

# Foundations for Marriage

by George Verwer

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*The sermon emphasizes that holiness and commitment are the foundational elements for a successful marriage, rather than the pursuit of happiness.*

**Duration:** 59:08

**Scripture:** Psalm 55:22, Proverbs 14:29, Isaiah 30:15, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:33, 1 Peter 5:7

**Topics:** "Marriage"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of communication and learning in marriage. They emphasize that many of the principles for a successful marriage can also be applied to team life. The speaker highlights the need to understand, accept, and be patient with one another, as well as the importance of compromise without compromising the truth. They also touch on the significance of relaxation, conquering fear, and seeking support from prayer partners. Throughout the sermon, the speaker references various scriptures, such as Isaiah 30:15 and 1 John 4:18, to support their points.

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## Transcript

We'll start right off on the wrong foot if we think the greatest goal in marriage is happiness. I believe the greatest goal in marriage, as the greatest goal in life, is holiness. Holiness.

Happiness is not the great aim of the Christian, it is a byproduct. The byproduct. And we want healthy marriages, we want holy marriages, and we believe they will be, in most cases, happy marriages.

But a true marriage is going to have its moments of sadness. My heart has been challenged by that statement by Billy Graham, that life on its best is filled with sadness. A Christian must learn how to handle sadness.

He must learn how to face the difficulties as well as the blessings. It's interesting that this word commitment has been burning on my heart. And then yesterday, without realizing it, one of the pastors handed me the latest or one of the recent issues of the evangelical newsletter, and I was just reading this.

I won't tell you where I was when I was reading this, but I was reading this, and it really just spoke to my heart. Commitment, this is what it says, commitment is the real issue in marriage. This is precisely what God has been putting on my heart to emphasize, and then I read it here, commitment is the real issue in marriage.

Not simply that elusive thing called love. In the light of the state of many marriages today, what can a pastor say to a young couple who want to live together? Michael Zadig, writing out of his own experience of living with a girl, claims in Mark His magazine that commitment is the issue. You can't say to someone, I love you, let's live together to see what happens.

On those terms, either you can split at a moment's notice. As a result, you never really can be yourself or feel free of losing the other person. You can never have the liberty to share your deepest feelings.

You have to hold back. The relationship doesn't get a chance to grow because it is based on a conditional acceptance. Which is the cover, is the cover for the self gratification of two people indulging themselves in what they politely term as meaningful relationships.

Real commitment, on the other hand, says I'm willing to spend my life with you to see you grow, for better or for worse. Some marriage vows still say, others like those, once exchanged on the Rhoda show, for as long as we both shall love. Look at what happened to Rhoda and Joe, since they spoke those tentative words.

Love may have some cold spots, and it alone will never be enough to hold two people together. It's commitment that carries them over difficult times. Commitment is what God intended between men and women.

That is why He set up marriage, to express a lifelong commitment. Praise God for that thought. Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5, to see something of what God says about this thing of marriage.

And I believe it's one of the most needed messages in America today. I believe every believer here tonight could have a ministry of marriage counseling. I really believe that.

There are people all around you in trouble. More than just a meeting tonight, we feel we're here in a little bit of a school. O.N. is a school.

And if you just think of it as being a little bit of a night school, you worry that you're in for your second message. And you realize that what you receive tonight could save you a lot of time in the long run, because divorce proceedings are expensive, they take a lot of time, and a lot of agony. I believe this is one of the most important messages I could give here, and in some ways would come almost from England, just to share it.

Ephesians chapter 5, beginning after we're told to be filled with the Spirit, and the reality of this is described, giving thanks in all things, we move on to verse 22. Verse 21 is perhaps part of it. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Why submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord? For the husband is ahead of the wife, even as Christ is ahead of the church, and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loveth himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are

members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Let's just pray for a moment. Lord, help us. We sense the need to get into the prayer meeting.

We have a burden for prayer tonight, but we also believe that you are concerned about our personal lives, our families and our homes, and you want to minister to us from the truth of your word, from the truth of history and experience, and we would ask that you'd help us to be obedient to what we hear tonight. In Jesus' name, Amen. I'm going to try to give you an outline so that you can take notes and follow this, and jot down a few scriptures.

Communication through commitment. Foundations for communication, especially in marriage. Marriage means learning.

And I'm going to give just ten things that we've got to learn if we want a happy, fruitful and lasting marriage. The amazing thing is that many of these things we have to learn from the Lord and from his word are basic also to team life. Living on an O.N. team this summer has many similarities and is an ideal preparation for marriage.

You're going to see that. You're going to see it tonight. You're going to see it more this summer.

Learning to understand people, accept people, to be patient with people, learning to compromise not the truth but your own position is so beautiful and so important. I especially learned this from Eugenia Price's amazing book Make Love Your Aim. What it is to give in, what it is to bend and be flexible, how important that is in marriage.

And I just really tonight want to dedicate this message to my own dear wife. Without her I wouldn't be able to speak this message because who in the world knows where I would even be. And I just have learned so much from her and have been so challenged again and again, especially by her loyalty, by her commitment and by her love.

Lesson number one. We've got to learn to be unselfish. Selfishness is public enemy number one in marital difficulty.

It has many, many forms. It's a multi-headed monster. It's been ingrained in us before we were born because according to the Word of God, we were born in iniquity.

Some people don't like that concept but there sure is plenty of proof that it seems to be biblical. And I'm convinced that from the very earliest age, selfishness is the arch controller of many situations even in children. Philippians chapter 2 verse 3 and 4 especially comes to my mind at this mind, at this moment.

