

MAKING CHANGES FOR THE GOOD OF YOUR MARRIAGE**THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE**

The adage states: “A man marries a woman expecting that she won’t change, but she does. A woman marries a man expecting that he will change, but he doesn’t.” Some change is inevitable. Time and the aging process will change each of us personally. Every marriage, in time, will undergo change also. Some marriages change for the better, but far too many change for the worse. As we grow in our comfort level in the marriage relationship we have a tendency to become complacent and to take our partner for granted. We need to examine our marriages on a regular basis (and ourselves individually) to see what changes are needed or what areas need improvement.

Do you recall from your dating days and early married life the desire to be together, whatever the costs? You wanted to be near the one who had captured your heart and captivated your mind. You made time for each other. But, that’s just it—you *did make time for each others*. Since then, as the saying goes, life happened. Responsibilities increased, time demands grew, various other interests entered the picture, children came along, money requirements continued to expand, moves took place, problems occurred in various areas and so on. That time that you once had for each other is slowly being drained away. And, far too often, with it also goes the desire to maintain the fervor in the relationship. In many marriages this trend continues on a downward spiral until those things that required attention and demanded time, a mortgage, job security and young children, are gone. Then one day, you suddenly look across the table as a stranger. Sure, you still love you spouse, but what happened to that closeness that characterized your early years together?

What can be done to prevent this scenario, or to rekindle the love that was once ablaze in your marriage? In a word—change. Although it did not take conscious effort to cause the closeness to evaporate or the feelings to disintegrate, it *will* take conscious effort to restore these to the marriage relationship and to insure that they continue in good order. Like a beautiful lawn, most people want a good marriage, but not everyone is willing to give it the attention it deserves. The determination to make the time, provide the opportunities and engage in the needed efforts must be present. This will involve changes in the way you think and act toward your mate. The results and rewards, however, will be worth the effort as you see your marriage flourish once again.

Regarding wives, Peter said, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7). Although other instructions are given to wives, the Bible nowhere directs them to dwell with their husbands “according to knowledge.” This should give husbands some insight into how they should treat their wives. There must be some “knowledge” involved in this subject. Knowledge is obtained, of course, through study in some fashion. Husbands should make the time to learn about their wives. Whether the subject is emotions, communication, sex, likes and dislikes, or other needs, he must know her.

Husbands, make changes in your life that will show her your care and concern for her needs. Learn about what she likes and provide it for her. Do shall things on a regular basis that demonstrate your love and reassure her of your commitment. Make changes in your schedule to provide some quality time for the two of you to be together. It is, after all, the responsibility of the husband to provide the atmosphere of love in the marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:25-29). He is to “nourish” and “cherish” his wife. Author Michael Webb states that women need two simple things from the

“...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel...” (Amos 7:8)

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Text: _____

I. Its _____ is with God.

Notes:

II. Its _____ is of God.

Notes:

III. Its _____ is to God.

Notes:

WATCH OUR FOR SONG LEADERS

A preacher and a song leader in a certain church were not getting along. This began to spill over into the worship service. One week the preacher preached on commitment, and how we should dedicate ourselves to service. The song leader then led the song, *I Shall Not Be Moved*.

The next Sunday, he preached on giving and how we should gladly give to God. The song leader then led the song, *Jesus Paid It All*.

The next Sunday, he preached on gossip and how we should watch our tongues. The song leader led, *I Love To Tell The Story*.

The preacher became disgusted over the situation, and the next Sunday told the congregation he was considering resigning. The song leader led the song, *Oh, Why Not Tonight*.

The preacher resigned the next week and informed the church that it was Jesus who had led him to that congregation, and it was Jesus that had led him away. The song leader led the song, *What A Friend We Have In Jesus*.

men in their lives, “to be told frequently they are loved and to be shown often they are special” (Webb ix). Does your wife hear your verbal commitment of love from you often? Does she see your love demonstrated to her in frequent actions that are initiated for that purpose? If not, husband, perhaps you need to make some changes in your life. She is naturally an affectionate and passionate creature. She needs those elements in her marriage. And you, her husband, must provide them for her.

On the other hand, wives are given divine instructions regarding their part in the relationship as well. Wives, you are to respect and reverence your husbands (Ephesians 5:33), giving due regard and being subject to him as the head of the home (Ephesians 5:23-24). If he is not a man in his own eyes, and in yours, then he is nothing. He must get confirmation of this fact from you, his loving, adoring wife. It must not come from any other woman, not even his mother. He needs to know that you respect and admire him. He needs to know that he is appreciated for what he does in making a living for his family and providing a home for them. Deep down he longs to be your “knight in shining armor,” your hero. He needs a haven of safety from a troubled and troubling world.

