

The Local Church That God Blesses - the New Testament Home in a Permissive Society

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of New Testament Christianity, consecration, and waiting upon God in building a successful marriage and avoiding immorality.

Duration: 1:07:10

Scripture: Acts 1:8, Acts 2:42

Topics: "New Testament Church", "Christian Marriage"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the significance of the local church and the necessity of building New Testament homes in a permissive society. He discusses the importance of being filled with the Spirit, the principles of marriage, and the need for strong, Christ-centered relationships within families. Brandon highlights that every Christian home is under attack and stresses the importance of maintaining biblical standards in marriage. He outlines the preparation, permanence, and principles of marriage, urging couples to embody a Christ-church relationship as a witness to the world. Ultimately, he calls for a return to functional New Testament Christianity to experience God's blessings.

Transcript

Now we are discussing together the subject, the local church that God blesses. And so far we've looked at the objective, Acts 1 and Acts 2, and we have seen that every spiritual movement is an endeavour to have restored to us the principle and the power of those great churches. And we have seen that the first step in restoration is for us to get back to functional New Testament Christianity.

And therefore we have looked at Romans 6 and we have seen in that chapter that it's vital, if we are going to have blessing, to understand what it means to be dead to sin and alive unto God. And we notice quite quickly that baptism symbolises it, the cross proves it, the resurrection confirms it, faith appropriates it, and a yielded or consecrated life expresses it. And how vital it is for us to be in the good of that vital chapter.

Then we have seen the positive side of consecration, and that is a spirit-filled life. And last night we looked at what does it mean to be full of the Spirit. And we traced the word fullness through the Ephesian epistle, and we could see that it had attached to it the idea of sovereignty, then authority, and then maturity.

And we noticed that the emphasis on maturity was the major meaning of the word fullness, to come into full maturity. Then we asked the question, has every Christian the Holy Spirit? And we noticed that the epistle is very clear, all the epistles saying emphatically yes. Then we asked another question, is every Christian aware of the Holy Spirit? And the answer to that one is no.

What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? And then we looked at the secret of fullness. It is when a group of people, or if you like an individual, can address the Lord as Sovereign Lord God. And when we come under the total sovereignty of the Lord God, be sure of this, you are filled with the Spirit.

Then we looked at the steps toward fullness. How is the fullness procured? And first of all we noticed there must be a hunger, secondly exposure, thirdly consecration, and fourthly a simple act of faith in claiming what God has promised and commanded. The expression be filled with the Spirit has attached to it four verbs, and the first one is an imperative and it's a command.

Every Christian should be filled with the Spirit. And then we looked at the evidences of a Spirit filled life. First of all Christ becomes real to that person, secondly the person should be full of love, and according to the exegesis of Ephesians 5, we should be addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

There should be singing in our hearts, praise and joy, and then lastly there should be submission one to another. Now we're going a step further tonight, and we're going to look at the subject of building a New Testament home in a permissive society. May I say immediately before I read the scripture, that every single Christian home is under attack, more than we realize.

There are certain people known as Satanists, and all over the world they are praying to their demons that Christian homes might be broken up. Now that is not an exaggeration, that is a fact. And unfortunately when we lower the standard, we bring into the church sin.

And therefore we must never lower our standards, but constantly we must uphold what the bible says about marriage, especially the New Testament. And one of the most beautiful things that we shall ever see, and perhaps one of the greatest witnesses for God in this dark society, will be a husband and wife living a Christ church relationship. And I trust that this might be a blessing to us all.

You see we cannot have New Testament churches with power, unless we've got New Testament homes. You cannot tell a man's spirituality on the platform, but you can tell his spirituality in the house. And that's where he lives, and that's where he reveals his spirituality.

Now let's look at Ephesians 5, and we'll start reading from verse 18 to the end of the chapter. Now I shall turn you to a number of scriptures tonight, because after all you don't want to hear my thoughts, but what the bible says about this Christian home in a permissive society. Verse 18 of Ephesians 5. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour, or the preserver, or the deliverer, or the defender 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. Now I know that is the spoken word, but I would say emphatically that that does not refer to baptism, but to the spoken word which to us is the written word.