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Each marriage partner must learn to esteem the other better than himself. That's a beautiful thing isn't it? Not so easy for some people.

There's another scripture that says we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. The counterpart to that is we should not think of ourselves more lowly than we ought to think. I know many marriage partners who feel extremely utterly inferior to their partner.

That also can lead to confusion in the marriage. One marriage partner may have a very, very low self-image which the devil can make use of, not only to hinder them spiritually but physically. Because as we have a very low self-image of ourselves, as we are very negative about ourselves, it opens up the way for quite a few diseases and especially fatigue.

Dr. Carlson in his amazing book on the subject of fatigue called *Run Run Run and Grow Not Weary* has touched on this problem of fatigue in a way that I have hardly ever seen beat. I don't know if we have that book. I'm ashamed if we don't.

It's outstanding. And many, many people have been helped over the problem of fatigue by this man's writing, which is such a common problem in our day. Yes, we've got to learn to be unselfish.

We've got to learn to think of the marriage partner. The greatest problems that come in marriage stem from uncrucified self. And we can't speak as Christians about marriage without speaking about the cross.

It's impossible. I believe one of the problems today is that many of our marriage lectures leave out the cross. It's all psychology.

It's all kinds of things, everything but the cross. Jesus said, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up the cross and follow me. We'll be seeing that later on as one of the main points.

Unselfishness. I have been appalled in my own life to see my own selfishness. How I get so concerned about my quiet time.

I'm going to have my quiet time around my house in the morning, whatever goes. And God dealt with me some years ago, how incredibly unthoughtful I am. Often about my wife.

What about her quiet time? She's making my breakfast. She's making the children's breakfast. She's doing this, doing that.

It takes a lot to run a house in these days, and I'm off having my big Bible feast. Somewhere there's got to be some balance in this. It's true, to some degree a wife can see this as a ministry.

My wife, I don't think, ever once complained about it. But it is harder for the women to get their quiet time. And maybe husbands should be more conscious of that.

One of my greatest failings is that I have times of ministering to everybody else. And my wife once said, why don't you ever minister to me? I need discipling. I need some help in my spiritual life.

I was as impatient as a fly on flypaper when it came to really sitting down and ministering to my wife. I just sort of presumed she was just going to, you know, get on with being spiritual. Some of you women probably feel you're very unspiritual.

Maybe you're married to someone who, at least some people think they're spiritual, and you can feel very unspiritual. My wife is always telling me how unspiritual she feels. Well, she may feel unspiritual, but her husband is the one who is unspiritual too many times.

Spirituality comes out in different people in different ways. I personally don't believe my wife is unspiritual. Just because she doesn't sort of glow with the glow that some women have, uh, and doesn't float like some that I prefer to run away from, doesn't mean that she's not spiritual.

Different people are growing at a different rate of speed. Different people demonstrate their spirituality in different ways. Be careful of judging your life partner's spirituality.

Unselfishness comes out in the littlest things, the littlest things. And men tend to get strong-minded about little things and become overly demanding on the wife. The way the food is served.

I can remember a particular home, I got to be very careful in some of these things, where if the food was not, you know, really hot, when it came out on the table, if you know, maybe he was even late, it's his fault. But the food wasn't hot. I know some husbands, the man, the plate's got to be hot, the food has to be steaming, the soup has to be jumping out of the platter, and otherwise the wife gets stung.

And husbands, when we sting our wives with our tongue, when we say something that's unkind and unloving, we sin. If she stings us back, she has sinned. Two sinners don't make a saint.

Jesus alone can do that. But fussiness and demanding our own little way, often creates incredible tension within marriage. I believe one of the key things in marriage, and we're going to come into this later, is being a little more easygoing.

You may think one of the greatest miracles in my life was being filled with the Spirit, or experiencing the Cross, or going into Mexico. One of the greatest things that God did in my life was to teach me to be more easygoing. I am five times more easygoing than when I started out in the race many, many, many years ago, 21 or 22.

I just learned to, when the problems come and things are going wrong, inwardly I've got my own inner foxhole of peace, and I crawl in and say, look, you know, I'm going to do my best, and after that, forget it, I'm going to sleep. Or I'm going to go relax. Worry, tension, anxiety, getting up and uptight, increasing the blood pressure, is not going to resolve any of the problems.

I've had terrific arguments with my wife, most of them my fault, because I've been too strong about things that are not that important. You cannot imagine how fanatical I was, I'm praying that I'm still being delivered, about money and expenditure. How my wife tolerated me the first 10 years is just, it blows my mind to think of it.

No woman here could be married to anybody as fanatic and tight about money than me. I won't even go into detail, it'll frighten you. You may not come back tomorrow night.

And God had to break me. God had to show me that she should have just a little money, and better do anything she wants with it. Now I say that, it's easy to say that.

Then, after I give her that little bit of money, and she goes out and she blows it, and I see what she's purchased, I get, you know, really, I just, I feel a whole work is caving in. I actually thought the movement was finished. I don't know why you keep laughing.

Because I thought this, if I can't control my own wife, if she is breaking the principles of the movement, then who else is going to keep the principles? Then I thought, no one is keeping the principles anyway, the

whole thing is screwing, I'm leaving. You may think that's funny, but I went into the longest depression in my Christian life. In fact, Frank Fortunato here was my counselor once at one of these depressions on the ship, and I went to Frank Fortunato, and I tore O.M. from limb to limb, and I can do it.