Only his wife can provide such a haven. Wife, how long as it been since you studied about his needs? How long has it been since you romanced your husband and reassured him of your love in a way that bolstered his confidence and confirmed his manhood in his own mind? It might well be that as you examine and evaluate your marriage that you, too, have changed in this regard. Perhaps there are some positive changes that you could make to rekindle the flames of romance and reclaim your marriage from the realm of the insignificant. The honeymoon itself may end, but there is no reason why any marriage should not climb even to greater heights than those known in its earlier stages. That’s the way God intended for marriage to be.

A man and a woman who love each other and who are willing to communicate their needs, desires and dreams to the other have the necessary components to make their marriage all that it can be. Communication remains the vital key to a healthier, more satisfying relationship. The bottom line is that the “golden rule” applies just as much in marriage as it does in any other area (Matthew 7:12). We should treat our spouses in the way we would have them treat us. That might involve change, even some dramatic change, on our part, but, isn’t your marriage worth the effort needed to make those changes?

-Eddy Gilpin

MAKING MARRIAGE MARVELOUS

Any casual glance through a local bookstore will testify to the desire we have to improve our various stations of life. There are manuals to provide instruction for the improvement of finances, health, houses, cars, etc. Some have little worth while others contain much more constructive advice. However, of the many areas that many people are seeking to improve, it is sad that so relatively few are seeking to better their marriages. Divorce rates have skyrocketed while the reasons for divorce have become more and more frivolous. Marriage has become such a matter of little importance to some people that they enter a marriage anticipating its failure and their eventual re-marriage to another. Why is it that we have people planning on what to do when their marriages fail instead of planning what to do to improve their marriages so they do not fail in the first place? The blame must eventually fall upon a faulty memory. Why, say you, is the problem a faulty memory? Because marriages fail when we forget what marriage is truly supposed to be. Our marriages could be marvelous, but only if we make them that way. We can improve our marriages by improving our memories. How?

By remembering the intention of marriage. Marriage has numerous purposes. When it was first instituted it is clear God intended it as a means of companionship (Genesis 2:18). Additionally marriage was purposed with procreation in mind, as God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, replenishing the earth (Genesis 1:28). There is the obvious fact that marriage is a means by which to fulfill fleshly desires (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:2). However, in a very general way, marriage is an opportunity for man to receive and reciprocate something that we all need—love. And we're not just talking about any kind of love. Friends love each other. But there is a very special bond of affection that exists in marriage that cannot and does not exist anywhere else. It is the chance to share every aspect of life with another and for them to share every aspect of their life in return. But, especially is it about a love reciprocated between man and woman that is a reflection of a mutual love for God and a desire to receive the heavenly blessings eternity has in store. Yes, if we, as husbands and wives, truly love each other as God has intended it will result in His eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:10-11); our redemption. And so at the very foundation, we find marriage is an adjunct to God's desire for us to be saved. If we will remember that original intention of marriage, we truly will work to make our marriages marvelous.

By remembering the intimacy of marriage. Present in marriage are liberties that exist in no other relationship on earth. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). In the confines of marriage exists the blessings of intimacy. And it must be remembered that God expects those blessings to be enjoyed only within the framework of a scripturally authorized marriage. Husbands and wives are expected to maintain a monogamous intimate relationship as an outgrowth of their love one for another, never seeking another with which to satisfy these desires. A beautiful picture of this type of satisfaction with one's mate is seen in the Song of Solomon as Solomon and his Shulamite bride express their total desire for only each other. She was totally smitten with him and he was totally smitten with her, and no other could take the place of their beloved. This type of marital commitment is so totally different from the meager attempts put forth by so many couples today. If we would but remember the true intimacy of marriage we could make our marriages marvelous.

By remembering the Institutor of marriage. Marriage came from God. The marital relationship is not the product of a social evolution. It was not something that was developed as man recognized his own needs. The institution of marriage came from God (Genesis 2:22-24). It was the result of God's recognition of man's need and lovingly provided as a means to an end. And it is therefore the case that no marriage will be completely successful unless both participants remember God. It has often been pointed out in wedding ceremonies that any successful marriage will include not only two but three persons. There must be the husband and wife, but included each time must be God. If He is not the foundation of a marriage then it will surely crumble. If His word does not serve as the primary marriage manual then it will surely fail. But by remembering God, the Institutor of marriage, we can and will make our marriages marvelous.

A car does not have to be broken down for us to work and maintain its well-being, and neither must our marriages. We should be ever conscious of how delicate these relationships and our mates in these relationships are and rightly work daily to strengthen and build upon the bonds of marriage. If we will make this commitment for ourselves, our spouses, and our God, then our marriages will truly be made marvelous.