESS

During courtship and the early part of a marriage a man and woman are usually concerned about how they look to each other. They consider

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regular baths, well groomed hair, nice clothes and use of perfume and lotions a must. It is after a couple becomes used to each other and the luster of the honeymoon is gone that they become careless about these things.

Although God's word puts a premium upon spiritual cleanliness it does not overlook the physical aspect. II Cor. 7:1 says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

It is also significant that Paul speaks of the Church being sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word. This is true of the Church as the bride of Christ in a spiritual sense. But it also could be applied to man and woman in the physical sense, who are types of Christ and the Church.

Although we can't always equate clean well-groomed bodies with intelligence and good mental health there is often a connection. It is quite common for mentally sick people to be careless and indifferent about physical cleanliness and appearance. Beyond doubt many mental cases are the result of demon influence upon the mind. Called unclean spirits in the Bible they seek to defile human beings morally and physically.

Since we are psychologically turned on and off to sex it is vital that a good mental image through cleanliness be maintained. Clean, attractive bodies enhance a marriage and the sex relationship. But carelessness in this area will dampen the ardor of many who are sensitive to such things.

Not only is a man or woman more sexually desirable when clean and physically attractive but such a practice also wins the respect of their mate. When there is a loss of respect because of these things it is very easy to admire someone else. This is especially true when that someone is a contrast in cleanliness and physical attractiveness. Whether we realize it or not we will take note and make comparisons.

HONOR AND RESPECT

Another thing that enhances a marriage is honor and respect for each other. Prov. 31:10-11 says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."

The woman in Proverbs 31 is said to be virtuous, wise, kind, considerate and industrious. It is evident her husband had no need of spoil because of his honor and respect for her. When these virtues are missing it is very easy for a man or woman to be drawn to another whom they can honor and respect. The Apostle Peter tells the wives that outward adornment such as hair, jewelry and clothing is not as important in winning their husbands as the inward adornment of a meek and a quiet spirit. I Peter 3:1-4.

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What a man or a woman is on the inside is as important as their outward appearance. Because of this they should cultivate good manners, avoiding immodesty or coarse vulgarity. A man wants a nice virtuous woman for a wife and a woman wants a man of strength and character for a husband.

As we have said elsewhere on this subject, you don't just marry a person's body when you marry them. You marry the whole human personality including their mind, morals and varied personality traits. Every man and woman has some ideals they desire to transpose to the one they marry. When they lose respect for that person this idealistic image is shattered. Feeling cheated and robbed they are subject to look elsewhere for the man or girl of their dreams.

Certainly this is a principle that works today in helping to keep a couple together. We honor and respect those whose conduct demands honor and respect. By the same token we lose respect for those lacking virtuous conduct.

A husband or wife wants to believe their mate as Proverbs 31:29 says, "...excellest them all."

UNCLEAN SPIRITS

Although evil spirits are not believed in by many they are without doubt a real factor in sexual infidelity. When a person begins to play the field in sexual permissiveness they are subject to receive a sex demon. It is believed that one of the seven devils that went out of Mary Magdalene was such a spirit. Luke 8:2.

We have found from experience that boys and girls who have gone astray into drugs, alcohol and sexual immorality have invariably been led into these vices through wrong association with others who do the same things. Beyond doubt, evil spirits with the cooperation of human instruments are responsible for this.

This is not to say every person who engages in sex outside of marriage receives a lust spirit any more than every person who takes a drink of an alcoholic beverage becomes an alcoholic. The danger is when such a person has no moral restraint and give himself to sexual activity with those who are possessed by evil spirits.

Although God can save and deliver such people, it is a great mistake to marry them thinking they will change after marriage. Many cases of sexual infidelity involve people who have been sexually permissive before marriage. Sex demons like all other evil spirits do not give up easily. They may remain quiet for awhile after marriage but will surely seek to drive the person into sexual infidelity if they are not delivered.

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Very few couples can be realistic about themselves and the true implications of marriage. Because of this many are not prepared for marriage. When problems arise they invariably want to blame their spouse. If they don't learn how to resolve their problems the result is division. It is this division that inevitably causes one or both of them to break their marriage vows and turn to another.

Problems in a marriage, including infidelity, can be overcome if a couple truly desires to live together. Although unfaithfulness is a hard blow for some a marriage can weather even this storm if there is a forgiving spirit. Sometimes counsel with a minister or informed person is a great help. Eph. 4:32 says, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Many have come back from the very brink of marital disaster and built a marriage that lasted. This is especially so when a man and woman commit their lives to Christ and begin to live for eternal things.

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MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

This is another subject that has been grossly misunderstood and consequently is the battleground for much confusion and division. Caught in the middle of this great controversy are many innocent people, including children.

Most of the trouble is caused by legalistic teachers who feel they are standing true to the word of God. It is the result of teaching based more upon a “holier than thou” tradition than the word of God.

Christ’s sayings to the Pharisees have been used as a proof text to substantiate much of the teaching that has caused the trouble. Matt. 19:3-9. And to this have been added numerous doctrinal ideas that have no Bible foundation whatsoever.

ERROR BREEDS ERROR

When man falls into error, he has to provide more props to support his original mistake. Error leads to more error.

Such teaching as that a remarried person is living in adultery, even after Christ comes into his or her heart, is false.

And the teaching that previously married persons who have children must cease living together as man and wife, but stay together and raise their children, is without any scriptural foundation.

Some even go a step further stating that the supposedly guilty party (married more than once) must quit their present mate and return to the first one. All such ideas are the inventions of legalistic teachers caught in the web of their own false doctrine.

God does not leave us in the dark concerning this most important subject. It is man under the influence of legalism, with his false ideas and interpretations, who has confused the issue.

Show me one scripture that says a man or woman in a second marriage must cease the marriage relationship after conversion. Show me one verse of scripture stating that such a couple should remain together and raise their children but cease the conjugal relationship. Show me a verse of

scripture stating that they must leave their present mate and return to the first one. All such legalistic ideas are the vain teachings of men.

Surely the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God didn't overlook such an important issue. It is inconceivable that the scriptures would leave us completely ignorant on so important an issue.

The "holier than thou" attitude that some have today is the result of wrong interpretation of the scriptures and a general ignorance of the subject. Part of the trouble stems from wrong interpretation of Paul's instruction concerning qualifications for elders and deacons. I Tim. 3:1-12, Titus 1:5-6.

The statement that an elder or deacon is to be the husband of one wife leads many to believe that this applies to all former marriages. However, I am persuaded that this is not what the apostle meant at all. Due to the practice of polygamy, or having more than one wife at a time, Paul wrote these words.

POLYGAMY

An examination of the Bible, as well as history, shows us that polygamy was practiced by many nations including Israel. Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 18, pages 186-187, has much to say on the subject.

None can deny that the practice of having more than one wife by many Old Testament saints was a generally accepted way of life. Such notables as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David and Solomon had more than one wife. There is no hint from the scriptures that this practice was frowned upon by the Lord, much less forbidden.

Beyond doubt, polygamy was still practiced during the days of Christ and the early church. I feel sure it was in the light of this practice that Paul said elders and deacons were to be the husband of one wife.

With the exception of Paul's teaching concerning elders and deacons, there is no scripture forbidding a man to have more than one wife.

One of the problems encountered by missionaries to foreign lands today is this system under which a man is married to several women at one time. Feeling no sense of guilt or shame, many families with several wives and children are found living together harmoniously.

After conversion, the question of this polygamous state becomes a problem indeed to many missionaries who know only the monogamous point of view. I understand some of these churches have ruled that present family units be allowed to continue as they are, with the man being warned against additional wives. Of course, they are not allowed to become elders or deacons when they have more than one wife.

