

Biblical Principals of Marriage

by George Verwer

Marriage is a place to learn spiritual life and the way of the cross, and requires unselfishness, patience, and acceptance.

Duration: 58:17

Scripture: Ephesians 4:32

Topics: "Marriage"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prioritizing our time and not allowing distractions, such as excessive football watching, to hinder our relationships and responsibilities. He encourages viewers to evaluate how they are spending their time and make necessary changes to invest in their marriages, families, and personal growth. The preacher also highlights the need for discipline in all areas of life and the importance of learning to relax and have fun in the home. He concludes by acknowledging his own mistakes and urging listeners to learn from both instruction and experience in order to cultivate successful relationships.

Transcript

We're just a little limited in time and we need your help to condense this material. I really believe that some people's marriages, even if they're marriages that are not yet started, are dependent in regard to their victory and success on whether people are willing to get serious about these things tonight. We thank you that we can preach and teach the whole Council of your Word.

We don't have just one message, we have many messages because we have your whole book. Guide us now as we speak on these things. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Marriage. One of my great burdens before I was married, and of course after I was married as well, was to really become a Christ-like person. To know more of Christ and to be more sanctified and more holy.

At about 19 or 20, I thought I was really beginning to do well. Becoming more patient and seemed to be getting on with people better. Learning to take up my cross.

I thought I was really learning something of dying to self. Then I got married. Yeah.

God's graduate school. And I began to discover whole un-crucified areas of George Burworth. I think this is something we need to understand.

Whether you're already married or you're praying about marriage, that marriage is not primarily just to satisfy your particular emotional needs. That is involved and God is concerned about your emotions. He can meet them and satisfy them within or without marriage.

Some of the great men of God today have never been married. John Stott, William McDonald, Lymel Gurney, and quite a few others. Not to speak of women of God who have never been married.

And believe me, this message tonight is in some ways just as much for people who are single. Because it's about communication. And communication is one of the most important parts of marriage.

And I really believe that marriage is one of God's graduate schools. One of God's graduate programs to teach spiritual life. To teach the way of the cross.

To prepare us for heaven. If it's true what it says in the book, *Destined for the Throne*, that intercession is part of God's program to prepare us for heaven. So we must also say that marriage is part of God's program to prepare us for heaven.

And I hope that we can somehow, this evening, develop a more revolutionary view of marriage. My own marriage has been greatly enriched in the past few years. Because God has given us a greater view of what it's all about.

Communication, of course, is vital on your team. You're going to work on a team this summer. You're not going to O.M. Summer Crusade to get married.

So if that's your goal, you know, please stay back here. You're going to be on a team. But on the team, there are going to be men and there are going to be women.

You're going to have to learn to communicate. You're going to have to learn to relate to people. And so these principles of communication, though I'm going to be referring at times to marriage and to my own marriage, are basic on many other levels.

And I hope you will see that. I've listed here just some areas where I believe we have to learn. A disciple is a learner.

We make a great mistake if we think that we're going to become spiritual through a series of crisis experiences. I'm not against crisis experiences. And I know God meets people in special ways.

And I know he can fill people with his Holy Spirit. I know that people have experiences at Catholic conventions in England in which their lives are turned around or in some other special series of meetings. But I would yearn that this evening we could be a little more objective and understand that no matter what crisis we may have, if the New Testament has a purpose, then we must learn.

We must learn biblical principles. The biblical principles of communication. The biblical principles of marriage.

By God's grace, this is what I have been trying to do now for almost 20 years. I was married about 19 or 20 years ago. And through some of my mistakes, and I hope you can learn from some of my mistakes, I remember the man who said, any fool can learn by experience, but it takes a wise person to learn by instruction.

Believe me, if you learn from some of my mistakes and you take seriously some of the instruction tonight, you'll still have to learn other things by experience. So you're not going to lose that privilege, no matter what. No matter how smart you get tonight and how much you determine tonight to get serious about biblical principles in regard to relationships and marriage, you're still going to have plenty of experiences.

I know a lot more now than I knew 15 years ago, and yet I'm still having experiences. I'm still having to learn by mistake. And here's something we need to remember as we get a little bit older.

That many things in life must be re-learned. They must be re-learned. Life is big, it's complicated, it moves fast.

And we sometimes forget. And that really, really bugs me when I forget something that I thought I knew. Sometimes little things.

Little things I know you're not supposed to say. There's several things I know I'm not supposed to say to my wife. I know that.

I've preached about it. But I still say them. And so we're going to have to re-learn.

And in a sense, I am so convinced that true spirituality and a victorious life and total commitment, it is a continual process. You don't arrive. This is why it is such utter nonsense to run around thinking you're going to find the perfect church group.

When you join it, you'll know it won't be perfect anymore if it ever was. This is why it is so foolish to run around looking for the ultimate experience. I find people looking for the ultimate experience like someone looking for, you know, a double dose of marijuana.

And they think that somehow in this meeting or that meeting someone's going to throw them a spiritual pet pill. They're going to get high on Jesus. True commitment is a process.