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

For no man ever yet heated his own flesh, but notice this, 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. And for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they too 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. And the Lord will bless to us that first reading of his word.

Now in the Bible you will notice that there are two kinds of marriages, and to put it very simply there are good marriages and there are bad marriages. In fact if you go through the Old Testament you will find that there are references to good marriages and there are references to bad marriages, and if you add them up it's about 50 50. And you will notice even among Christians that many of us have married in the Lord but not of the Lord, and therefore among Christians if we were honest there are some very poor examples of marriage.

And I see a number of young people and we all long for them to have a spirit filled marriage. Now if you feel that your marriage isn't a happy one don't get depressed, because because of the power of the Holy Spirit in both partners there can be a real rectification in a problematic marriage if only we will give ourselves to the Lord. Now the real problems and difficulties I'm not going to deal with tonight because we just wouldn't have time, but what I want to do is to show you from Scripture the general root of a good biblical marriage especially as it's seen in the New Testament.

Therefore we're going to speak on preparation for marriage. Having dealt with that we're going to look at the permanency of marriage, and having finalized that we're going to look at the principles of marriage, and then when we have looked on that we must get down to the nitty-gritty of marriage and we must speak on the practicing of a real New Testament marriage. How does it basically work? So first of all preparation for marriage.

Now quite frankly as I look around and as I look at the Old Testament you will find that today and then there were good and bad marriages. Take for instance Isaac and Rebekah that was a lovely marriage the moment he saw Rebekah he fell in love with her. Take for instance the marriage between Boaz and Ruth that was idyllic, a delightful marriage.

But think of that horrible marriage between Ahab and Jezebel what a tarter she was. So you can see there are good and there are bad marriages. My old Bible class teacher and the man that married us is now 86 Norman Stevens and his dear wife is in a nursing home and she's 84 and her memory is going.

But he just said this to me I see her every day Peter and I hold her hands for two hours every day and we tell one another that we are still in love. Now that's a lovely marriage isn't it and that's how it should be. But I did hear something that was horrid the other day I think I must say it as a warning.

A sister was married to a man and unfortunately it was in the Lord but not of the Lord and she caused two divisions and on the occasion of her burial there was a thunderstorm and the lightning was arcing across the grave. It was a terrible occasion and he nudged his friend and said this she hasn't been there five minutes and causing trouble. Now we may laugh but that was a horrible marriage.

No testimony there to the Lord. What would the neighbours think of that. So can you see there's good and bad.

Now how are we going to prepare for it. Now first of all according to scripture there must be parental preparation and that must be if I may put it in my old London accent. The mums and dads must pray for their children and they should start praying for their children from infancy.

And if you go through the scripture you will see that Abraham was very concerned about his son's marriage and he was sure that she was not to marry a Phoenician girl or he was not to marry a Phoenician girl but to marry someone from his own nativity. Again if you watch carefully Isaac and Rebekah you will see very carefully that they were very concerned that he did not go the way of Esau and marry a Phoenician girl and they were determined that he should marry someone from their own nativity and that was right. And therefore all the parents should have a prayerful responsibility to lay hold on God for their children that they might marry spiritual men and spiritual women.

Never allow courtship to become a moment of rivalry. Never parents encourage your children to practice flirtation and dating. Make sure that in your prayers for your children you have before you the glory of God and spiritual partners for them.

I wish I could go into the details of that but that's absolutely vital if we're going to see good marriages. Now for those who are going to be married there must be spiritual preparation. Now why? When two people come together to live one life under one roof there are tremendous problems and difficulties.

For it means that two people have got to live one life and two personalities are going to be joined together and the problems and the difficulties will be multifarious. Therefore it is absolutely essential for you to know that you have God's partner. You see when God made Adam he was never an ish man until he was married.

Now the word ish means a man of a high degree and he wasn't absolutely complete until his other half was joined onto him. And therefore God knew the other half and that meant a cooperating partner. Now quite frankly there is only one glorious being that knows your other half and that's God.