ORIGIN OF DIVORCE

Several years ago I was thinking about Christ's sayings to the Pharisees in Matt. 19:3-9 on the subject of divorce and almost subconsciously asked the question, did Moses do wrong in commanding that a bill of divorcement be given when people separate?

Hardly realizing I had asked the question, I was shocked when the Lord spoke to me and said, "Moses did exactly what I told him to do."

The Lord then explained saying that in the beginning (before sin entered), he intended that man and woman be eternally wedded together in the marriage union, but after sin entered and strife and division came, it was necessary to legalize separation with a bill of divorcement.

This was necessary to preserve some degree of sanctity and honor to the institution of marriage. Divorce was given lest man degenerate to the level of an animal with no respect for marriage whatsoever.

This at least would give legal recognition to the separation of a couple and help prevent going from one mate to another. Going from one mate to another, and sometimes coming back to the original, was an abomination in the eyes of God. Deut. 24:1-4.

The Lord himself authorized the first divorce lest man commit greater sin in transgression of God's law in marriage.

Christ's teaching on the subject was never intended to answer the question that had arisen in the Corinthian Church, nor for the church today for that matter. It was given solely for the benefit of the self-righteous Pharisees who made their boast in the law.

It was given simply to expose their sin and show them how far they were from keeping the law. Their mouths had to be stopped that they might become guilty before God. Rom. 3:19. Since they made their boast in the law, Jesus gave it to them in its pure, unadulterated form.

Deceived by the traditions of the elders and the vain interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees, the Jews took comfort in thinking they were keeping the law. As law keepers, they didn't need a savior. In their own eyes, they were righteous already.

God's perfect law in the beginning was that the twain (man and wife) become one flesh in the marriage union. This is why the union of man and woman in marriage is a type of Christ and his church. I might add that this is still God's law concerning marriage for believers. There is no excuse nor justification for the divorce of enlightened believers in Christ Jesus.

TRUE UNION

Marriage is not a true union until it is sanctified by the Spirit of God. It is no more a true union than a mere lip profession of faith is a true union

with Jesus Christ. In true union, there is no ground for divorce. In the same sense, the Lord is eternally married to his people, regardless of their condition. Jer. 3:14.

I Cor. 7:39 says, “The wife is bound by the law (God’s law governing marriage) as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”

It is evident that this quotation by Paul has application to enlightened believers, not unbelieving sinners. In Rom. 7:1-2, he applies this same law to “them that know the law”. Verses 10 and 11 of I Cor. 7 also have enlightened believers in mind.

Using this same principle as a type of bondage to the law of Moses before conversion, Paul has this to say in Romans 7:4, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

If this teaches us anything, it certainly means we are set free from the bondage of the law when we come to Christ. Even as a woman is set free from the law of her husband when he dies, we become dead to the curse of the Mosaic law by the death of Jesus Christ.

A NEW BEGINNING

Out of this death comes resurrection life and a new beginning. II Cor. 5:17 says, “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

It makes no difference what men have done while in sin and unbelief, for this was part of the old creation which is of Adam.

Christ bore in his body all our sins: adultery, murder, lying, stealing, drunkenness and idolatry. In Christ, we are as free from all this, including marriage mistakes, as if we had never sinned.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate nor abusers of themselves with mankind nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I Cor. 6: 9-11.

This scripture certainly portrays the type of sinful humanity that God saves by his grace. Fornication and adultery, with or without a marriage license, is just plain sin in the eyes of a holy God.

Jesus agreed with the woman at the well — she didn’t have a husband yet, but was living with her sixth man at that time. This simply bears out

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the great truth that when men are in unbelief, there is nothing pure. Titus 1:15.

Man in his fallen state has broken all of God's laws and that is why he needs grace. This is why it was necessary for Jesus to die and meet the demands of a holy God that said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die."

Jesus' death on the cross is payment in full for man's transgression of God's holy law. This includes man's transgression of God's law governing marriage. God's law respecting marriage is as much a part of the law as "Thou shalt not steal" or "thou shalt not kill."

God's law, being eternal, is irrevocable. Once broken, there is no remedy outside of Christ. Since the demands of the law were met through his death, he must become our saviour.

When we come to Christ, we become part of the new creation. We make a new beginning with God as though we had never sinned or made a mistake. God saves us as we are and sanctifies our present marital status.

So far as God is concerned, we have never sinned, been married or divorced. It is all blotted out. The handwriting of ordinances that was against us (the law condemned us) is abolished through the cross. Col. 2:15.

NO MERIT

No amount of effort in keeping the law will make an unbeliever righteous. Everything done while in sin and unbelief is simply filthy rags. Isa. 64:6. Titus 1:15 says, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

According to the above scripture, there is nothing about the unbeliever that is pure. This includes marriage and everything else that is done in sin and unbelief. It is only when the sinner repents and believes in Christ that his marriage is sanctified.

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now they are holy." I Cor. 7:14.

Even children born from the marriage union of unbelievers are unclean in the eyes of God. This is why Paul says, "else were your children unclean: but now are they holy."

Only when faith comes to one or both of the marriage partners is the marriage sanctified.

DOCTRINE FOR BELIEVERS

Paul's teaching in I Cor. 7 was given not for the benefit of the self-righteous, Christ rejecting Jews, but for believers who found themselves involved in various marriage situations upon conversion. There being no scripture that spelled out the answer to these problems, Paul went into detail to help them.

Had Jesus' teaching in Matt. 19:3-9 been sufficient for the needs of the church, there would have been no need for Paul's teaching in I Cor. 7. This is where we will find most of the answers to our subject.

Before we more fully consider the teaching in I Cor. 7, I would like to consider an objection held by some concerning the inspiration of Paul's teaching.

Because Paul makes a distinction between the Lord's command and his own teaching in verses 10-12, some feel that Paul was not inspired. This is not what the apostle had in mind. He is simply saying that the Lord has already given commandment (Matt. 19:3-9) concerning a man putting away his wife.

Since the Lord did not personally cover other areas of need, Paul was dealing with these himself. In dealing with this subject, Paul was inspired of God to teach those things not personally touched upon by Jesus (verse 40).

The ministry of Christ, being to the Jews (Matt. 15:24), left many of these needs of the church to the inspired apostle. This is why Paul is the author of at least 13 epistles in the New Testament.

As the apostle to the Gentiles, it was Paul's responsibility to give an answer to the various questions that arose in the Corinthian Church. His treatment of the subject set a precedent and became the pattern on the subject to this day.

He begins his treatment of the subject in verses 1 & 2 by saying that it is good for a man not to touch a woman (sexually), but to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and every woman have her own husband.

In verses 3-5 he says, the marriage partners are to be mutually considerate and not to deny each other the right to the other's body, the exception being that they both consent to abstinence when they give themselves to prayer and fasting.

Paul says it would be better if the unmarried and widows would remain unmarried to better serve the Lord (verses 7 & 8). This same truth is also borne out in verses 32-40.

In verse 9, Paul says, "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." The apostle is teaching that it is better to

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marry than burn with passion. Although the Lord would have men serve him without distraction, he has in mercy provided marriage for those who cannot contain.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

Upon entering the household of faith, a new convert oftentimes finds himself divorced or remarried. Children may or may not be involved in the marriage. The question is, what must he or she do?

Going to I Cor. 7:17 we find these words, “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.”

“As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk.” This is the general rule as to what a divorced and remarried person is to do: stay as he is and serve God to the best of his ability. God sanctifies his present marital status. So far as God is concerned, the entire past is blotted out – marriage mistakes and all.

This is what Paul is teaching in verses 17-24. He concludes in verse 24 by saying, “Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.”

This scripture simply means what it says. The way God calls us and saves us is the way he expects us to abide and live for him. This is the general rule governing all who come to Christ, including divorced and remarried couples.

