

A Happy Marriage

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Ephesians 5:22-25

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All right. Let's get into this message today and I want you to listen carefully. I am going to speak on the subject: A happy marriage, a happy marriage. And I would like to hear from you pro or con. Last week I brought a message on Christ our peace and this message I am bringing today will be on that same tape. I would like you to have both of them. But now you listen to the message and you will decide whether you want it or not. And at the end the announcer will tell you how to get this message on tape.

But here is my text: Ephesians 5:22-25, Ephesians five. It 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 then he says, "Husbands, love your wives, love your wives even as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it."

Now in speaking from the Word of God on the subject of a happy marriage the very first point I must establish is this: to whom am I speaking? To whom am I speaking? Not indiscriminately to everybody, I am preaching, primarily, to people who believe the Bible. You would have a hard time proving anything to a man from the Bible who does not believe the Bible. So I am speaking, preaching today, primarily to people who believe the Word of God and who love the Lord Jesus Christ and who care what he says. Those are the people I am speaking to.

I am not saying, now, that the laws of marriage do not apply to unbelievers. They do. Do you get that? I am not saying that the laws of marriage do not apply to unbelievers. They do. But how can a minister appeal to a person on the basis of Scripture if that person does not believe and love the Scriptures.

Notice in the text: "Wives, obey your husbands or submit to your own husbands as unto the Lord." That is assuming that she knows the Lord. That is assuming she cares what the Lord says. That is assuming she is conscious of the Lord's worth, as unto the Lord. And then it says, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the Church." That means nothing to an unsaved man. He doesn't know anything about Christ or the Church nor does he care whether Christ loved the Church. So I can't help you in this important sermon on a happy marriage if you don't endorse the principles of Scripture if you do not seek the glory of God and if you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ. So I am speaking, primarily, to people who say that they believe the Bible and who profess to love the Redeemer.

Now, some of you are not married yet. Some of you are still single. Perhaps my message will impress upon you the seriousness of marriage. Perhaps my message will teach you the responsibilities of marriage. You see, marriage is a oneness. "The two shall be one flesh," Christ said. Marriage is a partnership. Marriage is a living together in faith and in fellowship with Christ. That is what marriage is. So it may be some young person who is contemplating marriage will listen to this message and be helped.

And now listen to this. Come on, now listen, right here. Some of you, perhaps many of you, because of the day in which we are living, some of you are divorced and remarried, divorced and remarried. And the Lord has been pleased to bring you to a knowledge of himself. He has been pleased to save you and or your wife, to bring you to a knowledge of Christ. "What shall we do?"

Well, I tell you. Forget the past. Forget the past. God has. And build for the present and the future. You are not responsible, if you are converted, to go back and straighten out the past and mess up two or three families. You are not responsible to go back and straighten out the past any more than a murderer who is saved is required to raise his dead victim. A man who has killed someone and God saves him, he doesn't have to go back and raise the victim from the dead. And whatever is back yonder, leave it back yonder, leave it alone and go on from here and build your home.

Now, some of you are married and you don't have a happy marriage. Maybe I can help you. Well, let's start here. Here is a solemn and necessary word. Now, listen to me. Here...home, home is where true religion is tested and revealed. Home is where true faith is tested, tested the most. And that is where it is revealed.

I wouldn't give you two cents for a public profession of religion or of faith that does not show love and tenderness at home. I wouldn't give you two cents. I wouldn't give you any hope. The man who is so gracious and kind at church to everybody else and so hateful at home, I wouldn't give you two cents for his profession of faith or his so called religion. True religion is tested and revealed at home. A man or woman that does not show kindness and gentleness and compassion at home, what good is their religion on the streets or in the church? If my wife and children and grandchildren do not see Christ in me, what profit is it if you see Christ in me if you only see me once a week? If my wife and children do not have respect for my profession of faith then it is not worth a plug nickel. If my wife and children do not have confidence in my relationship with God, I have missed Christ.