And therefore it's essential that those people who are to be married must wait upon God until he brings along the other half and he will do that if we wait upon him. But then it comes how can we be sure of God's will? Let's turn to Romans chapter 12 verse 1 and we shall see the secret there. The epistle now has almost been written.

Now he's going to make another urgent appeal as he made to them in the sixth chapter. I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God and all God's dealings with us are based upon his mercies that he present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable rational

service. You see consecration is not an emotional service.

If you're listening to a preacher and he's whipping you up emotionally do not make any decision whilst you are under emotional fever. Consecration is a rational and religious service something that you do intelligently with your mind and also with your heart. Be not conformed to this world in other words don't let the world squeeze you into its mold but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Why? Now look at this that she may prove and that word prove means by experience what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Therefore I want to say to those who are unmarried that if you are desiring marriage then it's absolutely essential for you to find God's partner. And if you are laid upon the altar not only will you find God's partner but you will find that you will be doing the will of God all your life.

Now I think I can say this to you now with a little bit of experience that I have discovered this that every five minutes I've spent in the flesh and the world has been a sheer waste of time. But all the time I have spent in the realm of the spirit has brought joy and happiness. And therefore when we lay ourselves on the altar we do not lay ourselves on the altar with a false motive in order to get a good wife or a good husband or a good job or anything like that.

We lay ourselves on the altar for one purpose and one purpose alone for the glory of God. And then as we lay ourselves on the altar we shall discover what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God. And therefore it is a very dangerous thing in this permissive society for a Christian to be worldly and carnal.

Could I say this to you with all the love that God can give me? If you have one foot in the world and one foot in the church you are living a very dangerous life. You see we're living in the last days and the Lord Jesus said iniquity is going to abound and the love of many waxes cold. So you can see how dangerous it is and therefore the wisest thing and the honorable thing is to lay yourself on the altar for God so that you might know that perfect and acceptable and the good will of God.

So you can see that's the second step. Now can I ask a question? Are you all on the altar? Have you become a living sacrifice? Then there are a moral preparation and I want to turn you now to 1 Corinthians 6 and this is very important. 1 Corinthians 6 verse 30.

And these verses right to the end that's verse 20 are divided into two. It's the painted body and then it's the tested body and then if you like right at the end it's the body, the temple of the Holy Ghost. Now look at verse 13 please.

Meat for the belly and belly for meat that God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication but for the Lord and the Lord for the body. Now the word fornication is a very difficult word to translate.

It comes from a Greek word which is very flexible pornea and it has many connotations and sometimes the word does refer to premarital sex and unfaithfulness but sometimes the word does refer to every form of sexual misbehaviour. And properly here it does refer to every form of sexual misbehaviour. Therefore what he is basically saying is this that the body of a Christian should not be for that kind of sexual sin.

And God has both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by his own power or authority. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ because you belong to him. Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? The answer is God forbid.

Now what was happening? Corinth was just like our society terribly permissive. In fact even worse. In their temples where they worshipped their God sometimes during the service there was a sexual manifestation.

For some of the priestesses were harlots and some of these men were slipping out and being immoral. And Paul now is going to nip the whole thing in the bud. And so he shows to us that what a dreadful thing it is for your body to be a member of Christ and bringing that into affiliation with a harlot.

Now he is going to get right down to the nitty gritty of this teaching. Notice the word what. Now in our it's bad grammar but of course not in the original.

How can I explain this? When we were at school we used to have a headmaster by the name of Harbert. He used to teach us history and he was very good. But if we made a blunder with our work as we often did he would come in with a boxing glove swinging it.

And if you lost contact with him you gained contact with the boxing glove. And then he would throw it down and in disgust he would shout out, what? And every boy would shiver with fear. What a difference.

Now actually that is what Paul was saying. He was absolutely disgusted with these Corinthian Christians that were in love. What? Know you not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body, for to serve he shall be one flesh.

Now that was a thunderbolt. What he was showing was that marriage was unbreakable. It was permanent.