I know enough nonsense about this movement to write a whole encyclopedia. And Frank was so good, you know, these musicians, they're always good to talk to. He's going to listen, I think it scared him a bit, since we were in Ceylon, and I was supposed to be in charge of this massive spiritual invasion.

I was in this depression, and oh my, I've just seen again and again, these little things that I get upset about. What is that in comparison to the carnal state of mind that I get into over it? And the silly things I say. And I just thank God for Calvary Road, you know, I just never got into bed at night without repenting to my wife.

I just dare not do that. I just don't believe in getting in bed, going to sleep anywhere without repenting, and she's just been so forgiving. I go to her, look, I didn't mean that, I'm sorry, I don't know what something must be bothering me.

Forgive me, and she cries a little sometimes, and I cry sometimes, and back to Calvary we go. It's a long road to be unselfish, but please don't give up. If I can keep going, 17 years of marriage, there's hope for everybody here tonight.

I am not just saying that either. Number two, learning to be patient. Learning to be patient.

Colossians 1 11, what a challenging verse that is to our hearts. Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience, long-suffering with joyfulness. Oh, I don't know how to even explain how hard I've found it to be to learn patience.

You know, and sometimes when we lose our temper, we feel very ashamed. I remember in Spain, my son was only one year of age. I never believed I would do such a thing.

He kept crying, and crying, and crying, and crying, and playing on my nerves. I don't know what I was trying to do. My wife wasn't there.

I kept crying. I, you know, I held him, and juggled him, and all these different things, and I just remember screaming and yelling completely out of control at my little child. One.

What could he do? And, oh, I felt so terrible after that. I repented. Of course, he didn't understand that, and I realized then the potential of a man, even who knows Christ personally.

I do. I know some of you, if you have certain viewpoints, probably having your doubts by now, but I know that a man who knows Jesus Christ, if he gets in the flesh, he is capable of some pretty horrible things, and women is the same thing. We need to cultivate patience, and OM training this summer is a perfect place for that.

Some of you think you're really patient. You just wait. We've got some programs and some plans that will match anybody's self-control.

Add to your faith patience. That may not be the correct order, but it's all in that list. Patience.

Long-suffering. We need to study 1 Corinthians chapter 13, and until you know more and more patience, and we do grow in this area, I'm astounded at my own growth, though I still have terrific ground to take, but the more you grow in this area, the more God is going to be able to use you in people's lives, the more you're going to be a blessing in your home instead of a hindrance, and your children are going to pick up from you. And it's deadly.

Billy Graham, in his book, *Seven Deadly Sins*, speaks about the danger of losing one's temper. Too many men, and many women as well, are excusing their temper. I believe one of the reasons I'm still going on despite my weaknesses is I refuse to excuse any sin.

I have always, by God's mercy, repented, and I found that the more I repented and dealt quickly with it, the less it happened. It's been many, many, many years since I've lost my temper, as I used to. Now my battle is more with irritability, quick words, but it's a beautiful thing.

God can change us. We are on the road to holiness. It's not just a matter of sinning and repenting and sinning and repenting.

We grow. God gives us strength. He changes us, changes us.

Some of us grow quicker than others. Different temperaments have different problems. My life has been greatly helped in the past two years by Tim LaHaye's books, *Spirit-Controlled Temperament*, *Understanding Myself*, *Understanding My Wife*.

I couldn't understand my wife in a number of areas. She was so incredibly small, I couldn't even walk down the street with her. She was always lapsing back.

Plus, she's never joined in my jogging program. And many areas. Of course, it all sounds very funny here.

It's not really funny at all. How's your patience? How's your patience with your husband? Jill Rinnick's book, *Written for Women*, has been a great help to our women in OM. We don't have copies here.

Just remember the name, Jill Rinnick, the book she wrote for women. There's a number of similar books written for men. God can use these books.

You know, one of the great obstacles in marriage is pride, and some of us are too proud to think we can learn something from a book. And we read a book, we find one thing we don't like. I always find things I don't like in books.

Some of the books I recommend are things I don't like. The things in this book I don't agree with at all. I probably sold more copies than almost anybody in the world.

I'm just so excited about that book. So don't let some little quirk in a book hinder you. The most controversial and therefore the most fast-selling book on this subject, of course, is *Total Woman*.

People are really angry about that book. One pastor was waving, he saw it in a book table. If my wife becomes a total woman, I'll total her.

But a Christian should be able to review a book and accept some things and reject others. And say, well, on this point, I think she's exaggerating. On this point, maybe that's true with her husband.

It certainly wouldn't be with mine. I tell you, if, you know, if my wife started to do some of those things, I think she'd gone right out of her mind. And she's very liberated, I can assure you.

So let's not let our pride hinder us from learning from others. It's very important. Thirdly, we've got to learn to accept others.

This is what I had to do in regard to my wife. This is what she had to do with me. I'm sure she's had some real disappointments with me.

She doesn't seem to say that, but certainly there must be. Some marriages have more disappointments than others. You cannot always evaluate your marriage by comparing it with someone else.

There are all kinds of couples. I live in a home with another family downstairs, but the family who's usually living there, my faithful secretary, who by the way is playing the organ, he's living down there with his new wife, just married. But the young couple who usually lives there, Peter Conlon and his dear wife, they may hardly ever, if ever, have any kind of argument.

It's just, you know, they're just not the fighting couple. I'm sure they must have some little disagreements, but of course they've been only married a couple years. No doubt the future will have some new events, I don't know.

I in no way justify any impatience, but on the other hand I know that with my temperament I have to be willing to accept that there are going to be some disagreements in the home. And I feel that talking out disagreements and then accepting one another, realizing you're not going to agree on every point, is very important. As long as eventually you come back to the place of repentance and acceptance and brokenness.