Upon being converted to Christ, the married believer is responsible to honor and make his marriage work if at all possible. “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: if any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.” I Cor. 7:12-13.

These scriptures are very plain; the believer has no right to put away his unbelieving mate so long as they are pleased to continue the marriage relationship. This is why Paul says in verse 16, “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”

THOSE WHO DEPART

Occasionally, when one marriage partner is converted, the one remaining in sin and unbelief will refuse to live with the Christian wife or husband. The question is, what must the Christian partner do? As already stated, the Christian has no right to put away their unbelieving mate. In fact, they should in good conscience prayerfully do all in their power to save their marriage.

If, in spite of this, the unbeliever leaves their Christian mate, there is nothing the believer can do but let them go. The Christian is not under bondage in such cases. Verse 15, says, “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.”

He is free from that marriage union, as well as all other deeds of sin done in unbelief. He is as dead to the law of that marriage by the body of Christ as he is to the law of Moses by the death of Christ.

Some would object to this and point to verses 10 & 11 as proof that this is wrong. The truth they fail to see is that Paul has two different groups or situations in mind. Verses 10 & 11 apply to enlightened believers. There is no ground for divorce when both man and wife are believers. Verses 12-15 are given for the benefit of a believer married to an unbeliever.

Let’s not forget, the law governing marriage is as surely a part of the law as “Thou shalt not steal” or “Thou shalt not Kill.” Since the believer is dead to the law by the body of Jesus Christ, he is also dead to the law of past marriages. This also applies to current marriages where the unbelieving mate refuses to continue the marriage relationship. Otherwise, Paul would have been wrong to say “A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.”

The next question is, just how free is the believer from the marriage union of the unbelieving partner that went out from him? Is he indeed free, or must he live out the rest of his mortal life without the privilege of ever marrying again?

Some misguided religionists actually teach this. Did Paul really mean a brother or sister wasn’t under bondage in such cases? If he is not under bondage in such cases, he is free. John 8:36 says, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

With the past blotted out in the precious blood of Christ, the believer is indeed free and begins a new life. He is as free to marry as if he had never been married, or as if his former husband or wife was indeed dead. In the reckoning of God, the new believer or convert is dead and his life is hid with Christ. Rom. 6:7-8, Col. 2:20 and 3:3.

Paul’s teaching in verse 2 that says “Let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband” still applies. As he teaches in verse 9, it is still “better to marry than to burn.”

HYPOTHETICAL CASE

To show you how ridiculous legalism can be, let us take a hypothetical case to illustrate what we mean. Two young women, each 21 years of age, are attending a gospel meeting and are converted to Christ.

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One of them was raised in a good home and had lived a good clean moral life. However, she was swept off her feet by a convincing suitor and married at 16 years of age. The marriage only lasted three months and the young man deserted her for another woman.

Later on, they were officially divorced and the girl continued to live a good, clean, moral life until her conversion at the age of 21.

The other young woman went astray at the age of 16 and lived a very immoral life until she was converted at the age of 21. Although she had lived with several men, she had never actually married any of them.

After her conversion, they both meet fine Christian young men who want to marry them. The young woman who lived a very immoral life until conversion is told there is nothing wrong in her getting married. She has the blessing of the church and preacher upon her.

The other young lady who has lived a good, clean moral life but made the one mistake is told that she cannot marry. If she does, she will be living in adultery according to legalism.

This is what some preachers and churches actually teach today. Knowing that I have to face God in the judgment, I say to both young women: "Christ has set you free. His precious blood has cleansed you from all sin. Your past is blotted out and you are free to marry in the Lord."

ONLY IN THE LORD

However, in beginning a new life, no believer has a right to marry outside of Christ (II Cor. 6:14). And even then, they should be led of the Lord. Much prayer, with a desire to please the Lord, is a must for those contemplating marriage under any circumstances. Where either or both the man and woman have been previously married, much heart-searching prayer is in order.

Since there are so few preachers and churches who have very much light on this subject, it is almost impossible to turn to them for counsel and help.

However, where there is a church body moving under the headship of Christ, I certainly recommend that individuals go to them for counsel and prayer. Sometimes a situation is so complicated that wisdom from the body of Christ is necessary.

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“And the Pharisees came unto him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, what did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Mark 10:2-9.

According to statistics more marriages in the U.S.A. are headed for separation in the divorce courts than ever before. It is not uncommon to hear of couples who have been married ten, twenty or thirty years breaking up and going their separate ways. In some instances couples stay together until their children are grown and then separate.

Many reasons are given for these shipwrecked marriages. Sometimes another woman or man is involved and in some cases they simply want their so-called freedom. Sometimes both parties are guilty of not really wanting to make a go of it. Very often each side blames the other. As a result of all this the psychiatrist, the medical doctor, the minister, the marriage counselor, the divorce lawyer and the courts are doing a booming business.

For a long time Hollywood has set the pace in making a joke of marriage, divorce and any concept of marital sanctity. Today hardly anyone is censored for marital infidelity or divorce. And the growing trend is to simply live together without marriage or any commitment of faithfulness.

What is the real cause of this attitude and shipwrecked marriages that society has come to accept as simply part of our way of life? I could answer this question by simply saying, “People need God.” Basically this is absolutely true. But the truth is, the whole fabric of our society has so

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degenerated in the matter of morals and God-consciousness until hardly anything is sacred any more. Our world will become more and more like the world of Noah as we approach the end of this age. Genesis 6:5.

With the growing release of demonic forces upon the world, mankind must draw nigh to God or be possessed by his own depravity. This, I believe, is what is actually taking place. More and more the enemy is coming in like a flood. But (praise God!) a standard is being lifted against him. Isaiah 59:19. The light of the evening time is increasing. Zechariah 14:7. God's word sets men free (John 8:32) is searching out and finding a remnant of people that are looking for the coming bridegroom. Matt. 25:6. Although darkness is covering the earth and gross darkness the people, a few are hearing his voice. Heb. 3:7. As the light increases they will arise and shine in preparation for their coming Lord. Isaiah 60:1-2, Psalms 45:13-14.

Beloved, a revelation of what God is doing will do more to stabilize lives and save marriages than all the psychiatrists and marriage counselors in the world.

A couple whose marriage was on the verge of breaking up who began attending one of my meetings over twenty-five years ago is an example of this. They were a typical young couple with every earthly reason for making a success of their marriage. They were nice looking, intelligent, well educated and enjoyed a good standard of living. Despite the fact that both of them had religious backgrounds and the Lord had blessed them with two beautiful daughters, their marriage was on the rocks.

Under the influence of the gospel they discovered a new purpose in life and soon found peace with each other. This case, as well as millions of others, has proven that we must have something to live for other than self. Earthly, carnal things can never take the place of God and the peace that he gives. Jesus said, "Peace I give, not as the world giveth."

However since there are so many aspects of truth that relate to marriage our purpose here is to give more detailed specifics on how to prevent shipwrecked marriages.

PREPARATION

The old saying "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure" is certainly true of the marriage state. The fantasy that the magic bliss is going to make you live happily ever afterward is one hundred percent wrong. Don't be an ostrich. Sticking your head in the sand won't make your dreams come true. Take a good look before you leap. We need to be as realistic about marriage as we are about choosing a career, buying a home, establishing a business or any other important endeavor.

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Jesus himself taught this principle in regard to the kingdom of God, which is spiritual union or marriage to our heavenly Bridegroom. Luke 14:28-33. Other than union with Christ and his body the church, marriage is the most important decision you will ever make in this life. There are numerous factors that enable us to “count the cost” before we make such a vital and important decision.