But they had joined themselves with a harlot and they had become one flesh. And their body that belonged to Christ was joined with a harlot. But then he goes on.

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Free, run away from fornication. Now let us be factual.

Every young person will have problems with this word called fornication. The moment you move into adolescence there are strong desires that need to be dissipated. Nothing wrong with sex within the realm of marriage.

In fact it is a very beautiful and spiritual act as we shall see in a moment. But sex outside of marriage is an appalling sin. And every form of sexual misbehaviour will grieve the Holy Spirit.

That is why we want to encourage our people not to practice dating and flirtation. Keep away from it because that leads to immorality. Wait upon the Lord and he will provide the partner of your choice at the right time.

So therefore he is basically saying this. Free, run away. There comes a time when it's staring you in the face and you've got to bolt for it.

You know what I mean by that? Run for your life. Now what? Every sin that a man doeth is without the body. What does that mean? If I lose my temper I war against my soul but not against my body.

If I tell a deliberate lie I war against my soul, I damage my inner personality and grieve the Holy Spirit but it's not against my body. But when I commit fornication I sin against my body. Well what does that mean? You have a lovely body and when you get married you want to go into marriage with your virginity.

Pure. Untouched by man or woman. So that the girl can be in white and the husband figuratively in white.

Both of them have kept their virginity. But if you sin morally, you've sinned against your body. You've lost your virginity and I say this with tears.

You've lost it forever and you will never get it back again. Therefore I am going to encourage all who are unmarried to seal themselves, deafen yourself to the philosophy of existentialism which governs this modern world and say to yourself now, I must flee fornication and wait for God's appointed partner. Having said that then he makes this tremendous statement.

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God. In the Old Testament God had only one holiest and that was in the temple.

In the time of Moses he had one holiest and that was in the tabernacle. But in this room there are more holiest than God ever had in the Old Testament. Every believer's body is the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost.

The Shekinah glory is not above you but the Shekinah glory is in you and that's why every part of our body is now sacred. Therefore we must glorify God in our body and in our spirit. Now can you see the importance of that preparation? Parental preparation, praying.

Spiritual preparation, laid upon the altar. Moral preparation, keeping the body pure. Now the permanence of marriage.

Now let's look at Mark 10 and we just really need to read it because the explanation is seen on the surface. Verse 2, Mark 10 please, verse 2. And the Pharisees came to him and asked him is it lawful for a man to put away his wife tempting him? Now in the time of our Lord there were two schools of thought concerning marriage. There was the Shammai and he was a rabbi and he taught that the only time a person could be divorced was through pre-marital unfaithfulness.

There was Hillel and he was the liberal and he taught that if the husband did not favour his wife he could divorce her and most of them followed Hillel. And therefore they come to the Lord Jesus asking him and of course he is not concerned with the Shammai school of thought nor the Hillel school of thought, his concern with the scriptures. So he says he answered and said unto them what did Moses command you? And they said Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement and to put her away.

And Jesus answered and said unto them for the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. Now that's interesting. You see Moses and the law never restored to mankind the creatorial purposes of marriage.

In fact the creatorial purposes of marriage were never restored in the Old Testament. And we shall see it was only through the Lord Jesus we see those purposes being revived. Now verse 6. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother. That means he leaves one form of headship and cleaves to his wife. The word cleave there is interesting.

A literal translation means stick like glue. And the idea of that word cleave means an unbreakable oneness. And they twain shall be one flesh so then they are no more twain but one flesh.

What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Therefore I want to say now as clearly as I can that the first reason why there should never be a divorce in a Christian marriage is because of the restoration of God's creatorial principle. But we shall see in a few moments that there is something higher than that.

There is God's spiritual principle that's much higher than God's creatorial principle. But I'm not going into the details of that now otherwise I shall not finish by nine o'clock. But by that scripture we can see the permanence of marriage.

Now I know there are problems. I know there are differences. I know there's the accepting clause in Matthew.

But that should be the objective of every Christian that gets married. That there is no such thing as divorce. It's until death do us part.