I think some women get sick because they never blow off any steam. It's true, if you had maybe a deeper, more mature walk with the Lord, you would find a total answer in your communion, your fellowship, your praise and thanksgiving. But if you're not finding that yet, why fake it? And bottle everything up.

And then eventually illness, nervous breakdown, or just some complete wild temper explosion. There should be room in marriage for confrontation. I am in favor of confrontation and I'm happy to discover a new book has been written, I think by Augsburg, on the subject of the importance of confrontation in marriage.

And this leads us to a deeper commitment as we talk things out. I've had to counsel couple after couple with resentment and bitterness against one another. Imagine a so-called mature man, he may be even leading a business or be working in an office.

And many times we wouldn't dare do in our business what we do in our homes. We know we would blow the corporation right in two and get fired. And we'll do around our home what we'll never do in our office.

There's an interesting book out about that as well. Confrontation can lead to a deeper understanding and a deeper commitment, but there needs to be as the foundation, acceptance. Same on your team, you can confront your leader in a loving way.

I've had an interesting day here today, few confrontations. That's of course one of the reasons I'm here. I'm the last stop, the buck stops on my desk.

And today has been a very interesting day, I can assure you. But it's wonderful. And I believe with all my heart, we learn through communication, don't bottle things up.

That doesn't mean you blurt out everything. Only a fool does that according to the book of Proverbs. And I try to guard my lips around the home.

I pray the prayer of the psalmist. Lord God put a doorman at my lips. Guard my tongue.

Guard my tongue. Ephesians 1.6, we are accepted in the beloved. The fact that God knows all about us and accepts us and loves us shows that we can love and accept our partner.

Stop trying to remake your partner into your ideal little dream. That's not God's will. It's not God's way.

Acceptance. And that acceptance needs to be communicated. Sometimes as we go on in marriage, we presume that we love one another, we don't tell each other so much anymore that we love one another.

What if after years of marriage, you've had the glow of romantic love, you couldn't wait to be home with each other at night? What if suddenly this disappears? What if suddenly this, you know, this enthusiasm, this glow, this feeling that was so beautiful, perhaps you had it from the first day you met her, suddenly it disappears? What are you going to do? Eventually sit down with your wife and say, well, you know, I don't really love you anymore. You know, you can laugh, but men actually do that. Sometimes in the name of honesty, and women do it.

And that is one of the greatest mistakes you can make in marriage. That is to deny the commitment factor in marriage. Marriage is a commitment.

I love my wife. I am giving myself for her as Christ gave himself for me, and I want to do that the rest of my life. Therefore, it would be impossible for me to ever say I do not love her.

Without total straightforward sin, and a denial of my commitment to her, and a refusal to obey God, and turning my back on about 100 scriptures, and I'm not about to do that. The emotion of marriage goes up and down for some people. It does for me.

Even worse, we have husbands, and sometimes women, who end up telling their wife that they've fallen in love with someone else. They kept it quiet for some years. Maybe some months, finally, they blurted out, this girl, you know, I just, I just love her.

She's everything I ever dreamed about. It's everything I ever wanted. I've actually counseled people with those very words.

Then had to go and talk to the wife. Broken, crushed, destroyed, at least on the way. I believe, without question, that all relationships, all infatuation, outside of your marriage, if you are married, is sin firstly against God.

Firstly, you are saying, God, I do not love you, and I do not love Jesus, because Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. And one of his commandments is faithfulness in marriage to the end, for better and for worse. I am not speaking this way to judge people who have had divorce or problems in the past.

That is not my concern. I'm laying foundations for the future. I know life is complicated.

I know many people who, who would never have had a divorce, if anyone had taught from the basic principles that we're talking about tonight. And so I'm the last one to point fingers. And in our work, we have tried to be very merciful, loving, and, and filled with grace toward those who have had marital problems, especially, of course, before their conversion, but even afterward, when they were babes in Christ, or there were other difficulties along life's road.

I believe this basic acceptance of one another, and true love linked with commitment, will stand the test of other infatuations. I am a man who is easily infatuated. I started going with girls at the age of six.

Actually, four. I was in love, I thought I was in love at four. I found that out later, because before I went to school, which is five years of age, I was so infatuated with this particular girl, she's much older than me, of course, that I went outside the school, because she was in school, and I waited, and waited for her to come to the pencil sharpener, and I was four years of age.

So, man, you know, you know, maybe you think I need a psychiatrist. Well, I've got the master psychologist, Jesus, and he's really helped me. By the time I was sixteen, there were about thirty-two different girls.

Now, I never committed adultery or fornication with any of them. Thanks be to God, but just about everything else. But incredible infatuation.

That was a major thing. There were many big things in my life, money, sports, but this was the arch triumph of all. Women.

And to this day, I still can't understand why God made it this way. Forgive my English. I can't understand why women are so attractive.

And, you know, why couldn't the thing be a little lower pressure? For, anyway, I accept it, and I'm plodding on, with all guns aimed in the right direction. By the age of sixteen, it was getting pretty intense, and God just came in and brought me to Himself, and one of the first things He showed me, after three or four more mess-ups during my first year of conversion, leading girls to Christ, falling in love the same night, necking all night in front of the Washington Memorial in Washington, D.C. Not really the way to go about personal evangelism, but I learned the hard way. I learned the hard way.

And I knew that in my situation, that I had to break it all off for at least a couple of years. All of it. The dating, the necking, the petting, all of it, for at least a couple of years.

