

MARITAL COUNSELLING

ROLE OF THE HUSBAND/FATHER

The supreme hallmark of a Spirit-controlled family is not happiness, children or prosperity. It is rather obedience to the Word of God. Happiness and fulfilment in life comes as a direct result of our obedience to God's Word.

"Blessed (happy) rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

Luke 11:28

"Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD."

Psalms 119:1

"Now that you know these things you will be blessed if you do them."

John 13:17

Therefore, the 2 requirements for happiness are hearing the Word of God and putting into practise what we hear. In other words,

Hearing the + Keeping the = HAPPINESS
Word of God Word of God

Most people are searching for happiness in life. Often they look to marriage to fulfil that happiness. It is never found as a **result of a quest** but rather as a **result of obedience** to the known will of God. The longest portion of Scripture in the New Testament dealing with the family (Ephesians 5:17-6:4) shows us the result of a Spirit-controlled life.

1. A Song in our Heart - 5:19
2. A Thanksgiving Attitude - 5:20
3. A Submissive Spirit - 5:21-24; 6:1-3

God has clearly outlined the role of the man and woman. Just as we have complementary physical characteristics, so we also have complementary roles. The success of these roles demands a consistent cooperation by both partners. Partners who truly submit to each other have no difficulty accepting the Biblical teaching on roles or subjecting themselves to them, and thus they help each other fulfil those roles.

I. The Husband as Family Leader (Ephesians 5:23; Genesis 3:16; I Corinthians 11:3)

A. The husband is to serve as leader of his wife - as Christ is the head of the Church (a leadership based upon true love).

B. All decisions must consider the feelings and ideas of the wife and children.

C. 5 Considerations in Decision Making

1. Never make an important decision without hearing and evaluating the wife's point of view.
2. Always pray for decision-making wisdom which God promises to provide (James 1:5)
3. Always check your motivation. Is it really for the family's good, or could it be inspired by selfishness.
4. Use tact in effecting your decision -- a sensitive father will not alienate the family he loves.
5. Once the decision is made, do not give in to attempts of change (pouting, temper, frigidity, and other manifestations of immaturity). However, always be open to hear further evidence that might render your previous decision obsolete and warrant a change. In God's plan, the husband is responsible for the final decision.

D. Seven Stumbling Blocks Ahead of Husbands

The American Institute of Family Relations published the following seven most common failings of husbands, according to their wives.

1. A lack of tenderness.
2. A lack of politeness.
3. A lack of sociability.
4. A failure to understand the wife's temperament and peculiarities.
5. Unfair in financial matters.
6. Frequency of snide remarks and sneers at the wife before company or the children.
7. A lack of plain honesty and truthfulness.

II. The Husband as the Ideal Lover

According to Ephesians 5:25, a man should love his wife sacrificially. True husband love is supernatural, a result of being filled with the "*Fruit of the Spirit.*" That kind of love is a treasure that matures through the years. It is not dependant upon any single event but rather it requires a lifetime to express.

A. Test Your Love (10 points each)

1. ___ Do you have a strong and affectionate bond of caring about your wife's needs and desires that inspires a willingness on your part to sacrifice to fulfil it?
2. ___ Do you enjoy her personality, companionship and friendship?
3. ___ Do you share common goals and interests which you communicate about freely?
4. ___ Do you respect and admire her in spite of recognized needs or weaknesses in her life?
5. ___ Do you have sexual attraction for each other that you believe will be frequently met and mutually satisfactory in the act of marriage?
6. ___ Do you desire children (if physically possible) who can share your characteristics, lifestyle and spiritual values?
7. ___ Do you have a vital faith in God that will be a helpful influence on her spiritual life?
8. ___ Do you have a sense of permanence and possession about her such that other women are not in the same manner attractive to you?
9. ___ Do you have a growing desire to be with her?
10. ___ Do you have a genuine appreciation for your fiancée's successes?