Now I believe I've said sufficient in order to make that absolutely clear. Now what about the principles of marriage. Now shall we turn back to Ephesians 5 and we shall look at them.

Ephesians 5 just taking up the portions that we have read together. Now first of all I'm going to look at the husband and then secondly I shall look at the wife and then all of us who are married. Let's size up to the teaching of this particular narrative.

After all we can't have New Testament churches until we have New Testament homes and we can't possibly live the teaching here until we are filled with the Spirit. And we have seen that every Christian should be filled with the Spirit and this is how a Christian marriage should function as far as divine principles go. Now you will notice that the husband becomes a symbol of Christ and the wife becomes a symbol of the church and therefore in a decaying society they should show a Christ-church relationship.

Now first of all you will notice from verse 23 that the husband becomes the leader. The husband is the head of the wife. Now there are two understandings of the word head in scripture.

One a physical head like the head that you have on your body and two a spiritual head that speaks of lordship and leadership. Well here the word basically means not when it refers to Christ but when it refers to the husband that he should be the leader. In other words he should be responsible for the government of his own little house.

Now would all husbands be that? Secondly I want you to notice that he uses another word the saviour of the body. Now that has three meanings. First of all it means a deliverer and therefore the husband should be a man constantly if he's filled with the spirit that wants to deliver his wife from all the problems and difficulties of life.

Secondly he should be a defender and that simply means he should protect her. Mind you that's hard sometimes especially in Australia. For instance we were in Brisbane and my wife came running out of the shower and she said oh come quickly the biggest spider I've ever seen and I don't like spiders.

I don't like wasps. Well I don't mind the wasps because the rear gunner I don't like. But when I saw this spider I've never seen such a monster in my life.

Now I'm not exaggerating it was as big as my hand and I took my 12th shoe and gave it such a whack and then ran out. But you see I felt like pushing my beloved wife in. But you see quite frankly we've got to be the saviour, the deliverer.

Now the husband must take that part if he is filled with the spirit. And then it's the preserver. That means as we shall see in a few moments he cares for her just like you have a lovely piece of expensive china that you put into the china cabinet and then when you wash it you're very very careful with it.

So the husband should look at his wife and forgive the expression like a dressing piece of china. Something that he preserves and counts to be very precious irrespective of her age. Now wouldn't that be lovely if we saw that functioning in our home.

And then he should be an admirer. Now I want you to come with me down to verse 26 and 27. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

That he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives even as their own bodies. Now what does that mean? The Lord Jesus will never be fully satisfied until he sees his church complete and glorified.

When that church is complete and glorified he's going to admire it as his own precious workmanship. So the husband should look upon his wife and admire her as he sees in her the graces of the Lord Jesus not just physical structure. There should be that constant admiration and I saw that quite recently.

I was in a home and he was 86 she was 84. They were both going to bed and therefore their dentures were out. And quite frankly all their features were flattened.

And he said to me looking at his wife see that darling there. She's more lovely now than when I married her. Do you know I thought that's absolute beauty.

And that's how it should be right to the end. And then he should be a lover. Look back at verse 25.

Husband love your wife. Now this gave me a shock in my research today. I thought this word would be almost like a family love as you have the word filial in the brief.

But when I looked at this word I was shaken. It's that jagged Greek word agape. And that means a sacrificial love.

Therefore you can see that the husband shouldn't have such a love that is only physical and emotional and occasional. He should constantly have for his wife a sacrificial love so that he should be prepared to lay down his life for her. You see that's the kind of love that the world's looking for.

Anyone can sing these silly sentimental songs and what happens in three weeks there's a divorce. But this love is totally selfless. It's agape love.

Now let's ask ourselves the question as we go on. Am I the leader? Am I the preserver? Am I admirer? And am I a real selfless lover? Well come down now to verse 29. For no man ever yet eateth his own flesh but nourisheth and cherisheth.

The word means almost the same as to edify, to build up. And therefore the word nourisher means someone that wants to see his wife well fed. Now this doesn't mean that you want her to be obese or anything like that.