You see, that is where the mask is removed at home. We can wear our mask in public, pretence, hypocrisy. But when we get home that's where the mask comes off. You can impress the preacher. You can impress the people at church with your faith. You can put on a good show down at the meeting house, but the wise man is more concerned for the glory of God and a good testimony at home before his family and children, than he is down there at the church house. They really know him. They really know him and that is where it is revealed.

Somebody said to John Newton one time, said, “Mr. Newton,” said, “brother Smith is a great professor of religion, a great public prayer and teacher and all. Do you believe he is really saved?”

And John Newton said, “Well, I really don’t know. I have never lived with him. I have never lived with him.”

You see, that is where it is revealed, those that live with you. And then...that is a serious solemn point that I would make. A genuine relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in the home. That is where it is. That is where the mask comes off. That is where the rubber hits the road some preachers say. That is where a true revelation of myself is judged.

And then, secondly, marriage begins with certain vows. In other words I have married a lot of people in these 30 some odd years and they stand before me and the question I ask them...I turn to the man and to the woman, I say, “Do you take Mary or John or whoever to be your lawful wedded husband or wife and do you promise in the sight of almighty God and these witnesses that you will be to her, to him a true and devoted wife and husband to love and to cherish and to remain faithful until death shall part you?”

And they say, “I do. I do.”

Now, you may take these vows lightly, but God doesn’t. Do you know that? God doesn’t. These are vows. These are solemn vows that we are taking upon ourselves in the presence of God. That is what the preacher says, that’s right.

The book of Numbers, chapter 30, verse two, says this. “If a man vow a vow unto the Lord he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.”

Solomon said, “It is better...it is better that thou shouldest not vow at all than that shouldest vow and not pay it.”

God is a witness to every marriage ceremony and he will be a witness to the violation of every vow. So it is a pretty serious thing to put away your wife or put away your husband. I am talking about people who know the Lord, now, and people who claim to be saved. You are playing with dynamite. That is exactly right. You have made some vows and you are under a solemn responsibility to keep that vow before God.

And you can’t change that.

And then, thirdly, marriage has certain Bible guidelines and certain duties and responsibilities, serious responsibilities and duties. A man takes a wife. The Bible says something about the duties and responsibilities of a husband in the home and a wife and children. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord.” The Bible has something to say

about you men that work at the plants and other places, about being good workmen and giving a full day's work and doing your best to promote the business that hired you. It has got some thing to say to you men who work men, to pay them a decent wage and withhold not from the laborer his hire. It has got something to say about these things. It has got something to say about stealing down there where you work, too. It has got some things to say about that. It has a lot to say about things like that.

A man takes a wife. And Scripture says he is to love her and prefer her and defend her above all. That is what he said. Genesis 2:24...and this was before the fall even. This was before Adam and Eve sinned. God said, talking about Adam and Eve, husband and wife, he said, "Therefore shall a man leave his mother and father and cling to his wife and the two shall be one flesh."

I have known a lot of men that cause a lot of trouble in their home because they are momma's boys, you know, they can't break the apron strings or the cords from momma. They defend their momma against their wife or their daddy against their wives and all this sort of thing. Your wife is the one you are to love and honor and cherish and depend and protect and watch over her and stand with her. I have known women to cause a lot of trouble in their homes defending the children against the husband. That is dangerous. You husbands and wives stand with each other. Stand with each other. Defend one another against the whole world if necessary. Don't you side with momma and daddy. Your mother in law... your mother has a conflict with your wife, you stand with your wife.

He is to love her and not be bitter or harsh, bitter. Colossians 3:19 says, "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter, caustic, harsh with your wife." Be gentle. Love your wife.

He is to treat her as a weaker vessel, dependent.

I know women today don't particular like this, but it is so anyway. He says, "Dependent on his care and protection and provision. Husbands dwell with your wives according to knowledge. Give honor to her as the weaker vessel that your prayers be not hindered."

He is to provide for her. 1 Timothy 5:8 says...listen to this. "If any man provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel."

Do you want me to read that one again? Provide for your household. Provide for your wife. Provide to your children. "If any man provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and he is worse than an infidel." Men who waste their substance on foolishness, foolishness, instead of providing for their wives and children, giving them the things that they need.

