

## God's Blueprint For a Lasting, Happy Marriage

Hello Dear Listeners;

There is an awful tragedy that's becoming more and more acceptable, it seems in our society today. It is the scourge of broken marriages, leaving behind disillusioned adults, and a whole lot of unhappy children. Yes, disillusioned adults, as indicated in an article written for Statistics Canada by a Michelle Rotermann a few years ago. She found -

For both men and women, dissolution of a marriage or common-law relationship increased the likelihood of a new episode of depression. <sup>1</sup>

The study found that evidently “12% of people whose relationship had ended reported a new episode of depression. This compared with 3% among people who remained in a relationship.”

It appears that, “Till death do us part” has been replaced by “As long as I am happy”! We'd have to say that the ditty “Love and Marriage ....Goes Together Like a Horse and Carriage” is a journey of short duration as more and more ‘horses’ and “carriages” return to their separate stables before their fifth year “on the road.” Already some ten years ago, according to US Government figures, nearly four babies in ten were born out of wedlock! Someone, <sup>2</sup> has said, regarding the song's proposition about marriage

*It sounds even less impressive when you realize that a horse is backed blindly onto a carriage and spends its working life pulling a heavy load only to be rewarded with a bag of oats a day and an occasional crack of a whip.*

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<sup>1</sup> Michelle Rotermann Marital Breakdown and Subsequent Depression in “Highlights” Statistics Canada “Date Modified 2—7-05-22”

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Baron - London England, quoted in an article concerning marriage and Divorce on the Net .

Be that as it may, the truth is that what were at one time considered to be the binding norms for marriage and the family are neglected, simply not recognized or rudely overturned by many today. Even that fundamental commitment to the God-given rule that marriage is a binding relationship of love between one man and one woman has been overturned by long-robed judges who have the audacity to say they, “know better”!

Yet what is the result this wasteland of confusion that features the undermining of Gods good dictates for happy and lasting unions? A whole lot of misery and insecurity and what is worse, far worse, the disappointment and anger of a holy God who has given His gracious blueprint for happy, Christian marriages. It is our intention, this month, on this program to give attention to what God Almighty says in His Word concerning marriage. It doesn't mean that we'll be able to give large-scale, thorough attention to every aspect of marriage but we'll do our best in the time we have available.

So what does the bible, God's infallible Word have to say about a marriage that is pleasing to Him? It is clear from the moment you open the first chapter of the book of Genesis that it is *God who crafted the institution of marriage*. It is He who made the woman out of man. That she might be a “suitable helper” one well-fit for him for she was designed to be such by the Lord God, the Architect of life! ( Gen. 12: 20b-25)

It is this mighty, gracious God who brought the woman to the man. So the man immediately sang what amounts to be the first marriage song:

This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called 'woman'  
for she was taken out of man  
( Gen. 2: 22 )

This means marriage is neither a human invention or a societal design. It is God's own doing. That surely means that it also should conform to His standards and not to the fickle, changeable rules of people. This great God didn't just lay down the rules for this relationship called marriage. He says repeatedly in His Word, things such as we read in Psalm 128,

Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways.  
You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity  
will be yours. ( Psalm 128: 1, 2)

In the book of Ecclesiastes, a book which catalogues the fruitlessness and frustration of living outside of the Lord and His Word the Preacher says, ( ch. 9:9)

Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless  
life that God has given you under the sun.

“ Meaningless” only if it is empty of the happiness found in God and His Word, The Holy Spirit and His direction.

God's Word is also clear that marriage is a *covenant*, that is, a relationship in which God's promises and demands play significant roles. Does the Lord promise a couple happiness? Then there must be faithfulness to one's spouse. The husband must love his wife, modelling his love even after that of Christ's love for his church as is clear from Ephesians 5: 25. As the head of his wife, the husband must love her “ *as his own body*” . For that's what Jesus Christ did, loving his bride, his Church and giving himself up for her. O yes, as head of his wife the husband has a certain authority. Yet not that of a tyrant, a dictator, but as a wise, loving leader. One whom a wife will be glad to honour and obey, because of his faithful, unconditional love.

Even in a climate which promotes gender-equality, independence, and submission of a wife to her husband has become an anachronism for many, the Lord God still maintains that which He said generations ago,

*Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Ephesians 5: 22*

That submission is far from being a blind and absolute submission, for God is to be honored above all. If a husband should demand his wife do something that contradicts the revealed will of God *she must not do it.* ( see Acts 5:29). Besides, the bible just prior to Paul's teaching concerning wives and husbands says "*Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ*". ( Eph. 5:21) That's said to all God's people and is simply part of those norms that govern the life of Christians, That life must be one of " Coram Deo" , that is to live one's life under the authority of a gracious God, being led by His Word.

Those who would neglect God's gracious commandments for living invite his anger and should not be surprised if grief and ruin and unhappiness results. When God gave the woman to the man in Paradise and he had sung his wedding song, the Lord said,

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. ( Gen. 2: 24).

An older translation says the man shall "*cleave to his wife.*" It is obvious I think, that this cleaving involves sexual intimacy, sexual union. Yet it is more. For in this amazing God-blessed union called marriage two distinct, and separate-until-that—time people, become *one, truly one.* Their lives, their spirits growing, welded together in love and in Christian purpose.

"*What purpose,*" exactly? The bible is clear on that as well. It is really a two-fold purpose. The first one involves God's promise that in the way of *mutual love* a couple may "*Faithfully assist each other in all things relating to this life as well as*

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<sup>3</sup> Form for the Solemnization of Christian Marriage in Book of Praise p. 616

*to the life to come.*"<sup>3</sup> That "mutual love" is to be coupled with *holiness*, that is a life that is dedicated to the Lord and is purified by God's Spirit.

No, even such a marriage will not be perfect. There are no people who are perfect of themselves. Will our marriages be happy, that is blessed? You and I will need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ. Outside of Him there is no life really. There is no blessing, no true happiness either.

But with Him, "In" Him, that is in fellowship, or communion with Him there is a great deal of joy! A relationship in which a couple constantly looks up, to Him who came into the world to save, to redeem, to love and to lead, there just has to be happiness.

What does it mean but that a marriage that would expect God's blessing will see a couple constant in prayer, and led by God's Word, that wonderful road-map for a happy life. More about that next week, the Lord willing. Amen, and thank you for tuning in. .