LOVE

What you call love may not stand up under the stress of marriage. Most of the romantic notions that people have are sheer fantasy. If you think that love and kisses and hopping into the bed is all you need for a happy marriage, you are headed for bitter disappointment. If your love is not based upon other qualities than physical attraction or sexual desire you have a poor foundation on which to build a life together.

Marriage is the fusion or union of two lives. Like two similar metals capable of fusing together, in marriage there must be compatible qualities that enable the twain to truly become “one flesh”. Matt. 19:5. There must be mutual admiration and respect for each other if this union is to be effected.

Remember, you are going to live with this person the rest of your life or until death. The time to take a good long look is before the vows are made. Don’t be deceived into thinking your love for him, or her, is going to transform them into a “silk purse” from a “sow’s ear”. How often we have heard the bitter cry of anguish, “Mother, I didn’t know he was like that.” If you are a wise woman, or man, you will not build your future upon the disappointing sands of romantic fantasies. Be honest with yourself and consider the following questions about your prospective mate.

Is he kind and considerate of his own mother or sisters? Is he a harmonious part of a family unit or a loner? Is he a reliable, dependable person? Does he hold a job, working regularly or bounce around from one thing to another? Does he have a profession or know a trade that he enjoys working at? Is he a drifter, a hippie, a religious cultist, an alcoholic or a criminal? Is he a skirt-chaser or does he consider himself a ladies’ man? What kind of friends or people does he associate with? What is his family like? Do you have things in common that you like to do together? And, most of all, do you both fear and reverence the Lord, sharing common religious views?

If the answer is negative to many of these questions you are asking for trouble to marry such a person. Marriage is not going to change all of these things. Some of these things are life-long traits that follow certain families from generation to generation. Don’t deceive yourself into thinking that marriage and your love are going to change all of this.

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If you marry a lazy bum you are going to have to support yourself and him. If you marry a temperamental, violent type you can expect to be beaten and abused. If you marry a moody, loner type person you will spend many lonely hours by yourself. If you marry mama's little boy, your mother-in-law will be the third member of your household. If you marry a skirt-chaser, you can expect to share your man with other women.

If you marry a rowdy drunkard type you will spend many lonely hours of anguish wondering if he is in jail, the hospital or dead. If you marry a confirmed hippie you might just as well put a flower in your hair, sandals on your feet, get your knapsack and hit the road.

The man must likewise take a common sense, practical look at the girl he proposes to marry and live with the rest of his life. Does she take pride in keeping a clean neat house? Can she cook? Is she interested in learning new recipes and trying to prepare nutritious and attractive meals? Is she more interested in working on a job or having a career than in being a homemaker? Is she a negative, nagging, jealous, domineering or dissatisfied person? Is she more interested in primping, partying and pretty clothes than in pleasing her household?

Does she possess a strong family spirit that will take precedence over the marriage union and keep running home to mother? Is she promiscuous, a prima donna, or a flirt that loves attention from the opposite sex? Does she have patience with and love children? Is she a bookworm, spending much of her time curled up on the couch reading true romances or drinking cokes and watching television soap operas?

Is she a complaining neurotic that is always going to the doctor who treats her for ills that exist only in her mind? Is she thrifty, appreciating the value of a dollar, or does she think that money grows on trees?

If a man doesn't want to live with a dissatisfied, nagging woman, eat out of cans, sleep in unmade beds and see his children neglected, he had better open his eyes and consider the consequences.

If the answer is negative to many of these questions, the perfume and roses will soon fade and be replaced with the despair and bitterness of disappointment. Most of these questions, plus others, can be applied to both the man and the woman.

You don't just marry a nice figure, a pretty face and beautiful hair. You marry the total personality. Their body may be the dwelling place of many devils that will make your life miserable and seek to destroy you in the process of time.

Spirits of pride, wrath, jealousy, dishonesty, immorality, laziness, sexual perversion and many others are very clever at camouflaging their presence until after the marriage vows. Evil spirits purposely release their

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hold upon the minds of their subjects and allow them to act normally at times.

I might add they actually inspire their subject to be gracious, considerate and understanding to deceive and seduce their victims. Don't be deceived by sweet talk. Some have the same line for every girl or boy they meet. Psalms 5:9 says, "For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue."

This is why the gift of discernment is so needed in the church. This is also why anyone contemplating marriage needs to pray much, wait on the Lord and keep their eyes and ears open.

There is hope, there is help if a couple actually desires to save their marriage and will listen to reason. The basis of this reason has to be God's Word. I do not have any hope in the ultimate or permanent sense for those who want help without God. The final criterion is God's eternal Word which is forever settled in heaven. Psalms 119:89.

The Word alone must rule in our hearts and lives. It is through the Word of God that the man and the woman will find that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Rom. 12:1-3. The Word will help them come into divine order. This is the place of harmony, peace and rest that God has ordained for them from the foundation of the world. Even as God has divine order and arrangement in his universe, he has a purpose and plan for mankind. This includes the man and the woman in marriage. The purpose, of course, is to bring them into harmony with God's purpose and plan for their lives.

This is why divine counsel is so important to any couple whose marriage is in trouble. There is absolutely no way to help people who will not listen or receive counsel. God, himself, cannot help people who will not be reasoned with. Isaiah 1:18.

This is actually what Jesus had reference to when he told the Pharisees that Moses wrote the precept of divorce because of the hardness of their heart. But he pointed out that this was not God's way in the beginning. Mark 10:2-9. It truly takes a hard heart and a stubborn, unyielding attitude for a man or woman to reject a mate they have lived with and shared life with.

It is only after Satan has had access to the mind for a period of time that a man or woman can do such a thing. Such a condition, which God likens to witchcraft (I Samuel 15:23), is actually rebellion against God. Unless the stubborn will of such a person is broken, there is no help for that person or his marriage.

Trouble in marriage or any area of God's universe means something is wrong. This simply means there has to be a change – a change that will

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bring individuals into harmony with God and each other. Marital trouble is simply the symptom of sickness in the heart. Accusing, condemning and blaming your mate will not cure this disease.

Next to the church, the home is the most sacred thing on earth. This is where our children are nurtured and taught those things that prepare them for life and hopefully eternity. The home, as well as the church, has more to do with shaping lives and making a stable society than anything else on earth.

Marriage is a type of the union of Christ and his church and Satan works diligently at trying to destroy it. He hates it because of this and works relentlessly by many devious means to cause strife and division. If a couple can recognize the true source of their trouble, they will have taken a giant stride toward saving their marriage.

HOW SATAN DECEIVES

When the mind is not filled with God's Word, Satan begins a slow campaign to make you dissatisfied and unhappy. Entering marriage with the false concept that marriage will be the answer to all your hopes and dreams, you will make it easy for the enemy to soon convince you that something is terribly wrong. From this point it is one step to the conclusion that the source of your trouble is your mate. Knowing that your conscience must be satisfied before you will sever the tie of marriage, Satan's campaign is to delude you into thinking you are right and your mate is wrong.

One by one he begins to magnify faults and sow seeds of discord into your mind. You will become miserable, unhappy and critical, blaming your mate for all your trouble. Being unaware of what is really taking place, you both become negative about each other and your marriage in general. This strife and division is a sure sign that demoniac forces are ministering to your minds.

James 3:14-17 says, "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

The word devilish means demoniacal. This passage of scripture makes it very plain that there are two sources of wisdom. One fills your life with strife, division and misery. The other brings peace, harmony and happiness.

As long as one partner in a marriage union has faith and a positive attitude, there is some hope for such a marriage. When both become

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negative and disillusioned, their marriage is in serious trouble. Not realizing what they are doing, they actually provoke, strengthen and create in each other the same condition that they are in. It is the law of God that everything brings forth after its own kind. Genesis 1:21.

