

HAPPILY MARRIED

Class 1, Oct 20, 2010

- Marriage is the exclusive, life-long covenant relationship God designed for a man of God and a woman of God to enjoy, whereby they can be complete, content, through which they can produce godly offspring, and where they can most fully express their Creator-God.
- God's plan for our marriages and homes is to be an earthly mirror of heaven itself. It is God's will in every marriage that the couple love each other with an absorbing spiritual, emotional and physical attraction that continues to grow throughout their life together. Our relationship with our spouse is to portray the glorious relationship between Jesus and the Church – His Bride.
- A truly godly marriage is a picture of heaven on earth
- **Ps 128 NLT**
 - *1 A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. How joyful are those who fear the Lord— all who follow his ways!*
 - *2 You will enjoy the fruit of your labor. How joyful and prosperous you will be!*
 - *3 Your wife will be like a fruitful grapevine, flourishing within your home. Your children will be like vigorous young olive trees as they sit around your table.*
 - *4 That is the Lord's blessing for those who fear him.*
 - *5 May the Lord continually bless you from Zion. May you see Jerusalem prosper as long as you live.*
 - *6 May you live to enjoy your grandchildren. May Israel have peace!*
- This Psalm beautifully portrays life as God desires it for His children. Reverential respect and relationship with the Lord, a flourishing marriage, lively, godly children, a blessed relationship with the church (Zion) and fruitful employment and enjoyment in the generation to come. Long life and peace!!
- After our ministry and relationship with the Lord, our next ministry is to our spouse. We are blessed beyond measure to have been called and appointed as husbands and wives. It is a calling and a great privilege.
- Before we continue, we need to make one very important comment:
 - We have heard many times from this pulpit that we cannot change someone else, particularly our spouse. We can only open ourselves up to God and allow Him to change us
 - Based on that thought, I would ask everyone here to start out with this attitude: ***If I want my marriage to become more fruitful, it's up to me to grow as a spouse.***
 - We are often tempted to attribute any issues in our marriage to our spouse first
 - But this is just an expression of Gen 3:12 – “It was this woman you gave me...”

- Now while I am in no way suggesting that you have a perfect spouse (even though he or she is the perfect one for you), we do have to acknowledge the reality of the fact that you can't change him or her
- And this is part of the trust relationship you must have with your spouse
 - We trust that God is dealing with him or her, and that he or she will respond
 - And as you grow in your marriage relationship, you will find yourselves more and more involved with one another's spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional development
- As we stated, one of God's purposes in marriage is so that our lives can most fully express Him
 - There are several passages of Scripture that demonstrate that your marriage is to be a reflection of your relationship with God
 - **Eph 5:22-33 AMP**
 - *22 Wives, be subject (be submissive and adapt yourselves) to your own husbands as [a service] to the Lord.*
 - *23 For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, Himself the Savior of [His] body.*
 - *24 As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.*
 - *25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,*
 - *26 So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word,*
 - *27 That He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless].*
 - *28 Even so husbands should love their wives as [being in a sense] their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.*
 - *29 For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and carefully protects and cherishes it, as Christ does the church,*
 - *30 Because we are members (parts) of His body.*
 - *31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*
 - *32 This mystery is very great, but I speak concerning [the relation of] Christ and the church.*
 - *33 However, let each man of you [without exception] love his wife as [being in a sense] his very own self; and let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband [that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates, and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly].*
 - Our marriages are to exhibit the same love, commitment, fulfillment, joy, peace, order, stability, and fruitfulness we experience in our walk with God
- In a word, our marriages are to glorify God

- This means there will be visible proof of God at work in our relationship
- We will see and partake of the fruit, and others will as well
 - **Gen 1:27b-28a**
 - *27 ...in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*
 - *28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it...*
- This was God’s plan from the beginning
 - Marriage is to be productive, fruitful, and flourishing
 - Wherever we find ourselves right now, be assured that God has much more for us
- The Bible has much to say about the fruit of our lives, and true godly fruit will grow out of our spirit man
- **Gal 5:22-23 GWT**
 - *22 But the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
 - *23 gentleness, and self-control. There are no laws against things like that.*
- The fruit of the spirit is the character of God
- The fruit of the spirit will be the result of walking in the spirit
- Gal 5:16-17
 - “The flesh” is simply the desires of the body, and how an unrenewed part of the soul allows these desires to be fulfilled
 - If we allow these to dominate and dictate our behaviour, we see vs 19-21, not just in our individual lives, but in our marriages as well
 - But when we walk in the spirit, we will see the fruit of the spirit in our marriages (read 22-23)
- For us to walk in the spirit, love –agape love – must be the basis for everything we do
- **Gal 5:13**
 - *13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*
- “Serve” implies submission to one another
 - While we are aware that the wife is to submit to (serve) her husband, there is no doubt that every husband will serve his wife (submit to her)
 - This doesn’t mean only doing what the other wants (although we look for ways to please our spouses), but fulfilling the others’ needs according to the Word of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit
- **Col 3:12-19 MSG**
 - *12 So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline.*