There may be moments of crisis. It's a process. Marriage and growth in marriage is a process.

Let's get into some of these basic points. Number one, in marriage, we need to learn to be unselfish. I think of verses like Philippians chapter 2, verse 3 and 4. So many verses I want to share with you, but I'm only going to be able to share some of them.

Philippians 2, 3 and 4. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. In other words, learning to be unselfish.

Learning to really esteem that marriage partner or that fellow team member better than yourself. This is so radical. You know, some people think that the radical aspect of OM is our burden to reach the Muslim world, or our vision to reach the whole world, or some of our special efforts, or our attitude toward materialism.

They think of this as the radical aspect of OM. I will tell you, the more radical teaching of OM is linked with verses like esteem your brother better than yourself. I want to tell you that is harder than selling all your possessions.

That is harder than going to the Muslim world. Someone once writing about the self-life explained that the self-life will live anywhere. The self-life will go to the Rajasthan desert and live in a tiny house.

The self-life will join OM with no problem at all and even exist on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the summer. The self-life will sleep on the floor. The self-life will travel in old trucks that have no windows and get overheated.

And when 14 people from 7 nationalities come forth with a series of aromas that one has never experienced before. The self-life has only one major need. It must live.

It must live. And it can live in the desert. It can live in a shoebox.

And don't think you're a disciple because you've learned to sleep on the floor or endure hardness or cross deserts reaching souls for Christ or any other such thing. That is not the radical aspect of discipleship. The radical aspect of discipleship is when you begin to die to self.

And this is why marriages come apart even when the people who are involved in the marriage outwardly seem to have the principles of discipleship. They may have had certain principles of discipleship but they didn't have the really hard core of discipleship which is crucified living. Get a hold of Mr. Maxwell's book from your great Bible Institute here in Canada Prairie Bible Institute Born Crucified.

You get halfway through it without repenting. You probably have a heart condition or a brain tumor. Learn to be unselfish.

And believe me, it'll take more than coming forward or going forward at a Keswick Convention or an O.N. meeting or any other meeting to turn the lives of us into unselfish Christ-like transparent marriage partners or friends or husbands or wives. Long after I learned to preach. Long after I learned to lead people to Christ.

Long after I learned to lead teams. Write books. Sell books.

All kinds of things. Long after that I was still at times scoring very low when it came to being the unselfish husband. And I have no credentials to use and to display tonight that gain me merit to speak on this subject.

I only come as a sinner and as a failure. And if I can help any other sinners and failures in marriage find a little grace and a little reality and a little source of life then my visit to Canada would be well spent. I can honestly say from the depths of my heart that I am as concerned about marriage as I am about mission.

And sometimes I've thought that perhaps all I should do is go around and hold marriage seminars because how are we going to evangelize the world with endless rows of divorced people and what are we going to do with missionaries on the field who are plunging into immorality and divorce. And if you don't think this happens on the mission field you must be more even naive than you look. Learning to be unselfish.

This may be one of the reasons God has brought you into OM. Not that you're going to become the great ambassador for Christ and friends but that somehow you're going to learn to die to self. You're going to learn how to repent how to deal with obnoxious areas in the self-life.

Extremism. I can't speak for Canada but of my own country the United States I can say I believe without exaggeration we are a nation of extremists. We go from one extreme to the other.

One thing I like about Canada is people seem to be a little more even leveled even keeled up here. I don't know whether it's the British influence or the cold weather or what it is. But I think it's good for those of us who are from south of the border to acknowledge our national weaknesses.

We are a nation of extremists. We have produced some extremely good people some really great missionaries even some really balanced people. But so many of us we go into extremes and it's unbelievable the extremes we are into in the USA today.

And we usually export them to Canada quite freely without duties. And of course there's nothing that will blow a marriage apart quicker than extremism. I had a case once where a woman read a Watchman Nee book a book that I told was a great book.

Most of these books I read I always have part of the book that I take with a grain of salt. After all everybody is a human being. What was Watchman Nee? An angel? One third of his material he got from Jesse Penn Lewis.

Another third of it he got from some other British people. And one third of it he got probably on his knees in China. Now I love Watchman Nee I distributed his book.

But I found people get some of these books and they go extreme. This lady was reading this book Release of the Spirit and she was getting all caught up in all these different terminologies and getting her spirit released and she felt her husband wasn't released and pretty soon she felt I don't know through some switch of the imagination that she couldn't fellowship with an unreleased husband. So they broke up.

Praise the Lord. Some of us got under the burden of that marriage and prayed those two people back together. I love the writings of A.W. Tozer but recently I was greatly helped for listening to one of his tapes in which he acknowledged that many times his own temperament and his own intensity caused him to say things that were extreme and do things that were extreme.

Maybe that's why children have gone astray. We're all vessels of clay. We all can learn more.

We all can read somebody else's book and learn something from it and grow. We all can learn and become more like Christ and more unselfish. That to me is lesson number one.

You know it's amazing how this touches little areas of our life. I was selfish about my quiet time. I was a quiet time neurotic.