Well, a woman takes a husband. Her husband is her head. I am not bashful or shy or backward about declaring what God says about this. The husband is the head of the woman. That is what God says. The same Bible that says Jesus Christ is the Son of God

and Jesus Christ died for our sins and he is the way, the truth and the life and you must be born again and the only way to God is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ says the husband is the head of the house. That is what it says. He is the leader.

God said to Eve when she sinned, he said, “Your desire to be your husband and he shall rule over thee.” Marriage is not a 50 50 proposition. The husband rules the home. Now, he doesn’t rule by law or a stick. He rules with love. But he rules the home. He is the head of that house. He is the spiritual leader of that house.

Ephesians 5:22 says, “Wives submit yourselves to 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 as the Church is subject to Christ in all things, let the wives be subject to their husbands in everything, in everything.”

My friends, one of the highest callings in the world...dear ladies, listen to me. One of the highest callings in this world...women talk about their careers, you know, and all this stuff. One of the highest callings in this world is to be a good mother and a sweet and gracious and kind and lovable companion and to build a home for the glory of God and a good help meet and companion for a good husband. That is one of the highest callings in this world next to the office of preaching the gospel.

Women are not competitors. They are companions. Women are foolish to try to act like men or dress like men or work like men or to live like men. They are not men. They are women, keepers at home, training their children. Some women, their baby sitters know their children better than they do. And everybody in the world has more influence over their children than they do.

I don’t know why... you know a lot of times it will be on some kind of television program they ask a dear lady, “Well, what do you do?”

She will say, “I am a housewife.”

“Oh.”

That is what God made her to be. That is what God raised her up to be. That is the highest calling in this world, to be what God made you to be in for his glory, to be a good wife and a mother, to give life to some child and over see it and watch it and pray for it and instruct it and train it and help it and care for it. My, my. Why would you want a higher calling? There ain’t none. There just is none.

Most important person in a home. I said the husband is the head of the home. I know that. He is the leader. But the wife is the most important part of that home.

Proper motivation in the marriage relationship is not duty, though, it is love. I can talk about duties and responsibilities and all of these things forever. That is not it. It is love. The whole law of God is fulfilled in one word: Love. And right here is where every duty

is met, to love one another. Right here is where every problem is solved, to love one another. Right here is where every relationship comes into its proper perspective, if we love one another.

“Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things...” No sacrifice is too great for love. Love gives and forgives. Love reaches out and love receives graciously. Love honors and respects. Love speaks kindly and considerately. Love remembers and love is grateful and love never fails.

I heard a woman say one time about a man, she said, “Well, he loves in his own way.”

Well, it’s time he quit loving in his own way and started loving God’s way.

Love is the gift of God. And, really, marriage is not so much finding the right person, it is being the right person.

I have had people say, “Well, I love my wife, but I don’t like her or I love my husband, but I just don’t like him. I love him, now. Don’t misunderstand me. I just don’t like to be around him.”

Is that possible? Yes. Did I shock you? Well, it is possible because we can have habits and ways and attitudes that are offensive, that offend people. And while people love us they just don’t enjoy our company. That’s right. Just because you are married doesn’t mean you enjoy somebody’s company.

There are people...take for example, there is Mr. Grouchy. Everybody has to be careful around him. He is always mad at somebody. You have to be careful not to offend him. He is always upset, upset. What he wants everybody else has to do, you know. He has got to have his way. Well, you may love Mr. Grouchy, but you sure don’t enjoy his company. And you like to avoid him.

And then somebody said there is Mr. Sloppy. In public he is neat and careful about his appearance, but at home he is just liable to be found any way, careless, unshaven, sloppy. I read something one time that impressed me. Someone said, “Well, cleanliness may not be next to godliness, but I prefer it next to me.”

Somebody said one time, also, “Water and soap would do wonders for a marriage.”

Mr. Sloppy. You may love him, but you just don’t enjoy.

And then there is Mr. Stingy. He says, “It is my money and my car and my house.” He has the first nickel he ever made or he may spend it on himself, but never on his family or on his wife. She never has a dime in her purse or her pocketbook. She never can just go out and buy something that she happens to see that she wants even though they may afford it, because Mr. Stingy, it is his money. He says, “I make it. I earn it. I go out and bring home the bacon. You fry it, you know.”

