

MARRIAGE THROUGH THE AGES

By Royce & Cindy DeBerry

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Spiritual "equipment" for the contest of life.

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New King James Version used throughout book unless otherwise noted.

Marriage Through the Ages

Royce and Cindy DeBerry

Lovingly dedicated to our wonderful parents,

L. Parvin and A. Pauline DeBerry who were married
52 years before Royce's dad left this world.

and

Orland and Delores McCann who were married
15 years before Cindy's dad left this world.

Their godly example helped prepare us for our
marriage. We love them dearly.

Principles that Never Grow Old

Dedication

Our society puts a lot of importance on education and success. We want to get a quality education. We readily acknowledge that usually a person will succeed at a task in direct proportion to the energy applied to the task. A doctor spends years studying to be able to be prepared to diagnose his patients correctly. A professional athlete will spend years practicing the same skills over and over and over and over to win the game.

How much education and energy is spent in preparation for becoming a husband or wife? Unfortunately, sometimes more time and energy is spent preparing for the **wedding** than is spent preparing for the **marriage**. The wedding will last one day, but the marriage is “till death do you part.” Marriage can be the most wonderful, fulfilling relationship of our entire life. On the other hand if we marry wrong or if we, ourselves, are not who we should be, marriage can be the worst, most miserable relationship of our entire life. Can you think of a part of your life that it will not impact? Will the way you treat your mate matter? No other relationship should be closer; therefore, we need to put energy into the subject and educate ourselves to have the wonderful, fulfilling relationship God intended for us.

Attitude

It has been said that it doesn't matter what happens to us. What matters is how we react to what happens to us. This principle can be applied to every situation. This is why every person can serve God no matter what. We have examples of people who have everything and commit suicide. We also have examples of people who have lost everything yet remain faithful. Every situation in between follows the same principle. God has a way of escape for us no matter what if we will take it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Introduction

The Bible tells us in Ecclesiastes 1:9 that “there is nothing new under the sun.” This means that whatever we face today someone has faced before us. Therefore, as husbands and wives, we know someone before us has faced whatever we are dealing with. We sometimes forget this and feel like we have new problems no one can understand or help us with. This is not true. We have everything that pertains to life and godliness recorded for us in God's word (2 Peter 1:3). We are told that the Old Testament was written as a schoolmaster for us (Galatians 3:24-25). We have an advantage over the people we will be studying. We can see the actions and then the reactions in their lives. The purpose of these lessons is to help us gain wisdom and knowledge on marriage from God who created us and knows what we need (James 1:5; 3:13-18).

Lesson One Relationships

Introduction

The word “relationship” could be defined as a working interaction between two or more people. We usually think of families when we hear the word. With any relationship however, there will be roles and responsibilities for both sides. Depending on how seriously each side takes their roles and responsibilities will be what determine the strength or weakness of that particular relationship. A relationship can be healthy or unhealthy for one or both sides.

The marriage relationship is so special God compares it to the relationship of Christ and His church. Ephesians 5:22-33 says:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

In this lesson we want to look at what goes into a healthy relationship in general terms.

I. There is something we must do to get into a relationship

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Christ left His Father in heaven and came to earth. He lived on this earth experiencing every type of temptation so that He could understand what we go through. This made Him the perfect mediator for us. He then died a terrible death on the cross. This was all done so Christ could be our Savior. All of this was for His church. Those people who wish to enter a relationship with Christ need to get to know Christ through studying His word and then becoming obedient to it. After the person has been obedient, and only then, they have become a member of Christ's church and have entered into a relationship with Christ (Matthew 28:16-20).

Husbands-to-be need to be doing preparation work to get ready to become good husbands. Wives-to-be need to be doing preparation work to get ready to become good wives. These roles cannot be fulfilled effectively without preparation. After both parties have prepared themselves, they need to look around and find the person they believe will fulfill all of their hopes and dreams. The husband-to-be will have to ask the wife-to-be to become his wife. If she says "yes," they will have to purchase a marriage license and fulfill whatever their state mandates. They will have to plan the ceremony and pay for the ceremony. They will both need to show up and make the vow before witnesses. Then, and only then, they have entered into the marriage relationship.

