

**THE KEY  
TO A  
SUCCESSFUL  
MARRIAGE**

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*“Thy Word  
Is  
Truth”*

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# **THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE**

**IN** the Bible is found the key to a successful marriage.

Marriage was instituted by God in the Garden of Eden; and in His Word is found the most reliable information concerning a successful marriage and a happy home.

## **What Is a Home?**

**A** home is a little society formed by a family's living together. The manner in which that little society is run determines whether love, peace, tranquillity, confidence and fidelity are maintained.

The home and family established upon the Word of God and governed by its precepts will enjoy God's blessing, and will be an asset to the community.

## **National Issue**

The moral standards of any nation are founded upon the teachings children receive in the home. It has been said that as goes the home, so goes the church, and so goes the nation.

Through the centuries the home has been associated with the tenderest emotions of a person's life. What memories come to us through such words as mother, love, fireside, family, suppertime! But now, cut in the conflicting currents of our day, the Christian home –the most important and fundamental unit of a God-planned society –is reaching the near-vanishing point. How few Christian homes there are where children are taught the old moral standards!

## **God-Ordained Marriage**

When God placed man on the earth, He looked on all He had made and "behold, it was very good." But He knew

that man needed companionship, and He said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18).

Marriage, as God instituted it in the beginning, is the union of one man and one woman. The closest companion that a man has is his wife; the closest companion that a woman has is her husband. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

Together they are to enjoy the pleasures of life, share hardships and sorrows, and be a comfort and strength to each other.

### **Unequal Companions**

How vitally important it is to make the right choice concerning a marriage partner! This is something the Christian must pray about and let the Lord lead. The Bible teaches that the Christian is not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. This admonition is not given in the form of a suggestion or mere advice. It comes with the terrific impact of a commandment.

**"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14).**

This definitely indicates that a Christian should not marry an unbeliever, but rather choose one who has been born again – a true believer.

The words of instruction that God gave to the Israelites are still in effect today:

**"Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.**

**"Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:**

**"Know for a certainty that . . . they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes" (Joshua 23:11-13).**

We are not living in an idolatrous land as were the people spoken to here, but these verses of Scripture contain a spiritual meaning for us also. They warn us that if we take a companion outside the household of faith – from among the "heathen" – we will have trouble!

If you, as a Christian, go among the worldlings to find a person who appeals to you, and choose one who is not saved, you may very well be consummating a contract that will make life a hell on earth for you – and it might mean your eternal damnation.

Marriage can have a great spiritual influence on your life for the worse or for the better. The wrong decision could foil God's purpose for you in His service – and even worse, cause you to miss Heaven. In Heaven, earthly relationships will be dissolved, but for your time on earth, marriage relationships are of utmost importance.

The Lord will direct those who seek His will regarding marriage – even to the decision of whether to marry at all. But if one insists on having one's own way instead of the Lord's will, He may let that person have his desire. The result might bring leanness to the soul and disaster to the marriage.

## **Dating—Courting**

Young people often ask, "How am I going to meet the right person?" Sometimes we read articles of advice on that subject: attend a church; get into the activities; join a social club. By all means, one should attend a church, but not just for the purpose of meeting a companion. God has said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

The better way to find a likely person for marriage is through God's guidance – seeking His will through prayer, submission to His direction and adherence to Bible admonitions. Christian fellowship among young men and women can be very beneficial and spiritually inspiring; but in addition to group association, one must consider the individual.

Take time to stop and think of spiritual values. When keeping company with someone, do you find that your spiritual life is enhanced through your being with this person? Does your partner enjoy prayer and the Word of God? These are things to consider before choosing a lifelong companion.

On the contrary, is your spirituality waning because of the company you are keeping? Is your prayer life lessening? These are things to consider as warnings against an unsuitable companion.

If you notice traits in a person which you know for sure you would not want in a marriage partner, why date him or her at all? You take a chance of becoming involved in something that will not be for your good. It may not be until after prolonged association that some undesirable traits will show up; and one may be disappointed in a person who at first seemed so pleasing. But when undesirable traits are obvious,

avoid that person. Don't begin a relationship that will cause a heart break.

### **Hold a High Standard**

Young man, take your stand as a Christian. Your reputation is built one day at a time. You can never rebuild some things that are turned down. Don't give yourself over to loose living and carelessness. We are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:22 to even "abstain from all appearance of evil." Don't do anything that is unholy or even questionable. You might later repent of it and receive God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of the people concerned; but just as surely as you drive in that "nail," the hole will still be there when it is pulled out. The scar will remain.

