

Marriage

by Leon O. Poole

This precious book, *Marriage*, by Leon O. Poole, is an insightful guide to Marriage as it was designed by God. It is our prayer that this book will help you have the best marriage possible and also help you glorify God with your marriage.

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PROLOGUE

Marriage is much more than sexual convenience. It is complex, but has a singular foundation. That foundation is COMMITMENT by choice. It is a choice that one makes to a single person until death separates them. It's substance must be more than a temporary whim, excitement, or advantage. That choice can give courage, determination and final success. Basically it is this to our spouse: **"I am married to you! NOTHING shall separate me from you but death, as far as I am concerned. You can rely on that until death separates us."** That is exactly what your marriage vows state. Make it work!

Whence does one get the stamina to sustain fifty to seventy five years of singular devotion to one individual? In that span of time, temptations may come to indulge in sex sins. It must never be done! In fifty to seventy five years the elected spouse is going to change. Their physical beauty is going to wane. The Scripture states a true fact: "we all do fade as a leaf." What holds a spouse true to their wife or husband? Emotions can change, or cease altogether. What holds a person true to their spouse?

The answer to that is found in Moral Conviction that inhibits any transgression of the marriage vows. There must be an anchor that can withstand the winds of change and of temptation. That anchor is the most secure when it is attached to the eternal Word of God. In this book, we will consider the role that God's Word and Will play in human marriage.

It is truly God's will that husband and wife shall live long, satisfying and blessed lives. Trust in and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Way, The Truth, and The Life in all things. Amen.

CHAPTER ONE

In Psalms 24:1 God tells us: *"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein."*

Revelation 4:11 states: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."*

John 1:1-4: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."*

Then in Genesis 1:1 it is written: *"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth."*

The above Scriptures proclaim that the world and every thing in it is God's property, with the exception of sin. He created the heavens and earth and the seas, and everything in them, except sin. As far as the facts are concerned, it matters not at all, whether mankind believes the Scriptural Record, the Holy Bible, or not. That is, Divine ownership is not predicated upon human approval. Nothing of human endeavor, or esteem or scorn can change the facts.

Bad results occur when people choose their own ideas in opposition to God's Word. Such unbelief also will incur God's judgment, but it cannot change or eradicate what God has established.

As noted in John 1:3, all things were made by God. In Genesis 1:31 God examined every thing that He had made, and declared that it was all very good. Consider the words "everything", and "all things" in these two Scriptures. In context, the earth would be a thing. An animal would be a thing. A human soul would be a thing. Marriage, I.e., the Institution, would be a thing. God made all THINGS, according to the Scripture.

Marriage is a thing that God created, examined, and called very good. He made it, and therefore, it is HIS Institution. That is the basis of His authority and claims for marriage. Marriage is not the idea of human beings. It is the Institution and will of God. He made it in order to carry out His eternal purposes, as we noted in Revelation 4:11, quoted above.

Since God made marriage, and instituted it for man, marriage is sacred. The human body, which God made in His Own image and after His Likeness, is sacred. The sex act between husband and wife, is holy and sacred, because God sanctified and blessed it. But a sex act between a man and a woman not married to each other, is a desecration of their bodies and of the Divine Institution. God forbids it, and calls any breach of His ordinance a sin.

Sex outside of the Divine Institution corrupts, decays, and ruins the partners who do it. It has no honorable objective of pro creation, or of honor to the Creator, or of honor to the parties concerned. It is strictly sinful lust gratifying itself at the expense of sacredness. It treats God's creation with contempt. It is useless to claim honorable intent in unmarried sex acts. If honor is intended, let the parties marry according to God's will. Else, let them totally abstain from all sex sins. People who commit sex sins anyway, will certainly receive the judgment which God has foretold. God said that such sinners shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. He warns that those who commit sex sins will be cast into the lake of fire for eternity, unless they repent before they leave this world. There is not the remotest chance of escape, except through genuine faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance towards God.

The Theory of Evolution seeks to vitiate the Divine Record. Indeed, if there is no God, there is no case of sacredness. Rather, through such deception, any whimsy of human lust might appear acceptable. In vain do evolutionists declare that there is no God. They WILL receive a just reward for their error, unless they repent.

Notice Psalms 2:1-6: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

Evolutionists often deny the sacredness of marriage and of human sexuality. God, by virtue of ownership of all things, sets "Bands and Cords" upon His Institution of Marriage. E.g., He imposed the Bond of Marriage.

God is the Creator. He who gave the power to procreate wasn't unjust to set boundaries upon its use. Human beings are obligated to God. We cannot choose to rid ourselves from answering to Him. We shall answer to Him for the legal, social, physical, moral and spiritual effects of our deeds. Those things form the required basis Divinely approved marriage. For their own good everyone should be taught the sacredness of marriage from very early childhood.

Whether people know their obligations, or consent to them or not, makes no difference to the facts. Revelation 20:12-15 states an awesome fact of personal, meticulous, judgment for sinners.

"And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book was cast into the lake of fire."

That is the eternal consequence of disbelief and of disobedience to God. It is the result of casting away His bands and cords. Though God is not willing that any one should go into the lake of fire, that will happen to those who disregard His ordinances. God commands all men everywhere to repent.

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent: because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained; whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead."

Therefore, we ought to always have sacred regard for marriage, for human sexuality, and for the family. God created and gave them to mankind. We ought to take heed to what God has about them.

