

LET'S TALK ABOUT MARRIAGE FOR A MINUTE:

Yes, you abound in faith, love, etc., but “see that you abound in this grace also.” When we give sacrificially, painfully, for the benefit of others, we are faintly and on a small-scale preaching the Gospel message.

Acts 20: 35 - In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said:

'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8).

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and exult in the surrender of my body, but have not love, I gain nothing.
4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no account of wrongs.... 6 Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.... 8 Love never fails.

Luke 6:31 - Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Matthew 7:12 - So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Ephesians 5:22-25 - ²²Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the LORD. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

So how do we get the best marriage on the planet regardless of where we are in that marriage today?

- (1) Forgive yourself because Jesus paid the price of our sins & there is nothing more we can do.
- (2) Desire to love your spouse more than your spouse loves you.
- (3) Desire to bring more peace and joy into your spouse's life than you have in your own life.
- (4) Offer more Grace, Mercy, and Understanding to your spouse than you feel that you are getting.
- (5) Christ loved us FIRST and His love for us leads us to love Him. He doesn't force our obedience, He does not enslave us, and he never asked us to do anything that will harm us, humiliate us, or that is against His Law.
- (6) Husbands, lead through love ... not legalism. A wife's willingness to allow her husband to be the leader is between her and God.
- (7) Our ability to be a leader is predicated upon our first being obedient to God as to His instructions for us in the marriage.
- (8) Don't "Give" with any preconceived expectation of "Receiving." Be the "MORE BLESSED."

(9) It has been said and proven that women who have had a good relationship with their fathers, and men who have had a good relationship with their mothers, often times do better in a marriage. Why do you think that could be? One, that experience is training in how the opposite gender thinks and acts. Sometimes we look for the qualities in a spouse that we had in our parent.

There is a special message here for husbands. God's Word tells men to "love our wives as God loved the Church." How did he do that? He did it as "Father in Heaven." He sacrificed Himself for her ... The Church. Could it be that there are times when our wives need from us a little bit of "fathering?" Giving of ourselves like an earthly father. A father who "aren't" in heaven. This may be even more true when she did not have a great "Daddy Figure" in her life. Consider loving like a daddy and loving like a husband.

Are we sometimes "Self-Destructive?" Do we realized that when we hurt the flesh or the heart of our spouse, that we are hurting ourselves as well?

Ephesians 5:31 ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will **become one flesh.**"

Genesis 2:21-24 ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." ²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they **become one flesh.**

"The greatest of these is Love!" I love you isn't something we say ... it is something we do and live out. Jesus didn't say "I love you" and just walk away. He sacrificed Himself for The Church. He put the Church first, ahead of His own wellbeing. He didn't rely on His power over us, His greater strength. We don't define love ourselves and just live up to our own definition and then feel good about ourselves. We must go to the Word of God and seek His definition, learn it, practice it, and watch it grow.

LOVE – GREATER TO GIVE – DO UNTO OTHERS – WE ARE ONE