II. There must be a commitment to the relationship

To have a relationship both sides need to say "yes," we want this relationship. If either side says "no" to the relationship, that will end the progression towards a healthy relationship. Matthew 22:1-14 shows us that there is not something "in between." We must be willing to make a commitment to the relationship or we will not have a relationship.

III. There must be time spent in the relationship

Psalms 1:1-2 says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night." For us to be what God wants us to be in our relationship with Him, we must spend time on the relationship.

Husbands and wives will not have the relationship that is the best it can be if they do not spend a lot of time in the relationship. If the husband and wife have different goals and go separate directions, the relationship will not grow.

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IV. We must know the other(s) in the relationship

God created us so He **knows** what we need and when. We must strive to know God by reading and studying His word. Without understanding the rules and benefits of a relationship, the relationship cannot grow or develop.

A husband and wife must know one another too. Without knowing the rules and benefits of the relationship, it will not grow as it should.

V. There must be communication in the relationship

God communicates with us through His word. We can open it and read it anytime we want to learn more about Him (2 Peter 1:3). God has given us the avenue of prayer so that we can communicate with Him anytime we want (Romans 8:26). Our relationship with our Creator has an open line of communication running in both directions.

A husband and wife must have an open line of communication running in both directions also. When it breaks in either direction, the relationship will break down.

VI. There must be trust in the relationship

In Hebrews 13:5-6 it says, “Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” We can have total trust in our relationship with the Lord. He has proven over and over that He will always be there for us. He expects us to be as loyal to Him as He is to us.

A husband and wife need to have that trust in each other. If your mate proves to be untrustworthy, the relationship cannot continue at the same level. The mate will be cautious because they are not sure they can trust the other.

VII. In a relationship, you must be something or there is no relationship

Christ is the bridegroom of the church. The church is the bride of Christ. If either side is not living up to its position, the relationship will crumble.

A husband and wife are the same way. If the husband is not living up to the position of a husband, or the wife is not living up to the position of a wife, you

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do not have a healthy marriage relationship.

Conclusion

If we want to have successful relationships, there are steps we need to take to ensure that the relationship can be successful. The marriage relationship should be the closest relationship you have in this world. No one should come between mates. They are one. They are to cleave to one another (Genesis 2:24). Glue two pieces of paper together. Put them aside and let the glue dry. These two pieces of paper are cleaving to one another. Now separate the two papers. It is impossible. You cannot do it without leaving parts of each piece of paper on the other. This is marriage. Two people become one in purpose. They should not be separated.

Questions on the Bible Text

(Ephesians 5:25-33; Matthew 28:16-20; 22:1-14; Psalm 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:3; Romans 8:26; Hebrews 13:5-6; Genesis 2:24)

1. Can the church decide what the rules are going to be for it?
Give Scripture.
2. How are husbands to love their wives?
3. Why is the husband told to love his wife, but the wife is told to respect her husband?
4. Describe the roles and responsibilities between Christ and the eleven disciples.
5. Explain the parable of the marriage feast.

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6. What makes a man blessed?
7. How has God given us all things that pertain to life and godliness?
8. What recourse do we have when we don't know what we need to pray for?
9. Why can we trust God?
10. How close are a husband and wife supposed to be?

Personal Application

Make two lists from Ephesians 5:25-33 to compare the husband/wife relationship and Christ/the church's relationship.

Husband's Role

Christ's Role

Husband's Responsibility

Christ's Responsibility

Wife's Role

Church's Role

Wife's Responsibility

Church's Responsibility

Glue two pieces of paper together. Let them sit until the glue is dry. Bring them to class and attempt to separate the two pieces of paper.