But it simply means that you want to see her really happy and healthy and careful. We should never neglect our wives. But we should cherish, nourish them.

The word cherish is a little different and it means to warm. And therefore this can only mean one thing. To clothe her.

To see that she's careful. And so you can see by that that the man has to be a leader, a preserver, admirer, a lover, a nourisher and a cherisher. And therefore we shall see in a few moments when the biological union is made it should be an expression of the oneness that Christ has with the church.

Can you think of anything more beautiful than that? Now let's get right down to the wife. Unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. Now this submitting here does not mean to say that the wife is inferior in any sense to a husband.

In fact there are many Christian wives that may be superior in education and in talents than a husband. In fact I have known this over and over again. The husband might be a very practical man.

His wife may be an academic. And sometimes the wife is an academic. Sometimes the wife is practical and the husband is academic.

And you will find that God will bring two people together in order to help each other in their respective deficiencies. So there's no idea when a wife submits herself to a husband that she is submitting to someone that she thinks is highly superior to her. But she submits as unto the Lord because it's the instruction of the Lord.

And then you will notice another thing in verse 33. And the wife see that she reverence her husband. And that Greek word there, so the scholars tell me, has about six meanings.

It means to respect. It means to prefer. It means to esteem.

It means to admire. It means to reverence, venerate and even to pray. Now can you see these lovely principles? Here is a spirit-filled man.

Here is a marriage that's right from the Lord. And this man says, Lord help me to be a true leader in my family. Not a dictatorial leader but someone like the Lord Jesus that leads by love.

Help me to be a preserver to my wife. Help me to be a selfless lover. Help me to admire her.

Help me to cherish her. Help me to clothe her, to warm her so that I might be a type of Christ to her. And the wife submits to that man as unto the Lord.

And she reveres and respects him. Now dear friends, what a witness that would be in a crumbling society if we saw that Christ-church relationship functioning in our homes. Now let's get right down to the practice of a New Testament marriage.

Now there is a book in the Bible and I love it. It's called the Acts of the Apostles. Not the principles of the apostles.

Not the philosophy of the apostles. But the acts of the apostles. In other words, it was showing to us the acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles.

Now I want to bring all this down to the nitty-gritty of everyday life. Now if there's to be a functional New Testament marriage, there must be, as far as I can see from scripture, five links. And the first link is an emotional link.

If you go back to the Old Testament and we haven't got time to see that. In Genesis 29, when Jacob first of all met Rachel, the moment he saw her he fell in love with her. You say, how do you know that? He kissed her and he lifted up his voice and wept.

And that is a perfect expression of a man that really falls in love. He is absolutely moved. And if you go through the scriptures you will find that at least 10 times in the Word of God.

Now that in love link must be kept right until the end. I think I can use this as a personal illustration. I trust I'm bringing glory to God when I say this.

When my mother-in-law was dying last April, my father-in-law loved her so much that he never left her side. And when she breathed her last, he was holding her hand in love right to the end. And that's how it should be.

And therefore I want to say this to you all. If you're going to have a happy marriage, never fall out of love and just be companions and friends. Be sweethearts and lovers to the end.

And brothers, when the birthdays come round, don't forget the birthday card. When anniversaries come round, don't forget a few red flowers. And see that you do that to the end.

You say, ah that doesn't matter, I always love her. But show her that you love her and let the wife show to her husband that she loves them. And you know sometimes when you're walking along, it's nice to hold hands and to walk arm in arm.

It's lovely to see that. You know, we mustn't be sentimental, but we want to show to the world that there is an in-love link in marriage. Don't be a hard man.

Be soft. Be hard when it comes to sin, but be sensitive to the feelings of your partner. Then there should be a conversational link.

Now if you go through the Bible, you will find that there's good conversation and bad conversation. For instance, Ananias and Sapphira were married and maybe their marriage was quite good as far as the in-love link was concerned, but not the spiritual link. You see they had private conversation among themselves that they would sell a property, keep half back the money for themselves, and then to give the rest to the apostles and give the idea that they were surrendering all.