I still am a little bit. And so I had my quiet time in the morning no matter what. No matter what.

I hardly ever thought about the fact that my wife was not having a quiet time very much because she was serving me. Because of my quiet time I want a cup of tea. Who's going to bring me a cup of tea? My wife.

And after my quiet time I want my breakfast. And who's going to cook my breakfast? And I want a good breakfast. And I want the egg medium.

So when I dip my toast in it goes straight down it doesn't bounce up. And here I am you know here I am feasting on God's word memorizing God's word and going from God's word to the breakfast table and

really there I am sitting a selfish little man a selfish little man about his little egg and his little cup of tea and very very unsoughtful about the fact that his wife maybe hasn't got the chance even to break the pages of her Bible yet. That is just one of endless illustrations that I could give you just in my own life which is a very limited scene of how selfishness creeps in.

And I pray that husbands tonight will declare war against it and women you declare war against it as well because often times as men and women we all cooperate very well in our selfishness. Number two learning to be patient. There was a hard blow for me when I discovered there was more in the New Testament about patience than evangelism.

I had to change the whole strategy of the work. But it's true. And it's so easy for us as men and sometimes women as well to go around justifying our impatience and I tell you God hates it.

And sometimes our convictions our strong biblical convictions about discipleship and especially how money should be spent lead us into the sin of impatience. And there's more about impatience in the Bible in the New Testament than there is about forsaking all or about the use of money which some of us in OM become almost neurotic about. I was an extremist in the area of money.

I had the word around when I was a student at Moody that if I ever did find a girlfriend I would spend zero on her. Zero. I wouldn't enter into the sweet shop.

I didn't believe in a sweet shop. I think probably then I thought it was a trick of the devil to make people overweight or something else. And I just felt that every penny should go to world evangelism.

And I got really uptight about this. And I used to judge other people. Now God was merciful.

He still used me and I guess today in the present evangelical scene this really isn't a major problem in too many places. And in one sense I'd rather see even today young people going a little bit extreme on some of these things we can bring them back. As Brother Andrew once said to me we were preaching in Holland together and I'm very slow to give invitations and he said to me in this rather big meeting he said, Brother George, did you give an invitation? I said, well, no.

He said, well, I think I'll give an invitation. And he said, I think I'll give an invitation because I've discovered it's easier. How did he put it? That it was easier to cool down a fanatic than warm up a corpse.

And today I don't think our great problem is too much enthusiasm for Christ and too many people becoming extreme on some of these things. But it is sometimes a problem. It's amazing how merciful God is.

I don't know how I ever made it. Fortunately, even early in my marriage it began to change a little. Little by little.

My wife reminds me of a time when I lost my temper. I'm ashamed even to tell this. But I used to feel and I still do to some degree that my wife should get her clothing from Charlie.

You say, what is Charlie? This is orientation. Charlie is the ONU's clothing store. People who have too much clothing they give it to Charlie.

We put it in a nice room. We try to make it look nice. Some of it is you know, 7th century.

We had a big run one year on miniskirts. What are we going to do with 200 miniskirts back in 1971 or whenever it was. We discovered how to convert them into book bags.

You can just imagine what this is. These are selling very cheap. I used to be rather tight with the money that I would give my wife.

And I used to put her into a guilt trip all the time. One day we were sitting in a car. This was so bad that I repressed it.

So she reminded me of it. Some years later she was in a depression. Months of depression partly because of me.

Partly because I lacked sensitivity. Partly because I knew how to put her into a guilt trip. Partly because I was taking advantage of her submissiveness.

Partly because I was holding the Bible over her head. She reminded me of how I put pressure on her when we first got married to sell her sewing machine for Jesus. And then the rest of her life she had to watch other O.M. women who have sewing machines because there's no rule in O.M. that a woman can't have a sewing machine.

And years later when I forgot that I put this pressure on her I said, Boy, a sewing machine that's a tremendous thing to have. Look at the money you can save sewing clothes. But in this particular incident I was sitting in a car and I was driving down the highway and I must have been in one of my uptight days of course most of you don't have that problem.

But there I was driving down the highway and she finally got the courage to share with me that she had just purchased a new dress without my permission. This was in a time of financial pressure. We were paying in money.

We had bills to pay for literature, for Bibles. And my wife goes out without my permission and buys a dress. She already had three dresses.

But I did not react with a joke or with humor. But I relapsed into a pre-pagan stunt and jammed the brakes on full force of the car beeped the horn and skidded to the side of the road. I thought this would make an impact.

And I'm telling you the truth. And to this day neither my wife and I remember whether I repented or not. I think I did.

How God hates impatience and how supple Satan is to take a strong conviction and let it go sour and lead us even into sin. Self-control is as basic to marriage as the very ring we put on one another's fingers. And God this summer wants to teach us patience.

You may have to stand in some queues or lines or whatever you call them. You may have to wait on your leader. I don't arrange it but God does.

And believe me I believe patience is one of the most important virtues in the Christian life. God has done a miracle in my life in this area but I still have a ways to go. God has done a miracle in our marriage but I have a ways to go.