And though I don't believe this is true of everybody, I had to say, God, I am too mixed up in this. You have got to really bring my wife in a miraculous way. I have, I will not be able to find her.

She's quite capable of being totally infatuated, three, four, five, six, all at once. All of them were driving me crazy. You may think that's a problem.

It is. But, uh, I cannot express how much God helped me in this errand. And the answer was a deep love for Jesus, and a total commitment to His work, and a conviction that God's word was true.

And for several years, until I was 20 or 21, when I met the girl, the only girl I ever dated again, and she became my wife, and was obviously God's choice for me. A story that, uh, if we get in tonight, you'll never leave here. And I just so strongly believe that love, commitment, communication, together, is the answer.

And I hope you understand the importance of acceptance. Accepting one another. Everything I've said here, I've said to my wife.

She knows all about me. And yet, through this, from the day of my wedding, in fact, from the day I made that commitment, to this day, those hands have never touched another woman, unless I helped to pick up her purse or something, I don't remember. God has kept me.

I say that not as a boast. Don't misunderstand me. I say that to give hope to some of you who tremble at the thought of a possible temptation.

God can keep you. And some of your backgrounds you know are far worse than mine. It wasn't just necking and petting.

I know what's happening today, and you really feel bad about it. But remember God's word, though your sin be as scarlet, it shall be made as white as snow. And maybe even in your marriage, there's been some unfaithfulness, and you hardly could give the testimony that I have just given.

And perhaps I can only give that testimony because somehow, in God's mercy, I saw these principles when I was 17 and 18 and 19, and I built my marriage on these principles. And I only saw those principles because, at that age, I totally committed my whole life to God, willing, even more than willing, to be single, and never, ever be married or touch a girl the rest of my life. I believe many of us, as single people, have to at least be willing to go single through life, though it may seem like the most wild, impossible thing that we could ever talk about.

It was only really when I was brought to the cross, in this deeper way, that I came into more victory and power to resist these temptations that come upon us in this crazy world. Fourthly, we need to learn to break and bend. 1 Peter 5, 6. Humble yourself.

That's what repentance is. Humble yourself unto the mighty hand of God. Marriage is one of God's greatest schools for humility.

I've learned more there than most places, and I have a long way to go. Sometimes I wonder if I even know the definition of the word, but it's a wonderful thing to humble yourself in front of your wife. It's even more interesting to humble yourself in front of your children, and get off your big, high and mighty throne as the big king of the house, or the queen of the house, and acknowledge that you're a sinner, and acknowledge that you make mistakes, and acknowledge that you need the prayers of your own children, and you need their cooperation and their help, or you're not going to make it.

I tell you, if my children start really going bazook, I don't think I'm going to make it. You know, I've just made it clear to them, we need them, all three of them. And if they want to take over as vice president, and whatever else, well, we'll at least discuss it.

And we found our children willing to pitch in. Children are willing to pitch in when they see there's a need, but some of us go around as if we don't have any needs. What an absolutely ridiculous way to live.

Until God can break you and expose you as a needy person, you're not going to experience the grace that you need. Humble yourself into the mighty hand of God, and He will lift you up. Adaptability, flexibility, bending, breaking, absolutely essential.

And the same is true on your team. With your leader, you're going to get, some of you, a leader that you don't like. Some of you have already realized that I'm a leader, and you're finding me difficult.

That is perfectly normal. Maybe I would find you difficult. Wouldn't mean a thing as far as loving you.

When I find someone difficult, someone who turns me off, it doesn't happen much anymore. I get so turned on by people, sometimes I can barely get to sleep thinking about it. Because to me, people are wonderful.

The weakest person who knows Jesus Christ is a beautiful picture compared to some of the people I've worked with in the gutters of sin and sickness. We all need more love for God's people, and we need to learn to work with people who don't attract us. And that's going to prepare us for marriage, because sooner or later, your life partner is going to do something that turns you off, that gets you upset.

That's normal, that's as normal as eating. And what you need to do when someone turns you off, is let Jesus turn you on. And to know what it is to show love when you feel like it or when you don't feel like it.

I believe it's more meaningful when you don't feel like it. That's where discipline comes in. To me, that's where real love comes in, the kind of love God had for me, so he sent his son.

Sometimes our marriage partners may get sick. For the past two weeks, just before coming here, my wife was very sick. In a hospital, major surgery, 15 days, hemorrhage on the second day, nurses running all over the place.

When I went, and I'm being very honest in this, when I went to the hospital bed, because, I don't know, I think it's because of hospital environment, I could find even less emotion than I normally have toward my wife. I found the whole thing very hard. Seeing her there, she looked weak and different, and I made a terrible mistake.

Most of the time, I did pretty good. I just showed her love and ministered. I went to her every day.

One time there, my guard was down, and I was there sitting by the bed, and she was trying to talk to me, and she's so in love, and at this moment, very depressed, she was on some kind of machine to empty her bladder, and I just fell. I just sinned, and she said something to me. She says, what's wrong? I said, I'm bored.

I'm bored here. And of course, it just hurt her. Why should I be bored in her presence? And didn't I really love her? Didn't I enjoy being with her in the hospital, in this moment? Of course, the moment the word came out of my mouth, I'm bored.

This is one of my problems. I do get bored easy. I get too many things on my mind, and I can't get my wife the attention sometimes I should.

My wife has an incredible problem. This is my problem. She talks to me in a loving, wonderful way.

I don't hear anything. She stops finally after a minute. She says, are you listening? Oh, sure, sure, yeah.