This they did, tempting and testing the Holy Spirit. And both of them were judged by the Lord. You see that was bad conversation.

But if you look at Aquila and Priscilla, you will find first of all they helped the apostle. Then you find that they took Apollos home and instructed him in the way more perfectly. And you can see by that couple that they had healthy spiritual conversation.

When you turn back to Acts 2 concerning those early Christians, they went from house to house breaking bread and they'd eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. You see their homes were open to all God's people. Generosity and hospitality should mark all God's people, but their conversation was good.

Don't become a nigger. There are times in your Christian life when you must sit down and have a straight talk one with another. Don't have secrets.

Another thing, don't become mute. I have known some Christians when there's the slightest upset they won't talk to one another for two or three days. What a shocking testimony.

Never be like that. On the other hand, never nag. As you know I have to live in people's homes and most people I stay with live a happy life.

But I did stay in one home and quite frankly the wife was constantly nagging her George. And it went like this. George, see the man across the way? Doesn't he paint his house beautifully? And he never drops a spot on the ground, not like us.

Ah, yeah. Then it went like this. See the beautiful way he does the garden and all the beds? Not in apple pie order like us, but he does it so beautifully and artistically, doesn't he? Yeah.

Then she went like this. I noticed that he's decorating the lounge and he only did it three years ago. We haven't had our lounge, have we darling, done up for 12 years? No.

And then he said this. I heard her say this. You know when he says goodbye to his wife he's very loving and he's very kind.

You hardly give me a handshake there. And by his eyes I could almost hear him say, when that preacher's gone, boy there's going to be trouble here. You see now, dear friends, let there be conversation and let there be good conversation.

Don't be mutes at the table. Now I know that can be my problem. I can be in the Word of God and my wife will call me down for some coffee when I'm home and I can be going over certain words trying to puzzle them out and I can hardly be aware of my darling sitting there.

Now that's wrong. Let's have healthy conversation. And then there must be a biological link.

Now quite frankly when we read the scripture this is not hushed in the Word of God. 1 Corinthians 7 shows to us very plainly that marriage is not only for the procreation of children, it is for the satisfaction of each respective partner. Therefore man is body, soul and spirit.

And before people marry I would advise them to get a good thorough knowledge of anatomy and physiology so that you understand the working of each other's body. Now that's vital. And when the biological union is made it's not sinful but it should be an act of worship.

So that when that biological union is made it expresses Christ's with the church. It should not be made out of lust. It should be made in absolute purity.

Therefore I want to say this. Let that biological union be marked by refinement, by purity, by artistry and in pure love for each other. Now that's vital otherwise there will not be a functional marriage.

But then there should be a practical link. You see in the old Victorian days marriages were secure, thank God for that. But unfortunately the wife became a slave.

Now that's wrong. Husbands and wives should work together so that there is real practical understanding. Sometimes when a mother has been looking after four or five children and when the husband gets home she can be tired and exhausted.

It's lovely sometimes when he helps. You know I heard a lovely story and yet a sad story. And it happened in Ireland and those of you who are touched with the Irish spirit must forgive me.

But a young man got saved, wonderfully saved in Ireland. And he was so full of the Lord he wanted to be at every meeting. And he had a family and his wife wasn't saved.

But eventually she was saved. But not at this time. And whenever they had a meeting in the gospel hall he wanted to be there.

And sometimes they would have a six-week mission. And he was out every night. And it was very difficult for the young wife.

One night they were having a missionary from Ethiopia and it was entitled going through Ethiopia on a camel. And he turned to his wife and he said as she was frowning, I must be out tonight dear. I want to hear that missionary.

Oh dear she said must you be. Yes he's speaking on the subject going through Ethiopia on a camel. And then she lost her temper.

She says you're not going through Ethiopia on a camel. You're going through China with a dishcloth she said. Now can you see the wisdom of that? Now let's be practical.

And I'm sure if we are right down to earth we could have these Christ church relationships. And then lastly I've left this to the last. There must be a spiritual link.

And you find this right the way through the scripture. When Abraham first pitched his tent in Canaan. He pitched his tent toward the sunrise there at Bethel.