And I hope you will go along with me. Number three, learning to really accept one another. This is so basic.

We project on each other our spiritual goals. And I had certain things that I was projecting on my wife from the marriage onward and even before. And I had my little sermons for her.

And I discovered after we were married that she wasn't exactly the same as I thought before the wedding. She also discovered that about me. And so of course I proceeded to make changes to see her grow in the Lord.

To see her become more spiritually mature. It was obvious that she had some blind spots. Not me, she.

And so there were the exhortations. She didn't even go along with my exercise program. Now I believe this thing of exercise is important.

Get up early, push-ups, jumping jacks, jogging. She would have none of it. We discovered that our whole life we were a different metabolism.

And the doctor told me I had a high combustion engine. Everything I go in or take in to eat, it just burns up. My wife has a totally different kind of engine.

Everything she takes in converted to fat. Now she's not fat because she's disciplined. I'm so thankful to God for that, oh Lord.

But a major breakthrough came in our marriage when she, I believe, already accepted me as I was. She didn't have this trouble. I'm sure she must have had some struggles because at times I was so obnoxious and I'm sure I was such an enormous disappointment.

But I can say as far as I can remember, my wife never once belittled me or discouraged me or used my weaknesses to run me down. I can't say that in reverse about my attitude toward her. And God had to really break me and just enable me to accept her as she was.

I tell you, this is so important in marriage. Some women have more trouble than men. They want their husband to be somebody.

On the mission field they have major divisions. This particular husband, he's quite happy to be the number two man. He's just like Mattick type.

He doesn't want to be the boss. He's quite happy. He'd be number three man, number four man.

He's worshipping the Lord. He just wants to get on and be Joe Faithful. But his wife, oh no.

She feels that his potential is not being recognized by the missionary leader. And she is pushing him, just slowly. She is pointing out the weaknesses of his leaders.

She is pointing out to him that he certainly in a number of these areas had greater wisdom than the boss. Pretty soon he's thinking, oh man, maybe I'm not just the number two. And my wife has got wisdom and maybe he should be the boss around here.

And his whole life becomes a disaster because of his wife's push to get him to the top. It happens. It happens all the time on the mission field.

And at home. How important it is to accept your partner as she or he is. That doesn't mean together you don't want to see growth, of course, and greater holiness in your life, of course.

I couldn't even walk down the street with my wife. I didn't realize this before we were married. She was just slow.

Not slow, but slower than me. And it was very difficult. I'd have to wait on the corner and give out tracts and wait for her to come along.

But a lot of the countries we work in, you're not allowed to give out tracts. It became a great tension. And I didn't understand women.

And most of us as men, I think if we're honest, we don't understand women. And I couldn't understand why she couldn't be ready quicker. I operate a lot on spontaneous things.

I get an idea, let's go. I'd give her five or ten minutes notice. I couldn't understand, what is she doing in the bathroom? And I would have tremendous struggles with this.

And I'd try to control myself. I remember once going out to the car. I'd given her even 20 minutes notice.

I didn't know where we were going. She was up there doing this and that. I was hitting the car and I was saying, Lord, guard my tongue.

Guard my tongue. I don't want to say anything. I don't want to hurt her.

Such a wretch. I got it all in the head. All in the head.

She gets in the car. I didn't say a thing. One dirty look.

Some women cry easy. You know, Billy Graham says with our tongue, we can smite. We can hurt people.

We hurt one another. We hurt one another. So totally ridiculous.

Just the other night, here I am, 19 years marriage. I should be improving. Just here, right here in Toronto, the other night.

I'm going to bed. I'm reading something. My wife comes.

She wanted me to turn off the lights so she could go to sleep. I had told her to go to sleep two hours ago. I was a little upset.

Why was she still walking around? So she just gave me a rather, just a rather sympathetic look. Some kind of a nice look. And I used it to say, of all things, can you imagine? Here in Toronto, such a nice place.

Of all things. I said, why are you giving me a dirty look? And that just hit her. Because, of course, she hadn't given me a dirty look.

My wife hardly has ever given me a dirty look. Only once in a while. Boy, I tell you, when it comes, heavy.

And so that hurt her and that bothered her. And often I do ask forgiveness before I go to sleep. But I fall asleep quick and that was it.

I fell asleep. And so I wasn't able to repent until the next morning. So she had to sleep with that on her mind.

And it hurt her. So easy for us to hurt with these unnecessary comments. Unnecessary words.

And they come because we're not abiding in Christ. Or we're in a bad mood. Or something.

And I'm reading a book right now and it nails it right on the head. Irritability is sin. And that's been one of the sins that has plagued my life.

And I'm going to stay in the battle against it. I want to wipe it out. I don't want to defend it.

I don't want to say I inherited it from my grandfather who was an incredibly irritable character. But I want to nail it to the cross. Irritability is one of the most destructive forces in marriage.

Moodiness. Nothing to do with D.L. Moody. Moodiness creeps into the marriage.

And we get on each other. But on the other side I want to say something that's just as important. And it leads me to the next point.