You were just talking about the cat, weren't you? No, I was talking about the children. Well, yeah, I heard you. I just got a little mixed up.

Of course, I just took my wife from the bed, and I don't remember what I did, but I just apologized. I said, well, I wasn't really that bored. I was just in a bad mood and had a hard day, and she understood that.

She then understood I didn't really mean that. We all say things we don't mean, and women, please understand, your husband is bound to say, if he's got anything in him, apart from sawdust, he's gonna say some things to you that hurt you. Many times he will not mean it most of the time.

A lot of times we don't know what we mean. We're depressed. We're confused.

It's been a hard day, and that's why a woman needs a lot of love and a lot of patience, and praise God for godly women who are so patient, patient with the likes of me. We've got to bend. We've got to break.

Fifthly, we've got to learn to love. Some people think love just comes. We fill with the Holy Spirit, and after that, it's just all fruit.

What do you think you are? Some kind of a wind-up toy? Some kind of a computer? You're only going to love as you want to love, and you're going to love as much as you want to love. It's not just the feeling that we fall into as Walter Trobush in his tremendous book says. It's a feeling to be learned.

There's nothing wrong with feeling when it's under God's control, and it's in the right direction. Remember that. And when it's not under God's control, and it's in the wrong direction, it's got to be dealt with by the power of the Lord Jesus, and by the cross, and by the disciplined life.

Think of verses like Ephesians 5, 25. Let me read it quickly. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.

As the wife honors and submits to her husband, the husband loves the wife, and it is an unstoppable combination. Sixth, we've got to learn to discipline our life. That's why we're pushing this book.

That has really been the salvation of our marriage. Discipline. I determined many years, several years before I was married, that whatever the cost, I must discipline my life.

That has saved me again and again. I walked the lonely streets of Paris away from my wife. An incredibly slick-looking woman came up to me and just about had me by the arm.

I don't know what happens at moments like that. You almost lose your mind. The curiosity of it.

Many men fall into sex sin because it's wrong. They don't really want it. Not that much, but it's wrong.

It's hidden. It's dark. There's something in our old nature that likes to explore.

Why do people get into perversion? Why is there such an increase in pornography? There's something in man, and sometimes in women as well, that likes to go into the unknown. I recently read a case history of a man who could never enjoy sex with his wife. Nothing.

It didn't mean anything. It was blah. But when he did sex and had sex, when it was illegal, when it was wrong, he enjoyed it in an incredible way.

How can that be? Because man is lost. He has a fallen nature. And I tell you, we cannot play around in this area.

And that means discipline. I cannot tell you the temptations that I have gone through these years, five months a year, on the road, away from my wife. And Jesus Christ has kept me every time.

I'll only share one. A bus station, Washington D.C., away from my wife, 1967, on the way to preach at the biggest meeting in the history of my ministry, the Urbana Convention. The main speaker responsible for giving the invitation.

I was in a bus station in Washington, and I saw a girl, and for one minute I said I'd sell my soul for that girl. She seemed to be the most attractive creature I had ever looked at. She was alone.

She looked lonely. She was just sitting there, and I was on my way. But instead of going to her, I went into a phone booth.

That's my emergency station. When I know the heat is on, the devil's really moving in with 68 demons, I go right for the phone booth. If you could lock the door, I would, but you can't.

I get in the phone booth, and I got on the phone, and I just talked to God. I said, Lord, I'm finished. I'm weak.

I'm weak. Do something. Do something.

And I just cried, and at that time you're being pulled apart, pulled apart, pulled apart. Who will know? Be a man! You know, all kinds of lies of hell come into your mind at that moment, and somehow I made it. That's where I thank God for my prayer partners.

I got in my bus. I was headed for Mexico, and only discovered later on, the girl was sitting behind me the entire night, I went to sleep and woke up, and the temptation was gone. Well, I hope you don't get in too many temptations like that, but the Bible says the wicked woman hunts for the precious light, and I just know there is keeping power, but I know that I would not have made it in that bus station that night, if also I had not done my part in learning God's way, and God's way is that you learn to say no, and if you learn to say no to little things, food, use of time, little pleasures, if you learn to discipline yourself in little things, when the big temptation comes, you'll be able to say no.

Now, saying no is a lot easier. All kinds of weird situations, and I've become very negative in this area. No! No to the body, yes to Jesus.

No to this and that, yes to my beautiful, wonderful, loyal wife. In the hospital, out of the hospital, with legs and arms, without legs and arms, whatever may happen to her, and all kinds of things can happen in life, I am committed to her, and I give all of you as a witness, if anything else ever happens, chase me from one end of the planet, I've got at least 150 OM leaders that will, so you can join them, but by God's grace, it's commitment to the end, and I want to ask you men, tonight, to make a new commitment to your wife. Whatever the cost, you're loving her, you're sticking with her, you're following her, you're going to be God's choice and God's blessing in her life.

And women, a new and fresh commitment to your husband. I know that women get wild temptations as well, because my wife and I have been in counseling of that kind. Incredible things.

Women, home alone, husband away, somebody arrives at the door. This thing, that thing. There is more immorality, most people know this, if they've done any studying, among married people than among single

people.

And I believe we all, tonight, would do well to make a deeper commitment. It means discipline, it means work. I went to Ken Taylor, the man who translated the Living Letters, Living Bible, long before that happened.

I was at Moody Bible Institute, I went up to him for marriage counseling, before my marriage. And Ken said, what's, what are some of your philosophies about marriage? And I said, well, I'm not sure, but I believe one thing, it's, it's going to be a discipline. And I was incredibly in love.