Well, you may love that fellow, but he sure is not very enjoyable to be around. You would sure trade him in on another model. A lot of people would.

These are true things. Now, I know what I am talking about.

But then there is Miss Charge it, Mrs. Charge it. She keeps her poor husband in debt to every store in town, keeps his nose to the grindstone. She has a charge plate on every store in town. And the poor man stays right up against it week after week, month after month, so heavily in debt he can't see the light of day. All he can do is work and moonlight and get some other job to pay that woman's bills. That is hard to like, awful hard to like.

Learn to live in your means. Be generous with what you have, but live in your means. Live on what God provides. That is his providence. That is his good providence.

Well, there is Mr. and Mrs. Put Others Down. Have you ever met them? Man calls his wife, "My old lady." That is not very complementary, is it? Or a wife calls her husband, "The old man."

I have actually heard women berate their husbands in public, make them feel awfully bad, just say harsh and cruel things in public. That is not respectful and that is not grace.

This is the reason I am saying, my dear friend, that true faith and true religion is revealed in the home, not just in a church building where everybody is singing, "Oh, how I love Jesus and everybody is praying and reading the Scripture and putting on a good front and a good show." I am talking about at home. I am talking about in the living room, in the bedroom, in the den. I am talking about in the kitchen. I am talking about day by day right down living and living in such a way that it gives an evidence that you have met Christ and you are a new creature in Christ.

"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." And he will be a better husband. He will be a better father. He will be a better worker. If a woman is in Christ she will be a good wife, a submissive wife and a good mother and a good neighbor. And if she is not, she has missed Christ.

Mr. and Mrs. Put Me Down...did you ever hear a husband or wife talk about one another in critical terms? Critical, critical, critical.

I feel like one man said to his wife one time in my presence, he said, "Well, honey," he said, "I may not be the smartest fellow on earth, but you don't need to remind me of it." That is sad, isn't it? He said, "I need encouragement. I need help. I am doing the best I can."

I heard another man say one time when he was being compared to another man that had a better job, made more money, drove a bigger car, bigger house, he said, "Well, I may not

be a successful as some people, but I need your encouragement. I need your help because I am trying. I am trying.”

Can't you find some good points? Find some good points and praise one another and be grateful to one another. How many of you get up from the table and never say, “Thank you, honey, for that meal? It was good. I appreciate it. You are doing your best.”

[?] He is going to pout or he is going to ignore you or she is going to ignore you, stick their bottom lip out and pout. [?]

Is that grace? Is that Christ? Is that the example of the Son of God?

Here is another one. A lady I knew one time [?] “I didn't marry your family.” He didn't like her mother. He didn't like her father. He didn't like her brother and he didn't like her sister. “I didn't marry your family,” he said. [?]

[?] Honor your Father and mother. And it means honor your father in law and mother in law. That your days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

I know these are touchy things, but I am dealing [?]. I have been in homes and dealt with people. [?] I am interested in sinners coming to know Christ. [?] joining the church and making a profession. I want you to know Christ. You need him. His [?] change your spirit, change your outlook, make you a new creature. [?] If you ain't glorying, you are dead. If you are not making some progress, you are dead.

Have you met Mr. [?] He forgets birthdays. He forgets anniversaries. He forgets Mother's Day. He forgets Christmas. He forgets everything. But he didn't when you were dating. But he just forgets.

Have you met Mr. Take You For Granted? He is the one that cries the loudest at the funeral. Why not a kind word now? Take you for granted, but, boy, when she is gone he sure makes a lot of noise or when he is gone she makes a lot of noise. But right now just take them for granted.

Let's try to build our homes on the Word of God for the glory of Christ. If you want this tape, “A Happy Marriage,” you write to me. On the back of it is “Christ our Peace.” Maybe it will help. If it helps one person I am glad I preached it. You write to me. The address is given to you right now in just a moment, right on your television screen. Send two dollars and we will mail you the tape. Until next week God bless you every one.