Forgiveness. Is that again and again my wife has used the therapy of forgiveness to break me and to bend me and to keep me going. Now my wife is more phlegmatic.

She's shy. She's introvert. I am aggressive.

Choleric. You know, that type of thing. With a melancholic streak according to a choleric friend of mine.

It's really bad. But some of you have a reverse situation. I counsel people.

The husband is a real phlegm. You know, the morning his wife's up doing her jumping jacks. He's in bed.

She's a nut. She's a nut. And you know, he's wanting to go out for a milkshake.

He's feeling a bit of, you know, his tongue is dry. She's wanting to go out. Let's keep our tracks.

Let's go door to door. It happens. He wants to sit home at night and watch a football game.

No, no, no. We've got to go to church. We've got to go to church.

We've got to go here. We've got to go there. And I tell you, that makes an interesting program.

That makes an interesting program. And any of you husbands that have that kind of wife, you know, I'd like to become your permanent prayer partner. Really.

Because, you know, if I was married to that kind of wife, I'd probably, you know, just, you know, just a pistol. Boom. And for any of you women that are like that, you know, I can only say try a little bit of balance.

You know, just pull back a little bit. Maybe even read Marilyn Morgan. No, I know she's taboo among the conservative evangelicals.

But, you know, just for balance, just for balance, just go halfway back. Then throw her out the window. But, believe me, there's got to be forgiveness.

There's got to be forgiveness and acceptance. Think of verses like Ephesians 4.32. Ephesians 4.32. So beautiful. So appropriate.

And be kind to one another. Take care of one another. Tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.

That's the basis of marriage. My wife and I, in the first year of marriage, we read Calvary Road, Revival in the Home, and that has kept us going. When I have failed, when she has failed, we've repented, and we've been cleansed by the blood of Christ and have hardly ever gone to sleep at night without knowing we were right with God and right with Him.

It can be that way. It can be that way. And then, number five after forgiveness, accepting one another for forgiveness, five, learning to bend and to break.

1 Peter 5.6 speaks about how God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. If I hadn't learned a little bit about this and I'm still learning, I think I would have blown our marriage into pieces. How to bend, how to break, how to admit you've made a mistake.

Do you ever discover how hard it is to admit that something is totally your fault? Do you ever discover there's something in us that resists that? And to just be able to learn that, how to admit it's your fault. Take the blame. If that person, your marriage partner or someone else, if they were 98% in the wrong and you were only 2% in the wrong, you only have to worry about the 2%.

They will have to worry about the 98%. Put your 2% right. Go to the person or go to your partner and say, look, I'm really sorry for saying that or doing that or forgetting that and let the Lord convict that person of the 98%.

Brokenness is so basic for marriage and marital happiness. Bending. And this also works in a practical level and I call it compromise.

In my early Christian life I thought the word compromise was totally from the devil. We can't compromise on the basic doctrines. We're Bible-believing Christians.

We don't compromise. We don't compromise. I was brainwashed into this.

Don't compromise. I dragged it into my marriage. Marriage is impossible without compromise.

Impossible without good compromise. Each person giving in a little bit. Each person going the extra mile.

If I hadn't learned this with my strong convictions, some of them on minor issues, I would have destroyed my own wife. Probably myself. Why is it that some of the men that have gone the furthest for God and have been so mightily used by God have gone so low in their marital situations? Because the things that help us be strong in some areas of our Christian life produce weakness in other areas.

Why is it that many times missionaries can't get on with each other? I'll tell you why. Because it takes a strong-minded man to get to the mission field. He has to plow through all kinds of problems, all kinds of difficulty.

He finally gets to the mission field. When he gets to the mission field, what does he meet? Other strong-minded men who have plowed their way to the mission field. And so they can't get on together.

What helps you in one area being strong-minded becomes your deadliest enemy in another area. That's why without balance, without compromise, it doesn't work. The very things that help us to be successful in business destroy our own.

That which may help me in the pulpit will destroy me in the living room or with my children because they don't want my sermons. They want my love. They want my patience.

They want my time. And we men of God get so incredibly busy. And we think it's all for Jesus.

It's all for God's work. And we're in for a big surprise. And we're going to discover that a lot of what we have done hasn't been for God's work.

It's been our own ego on a full-scale charge. God is first and the family is second. And if we're too busy to spend time with our children every week, except maybe when we're away.

And that means when we come back we have to spend double time. And remember, it isn't just the quantity of time you spend with your children. I learned this the hard way.

It's the quality. Because I would take my children out thinking I was doing them a great big favor. What an egoist.

I was doing my kids a great big favor. There are dozens of people who are trying to see me. They're being counseled by me.

And now I'm going to give an hour of my time to my kids. And I go out and I take them out. I blow the whole thing.

I did it again just a couple of months ago. In an intensive schedule. I was going to be Big Daddy.

Take my children out on Sunday for a walk in the woods. I blow it. My daughter wanted to take a picture of me.

I don't like cameras but I decided to be, you know, give it a try. So I posed for her. She's my daughter.