It happened at First Sight, I went up to rent a Moody Science film, and there she was, in charge of the films. Just like that. Of course, I was convinced this wasn't from the Lord, because she was too attractive.

I thought, well, this, this, this couldn't be. I had this warped idea that eventually I was going to be forced to marry something that, you know, looked like a crocodile on a furlough. And, uh, but, uh, God worked it all out.

Of course, all of you know that love is blind. I've got some fellas tell me about their attractive wife, and when I looked at the wife, I thought, dear me, the guy's gone completely blind. But that's the way love is.

Of course, it fluctuates, doesn't it? Just a few more points, and then I know some of you want to go home. Relax. We've got to learn to relax.

We've got to learn to conquer worry and fear. 1 John 4.18 says, love casteth out fear. Fear is a tremendous, tremendous enemy of marriage.

It brings panic into the home. Some people, judging outwardly, would think that I might be stronger than my wife. Actually, in many ways, she's stronger than me.

Recently, when I thought, I, I thought the ship was in trouble in the Bay of Biscay, I collapsed completely under fear. It's not easy to tell this. It's more difficult than to tell than even my lust problem.

I was scared stiff. My whole body was shaking as thoughts went through my mind that Lagos had sunk in the Bay of Biscay. There was no radio communicating, communication for 24 hours, and I, I knew on one hand it was ridiculous to think this way, but I could not stop having fear.

Have you ever been gripped in fear like that until your body actually shook? And I just curled up in the bed. It was in the morning next to my wife, just, just shaking, and I think crying, and just poured it out, shared it with her. She was more stable at that time than I was, and it took me till noon when we made radio contact with the Lagos.

It was in this terrible storm, 40-foot waves ripped part of the roof off the ship, toppled all the bookshelves, 90% seasick, though for a ship of this kind, that's nothing. Every, the big joke is that Verler was mainly in the storm. Well, you know, when you're in a work of this size with 300 vehicles on the road, you've already buried some of your best friends, killed in motor accidents.

Fear can grip you in a way you cannot explain, and fear is one of the most powerful forces that can make a marriage. As you cling together in that time of fear, when you feel you can't make it, and crazy things are happening, or it can break your marriage as you panic and do something foolish, and just one foolish mistake at a moment of crisis sometimes can destroy a whole marriage, as the devil builds onto it, and

adds onto it, and it never ends. Well, cast without fear.

Let's not pretend we don't have any fears. Let's not exaggerate our fears, and let's learn to deal with them. Casting every care upon him, for he careth for you.

Think of verses like Isaiah 30, 15. For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, in returning in rest shall ye be saved. In quietness, in confidence, shall be your strength, and ye would not.

Yes, I was exhausted. My mind was beginning to not really function properly. I got sleepy.

I made it through lunch. I talked to a few more people. I wanted to go to the worship meeting, but I knew I couldn't do it.

I went back to where I'm staying. I went out in the back garden, and I just looked at the green, the trees. I slept for 20 minutes, and dictated letters for an hour and 20 minutes, and I felt 100 percent when I came back for the evening meeting.

We have got to know how to relax. Find some way to relax, but you've got to learn how to draw into some kind of boxhole, and refuel, and the same is true in marriage. I think it's good at times for the marriage partners to be away, at least for a couple of days.

I think it's good. We've got to trust one another, and when we come back often, there's a greater appreciation, and sometimes a renewed zest in the marriage. It isn't normal to be away from our wives for a long period of time, but if the world is going to be evangelized, such things are necessary.

Billy Graham is only one of many examples of this, but no man should presume on this. He must know it's God's calling to be separated. It must not be a cop-out because he's finding it difficult at home.

I have more of a magnetism toward my home and my wife than ever before in my life. I'm not emotionally right anymore when I'm away from her. Some of you probably noticed it.

Just not, you know, just not quite all that I should be. Of course, the Lord gives grace. Learning to relax, how important in our marriage.

Number eight, another way linked with that, is we've got to give time to our wives. My wife was so appreciative just before I left. I took a whole day, just her, just her, forget the office, let the phones ring, the telegrams, tell everybody to go, you know, whatever, and just be with her, take her out for a meal, treat her like a queen.

You know how many years it took me to get faith and courage and get some of the blightedness out of my head to buy my wife flowers for the first time? Sixteen and a half years. I just bought flowers for the first time when she was in the hospital. I was avidly, fanatically anti-flowers.

Now, I picked flowers, free flowers. One time, of course, I thought these, these, uh, I thought these flowers were beautiful. They, they smell so nice, little, little, little yellow ones.

I got them off the guy's lawn. But my wife is so wonderful, when I brought her those flowers, she thought it was such a beautiful expression of my love. Buy your wife flower, buy her a box of chocolates, do something but minister, and, uh, it will, it will make a difference.

It's true, as I speak, I'm limited because I'm a man, to some degree, speaking from a man's viewpoint, though I've tried to bring in some things that are important, indirectly, for women to know about this. We've got to take time to be with each other. It doesn't cost much money.

We go for walks. We love to go for walks. When's the last time you took your wife for a walk? Out in the woods or somewhere, holding hands.

When's the last time you hold your wife? She hasn't got gangrene over the years. And what a beautiful thing it is to see couples who are a little bit elderly but still have some affection. I'm the anti-public affection man, you know.

This, this bothers my wife actually. Another one of the 20 areas we have a little difference, you know. She likes to hold hands in public, and, uh, of course, we husbands can be incredibly stupid in this area.

