

Progressive Sanctification in my Marriage

Whether I am a married person or a single person, if I am a Christian then I am involved in the mystery of marriage. This marriage means that I am betrothed or promised to Jesus for a future event. This is a spiritual truth that is greatly misunderstood, it is therefore important to see what the Lord expects of me in my relationship with Him.

Revelation 19 v 7-10

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. "It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. "'And he said to me, "These are true words of God." Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Marriage means me and you if you are a born again, spirit led Christian.

The relationship that we have has to go through the whole process of sanctification, we are being prepared for a far superior relationship than the earthly task that all of us struggle with. Jesus seeks a corporate bride that is pure and holy, each member of the church qualifies and we are to prepare ourselves for this wonderful event that is to come.

The single person has to reconcile themselves to either remaining single or asking the Lord to introduce them to a spouse. There is not time or space to cover the *how do I get one* question, however in the context of our study we can all be involved in the work of sanctification.

The principles governing marriage on earth are specific and clear, understanding the requirement that God has laid down in His word is not difficult at all, what is hard is the doing of these things. Our scripture references give the divine order and they are impossible to obey unless we live in and are led by the Holy Spirit. What we see written is what we are to get into, what we need is the strategy to be able to do it.

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Relating to One Another in the Home

There is a divine order for the home which should be sought in prayer together. In Genesis 2 man named all the cattle, birds and beasts but there was no helper amongst them. God emphasised that man was not to be alone, he was to be given a helper and it was His idea, not just a good one! Adam experienced the first anaesthetic; God removed part of Adam's anatomy and created the woman as a helper. Adam came from the soil, Eve came from Adam.

Genesis 2 v 18-25

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

From that time onwards the order was reversed, every child that was born came from man's seed that was planted in the woman and the child comes from the woman's womb, making both man and woman dependant on each other.

1 Corinthians 7 v 1-7

Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But this I say by way of concession, not of command. Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

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Each one has authority over the other's body, God has made us to be one flesh, two people are to be one person, yet unless we move in and by the Holy Spirit and in accordance with the word of God we shall not be able to do it. Paul's letters demonstrate much of this.

Ephesians 4 v 25-32

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Ephesians 5 v 22-33

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

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Colossians 3 v 18-24

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart. Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

1 Peter 3 v 1-12

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be merely external - braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. For, "The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. "He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. "For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

We are to become word wise, not world wise. In the world marriage does not work, generally speaking, however, we have the opportunity to satisfy God and each other as we prepare for the marriage that is to come!

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Let's be Practical

Commit yourself to God's way of doing things. Repent of all impatience, to be able to imitate God we need patience, so be patient. Treat your spouse as though they were Jesus; that takes faith.

Ephesians 5 v 1

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children...

Hebrews 11 v 1-6

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Repentance is needed, not rationalisation or justification. Do not listen to the devil, he is a liar and a thief. Forgive your spouse 24 hours a day if necessary, be God conscious more than wound conscious. Stop resisting and give yourselves totally to each other. Insofar as you give yourself to your spouse, do you show your love to God?

Romans 12 v 1-3

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Clean up the house, you are the spouse of in the house that needs a clean - up; throw all your old rubbish out in the spiritual dustbin; old hurts, old grudges. Stop finding fault with one another and look for Jesus. He is there if you alter your focus. You will find that success is only born out of humility.

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James 4 v 1-12

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

There is no excuse for us not knowing how to live, the Bible is full of information, the Holy Spirit wants His word to be formed in us so that we can meet the Bridegroom in the future. Will you prepare yourself for Him?

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