She's only 14. Is she going to tell me where to stand? Yes. She says, Daddy moves over.

I lost my cool. I said, forget it. You're not taking pictures of me.

And I walked away. That was the end of the whole afternoon. Lovely family time in the woods of Sweden.

My daughter was so upset, she froze. You know, she becomes quiet. I don't know where she learned this.

She walked down other paths. She walked, you know. I begged her.

I asked her for glory and mercy. I apologized. I repented.

I said, look, take the picture. Anything. What did she say? You think she'd forgive me? She said, no.

You're always like that. Finally, after an hour and a half, we got restored. Why do I tell you this? I tell you this because if some of you have been trying to be the ideal father and you've been trying to be the ideal husband and you're still failing, I can tell you there's at least two of us, so let's not give up.

Let's not give up. Learn to bend. Learn to break.

Learn to compromise. Grow up. Watch out for your ego.

And it'll make you a better father and a better husband. And then the next point, I always lose track of my numbers. I think it's six.

Learn to be Learn to love. Love isn't something that you just got in a funnel on the wedding day. Learn to love.

1 Corinthians 13, apply it to your marriage. And dozens and dozens of other verses on the subject of love. And I can tell you in the last few years, I've been learning to love my wife more.

I believe I always did love her, but I've learned that little things count. I couldn't understand this with women. Little things count.

You know, to me, life is a big thing. World evangelism. Planting churches.

Mobilizing families. Thousands. Preaching.

Big things. My wife gets, you see, these little kinds of little things. Flowers.

I buy my wife flowers. I preached almost a message on this years ago. How can God's people go around spending money on flowers when there are needy souls who need Gospels of John? Sounds tremendous.

My wife never fell for it. And I don't know when it was, of course, I decided years ago I began to get balanced. Really.

And I went out to the woods and I picked, you know, some dandelions and brought them to her. But finally, God got through. About two years ago, I actually spent real money.

Real money. I mean, you can't steal them. This is a temptation.

You know, you see these guys standing outside the railway station. They're usually jerks selling their flowers. You know, they can say, Hey, what's that? This is, of course, one of the problems with the Christian life.

There's restrictions on every side. So I took some real money and I bought some flowers and I went home to my wife and I gave her some flowers. It meant something to her.

It added a new dimension. And that's only one little example, but there are so many things that we can do to express our love. Many of us as men especially when we're married, love, and all of this is an emotional thing and it's often involved with a sex relationship and the whole area of sex.

For a woman, it's different than a man. A man can go through 90% of the day seemingly without much concern about sex. Then suddenly at a particular time in the evening or some other time, this becomes the main interest.

Woo! It's all getting in, you know, suddenly it's Joe romance and woo! Half an hour later, it's all over, back to the work. Now, I know that not all men are like this, but me. Now I read this in books and I found that it's true that for most women, sex is something that spans out through the whole day and it's more linked with romance and it's more linked with what we say and little kindnesses and appreciations.

And it's not a firecracker, it's something that is long and meaningful. And in the area of sex and love, and love, of course, is a wider dimension than just sex. We have just got to know more of self-control, more of esteeming the other person, more of seeking their need and their benefit.

Fortunately, a few of these things I learned many years ago and I've had the privilege of teaching some of them to many people and they've told me it's revolutionized my marriage. We'll touch a little more on that in just a few minutes, but let me move on to the seventh point, disciplining oneself. All these other points and you may be far more loving and you may know a lot of these basic things that the books talk about, but if you don't have discipline, you can eventually destroy your own home.

And I love those words of 1 Corinthians 9, I buffet my body, I bring myself into subjection. And as men, we must be totally disciplined in the area of our moral life so that it is not even even an option that we would ever go with another woman. I was a person who faced enormous temptation in the area of life before I was a Christian and some after I was a Christian, but because I learned this principle, I have never touched another woman on the day of my wedding and I never intend to.

And I believe that we as men must make a firm commitment. We are committed to our wives whether they're sick or whether they're healthy, whether they can continue the total marital act or whether they are unable to, which happens. We are committed to Christ.

We are crucified with Christ. If we can have all the joys of total marriage, wonderful, if we cannot have them, have them, we will still serve Christ and be loyal to our wife to the death. Without compromise.

But you can't do that unless you have a discipline. You may think you're totally infatuated with your wife. You may think she can satisfy all your needs and you'll never have temptations in this area and some of your wives may not think you're going to ever have temptations, but you're wrong.

You will be tempted in this area. So don't fool around. Develop the ability to say no to the flesh, to the eye, to the pole.

And it's unbelievable the number of Christian leaders that get sucked into this kind of thing. Another thing that I would put in here that we need to be disciplined to avoid all appearance of evil. One man of God almost gave his own prophecy because he ended up divorced saying that any man who gets in an extended counseling with someone from the opposite sex that in most cases they will end up getting involved sexually.

When I first read that I had to re-read it. It was almost prophetic because he ended up divorced. But it's true.