_____ **TOTAL SCORE**

*90-100 -- You are doing well. Keep up the good work. 80's -- You need to work on your love
70's -- Deficiencies are getting serious Below 70 -- You need help soon!*

II. The Husband as the Ideal Lover (Contd.)

B. What is Love? (I Corinthians 13:4-8)

- 1. Patient** - True love is patient or enduring (ie. long suffering).
"Lust cannot wait to get; love cannot wait to give." - Bill Gothard
- 2. Kind** - The lover who walks in at night with love, joy and peace will resort to kind words and tender speech. Kindness needs to be expressed in a variety of ways - gifts, flowers, unexpected remembrances, and a host of thoughtful gestures.
- 3. Generous** - True love is so generous that it takes genuine delight in the success of one's partner. Generous love will carry over into the way couples spend money, entertain, and invest in charitable projects. The best way to get love is to give it away.
- 4. Humble** - A proud spirit will destroy true love. It was pride that caused Satan to be cast out of heaven.
- 5. Polite** - Men need to cultivate gestures of respect (ie. opening doors).
- 6. Unselfish** - Love will erase selfishness and self-seeking. Spirit-controlled love will look for ways to express itself.
- 7. Gracious** - Such love is not touchy, easily offended or defensive. It never responds in anger or hostility, either verbally or emotionally.
- 8. Trusting** - Jealousy is a cruel taskmaster and an unnecessary bed-fellow in a Spirit-controlled family. Jealousy is usually generated by insecurities of one partner more than by the deeds of the other. True love is trusting and "*thinking no evil.*"
- 9. Sincere** - The tragedy of deceit lies in its principle quality -- it never remains static.
True love not only is sincere but it also goes out of its way to be honest--in word and deed. Love doesn't keep accounts but hurries to rectify all misunderstandings. The Spirit- controlled husband quickly confesses to God, his wife and his family.

III. The Father as Father/Teacher

God gave the command to "*Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth...*" (*Genesis 1:28*). Due to birth control techniques and "humanistic population experts," the number of children per family in America has dropped to 1.6 (1977).

A. The Nature of Fatherhood - Ephesians 6:4

1. Fathers are to love their children.

If a child never receives love, he will fill that gap with wrath. A juvenile court judge, after presiding over thousands of cases, observed, "I have yet to see a boy come before my court who had a father who took him fishing or went to ball games or spent time with him."

Love will also use the needed correction to drive out foolishness (*Proverbs 22:15*).

2. Fathers are to teach their children.

Fathers are to teach by example based upon the Word of God. Principles of truth need to be instilled by example and precept.

3. Fathers are to discipline their children.

There is a vast difference between discipline and child abuse. Many children's lives are destroyed through lack of parental discipline. Most penitentiaries, juvenile halls, houses of correction and cemeteries are full of them.

Self-discipline, self-denial, and self-control are absolute essentials in maturing to adulthood. The foundation for self-discipline is parental discipline.

IV. The Husband as Family Provider

A. Whenever the husband is not the primary breadwinner in his marriage, this deficiency becomes a serious threat to his role of leadership and personal self-esteem (*I Timothy 5:8*). There are, of course, sometimes temporary exceptions to this. As a basic of thumb, the husband's income should provide food, shelter and clothing. If the wife works, her job should be on a temporary basis to provide for such things which the husband's income cannot provide for.

B. The family provider will not be a lazy man, nor will he be obsessed with materialism. Instead, he will "*seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto him.*" (*Matthew 6:33*). Notice 3 things:

1. There is nothing wrong with a man being interested in business success. But when his business interests overshadow his love for God he is in trouble.
2. God will not supply us with everything on a silver platter. He expects us to do our part.
3. Remember that God will always supply our every need as we tithe and serve Him faithfully. Happy is the man who understands that his vocation is a trust from God.

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

V. The Father as Family Protector

- A. He will Protect his wife Psychologically
- B. He will Protect his children Psychologically
- C. He will Protect his wife and children from Disrepute

VI. The Father as Family Priest

- A. He must be a Spirit-controlled man.
- B. He will be regular in his daily Bible reading
- C. He will lead in family devotions.
- D. Suggestions for the Devotional Hour
 - 1. Plan a time that best fits the family schedule
 - 2. Be consistent but not legalistic
 - 3. Work in cooperation with your partner
 - 4. Encourage the children to take part
 - 5. Use the time to teach the family to pray.