Time and again we have seen a clean young person with good moral principles marry the wrong kind and in the process of time they become like the person they marry. This is because the scripture which says, “the twain shall become one flesh,” has been fulfilled. Mark 10:8.

THINGS SATAN TELLS YOU

You never get to do anything or go anywhere. Your husband doesn't take you out like other men do their wives. You never have enough money to buy things you need. Your clothes are old and worn out, and your furniture is broken down. All the money goes for house rent, or payment of the car, doctor bills and groceries. You never have any money of your own. You have to ask him for every dime you get and that's why you are going to get a job and earn your own money. Your husband doesn't have time for you and the children. But he has time to go fishing, play golf or have a night on the town with his cronies. He takes time to do the things he wants to do but he is too obligated and busy when you want to do something with him.

He doesn't appreciate you or how hard you work. Your life is one of drudgery, cleaning the house, doing the laundry, cooking, sewing and looking after the kids. Worst of all, he doesn't love you. If he did he would tell you once in awhile. You would probably faint if he sent you some flowers or a card, bought you a box of candy or remembered your birthday or anniversary.

All he wants out of you is to keep his house, raise his children, cook his food and go to bed with him when he wants some sex. As a lover he is the world's worst. All he is interested in is in satisfying himself and then going to sleep. He never shares his business with you or tells you of anything interesting that happens on the job. When he gets home he is so grouchy and tired he wants to be left alone.

After the honeymoon wears off and the husband has time to observe his bride in a sloppy housecoat, hair in curlers and in a bad mood, he is subject to think he has married Gravel Gertie instead of Glamorous Gertrude. Instead of being warm, intelligent and exciting, she becomes a cold, calculating, sexless wonder. After a few years and some extra pounds he imagines her as being old, ugly and fat. Observing other men with their slender young wives, he becomes disgusted and disillusioned.

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When this happens it is easy to imagine that what he needs, to be happy, is another woman, especially some young sweet thing that will understand him and always melt into his arms.

Besides all these things, all she does is nag, gripe and complain. He has to leave home to get some peace. Fact is, he wishes he didn't have to go home in the evening. Sometimes she gives him the silent treatment and leaves the arguing and fighting to the kids. To hear her tell it, she's the suffering little martyr living with a beast that doesn't appreciate or understand her.

With this negative marital climate it isn't difficult for Satan to convince one, or both the man and the woman, that if they had another mate they would be happy. Don't be deceived! The thrill will soon wear off and you will discover the same old problems are with you. You may actually be jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. The real trouble is on the inside.

LAST DECEPTIONS

One of Satan's last deceptions to destroy a marriage is to tell the couple their marriage was a mistake to begin with. They don't have anything in common and they don't love each other. This leads to the point of no return. Convinced in their minds they have made a mistake and the only solution is divorce, they refuse all counsel. If they belong to a church they finally reject the counsel of the pastor or elders on the grounds that they don't understand or they are prejudiced.

God's Word says, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Prov. 11:14. This is why it is so important to know the Lord and be a part of a Christian fellowship where these things are understood. The love, the wisdom and the communication within such a fellowship greatly strengthen the bond of marriage. And they understand the strategy of the enemy when he mounts an attack against one of their married couples.

Time and again I have seen marriages broken up when one or both members of a marriage drift apart through outside interests or a job that puts them into close contact with other people. This is especially true when your contact is with members of the opposite sex. The girls in the office look like angels compared to the wife at home. Their hair is in place, their clothes are neat and their perfume is tantalizing. This same principle is true of working women who imagine it would be like heaven if they had one of the prince charmings they work with for a husband.

Too many live in a fantasy world before and after marriage. Their concept is not a practical one. Too much TV and love and romance magazines can cause this. The idealism portrayed by such programs as the

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“Waltons” is proof positive to many couples that something is wrong with their marriage. Living in such a dream world, it is very easy to imagine the grass is greener in another pasture. Some have changed pastures five or six times and they still haven’t found the right one; Hollywood is a good example of this.

A REAL CONSPIRACY

Until men and women see that there is a diabolical and intelligent conspiracy designed to disrupt, divide and destroy their marriage, their home and their children will continue to listen to the voice of the serpent.

Satan has many sources through which he can feed and nurture a spirit of division and rebellion. It may be close friends of the husband or the wife. It is most phenomenal how people with a familiar and sympathetic spirit are always close by to strengthen and justify one or both partners in a marriage breakup.

Some never forsake Father and Mother to become one flesh with their mate. When the tie of blood is greater than the tie of spirit, there is no real union. A marriage or church built upon such a foundation cannot stand. Remember Jesus said, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife: And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Mark 10:7-9.

Be careful about those people who justify and take up for you against your mate. When marriages begin to break up, true peacemakers with an understanding of these things are hard to find. All I can say is woe unto the person who becomes the tool of Satan in wrecking a marriage. There is a curse upon those that are instruments in breaking up a marriage. This, no doubt, motivated Jesus to say, “What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” Mark 10:9. On the positive side Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” Matt. 4:9.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Broken marriages often result in every thing you’ve worked for and accumulated as a union going down the drain. Savings accounts are wiped out. Homes that you have worked and sacrificed to buy are lost. Positions of influence and opportunity that took years of hard work and diligence to build are gone with the wind.

Besides all of this, you are going to embitter and wound each other for life. Inward bitterness is worse than cancer. A cancer just kills you and that

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is the end, but an embittered soul keeps springing up and defiling everyone it touches. Heb. 12:15.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of all is the effect upon the children of a broken home. Broken marriages wound and scar your children for life. Very few people know the heartbreak of a little child whose faith in his mother and father is shattered. And so often in the painful process, they are abandoned to the courts and the mercy of the world. Sometimes broken homes result in burdens being laid upon people who are not able to bear them. So often I have seen grandparents and other relatives have to bear this burden when they were not physically, mentally nor financially able to do so.

Broken homes do more to spawn maladjusted misfits than anything else. Many of the criminals, dope addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes and welfare recipients, along with the insane, come from broken homes. One of the greatest burdens upon society as a whole can be traced back to the environment of broken homes. Hospitals, mental institutions, prisons and welfare departments will gladly confirm these statements.

Although it is unthinkable, divorce and broken homes have become more and more common among those who profess to be Christians. What a terrible testimony for people who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ. Such people are reproaches to Christ, the church, their children and their family before the whole world.

THE REAL PROBLEM

In the final analysis the real problem in shipwrecked marriages is rebellion against God. The hardness of heart that made the precept of divorce necessary to begin with was simply stubborn, unyielding wills that God could not touch with his mercy and love. It's a matter of whether men and women want God.

When God's Word has little control over our lives, our spirits are open to the influence of demoniac powers. Prov. 25:28 says, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

This simply means we have no defense against the enemy. A marriage without Christ and the influence of God's Word has little chance in our world today.

DIVINE ORDER

The world system and society, as a whole, knows little and cares less about divine order of God's purpose and plan for our lives. Ignorance of God's laws governing marriage and all human relationships does not

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nullify nor deliver us from the penalty of breaking them. God's Word says, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge." Hosea 4:6.

This is true of marriage as well as every other facet of human existence. Until the man and the woman find their God-ordained place in relationship to Christ and each other they will have trouble. All human relationships and endeavors will, in the end, miserably fail without God.

BE REALISTIC

May God help every couple who reads this message to realize there is an enemy who is trying to destroy them, their home, their children, their marriage and the work of God.

Wake up man!

God created you the head of the woman. I Cor. 11:3. You are responsible to take the lead in spiritual things as well as others. God intended for you to rule by truth, by love, by example and by honoring Christ as your head. God's divine order for the man and the woman is set forth in Eph. 5:21-31, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, 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: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

It may not seem important to most people but the headship of man over the woman must be honored and respected even as the headship of Christ over the man and the headship of God over Christ. It was when Eve moved away from the headship of Adam that she began listening to the serpent. In like manner when a woman despises and rejects the headship of her husband she begins to listen to the voice of the serpent. In reality she moves away from God and comes under the headship of Satan.