We are unwise in our counseling ministry and we as men or vice versa we get up in private situations again and again with the opposite sex in a counseling ministry hotel rooms this kind of thing. We in most cases are going to get in trouble. We need wisdom in the counseling ministry.

Billy Graham has always had this strong principle he doesn't go anywhere with another woman unless his wife is with him or another man is with him. And so Billy Graham of course the devil probably got a lot bigger guns aimed at him than most of us. We can learn something.

We can be a little wiser. I'm not giving this out as a legalistic thing. It's not even a legalistic thing with NOM.

Sometimes in certain situations a man has to pick up a woman at the railway station and run her home. But I believe as a general aim it's really helpful. Avoid all appearance of evil.

Because the devil is clever and he wants to spread gossip and he wants to destroy us. Discipline touches every area of the life. We're going to have to go quickly.

Number 8 Learning to relax. Learning how to keep a certain amount of fun in the home. Especially important for the children.

Learning how to cast every care upon the Lord. Learning how to not turn off the work. Very hard for me.

Focus in on the family. Focus in on the fun time. Being able to discern between that which is definitely worldly and that which is borderline and your children and even your wife need to be able to make a free choice.

I was against secular novels. Especially women's novels. My wife found this as a form of relaxation.

In the early days of our marriage she was ashamed. So what? She got pushed into reading in secret. I caught her and blew my cool.

God had to really deal with me about that. That that was not necessarily worldliness. We've got a lot of cobwebs as to what worldliness is and we're hypocrites.

People who go around on big crusades against worldliness they turn their televisions on and watch all kinds of garbage. I tell you television has proven that we in many cases are a nation of hypocrites. Because we have condemned people for doing this and doing that and going here and this is worldly and then we bring it right into our living room and nobody knows about it.

It's a difficult area. And O.M. is very conservative relatively speaking. But when you have children you better be careful of what you force down their throats because you'll only force your children into the dark.

You'll force them into the dark. One of the greatest encouragements in my life is when my three children on their own accord not only gave their lives to Christ but were baptized and are going on and that meant more for me than all the countries I've ever entered into to preach Jesus Christ. That doesn't mean I'm over the hill and I presume I'm nothing because Satan is out to destroy the home of every Christian leader.

Their primary target because it's an ugly thing. And I believe one of the things God showed me with my children is they've got to have some freedom. They've got to have some freedom.

They're going to make some mistakes. You made them too and this is an important area and yet they've got to learn discipline and there needs to be the disciplined life and none of us are going to exactly agree on how to rear our children. This is why when it comes to people's children it's better to keep your nose out of it.

Something we learned on the ship in some areas it's good motto mind your own business. Don't judge. Don't criticize.

Get on with your own project. Very quickly we move on to number eight. Learning to share or nine.

Learning to share and open up. Walking in the light. I praise God that I can really share my heart with my wife and she doesn't condemn me.

My wife knows that if I go down in the center of London and if I'm not in top form spiritually and really in total grip of myself that sometimes the pornography really sends me for a loop. I don't hardly ever buy it. I don't think I've hardly ever bought it since my conversion.

I'm too tight. But boy I tell you when it's sitting there free in the railway station or like it was a few weeks ago when I was headed for a train not easy to tell you this. Oh I like to get free newspapers.

I reached into the trash can. There was a main London newspaper and I grabbed it and inside of it ten dollar hard porno or not hard but porno wasn't hard porno. And it would be wonderful if I could just stand up and tell you I had the complete victory over that little piece of slut that ended up in my hands but I didn't.

I didn't. And to be able to share that with my wife and know that she forgives me and to be able to go to Christ and get the forgiveness and the cleansing and to bounce back into the battle is one of the reasons I'm still a Christian. And everywhere I go I find young men hooked on pornography and I find Christians hooked on pornography.

I find our Bible schools have got quite a few young men hooked on pornography. And no one talks about it. No one shares about it.

It's the most common problem. You can't walk anywhere. You land in an airport in Germany.

There's the cart that you put your luggage in that says follow me to the sex shop. By God's grace I've never been in one of those places and never want to go in but they're there. And their tentacles will reach out at you this summer.

And I pray first of all you'll make it your goal to avoid it completely. I've done that most of the time. But if you have a fall, as I've had once in a while with this kind of literature, I pray that you may bounce back and repent and get the cleansing and don't allow it to discourage you or destroy you or mash you into little pieces as I have seen it do.

Many, especially sensitive young men who have very high ideals about the victorious life, got to learn to share and to open up. And it seems to me in the area of sex, the devil is pulling a fast one because we're all bound up and we're afraid that we're going to lose our reputation or that somebody's going to find out this or that and it just gets worse and worse and worse. And then number ten, we've got to learn to repent and embrace the cross.

In marriage, in every detail, we cannot live without repentance. We cannot live without the cross. And if God has spoken to you tonight as we come to the end of this message, then repent and embrace the cross.

His forgiveness is there. If there's something you haven't put right with your wife, put it right tonight. Have a prayer session together.