Number eight, share and open up. Walking in the light. Confessing your faults, James 15, 16.

Walking in the light, 1 John 1, 6 through 10. How beautiful it is to share. I tell you, it's so meaningful for me to have a woman that I can share everything with.

Not that I always just open immediately up on every single thing. Sharing must go together with love, and everything must go together with a little bit of wisdom. Sharing, opening up, is important.

I know this is harder for some people, but we've got to do it, and it's beautiful. I am speaking some of these things from having been involved in counseling over the years, hundreds of people, and I've seen a lot of problems when people repress wives becoming bitter against their husbands, husbands against their wives. What does the Bible say? No root of bitterness should be allowed in your heart.

He may be hurt you. You can't live on this planet without being hurt. Stop being so naive, childish, or whatever else.

And the ones we love the most, sometimes we can hurt the most. Let us not fall short of repenting when we do. Ninth, we want to get this to the end, learn to embrace the cross.

Luke 9, 23. Anyone wants to follow Christ, they must deny self, take up the cross daily. And it's a wonderful thing to have a marriage that's built around the cross.

Both repenting, both acknowledging your failures, both accepting the cleansing blood, and receiving total forgiveness. He knows all about us in and out of marriage, and he loves us still. It's never too late.

It's never too late to the man who is willing to embrace the cross. To the man or the woman who's unwilling, sometimes it seems it gets too late. And then lastly, we've got to learn to redeem the time and be good organizers.

We want to train you as you come into O.M. on how to organize. Keep a proper notebook, keep a record of your accounts, handle money properly, because money brings many difficulties into marriage. Losing track of it, and when you lose track of that which hardly existed in the first place, you can get in a very interesting situation.

The disciplined life should touch the area of details. Some people say, don't get bogged down with details. You cannot live without being concerned with details.

And you've got to learn to think. You say, you may say, well, you're a slow thinker. You're not very well organized.

That's not your gift. Well, start learning, because sooner or later, if you don't develop a little bit of giftedness in organization, in details, in proper use of time, in handling money, taking care of the home, the taxes, the mortgage, then you're going to drive your wife crazy. This is why I believe in training.

I don't believe these things fall out of the heavens. I don't believe they teach enough of this kind of thing in our universities or our Bible colleges. Practical living.

And you're going to learn some of it on OM if you stick around. We'll probably suffer in the process. But we want to teach you how to organize, how to have an ordered life, a disciplined life in the area of details, everything dealing with these OM vehicles.

This is important. We don't want anybody killed this summer by negligence or foolishness, lack of organization, checking the oil, checking the water, checking the tires, checking the brakes. And we've got 300 vehicles out there that you're going to take care of this summer, aren't you? And in some ways, taking care of a wife has some similarities.

I won't go into that tonight. But we need to learn to take care of each other in the practical realm. This is where my wife has been so good.

She's so practical and much more ordered than I am. I'm a bit of a, you know, a bit scatterbrained. I lose my Bible here.

I've lost my hat in Minnesota last time I was here. Still haven't found it if any of you have seen it. And she's just so ordered.

And as you press on in your marriage, you're going to discover that she's different. You know, one little comparison I made some time ago, just the way my wife and I pack our suitcases. She starts days in advance.

She hates suitcases. But for Jesus, she'll pack them. And so for Jesus, she's packing her suitcase.

Everything is neat. Incredible. She's got to organize this bottle, everything.

You can take a picture of it. The case just closes perfect. When I pack my suitcase, I start 25 minutes ahead, unless she's already done it for me.

And then we get in a fight. So I usually pack it myself. I just grab whatever needed books, clothing, underwear.

I usually throw it in there, jump on top of the hood. Well, I think perhaps this is enough for one night. But I believe that basic to marriage also is a sense of humor.

I think most of you are doing all right on that. But really, to be able to laugh at yourself, to be able to laugh with your children when they're laughing at you, to be able to laugh at some of the crazy things that happen in the church, because sometimes the church and what church we're going to go to, and what we think of what the pastor just said, and all this becomes a major argument over the meal time. And the worst thing to have for Sunday dinner is roast preacher, or an argument.

And yet sometimes families get into a terrific bind on religious convictions. And the wife has gone on a religious tangent, the husband's all upset about it. And that's another area we've got to be patient.

Loving, understanding, this is to me what Christianity is all about. It's incredibly practical, very down to earth. And I'm convinced if you will build your marriage and your future on these basic principles, and many more you'll get from the word and from these books, then you will run and keep on running.

And you will be a committed couple that God can use to bless other couples. Because isn't that part of God's purpose? Not mainly our happiness, our little thing, and are we the perfect couple? But know that our lives may be a blessing to others. And some of the very problems we have, we'll be able to counsel others better, because we'll be able to relate to their problem.

And we'll be able to understand the struggle they're going into. So let's not think of this just as ourselves and our own happy home, but let's think of this as others, others, others, giving to others. And it's a beautiful thing when we do that.

Let's pray. Oh Lord, I in some ways wish I could give this over again and leave out a few things and add a few other things. But Lord, you know, if nothing else, this just comes from my heart.

I really want you just to bless these people. I just want to see marriages brought closer together. Moms and dads, sons and daughters, just want to see teams functioning in the energy of your Holy Spirit.

We've looked at so many verses and we believe they contain the truth. And just help us to learn from this experience. Deliver us also, Lord, from being too idealistic in our marriages and naive and regimented.

All these things that try to put their ugly head in and rip our homes apart. Lord, there's much more on this subject. Teach us more as we look into your word, as we read books, and as we dine us self.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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