

## *The Spirit Filled Marriage (Ephesians)*

I recently read about the construction of a town hall building in a small northern Pennsylvania town. The citizens of this town were quite proud of their little red brick building. It represented a long-awaited dream for them.

However, a few weeks after moving into the building, strange things began to occur. Several doors failed to shut completely and windows were not opening or closing smoothly. After a few more months, the front door would not shut at all and the roof had begun to leak.

An intense investigation was launched to try to determine what was causing the problems with this little town hall building. It revealed that deep, underground blasts at a mine several miles away were sending shock waves that were weakening the earth beneath the building. It was almost imperceptible, but it was slowly happening – one little shudder after another (Stephen Davey).

Problems in the marriage can be like shock waves to the foundations on which a marriage is built. The shock wave of selfishness, for example, can erode a marriage.

One couple went to a marriage counselor who had been arguing over which direction the other put the toilet paper on the roll. One wanted the sheets to come off the front side and the other want the sheets to come off the backside. They also were upset over where the other squeezed the tube of toothpaste. One squeeze it the middle and the other at the end.

In Ephesians 5:18-33, Paul describes a Spirit filled marriage. What are the foundations of a Spirit filled marriage?

### **1. Salvation by Grace through Faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

In 1 Corinthians 7:39, Paul commanded, “marry only in the Lord.” With equal authority, Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:14 admonished, “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”

Since I was a youth, I have heard the advice: Date individuals whom you would marry. Be the kind of person another believer could date.

Something that new the youth of today is on-line dating. 50 million people are e-dating. There are couples who have met at e-Harmony and are happily married. But there are some dangers. As many as ninety percent of online daters are lying about themselves. One researcher wrote, “For men, the major areas of deception in an online relationship are their income, height, and marital status; for women, the major areas of deception are weight and age.” At least twelve percent of online male suitors are already married.

The ability of two people living together each day for the rest of their lives is as Bill

Cosby admitted is “undoubtedly a miracle the Vatican has overlooked.” That is why you and I need God’s salvation to make it.

## **2. Service to the Lord (Ephesians 4-5 the Five Walks)**

In the practical section of Ephesians, Paul says five times we are to walk with the Lord. In our service to Christ, however, we don’t walk alone. Amos the prophet asked, “Can two walk together except they be agreed.” Some call it the principle of magnetism: Who we are is who we attract. This principle is seen in Proverbs 27:19. Are our close friends, believers who love the Lord? How can we get better friends? Become better believers! If we want to attract godly mates with whom we can serve the Lord, we must be godly.

## **3. Submission to God and One Another (Ephesians 5:21-33)**

Submission means “to put oneself under a leader” as in 1:22. Submission takes humility and is the result of being Spirit filled. Lucifer took himself out from under God’s rule because of pride. Spirit filled submission in marriage is described in 5:22-33.

### ***A. The Wife submit to Her Husband’s Loving Leadership (5:22-24)***

One counselor said all some husbands need is a Golden Retriever. Just someone to fetch what they need.

A husband read a book entitled, *You Can Be THE Man of Your House* and got all fired up about what he was reading. He marched into the kitchen and announced to his wife, “From now on, you need to know that I am the man of this house . . . You will prepare me a gourmet meal tonight, and when I’m finished eating my meal, you will serve me a decadent dessert. . . . Afterwards, you are going to draw me a bath so I can relax. . . . Then . . . guess who’s going to dress me and comb my hair?”

His wife replied, “The funeral director would be my first guess” (Stephen Davey).

Headship means leadership. Leadership does not mean superiority as 1 Corinthians 11:3 teaches. Adrian Rogers said marriage is like a football team. The husband is the quarterback. This does not mean he is superior to the running back. The running back may have a higher I. Q. but the quarterback has the responsibility of leading the team. Adrian Rogers, for example, said his wife, Joyce, took care of the finances.

### ***B. The Husbands Loves His Wife (5:25-33)***

#### ***1. His love is sacrificial (5:25)***

You might be thinking, my mate does not deserve my love. I deserve better than my spouse. Did we deserve God’s love? Did we merit Christ dying for our sins? Did we earn our forgiveness of sins? NO!

Can a Christian who loves God with all his heart, soul, mind and body ever say, "I do not love that person." Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

## ***2. His love is sanctifying (5:26, 27)***

One day Christ will present His Bride to Himself at the Judgment Seat without spot because He has cleansed her with His preached Word. God wants us to present our brides to Him at the Judgment Seat the way she looked on our wedding day in her pure white wedding dress. We husbands can accomplish this by getting our wives under the preached Word. Romans 10:17 tells us how, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

## ***3. His love is Protecting (5:28, 29)***

1 Peter 3:7 says the wife is the weaker vessel not the inferior vessel:

"Likewise you husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life." She is not inferior, she is an heir as is the husband.

Adrian Rogers, "Which is weaker, silk or blue denim, which is better? Which is weaker gold or steel? Which is better? Which is weaker a porcelain cup or a sledgehammer? Which is better?"

We husbands protect our wives from every thing and every one that would harm them physically and spiritually.

We love our wives by committing ourselves to them (5:31). According to Genesis 2:24, we become one at marriage. Like these laminated arches overhead. The individual boards are now one. There is strength in that unity.

Robertson McQuilkin, was the former president of Columbia International University. Robertson's wife Muriel was in the late stages of Alzheimer's disease when Dr. McQuilkin resigned his presidency to take care of her. For nine years he cared for her and led as president. Sometimes even taking her to class with him. Finally, it became impossible to both be his wife's full-time care provider and be president. Here is his letter of resignation that he read to the faculty, staff and student body at Columbia:

*My dear wife Muriel has been in failing mental health for about eight years. So far I have been able to care for both her ever-growing needs and my leadership responsibilities at Columbia. Recently it has become apparent that Muriel is contented most of the time she is with me, and almost none of the time I am away from her. It is not just discontent; she is filled with fear, even terror that she has lost me, and she always goes in search of me when I leave home. It is clear that she needs me now and she needs me full-time. This*

*decision was made, in a way, forty-two years ago when I promised to care for her “in sickness and in health, till death do us part”. So, as a man of my word, I will do it. She has cared for me fully all these years. If I cared for her for the next forty years I would not be out of debt. Duty, however, can be grim and stoic. There is more – I love her. I do not have to care for her – I get to.*