Level 2 Lesson 10

MARRIAGE (Part 1)

By Don Krow

Today we're going to talk about marriage. First of all, I want to give you some statistics: 75 percent of all family units are going to need some kind of marriage counseling. One out of two marriages will end in divorce. In 50 percent of marriages, a mate will be unfaithful within the first five years. Even in the Christian realm, they say that as high as 30 percent of ministers will be involved in an inappropriate relationship with someone in their church. It appears to me that we obviously haven't understood the principles of the Bible if those statistics are anywhere close. We're going to look at the subject of marriage and see some of the things God says about it—how you might be able to strengthen your marriage relationship.

First of all, I want to say this: Marriage was God's idea; He designed it. Genesis 2:18 says, *"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."* Also Genesis 1:31 says, *"And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."* You have to remember that this was a perfect creation. God came and fellowshipped with man. He had a wonderful relationship with him. Each day He would come in the cool of the evening and fellowship with Adam. Sometimes we think if we had a perfect relationship with God, we wouldn't really need anything else, but that's not true. God said in Genesis 1:31, concerning the creation He made, *"And behold it was very good."* The first thing that God said was "not good" is found in Genesis 2:18, *"It is not good that the man should be alone."* So marriage was God's idea to meet the need that man had, to give him a help-meet to deal with the problem of loneliness he might experience in his life. Marriage, if we follow the instruction manual and put into it what God wants, was meant to bring happiness and not misery.

Genesis 2:24 is the first time the Bible really talks a lot about marriage. It says, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."* Marriage is leaving all other relationships to refocus your life on another individual, and God designed it that way. It's like a tri-unity relationship. I don't know if you understand what I mean, but in the marriage relationship when God called Adam and Eve together, it wasn't just Adam relating to God or Eve relating to God. It was now Adam and Eve as a unit, in oneness of purpose relating to God. The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:7, *"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them* [your wives] *according to knowledge…that your prayers be not hindered"* (brackets mine). Genesis 5:1-2, a really a great scripture, says, *"This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created."* Notice that Adam named his wife, Eve, but God called Adam and Eve, together as a unit, Adam. So in the marriage relationship, it's no longer God and me or God and that woman—it's me and my wife in oneness, heirs according to the grace of life who have been called to serve God in purpose, to walk in oneness and unity.

Genesis 2:24, which we just read, says a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh. The word "cleave" means: to stick or adhere to, to become one, to be one in purpose. If you're having a problem in your marriage relationship today, let me ask you a few questions: Are the things you're doing, the way you're acting toward your spouse, the things you're saying to them, are they causing you to come closer together as one? Or, are they causing a breach, or separation? The commandment of Scripture for marriage is to cleave, to stick to. So, are the things you're doing building your relationship or tearing it down? You need to look at some of these things.

People think love is just an emotional feeling: "I used to love you, but I fell out of love—I don't love you anymore." Suppose you came from a dysfunctional family. You go before a minister or judge to be married; you commit to give your life to that individual; you really want this to work till death do you part. But because of your dysfunctional family, you've never seen love, never seen it expressed in your family, and never seen your parents share any warm expression of love. Your spouse may have come from a family that expressed a lot of affection, but you don't know how. Even though you want to love this person you're committing yourself to, because you're so dysfunctional yourself, having never seen love expressed before, you probably will fail. Chances are that within a few years you will go in for counseling and say, "We're just not getting along. I don't love them anymore." Well, I've got good news for you today: If you're having problems in your marriage, there's something that can correct it.

When you buy a new refrigerator and have a problem with it, you know to go to the manual. The manual will tell you what's wrong, or you can take it to a serviceman. There is a manual to work on your marriage, to fix it. It's called God's Word, and the Bible tells us in Titus 2:4 that love is something that can be taught, something that can be learned. If you came from a dysfunctional family and don't really know how to love your spouse—your marriage is falling apart—there's good news. In 1 John 5:3 it says, *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."* Through the commandments of Jesus Christ, who shows us how to love, how to express kindness and generosity, and how to seek the welfare of the other person in your marriage relationship, God can turn that situation around for you.

This is just an introduction to the subject of marriage. We're going to continue another lesson on it and I just want to say, "God bless you today as you continue in your study." We believe God wants to impart more wisdom and knowledge as you look into this subject.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Ephesians 5:31-32. Ephesians 5:31 is a quotation from Genesis 2:24. By looking at Ephesians 5:32, what do you think God is really talking about in this passage?

_____

2. Read James 4:4-5. What are these verses teaching?

_____

3. Read 1 Peter 3:7. Why should you walk in unity and love toward your wife or husband? _____

4. Read John 15:5. Can your marriage succeed without Christ as Lord of your life?

_____

5. Read Titus 2:4. Love is not just an emotion. According to Scripture, love can be _____.

6. Read 1 John 5:3. When we walk in God's commands, we walk in _____.

7. Read Matthew 7:12. If we are having problems in our marriage, it is because someone is not walking in _____.

8. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4. Love is: A. emotional. B. a warm feeling. C. kind.

Scriptures to Use with Questions

Ephesians 5:31-32 – "[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."*

James 4:4-5 – "[4] *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.* [5] *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"*

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."*

John 15:5 – "*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."*

Titus 2:4 – "*That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."*

1 John 5:3 – "*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."*

Matthew 7:12 – "*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."*

1 Corinthians 13:4 – *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."*

Answer Key

1. Read Ephesians 5:31-32. Ephesians 5:31 is a quotation from Genesis 2:24. By looking at Ephesians 5:32, what do you think God is really talking about in this passage? **A relationship between Christ and His church (likened to marriage).**

2. Read James 4:4-5. What are these verses teaching? **God is jealous over us and wants us to be true to Him.**

3. Read 1 Peter 3:7. Why should you walk in unity and love toward your wife or husband? **So that my prayers will not be hindered.**

4. Read John 15:5. Can your marriage succeed without Christ as Lord of your life? **No.**

5. Read Titus 2:4. Love is not just an emotion. According to Scripture, love can be **taught**.

6. Read 1 John 5:3. When we walk in God's commands, we walk in **love**.

7. Read Matthew 7:12. If we are having problems in our marriage, it is because someone is not walking in **love**.

8. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4. Love is: **C. kind**.

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