

The Marvelous Institution of Marriage, Part 2

Foundations of Communication

May 7, 1995

After all of the commotion of the wedding and honeymoon are over, soon something settles in; we need to learn how to live with each other! Thankfully, God has left us instruction which is extremely pragmatic and helpful to us in fostering a relationship with wonderful fellowship.

Sadly, one of the most controversial issues in a marriage is that God has created us distinctly male or female. We must accept the fact that men and women are different. This is so because God wanted it to be so. This is not to say that one is better than the other and clearly, one doesn't have a better salvation than another. But this does mean that we acknowledge that God has made them comparable but not the same.

Your highest calling as a husband or wife is maintaining your fellowship. Your work or ministry or children are not more important than your marriage. This relationship is the most important relationship that we can have between humans and care for its condition comes before all others.

- Fellowship can only be present where sin is absent.

1 John 1:5-7

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (NKJV)

- If we are in fellowship with God we can naturally be in fellowship with each other. Our fellowship with each other is directly dependent upon our fellowship with God.
- When a husband and wife are in fellowship, that is, they are communicating without the impedance of sin, all of the trials and difficulties that people have can be worked out. Disputes, conflicts and wrangles are all a result of sin. If a wife is seeking to honor her husband and the husband is seeking the best for his family, all are accounted for and contentions are unnecessary.
- It is an unfortunate thing that it has become unpopular to speak about sin. We call families dysfunctional or underprivileged, but these are just another name for sinful relationships. We can't reduce the weight of the fact of the sin by devising new names for it.
- So, why do we let this sin build up and ruin our fellowship? Scripture gives us the answer:

John 3:19-21

"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 "But he who does the truth

comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."
(NKJV)

We don't have an intellectual problem with God or fellowship with our spouses, we have sin problems. As sin increases it becomes increasingly more painful to step into the light and then we start justifying why we avoid the light.

- **Only confession will remove sin.**

1 John 1:9 *9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
(NKJV)

James 5:16 *16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.* (NKJV)

- The presence of sin will destroy the ability to communicate until it is confessed and forgiven in Christ. Sin isn't confessed because it happened a long time ago and no one remembers. Time may heal a hurt or dampen our emotions but it will not take away the guilt of sin. Only confession and repentance of our sin will remove it and restore true fellowship. If time could heal sin, Jesus died for nothing.
- Confession of sin is not the same thing as repentance. Just because we acknowledge that our behavior is sinful does not mean that we have called on Christ to forgive us and to stop the behavior immediately.
- Sin which is confessed honestly must be forgiven. When someone comes to you and honestly seeks forgiveness, it should always be granted immediately. The desire to stew in your anger for just a little while produces a sin that you must confess and repent of. We are instructed in Ephesians 4 that we are to be tenderhearted and forgiving of one another just as Christ God forgave us. What's more, we should have forgiven the person ahead of the confession so that when the confession comes, we are prepared to extend this kind of attitude. Regardless of the offense, we do not have the right to remain bitter because bitterness is a sin and we are never given a license to sin.
- Refusing to confess sin will destroy any hopes of restoring communication. Specifically refusing to confess sin quickly destroys communication. If we allow sin to pile up it will become harder and harder to confess. We should never go on in our lives carrying this sin around with us. You shouldn't have people over, or go to someone's house or attend church or even go to sleep until this sin has been confessed, repented and forgiven.

- **Fellowship will be destroyed if we refuse to acknowledge the difference in orientation between men and women.**

1 Peter 3:1-9

1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward -- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel -- 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. (NKJV)

- As we studied last week, God has built men to perform a task and has built the women to help him in that task. This difference in orientation is manifested in our differences physically; God has built us perfectly according to our calling. Beyond the physical differences, we also have differences in the way we communicate. Men and women generally, think, talk and act differently. It would be extremely foolhardy to think otherwise. Just because your spouse is different or sometimes difficult to understand does not mean that we are free to be inconsiderate of how the other thinks.
-
- **Refusal to perform the duties as husband or wife will impair communication**
- As we will see next week, God has assigned various responsibilities to both men and women in marriage. If these roles are reversed or if they are abdicated, fellowship will be destroyed as well. If we turn marriage on its head by blurring the lines of responsibility we will also turn communication on its head. This means that husbands as the head of the family are fully responsible for establishing and maintaining fellowship. If the ladies try to take on this responsibility, it will surely not improve communication.
- **If children are not disciplined, chaos will rule in the family.**
- A home where Godly discipline is not deployed will be one where nerves are strained and peace does not reign. If peace is not reigning at home, it will not be an atmosphere conducive to training and admonition.