One of the cleverest things the devil does is keep married couples from praying. He's pulled so many tricks on me in that area, I don't even know how to talk about it. But oh, to be able to have some prayer together tonight, especially married couples, engaged couples, in repentance and brokenness, embrace the cross.

And then there's two other points, finally, in marriage. Don't belittle sex. Don't belittle sex.

Spiritual people do this. Oh, sex, oh, that's not important. I counseled someone in a country in Asia.

The woman was a real soldier. All out for Christ. No time for sex.

Two or three years married, hadn't had sex once. She felt this was a great victory. Her husband wasn't so sure.

He was the pastor of the local church. Finally, he fell into adultery with a girl in a choir. This is a true story.

Fell into adultery with a girl in a choir. Of course, the denomination leaders gave him one big, quick kick. An area where we lack compassion.

I would beg of you to read Eros, Defiled. These people came to the ship and I had the joy of showing them the biblical basis for sex. There's over 300 verses in the Bible on the subject of sex.

Within marriage, it's a beautiful thing. It's the right thing. It's more than just for procreation.

It's for communication, expression. Many other things. The mystery, like many things in life, will never fully understand it.

And I saw that couple brought back together and reunited. In fact, some of the greatest joys I've had in my Christian life have been in the area of marriage counseling. There are answers.

We have answers. We have the New Testament. And all of us need to be more available to encourage and counsel and help people who are facing difficulty in this area.

But as a Christian, I want to beg of you. Don't neglect the sexual side of marriage. Don't overemphasize it.

Don't neglect it. Don't give the excuse that some people I've counseled have given. Oh, we're too tired.

There must be some time in the day when you're strong enough to fulfill this marriage commitment. It's a discipline. It's not supposed to be all pleasure.

There are times when one partner receives much more than the other partner gives. There are other times when it's reversed. It is a complex thing.

There are many things in life that are complex. But let's work at it. Let's not be afraid to receive counseling.

Let's not be afraid to receive a few books. Let's not be afraid to repent. I believe it adds and keeps a dimension in marriage that is very important and rather than hindering us in our spiritual life makes us more able to fight for Christ and to serve Christ.

Of course, if the time comes when this no longer exists, it is with men that I know who were married and then their wife died or I know of a man, a great man of God in India, Bhaktsingh, who lost his wife through his conversion, then God gives the grace. Then that aspect of life has to, by God's power, diminish and other things will come in its place. And then just lastly, one practical thing in marriage, learn to redeem the time.

If you are slow, especially husbands, you may have to learn a little bit at times about speeding up just for the sake of survival. And tomorrow night I'm going to be speaking about survivalship. You expected all messages on discipleship.

Tomorrow it's survivalship. Because to me survivalship, by the way, that's my own term, is part of discipleship. How to survive the fiery dark.

And in marriage, if you're going to survive, there needs to be more practical organization. Keeping track of the money. Careful handling of the money.

Not overspending. Not getting involved in too many loans. Watching your emotions when it comes to buying because materialism is such a destructive and confusing force within marriage.

We don't need so many of these things. We need to learn more simply. We need to get books like Rich Christian and the Hungry World or Golden Cow and read them.

But linked with that, in fact even more important, is basic organization. Delegation. Practical, redeeming the time.

You've got to learn priorities. Maybe you love football and you're tempted to watch every major football game and you know if you're honest this is getting a hold on you. You're not writing letters that should be written.

You're not witnessing to people that should be witnessed to. You're not giving your wife the time she should have. When's the last time you took her on a date? When's the last time you had a family outing? Instead for you it's the crazy machine that's worked its way into the living room that feeds you football every Sunday afternoon.

Put an ax through it. Don't somehow, don't let it rob you. Don't let it rob you of that time with your wife, with your children.

Maybe the one reason you have a television is for your children. I know it's complex. I don't have a television.

And it hasn't been such a problem for us. But I know that's not always the case. But if you have it, it needs to be controlled.

And you need to be controlled. The devil is out to destroy our marriages. And for those of you who are not yet married, could you imagine what your marriage could be if you build on these principles? I'm convinced God has brought you to OM that we can give you some of this kind of stuff.

Because we're as concerned for your marriage as we are for our mission in Muslim world or anywhere else. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this time together.

You know I don't do this because I'm on some kind of a kick to talk about these things. And myself, I wouldn't even open my mouth. And you know for my wife who has agreed that I could speak on these things, it's not easy either.

But we feel that for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of marriages and homes that need help, that we should share these struggles, these failures, these problems. And I thank you that it's under the blood. And I thank you that you are still changing my life and I'm still growing despite many weaknesses and failures.

Lord, we believe that marriage is a lifetime commitment and we've got a lot more to learn. Guide us as we take some of these principles and weave them into the fiber of our own marriage. And as we relearn some of these things and as we claim the victory.

We know that there are going to be some big battles ahead. But we know that you're greater. You're greater, you're bigger than anything that can come our way.

And therefore we will not be discouraged and we will not give up. But we will press forward toward the mark of a high calling of your Son, Jesus Christ. In his name we pray.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17510.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/biblical-principals-of-marrage/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net