**RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR SPOUSE**

Sunday School Lesson 2

*Building Right Relationships*

Ephesians 5:21-32

3/12/2023

**Introduction:** As we move into our second lesson on relationships, we are going to examine the relationship that we ought to have with our spouse. As a reminder, there are three key attributes of a healthy relationship with God that we looked at last week that are going to be the basis for every relationship that we have. These attributes – trust, selflessness, and communication – are absolutely essential to having a successful marriage. In addition to these key things, there are some other thoughts and principles that the Bible gives us to help us to have a successful marriage. Knowing that God designed marriage (to be between a man and a woman), we understand that it is something that is meant to be good for us. Even in man’s perfect state, God saw that it was best for man to have a helpmeet and to not be alone. This should tell us exactly how important marriage is, and that it ought not to be something that we enter into lightly or without commitment. During today’s lesson, I hope that we will be open to considering some areas in our marriage that could use some work. Many couples think that as long as there are not arguments, then the marriage is fine. A healthy marriage goes deeper than the basic ability to get along with each other. Let’s consider the following:

1. **IN ORDER TO THRIVE, A MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP MUST HAVE PROPER STRUCTURE.**
2. **The foundation of the marriage must be faith in Jesus Christ.** Malachi 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. 2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? Obviously, there are marriage relationships among the world that are doing okay by the world’s standards, but the absolute best marriage is one that is founded upon a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The need to be equally yoked is a constant theme in both the Old and New Testament.
3. **The leadership in the marriage must be properly set – Christ, husband, wife.** Ephesians 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 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. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.Luke 14:20, 26; 1 Corinthians 7:28-29. I believe that Satan has strongly attacked the structure of the home in our current society. The leadership of the father seems to almost be mocked by our present-day culture. Women are being convinced that they need empowerment. Children are unruly. All of this flies in the face of the leadership structure that God has established for the home. Many of the marital problems would be fixed if couples looked to the Bible and accepted the God-designed structure of marriage.
4. **The design and purpose of the marriage must be clearly understood.** Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. Ephesians 5:31 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. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 1 Timothy 5:8. If we are going to enter into what should be a lifetime agreement, it seems obvious that we should understand the design and purpose of marriage. God has designed marriage for us. It is for our benefit and enjoyment. The wife has been given to the man as a help meet. What does this expression mean? It means that God made the wife as a helper that is suitable for the man. It was exactly what Adam needed. The design of marriage then is for these two entities to become one singular but stronger entity.
5. **WHEN IT COMES TO LOVE, HUSBANDS ARE COMMANDED TO TAKE THE LEAD.**

* Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 33a Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; Colossians 3:19. The onus for love in the marriage relationship is placed on the husband. The husband is commanded to love his wife as Christ loves the church. Christ’s love for the church is an initiating love. We love Him because He first loved us. The love that you have for your wife ought to be the same love that you would have for yourself. While the Scriptures give us several passages to show the husband ought to love, we only have one place in the New Testament that speaks to the wife’s love back to her husband. That’s found in Titus 2:4. Clearly, the focus is first on the husband’s love for his wife.

1. **THE WIFE IS EXPECTED TO PURPOSEFULLY REVERENCE HER HUSBAND.**

* Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.In the same place where the husband is commanded to love his wife, the wife is commanded to reverence her husband. What does it mean to reverence someone? It means to regard with fear mingled with respect and affection. Consider this word in light of other places in the Bible that speak to reverence given to God and reverence given to fathers. The implication seems clear with this that the wife ought to treat her husband with a loving respect to who he is and the position that he holds in their marriage and the home. Notice the way the command is written in Ephesians. The wife is to see that she reverence her husband. This means that it is an intentional act. So many relationships are failing because the husband isn’t taking the lead on loving his wife, and the wife refuses to reverence her husband.

1. **THE HUSBAND MUST HAVE KNOWLEDGE, HONOR, AND GRACE IN THE MARRIAGE.**
2. **The husband must dwell with his wife according to knowledge and honor.**1 Peter 3:7a Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wifel, as unto the weaker vessel, The Bible does not elaborate on what specific knowledge is being referred to here; consequently, this leaves us with a general idea and application. The husband ought to dwell in the home with knowledge of what God commands for him as a husband and believer, what the wife needs, and what knowledge the wife may be able to impart unto him. I believe the context of this chapter shows us that the husband ought not to dismiss the conversation of his wife and that the husband ought to take ownership of his leadership in the marriage and lead it with proper knowledge. I believe it also speaks to his knowledge of her as a weaker vessel. He ought to honour her by properly considering her needs.
3. **The husband must dwell with an understanding of their mutual grace from God.** 1 Peter 3:7b and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. The husband ought not to think of himself too highly in the marriage. Both members of the marriage are heirs together of the grace of life. He did not do anything in and of himself to be deserving of the leadership role of husband. With this in mind, he ought to treat his wife with that same grace that he has received from the Lord and that he hopes to continue receiving from the Lord. Otherwise, he is opening himself up to having his own prayers not being answered. Most folks think of prayers not being answered as when a husband and wife are fighting or when a husband is not being forgiving. Yet, the Bible speaks to this here as a result of not dwelling with your wife with a common grace in mind. You ought to be gracious to your wife. Show her good favor.
4. **THE WIFE SHOULD EMBRACE THE INNER BEAUTY OF A GODLY SPIRIT.**

* 1 Peter 3:1-7 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.The verses here are dealing with a wife who has a husband who is disobedient to the Word. What is the wife to do? She is to win him with her conversation. She is to win him with her spirit. Ladies, never undervalue the beauty of a Godly spirit! It is going to have more value in the long run in your relationship than the physical beauty. It is that meek and quiet spirit that may help to lead your husband out of ungodliness. Instead of turning to frustration and fighting, focus your effort on having the right kind of spirit.
* WOMEN GUIDE THE HOMES AND MIND TO THEIR CHILDREN

1 Timothy 5:14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

* WIVES FOCUSED ON PLEASING HER HUSBAND.

1 Corinthians 7:34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

* HUSBANDS FOCUSED ON PLEASING HIS WIFE.

1 Corinthians 7:33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

* WE ARE TO REMAIN COMMITTED TO OUR SPOUSE.

1 Corinthians 7:10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

* WE DO NOT HAVE CONTROL OVER OUR OWN BODIES. (DUE BENEVOLENCE)

1 Corinthians 7:2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 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. 5 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.

* MEN GIVE HONOUR UNTO YOUR WIFE AS UNTO A WEAKER VESSEL. (HEIRS OF GRACE)

1 Peter 3:7 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.

* HUSBANDS AND WIVES ARE JOINED TOGETHER. (THEY LEAVE FATHER & MOTHER)

31 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. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

* WIVES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BLINDLY GO ALONG WITH EVERYTHING THE HUSBAND DOES.

Acts 5:7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

* WE ARE ONE FLESH. THIS IS WHAT GOD INTENDED.

Mark 10:2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

* HAVING A WIFE IS A GOOD THING

Proverbs 18:22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord. (Hebrews 13:4)

* THERE IS MUCH PAIN WHEN THERE IS CONTENTION WITH YOUR SPOUSE.

Proverbs 19:13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

* A PRUDENT & VIRTUOUS WIFE IS A GREAT THING.

Proverbs 19:14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord.

Proverbs 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

Proverbs 31:10-12 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. 12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Proverbs 31:28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

* SUBJECTION OF THE WIFE TO WIN THE HUSBAND. (MEEK & QUIET SPIRIT)

1 Peter 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

* MEN OUGHT NOT TO BE BITTER TOWARD THEIR WIVES.

Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.