And right near his tent where God revealed himself to him there was his altar. And you will find three things with those patriarchs. Tent, altar, well.

Tent, altar, well. And if you go through the scripture you will find that that's the song of a happy married life. Now what does that mean? Immediately a young couple begin their marriage.

There should be a family altar. Now allow me to say this carefully. Please do not allow your family to grow up around a television or even a wire.

Nothing wrong with the television or the wireless if it's disciplined. But it needs to be disciplined. We must grow up around the word of God.

Now that is vital. Therefore in every home there must be a daily altar when husband and wife read the scriptures together. And in the sphere of the home is the sphere of the woman.

And where husband and wife pray together. And that is perhaps one of the most beautiful expressions of the Christchurch relationship that you will have. Now if you do not mind a spiritual example.

I think I can say this now for the glory of God. Some of the loveliest times I've ever had with the Lord have been with my own wife. When together after breakfast and the same happened when the children were small.

We read the scriptures and prayed together in the presence of our boys. It's a wonderful witness when the children can see mum and dad kneeling in the presence of God. We went through problems with both our boys.

One of my lads was not saved until he was 18. And for two years he had atheistic tendencies. But what was the Lord teaching? Not to nag him or to ostracize him.

But we had to pray with prayer and fasting for that boy. And when we started prolonged prayer. God started to deal with us.

And when he had really dealt with us. Then he started really answering our prayers. And what a day it was when I was in my study and there was a knock on the door.

And my older boy came in and said dad I want to be saved. I nearly exploded with joy. But he was a prayer boy.

You see it's absolutely vital in these days if our homes are going to be saved that we have a secured family order. Now my time has gone. But can you spare another minute? But not only must there be that spiritual link in prayer and worship with husband and wife.

There must be a harmony link. Now what does that mean? What spoils every marriage is the fleshly relationship that can be in husband and wife. When we show the flesh anything can happen.

And that is why Paul says quite emphatically in scripture that they the Christ have crucified the flesh with the lusts and the affections. As you know from the teaching of scripture. From Romans chapter 8 the flesh has been condemned in every believer.

So that the believer will not go to hell for his flesh manifestations. They have already been judged. But the flesh is yet to be judged in a believer.

Now it's vital if we are going to see happy marriages for the flesh to be crucified every day. And that simply means when it speaks of crucifying the flesh it doesn't mean that you can take the flesh out and crucify it. If we could do that it would be very helpful.

But we cannot do that. But what it means is simply this. That we emphatically say no to the flesh.

I will not have you reigning in my life. And I say emphatically yes to the spirit. In our own little home and we learnt this from another family.

We used to have a little motto called SC. And if my dear partner saw the flesh in me she would say SC Peter. That would prick the buttock.

Self crucified. If I saw a little irritation which was very rare in my beloved I would say SC. You try it.

Whenever you see the flesh SC. If he comes into the house without wiping his feet and makes all the carpet filthy and dirty. Just say George dear SC.

You see how it works. Or if you come home and that beloved wife of yours is very irritable and has the usual nag. Say darling SC.

It works. Well would you believe it the boys got hold of it. Now there is a weakness in my life and I'm going to share it with you.

In fact many. I love gardening. When I get home after these two months mission I shall spend three days working.

I mustn't use the word. But working like a Trojan. And I shall love it.

But there's one thing I've got to watch. And that is the garden doesn't become a god. Well I had grown some lovely dahlias.

And was I proud of them. And I went out into the garden one evening. And my hand was behind my back.

And I was looking at one of those dahlias and I was admiring it. And the boys were playing a forbidden game in the garden. Cricket.

One of the boys sent a cannonball right past my ear. And it knocked off this prize dahlia. And I turned round.

Andrew. And he said all nervously. SC dad.

Now have you got it. SC. Now beloved wouldn't that make our homes lovely.

If we brought that into every detail. And last of all Christ must be first in everything. And when he's first.

Then we shall have this Christ church relationship. Functioning in a horrid permissive society.

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