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This is why there is such a great responsibility on the man to honor Christ as his head. Through honoring Christ as his head, the woman who is the weaker vessel, is also brought under the protective covering of Christ.

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to the knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” I Peter 3:7.

It will be noticed from the scripture above that honour and unity between the husband and wife are necessary if our prayers are not to be hindered. The reason for this is because division between man and wife is due to rebellion in the heart. Rebellion is always against God. Very few will even try to pray when their heart is full of rebellion. David understood this when he said, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalms 51:17.

Beyond doubt, as the head, man is more responsible before God than the woman. Great judgment awaits the man that refuses to honor Christ as his head and provide the God-appointed leadership that his wife and children need. Although every member of a family will give a personal account to God, a godly husband and father can do much to lead his family in the right direction.

Wake up woman!

God made you the helpmeet of the man and not the head. This does not mean God created you to help the man meet his bills by leaving your home and taking a public job. Women working on public jobs is one of the greatest contributing causes of shipwrecked marriages. This practice by married women is a direct violation of God’s Word.

Young women are commanded by the Lord “...to be sober, 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 2:4-5.

In I Tim. 5:14 the Word of God says, “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

Oh, I’m aware of the world system today that keeps many families so deeply in debt that they feel the woman has to work to help pay the bills. In order to do this they turn their babies over to a baby-sitter or some day care nursery. To keep house, work on their job and give just a little attention to their husband and children, it’s rush! rush! rush!. When the husband and wife are at home together they are so tired and ill that they are at each other’s throat fighting and blaming each other for their trouble.

This is the kind of atmosphere millions of children are being reared in. It’s no wonder they are joining the street gangs, becoming drug addicts,

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prostitutes, criminals and roaming the country from one hippie commune to another.

God never made the woman to take a public job driving a semi-truck, a taxicab, running a bulldozer, heading a corporation or becoming a politician. Don't be deceived by women's lib. The perverse spirit behind such movements is not liberating you. They are actually bringing you into greater bondage than you have ever been in before.

You are going to pay dearly for that extra money you make. Doctors, psychiatrists, hospitals, lawyers' fees and jail fines for your children will take it all. And there is no way you can count the costs in heartaches, misery and broken lives.

When women leave their children and their homes to earn some money so they can have more of this world's goods, they are out of divine order. The sin of covetousness is responsible for this. They would quickly condemn the liar, the thief, or the adulterer while they are just as guilty of breaking one of God's commandments. Exodus 20:17.

Jesus himself, warned us of this sin by saying, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." Luke 12:15.

A few weeks ago I was visiting in a home and the mother, a widow, told me of her son and daughter-in-law who had separated after twelve years of marriage. In spite of the fact that they had lived together for twelve years and had two young sons, ten and eleven years old their marriage was shipwrecked. Having known the young man as a teenager – he is about the same age as my oldest son – I felt very badly for and tried to be sympathetic with the mother. In discussing the cause of separation, I made mention of the fact that women working on public jobs was greatly responsible for many broken homes.

Although I had no knowledge of what had happened in this case, the mother quickly ventured that this was how this marriage was broken up. The young man's wife had met a man in the office where she worked. After a little flattery and attention, she had fallen for him and no longer wanted her husband of twelve years.

Women must learn to be content in doing those things God created them for. They must do it as unto the Lord and take delight in it. Proper mental attitude makes all the difference in the world.

Learning and working at being the kind of wife God wants you to be is a lifetime career. Being a good housekeeper, a good cook and homemaker is one of life's greatest challenges. Being the kind of God-fearing Mother that will nurture and bring your children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord is greater than being a world famous movie star. Being in

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rebellion against these things is rebellion against God who created you for this purpose.

THE REMEDY

The woman and the man need to surrender their wills in these things. They both need to learn to live within their means. Trying to keep up with the Jones' may be what others are doing but it is a tool of Satan to destroy you, your home, your marriage and your children. God's Word says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." I Tim. 6:6-9.

The man had better realize that he is responsible to God to work and provide for his family. I Tim. 5:8 says, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than infidel."

God says that the man who will not provide for his family has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. I don't know of a more serious indictment that can be brought against a human being. One who is worse than an infidel has reached the end of the line.

MARRIED TO UNBELIEVERS

Although the Word of God strictly forbids a believer to marry an unbeliever, we find many unequally yoked together in such marriages. Regardless of how it happened the believer needs to make a success of his marriage if he possibly can.

In the case of believing wives married to unbelieving husbands, the wife is more responsible before God than the husband is. This is simply because she has light or a knowledge of God that the husband doesn't have. According to I Cor. 7:13-14 and I Peter 3:1-12 the believing wife might be the means of bringing her husband to Christ.

Regardless of the ultimate outcome of such a marriage, the believing wife or husband has no right to leave or put away (divorce) their mate as long as they are pleased to dwell with them. In such cases the believer should honor his marriage relationship and yet honor and glorify Christ with his life.

According to I Cor. 7:15, if the unbeliever departs because he or she does not wish to continue the marriage relationship to the Christian wife or husband, a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases. However, the believer needs to be sure in his or her heart that he has sincerely sought God's help in trying to save his marriage.

SHIPWRECKED MARRIAGES AND HOW TO PREVENT THEM

I believe there is no obstacle too great to overcome if a couple sincerely desires to please God. The first step is a surrender of their own obstinate wills in the matter. The next step is to agree and pray together for help from the Lord. Matt. 18:19 says, “Again I say unto you, if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”

The help they will receive as they humble themselves before God and each other will, first of all, be grace to accept each other as they are. Next they will receive grace to make changes and adjustments that are needed on both sides. Very seldom is one person totally guilty and the other totally innocent.

The man and the woman need to be considerate of each other in the realization that both of them have their personal crosses to bear in their marriage union. If the woman doesn't have the strength and peace of God in her heart, the confinement of the home, crying kids and the never ending chores of keeping house can become maddening. And the man in never ceasing labor, well or sick, rain or shine faces a burden that grace alone will enable him to bear year after year.

While continuing to pray together and seeking God's help, they must communicate with a willingness to hear what the other has to say. Always end your sessions with prayer from your heart that God will help you. If necessary, get some godly counsel and advice to help you in things you don't understand.

Above all things, don't give up. Continue to seek God from your heart. He is looking on. Jeremiah 17:10. The key to saving your marriage is in opening your heart to God. The words of David in Psalms 51:17 are still true. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

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HOMOSEXUALITY

For a long time now much verbal and written discussion of homosexuality and sexual perversion in general has been publicly aired.

There was a time when open discussion of the subject was taboo. It was one of the unmentionable things that people as a whole looked upon as too vile to talk about.

Today such is not the case. It is discussed openly by much of our society without the slightest fear of public recrimination. Many doctors, psychiatrists, educators, public officials, newspaper columnists and even ministers openly discuss it. In addition to being the subject matter of numerous T.V. programs, it has become common for one or more characters to be cast as a homosexual in the shows themselves.

Pornographic movies, literature, radio and television are actually helping teach this Christless generation that homosexuality is perfectly normal for some people.

THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Fact is, a liberal permissive attitude by society has allowed a hard core of sexual perverts to come forth in our generation that has no consciousness of guilt whatsoever. To the contrary they defend their perversion and demand recognition with respectability.

They have not only come out of the closet but they are demanding approval by society and the right to teach our children in the public schools. Some politicians, churches and preachers actually cater to them as a poor oppressed minority that should be welcomed into the churches, the military and all branches of government.