Young woman, what kind of young man do you want to be with? Associate with one who has the right principles, who doesn't apologize for the fact that he has morals; and together you can set the standard for conduct by your Christian example.

### **Marriage Contract**

When it comes to marriage, if you let the Lord guide you, He will help you to choose a partner who will be an honor and credit to God, and a blessing to you through your whole life.

God has written the marriage contract, and it is binding for life. Jesus asked the people:

**"Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,**

**"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath**

**joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19: 4-6).**

Matrimonial bonds are sacred, and only one thing can sever the tie—death.

When two people are married, they are married for life. They have become one body, one flesh. They are married for as long as they both shall live. When one dies, the other partner is free to remarry. But so long as they both live – though they separate or even are divorced – they are, in the eyes of God, still married to their first partner.

**“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:39).**

### **Some Rules for Successful Marriage**

In a description Paul gives of Christ’s relationship with His Church, He brought in the marriage relationship:

**“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 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 love the church, and gave himself for it;**

**“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; but 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 hateth his own flesh; but norisheth 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 they 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” (Ephesians 5:22- 33).**

The Bible teaches that the husband is the head of the house, and it also teaches that the husband should love his wife even as his own body. If the man who is the head of his house truly loves his wife as himself, he will not be hard on her. He will not abuse her or belittle her. He and his wife are one in all things, even in reputation. If he loves his wife, he will speak well of her. He will be kind and considerate, and a help to her. Why? Because she is a part of him.

The wife is told that she should reverence her husband and submit herself to him. The wife who is a member

of the Body of Christ loves and admires her husband. She realizes they are bound together: they are not twain but one. They have been joined together in a holy bond of matrimony that makes them one.

**“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;**

**“While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear” (1 Peter 3:1, 2).**

Women should take seriously the counsel addressed to them. We are told in the Book of Titus that wives are to be sober, wise, understanding; to love their husbands, and to love their children. They are to be “discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:4, 5) . And we read concerning the husband:

**“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7).**

Some may wonder why their prayers do not go through. It might be just as simple as this: The husband may not be treating his wife right, or she may not treat him right. Maybe he doesn't appreciate what his wife does for him and the family. They both may take too much for granted.

### **United in Purpose**

When a man and a woman stand before God and take the marriage vows to love, honor and cherish each other, they are pledging themselves to try to adjust their lives to each other so they can, with God's help,

live harmoniously. Those who do this will enjoy the blessings of God on their lives, going down the path of life hand-in-hand and heart-with-heart, united as one person, one unit, undivided "until death do us part."

It is important that a couple be like-minded. If both love the Lord and are diligent in His service, they can make a good team. If they are careless concerning spiritual things—their chief goal perhaps being a luxurious home, and fine furnishings or other earthly benefits—it is an indication that they would rather have the blessings of this life than the blessings of the Gospel.

What is the purpose of **your** marriage? Is it to fear God and to please Him? Is God's will first in your life?

### **Responsibility for Spiritual Training**

The Bible tells the man that "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8) . He is not only to **provide** for his family, but he is to bear his responsibility as the head of the house and the guardian of his children, teaching them the Word of God.

God's love in the heart of the members of a family makes for respect one toward the other and a reverence for the things of God. God honors the husband and wife who set up a family altar and daily read the Bible together, seeking the Lord's guidance as they pray together. In time of trouble and sickness they have confidence that the Lord will take care of them. And He does!

This is a motto which would be good for every home: "Christ is the Head of this house, the unseen Guest at every meal, the silent Listener to every conversation."

## **Divorce**

In these last days when people's hearts are departing from the living God, we find that divorce has become the order of the day; therefore it would be well for us to understand our Lord's injunction about this matter.

Divorce is the legal dissolution of marriage and is looked upon with tolerance in many religious circles; but Jesus said:

**"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. . . .**

**"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.**

**"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away thus commit adultery" (Matthew 19:6, 8, 9).**

It is important for us to realize that during our Lord's time, He limited the cause for separation to the single case of fornication; but even in that case, He gave no license for remarriage.

**"Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.**

**"And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10: 11, 12).**

These are strong words, but they are Bible. The Bible states plainly that adulterers shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9).

## **God's Blessing on the Obedient**

Let us apply God's Word to all our plans, whether contemplating marriage or seeking to maintain a happy home after marriage. We find no Scripture which assures us that marriage will always be smooth sailing in every respect; but to have God with us continually is of vital importance. If He is with us, and we seek to do His will, He will lead and guide us day by day. Our marriage will be blessed of God and we will have a happy home.