- *13 Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you.*
- *14 And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.*
- *15 Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness.*
- *16 Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God!*
- *17 Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.*
- *18 Wives, understand and support your husbands by submitting to them in ways that honor the Master.*
- *19 Husbands, go all out in love for your wives. Don't take advantage of them.*

- **Love (Agape)**

- Rom 5:5 WW - *A word to which Christianity gave new meaning. Outside of the NT, it rarely occurs in existing Greek manuscripts of the period. Agape denotes an undefeatable benevolence and unconquerable goodwill that always seeks the highest good of the other person, no matter what he does. It is the self-giving love that gives freely without asking anything in return, and does not consider the worth of its object. Agape is more a love by choice than philos, which is love by chance; and it refers to the will rather than the emotion. Agape describes the unconditional love God has for the world.*

- If you study and apply the following passage of Scripture you will have a great marriage. It is guaranteed!

- **1 Cor 13:4-8 AMP**

- **4 Love endures long and is patient and kind** (don't snap if you don't get a response the second you expect it. Impatience is a work of the flesh. Watch your facial expressions and body language – they will say more than words)
- **love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy** (You complement one another. Your marriage is never a competition. Celebrate that each other's strengths will compensate for your weaknesses.)
- **is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.** (Express praise, thankfulness and appreciation for all the things the other does rather than looking for it for yourself)
- **5 It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride);** (Be interested in everything that concerns your spouse. If it matters to them, it matters to you.)
- **it is not rude (unmannerly)** (It is sad how the people we are closest to are the ones we can be the rudest to. We should treat our spouse with honour) **and does not act unbecomingly.** (Use tenderness not harshness. Speak in ways you know your spouse will respond (not react) to.)

- **Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking;** (Always look at how you can give into the situation.)
 - **it is not touchy or fretful or resentful;** (Admit when you do this and repent. Forgive quickly and as often as necessary.)
 - **it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].** (Don't keep records and hold grudges.)
 - **6 It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.** (Express praise to your spouse when they do right, when it would have been convenient to compromise.)
 - **7 Love bears up under anything and everything that comes,** (There is nothing that could come into your marriage that could ever weaken your commitment to each other. Voice your commitment to one another – it will build security and stability)
 - **is ever ready to believe the best of every person,** (Always, always express this to your spouse. It will build trust, acceptance and honour.)
 - **its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].** (Marriages go through many different seasons)
 - **8 Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end].** (Neither will your marriage when it is built on agape love. It will succeed and prosper and overcome anything that tries to oppose it.)
- God's love – AGAPE – is the foundation that makes our marriages survive anything, because it endures everything. Agape is the love that is in our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit and is released by our faith and by the act of our will. It is God's unconditional love that is part of our recreated nature.
 - There will be times and seasons in every marriage where Agape will be the only solution to meet the need because it is not based on the other's performance, but on the Word of God.
 - Agape always has the goal of giving the very best for the object of its love.
 - It is always concerned with the highest good of the beloved and it is permanently committed to the one loved, regardless of their response.
 - It is completely selfless, self-initiating and self-giving. It always expresses itself and never withholds. This takes growth and maturity.
 - It is the foundation and the canopy of our marriage union ("*His banner over me is love*" – SoS 2:4).
 - With agape as the source we are then able to enjoy the other kinds of love that God intends us to express and enjoy.
 - Love and submission are specific commandments to husbands and wives but they are also required of all believers out of a reverential fear of the Lord.

- Agape is action.
 - Husbands must become skilled in loving and cherishing their wives. Wives need to respond with loving respect to their husbands.
 - One of the most damaging things a wife can do to her husband is to be unresponsive to him. He is made by God to be a leader, lover, and “small p” provider. One of the most damaging things a husband can do is to be harsh and unloving to his wife. Every wife is made to be a help-mate, lover and keeper of the home.
 - The relationship will flourish as we take our God-given responsibilities and joyfully fulfill them.
 - We will be *Happily Married*
- **Fruit Producers:**
 - Every day, read 1Cor 13:4-8 in the Amplified Bible together while holding hands. Then pray together.
 - Individually and prayerfully, read Col 3:12-19, and do a personal, honest fruit inspection