As a result of this, sexual perversion is growing and gaining in popularity. Many who are not gay themselves are sympathizers who consider the gays a poor oppressed minority that should be allowed the same rights and privileges as all other citizens. To them sexual perversion is just another life style.

One homosexual minister taking part in a panel discussion on T.V. called it (his homosexuality) a beautiful gift from God.

ANTI-CHRIST

The gay rights movement is part and parcel of the great conspiracy that began with Lucifer's rebellion against God. Coinciding with the gay's resistance against government and society the world is clamoring with anti-movements of every stripe and hue. We have the civil rights movement, the ERA, the anti-capital-punishment forces and the anti-abortionists.

There is a universal anti spirit that is fighting for or against something. This, plus the free spirit, hippie generation, anti-marriage and anti everything else, must be understood in the light of Bible prophecy. The spirit motivating most of these anti movements is Anti-christ. The real purpose of these movements is to frustrate, confuse, divide and destroy.

It is according to the character and nature of Satan to deceive and inflame the masses under the guise of good. This is one of the ways he transforms himself into an angel of light. II Cor. 11:14.

This is the day when a general assault is being made against practically every segment of our social structure and government in general. I recently read an article in a local paper which told of a group that is lobbying against laws condemning incest. This group actually justified incest by saying that it is normal and even beneficial for sexual relations to take place within a family circle.

When you read something like this you wonder what is happening to the human race. It is simple. Truth-hating, Christ-rejecting mankind is being turned over to a reprobate mind. The only thing left for man when he rejects light is darkness. John 12:35.

We can only understand what is actually happening when we see these things within the context of the end of the age that will usher in the return of Christ.

"As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man." Matt. 24:37. In Genesis 6:5, we read where the imagination of man's heart was evil continually. Before the flood man's mind was so given over to evil until there was no further need for God to speak to him any longer. This is the consequence of continued rejection of light.

If men don't want God and righteousness he will turn them over to their own depravity. When this happens the vilest of demonic spirits possess their vessels and subject them to moral filth that animals are not guilty of.

In addition to incest where fathers molested their own daughters we have found that many married couples practice what they call oral sex. And believe it or not, some of them see nothing wrong with it! God never

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made man's mouth to be used as a sex organ. Only a filthy, unclean spirit could justify such unnatural behavior.

I recently came in contact with a case (a professing christian) who practiced perverted sex with both men and women. All of this in addition to these poor freaks who want sex change operations is symptomatic of a moral sickness that heralds the end of this age and the judgment of God on a reprobate world.

God destroyed man with the flood because he was completely given over to evil. The men of Sodom were such wicked sexual perverts that they refused Lot's virgin daughters desiring the two angels (in the form of men) instead.

Such moral corruption as this is one of the last signs of impending judgment, only this time it will be the final judgment of a holy God against the world.

My reason for dealing with this subject is the result of increasing contact with so many people who practice some form of sexual perversion in and out of the church. It is not uncommon to find preachers and professing christians guilty of such practice. There was a time when such degeneracy was unheard of in the churches.

And strangely enough, many of them see nothing wrong with it. Recently we had a young woman who confessed that her husband, an aspiring preacher, was a sexual deviate. We have had several christian women come to us whose husbands insisted on practicing what they call oral sex.

Although neither this article nor anything that I can say or do will change most sexual deviates there are some that can be helped. Truth, regardless of the nature of man's sin, is always for the benefit of the little remnant capable of hearing the voice of the Son of God. John 5:25 and 10:27.

In this day when homosexuality is so loosely and freely discussed, I believe we need some answers to these and other questions. As in all moral issues affecting the human race the Bible is our main source of information.

What about homosexuality and sexual perversion in general? Is it a normal way of life for some people? What is the cause of homosexuality? Should it be approved of by society and especially the church? What should be our attitude toward sexual perversion?

TWO TYPES

There are two types of sexual deviates that I want to consider in this message. Type one is people who can be delivered. For one reason or another they are not deviates because of rebellion against God and

rejection of light. In fact many of these people have been part of an environment that has been devoid of spiritual enlightenment.

Through wrong association as a result of their environment they have been led into some form of sexual perversion. Although they may participate or submit there are extenuating circumstances that keep them from union with a vile demonic spirit of perversion. Never in full agreement with what they are doing they stop short of reprobation or being sealed in their sins.

They are not in the category of those who have been turned over to a reprobate mind. Under the influence of the gospel and the right conditions these people can be delivered and saved as well as any other sinner. For example, I have had several women come to me for counsel whose husbands pressured them into sexual perversion against their desire.

There were some among the Christian believers that had been delivered and saved from sexual perversion. I Cor. 6:9-11 says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

It will be noticed from verse 9 that fornicators, idolators and adulterers are mentioned along with the effeminate and abusers of themselves with mankind. The last two mentioned have reference to sexual perversion. In fact, the "New Testament from 26 Translations" calls it homosexual perversion.

REPROBATION

The second type is found in Rom. 1:21-28. These are people who had great light and rejected it. In spite of their knowledge of God they refused to glorify him as God or to be thankful. Closing their hearts and minds to God and truth they turned and worshipped the creature instead of the Creator.

According to verses 24 and 26 God gave them up to uncleanness and vile affections. They dishonored their own bodies between themselves. The women changed the natural use of their bodies (sexually) into that which is against nature. The men left the natural use of the woman and burned in their lust toward each other.

Verse 28 says, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

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Let it be noticed that twice the scripture says "...God gave them up..." and once the word says "...gave them over..." Verses 24 and 28.

There is absolutely no further that a sinner can go in his rebellion against God. To hold the truth in unrighteousness and be so possessed by depravity until you do not want to retain God in your knowledge is the end of the line.

In the light of these scriptures, how can anyone claiming to believe in the Bible justify sexual perversion? There is only one answer. They have violated their conscience so long that it no longer cries out against such self degradation and shame.

This is man's supreme affront against his redeemer. It is the point of no return. How awful and tragic to think that man can reach such a state of hopelessness and utter despair. Absolutely nothing can be worse than eternal abandonment by God.

This was the state of Sodom and Gomorrah when God destroyed them with fire and brimstone. This was the condition of the world in Noah's day when God destroyed man with the flood.

This will also be the state of the world when it is destroyed by fire at the second coming of Christ. Were it not for the elect I do not believe this world would last another twenty-four hours.

My conviction is that most of the nations of the world have been enlightened and are already in a state of reprobation and strong delusion. For several thousand years many nations which had light at one time have been blinded by Christ-rejecting religion that sealed them in their sins.

For example, many of the Islamic nations, including Iran and Egypt, are descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar the Egyptian maid. Even the Jews scattered all over the world including those who have gone back to Palestine still reject Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Many generations have lived and died who are descendants of those who had knowledge of truth in ancient times.

God is not going to resurrect those untold generations that have lived and died and give them another chance. The rebellion of their fathers from the beginning has been ministered and handed down to each succeeding generation. Acts 7:51-52.

Deut. 5:9 says, "...I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

Even as Israel, blinded by sin and religious tradition, was unable to recognize their Messiah when he came the first time, the world today is just as blind.

Religious tradition today is just as deceptive and misleading as the religious tradition of the Jews preceding the first coming of Christ. Let's

not forget that it will be as it was in the days of Noah. Matt. 24:37. Jesus said, "Therefore be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt.24:44.

In spite of all the supposedly great teachers of prophecy that have been spawned by religious Babylon, the world today is just as blind to spiritual reality as the Jews were at the first coming of Christ.

STRONG DELUSION

Paul the apostle speaks of the great falling away and the manifestation of the man of sin before the coming of Christ. II Thess. 2:1-12. Other translations call this day "the great rebellion". Williams calls it "the great revolt". The New English Bible calls it "the final rebellion against God". Phillips calls it "a definite rejection of God".

The one thing that stands out with clarity from these other translations is that this day is unique in man's rebellion against God. It is evident that this day of revolt is man's final and greatest of all.

Beyond doubt, the greatest tribulation of all time will come as a result of this final revolt against God. It will be seething rebellion, inward unrest and misery that causes man to be striking out in all of these Anti-Christ movements. Most of these movements are Anti-Christ because of the spirit that motivates the people involved in them.

Matt. 24:21-22 says, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

It is because of man's rebellion against God and hatred of the truth that God sends strong delusion that seals him in his sins and damns him for eternity. II Thess. 2:10-11.

I believe it is later than we think. Most of the world has had its opportunity. America's day of repentance is about over. The moral filth and corruption that we observe today is bringing us ever closer to that final day of judgment.

MAN OF SIN

The man of sin which sits in the temple of God opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, II Thess. 2:3-4, is traditionally thought to be a world figure who is the embodiment of Satan or Anti-Christ.

This couldn't be some temple rebuilt at Jerusalem because God does not dwell in temples made with hands. Acts 17:48, Isaiah 66:1-2. The temple that both God and Anti-Christ seek to occupy is man. I Cor. 3:16, 6:19-20, John 2:19-21.

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Although the world system may one day be headed up by some sinister individual, the man of sin is already being revealed. The man of sin is the Adam man with his corrupt and depraved nature. As the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit through the gospel and law and order is removed from society more and more the man of sin will be manifested.

THE LOOSING OF SATAN

This is the day of the unfettered loosing of Satan. Rev. 20:3. The worldwide lawlessness, moral corruption and violence is all the evidence we need that Satan and his demonic forces are getting control of man.

This is also the reason various and sundry movements, religious and otherwise, are growing by leaps and bounds. Far out religious movements, witchcraft, political crusaders and all kinds of hate mongering activists are capturing the minds of millions.

Everybody is fighting for or against something – just anything to keep people occupied and away from Christ and righteousness.

Even though some of the issues could be technically labeled right, much demon influence is working behind the scenes ministering division and hate. This is the flood of Rev. 12:15 being spewed out of the serpent's mouth.

Until we can see that the binding and the loosing of Satan is relative rather than absolute we cannot understand what is actually taking place. Satan can only be loosed as he is able to express or manifest himself through man.

HOW?

The question of how men and women, boys and girls become homosexuals or sexual perverts needs an answer. Some turn to perversion because it is part of their ungodly environment. Even as thieves, harlots, bootleggers, petty crooks and assorted criminals are often produced by their environment and association, so is sexual perversion.

Disenchantment with the concept of marriage or a normal sexual relationship between man and woman is the catalyst that turns some to members of their own sex for fellowship and sexual fulfillment.

This can also happen when children are victims of a bad or abnormal home atmosphere. Lack of love, harmony and peace between a man and his wife can have disastrous effects on the children.

One of the greatest factors today that is turning many to perversion is the constant emphasis and glorification of sex and the human body. Living in a sexual fantasy world this generation is not satisfied with sex in a normal sense.

Brainwashed by demons of lust, many turn to perversion seeking a sexual thrill that doesn't exist. Experimentation often leads these people to possession by unclean spirits of perversion. When this happens their thinking process no longer functions normally when it comes to sex.

The longer and more often they give themselves to the spirit of sexual perversion the greater their bondage. Persistence in this direction leads to reprobation. This is simply God removing his hands of mercy and turning man over to the spirit he has given himself to.

The sexual revolution and the incessant availability of sex has cheapened the relationship of man and woman and caused marriage and sex to lose their meaning. The resulting psychological void causes many to turn to members of their own sex for fulfillment.

Often the end result of this is bitterness toward and rejection of the opposite sex. The next step is homosexuality or gratification of the sex drive with members of their own sex by perversion.

Many confirmed homosexuals have absolutely no desire for a normal relationship with the opposite sex. Possessed by a demon of perversion they literally detest the very thought of a normal sexual relationship.

The road to possession by demonic power is rebellion against God and rejection of light. The type of spirit that possesses a person depends upon various factors.

In my lifetime of almost sixty two years, I have observed many families who turned away from a knowledge of the truth. The overwhelming result has been disaster for their children. Dope addicts, drunkards, prostitutes, criminals, sexual deviates, sickness, disease and early graves have been the result.

Nothing will take the place of a good wholesome environment where people reverence and honor God. Prov. 22:6 is still true. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

When you associate with a certain type of people long enough you are subject to become like them. You partake of their spirit. As surely as children partake of any other type of spirit I believe it is possible for them to partake of a homosexual spirit at a very early age.

What is really wrong with much of the younger generation today is that they have partaken of the spirit and the sins of their fathers. Sexual perversion is simply one aspect or manifestation of the great falling away.

This particular manifestation of the great universal rebellion is the result of man's worship of human flesh or the creature instead of God, the Creator. The end result is God turning him over to a reprobate mind. Rom. 1:18-28. In this condition with all sense of decency and moral restraint removed he completely gives himself to gratification of his distorted mental concept of sex.

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This is just one aspect of the depravity of man through which Satan can possess and control him. The confirmed homosexual enters a state of strong delusion in the same sense that most of the world will before the coming of Christ. II Thess. 2:11-12.

BEING SEALED

Even as the righteous are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30), those that receive not the love of the truth and continue to reject it will be sealed by strong delusion before the coming of Christ. II Thess. 2:10-12.

This is a reprobate condition in which the rebellious, unbelieving world is sealed in their sins by the spirit of Anti-Christ. It is simply God removing his mercy and allowing demonic forces free access to men who do not want to retain the knowledge of God in their minds. Rom. 1:28.

Even as truth, or the word of God, is used by the Holy Spirit to seal the righteous unto the day of redemption, demon power uses the lie to seal the wicked into perdition. Heb. 10:39. This is not difficult when we realize how corrupt and deceitfully wicked the human heart is. Jer. 17:9.

The lie is anything that takes the place of the gospel and the kingdom of God in the minds of men. It could be one of these do-gooder causes that literally inflames people in the cause they espouse.

Regardless of how technically right any cause may be, if the spirit of inspiration behind it causes men to become implacable, vindictive and filled with hate it is evil. It is often evil in the guise of good. It is a clever conspiracy of Satan to sweep naive simple souls into a maelstrom of Anti-Christ rebellion and activity.

Some few will in time escape this dragnet of destruction because they have at sometime in their life received a measure of truth. But most of them will go on to strong delusion and eternal damnation.

In conclusion, may I exhort you to not take this message lightly. Don't toss it aside as just another religious article. It could be the means of saving you and perhaps your children from heartache and disaster.

Even while I am writing this article we have learned of one of the most tragic and heartless murders ever being committed in our area. The young woman with her nine year old daughter who were brutally murdered attended our church several years ago. She and her daughter were murdered without mercy and their bodies fiendishly mutilated beyond description. It is reported that the murderer is a sexual deviate who is suspected of committing the same crime in other places.

There is no limit to the depth of moral corruption and sadistic brutality that a human being can plunge into under the control of devils. God is our only hope.

Don't let the words of Jeremiah 8:20 happen to you. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

May God's word through Isaiah 55:6-7 speak to your heart. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

OTHER BOOKS

The Sure Foundation, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of four articles published in the early 1980's on the important subject of the foundation believers have in Christ. Suggested Price - \$3.00.

Delivered From Demons, by C. Parker Thomas

The story of a young girl's deliverance from demon possession and also a collection of a number of other articles relating to Satan's kingdom and activity, specially as it relates to the end of this present age. Suggested Price - \$4.00.

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