God highly esteems Marriage and He has bestowed upon it great grace and privilege. He is so concerned for our welfare that He directed three of the Ten Commandments for the benefit of the human family. They are the "Bedrock" upon which moral human welfare rests.

God gave the commandments so that Israel first, and later Christian believers, might be kept from the corruption and ruin that comes from defiling marriage.

The Canaanites, among with other sins, defiled the sacredness of marriage. As a result the land of Canaan vomited them out. God also used Israel to execute judgment upon them due to their sins. They died for their iniquity. The record is given as an example for those who choose to sin against God. In the coming Day of Wrath, impenitent people will die the second death if they don't repent first.

Today, the family is being 'savaged' by perverts and other ungodly people, whose only joy is to indulge themselves in every form of sexual sin and perversion. There are woeful results for such sins. Millions are harmed and suffer from sexually Transmitted Diseases. many. There is a world wide epidemic of the deadly AIDS virus. It seems to be a unique penalty for sex sins that arose in the late twentieth Century. It seems to have been unknown previously.

Even so, any effort to restrain sexual sins brings protest from the workers of iniquity. Romans 1:32 describes them. Their damnation is just, and it WILL be executed upon them, whether they believe it or not. Revelation 21:8.

The three commandments that God gave to protect marriage are listed in Exodus 20:12-14: *"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."* The New Testament repeats this same statement, with an added notation. Ephesians 6:1-2. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: For this is*

right. Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

This commandment has its roots in Genesis 1:26-28. Marriage, family, society, and human welfare, all originate in God's decree and purpose. God provided a way for humanity to keep that welfare through obedience to His commandments. By disobedience, people open themselves to the results of rebellion and to every form of distress that rises in troubled families. Even the dominion that God gave Adam over all the earth, depended on honor and obedience to God. When Adam disobeyed God he lost his dominion and died. For the good of humanity, God Commanded: (1.) "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Exodus 20:13: *"Thou shalt not kill."* This commandment also has its source in Genesis 1:26-28. God commanded mankind to multiply on the earth. He created man in His Own Image and Likeness. Therefore, to kill a man is a transgression against the Image and Likeness of God. To kill a man, is to prohibit God's purpose for him. It presumes that evil self-will is more important than God's will. It expresses hatred and ill will towards the person. The one who hates his brother is identified as a murderer in 1 John 3:15. Also, the image of God who is love is marred in those who are ruled by hatred. Thus, murder mars God's purpose in many ways.

Specifically, God stated in Genesis 9:5-6: *"And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man."*

Without exception, God holds every person's blood as sacred, and demands just punishment for those who dare to shed man's blood. Notice that God ties judgment back to His creative act, and the fact that man is made in the Image of God. Those facts are to so impress us, that we will hold human life dear and sacred. Heathen, and criminals, who do not respect God or His Word, transgress God's Word, and strike His image! Because of sinful and willful disobedience, God instituted human government, that it might execute His judgment.

In Romans 13:1-4. God's Word states that rulers are God's ministers, established by Divine Decree, to punish evil doers. Thus, authority for civil government has its source in Divine decree.

Exodus 20:14: *"Thou shalt not commit adultery."*

Adultery corrupts God's standard and purpose. It is also a sin against one's own body. It breaks the marriage bond that was instituted by God. It is a breach that permits every ruin of human virtue, and corruption of the persons involved. It is a sin against God that demands vengeance. That fact is stated in Revelation 21:8, and in Galatians 5:19 & 21.

The Holy Bible reveals that God judged individuals and nations for sins which the Ten Commandments were intended to prevent. In Leviticus 18:24-30 God said that the people

of Canaan, before Israel entered, practiced incest, adultery, idolatry, idolatry, disobedience, and disrespect for parents. Their sins were so vile that their land vomited them out!

The 12 spies reported to Moses that the Land devoured its inhabitants. It did so because of their sins against God. They did not have the Ten Commandments, but they had moral conscience, and knowledge regarding marriage and family life. But they disobeyed, and indulged themselves in their sins.

First the land vomited them out, and secondly, God used Israel to kill every man woman and child, in execution of His wrath and judgment upon them.

Today, people read of the conquest of Canaan, and think that God was fierce, and harsh. He was, and that fact should cause people to dread to break God's Laws and commandments. He has reserved another day in which also He is going to execute wrath upon evil doers. Rev. 20:12-15.

We ought not to think of God's Word as only a hard to obey demand. It is a gracious, loving provision of God for our welfare. It's not God's will for anyone to perish, but marital sins can cause people to perish.

CHAPTER TWO

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:14-16)."

The Bible states many things about Marriage. Among other things, by God's commandment, a family is implied in each marriage. Let us notice first, Acts 16:31, in the New Testament. It is a very great and vital promise. It was directed towards an individual, but included his family. Because it became part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it now applies to every New Testament believer and their family. God wants to save families as well as individuals. It works through believing God's Word.

"And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house (Acts 16:31)."

The word 'house', as it is used here, does not mean the street address where you live. It means yourself first, and it includes your relatives, especially those who are descended from you. For example, the Bible often uses the term, "House of Israel", meaning the descendants of the Patriarch Jacob.

Our study of the human family in the Bible, should begin in Genesis 1:28, just after God had created Adam and Eve.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth."

That is when God instituted Marriage. It is as old as the human race. Human marriage is unique. It is unique in the special endowments that God blessed it with. It is also unique because of supreme obligations to God, to husbands, to wives, to children, to parents, and to human society. There's an automatic response in society that rises out of our attitude towards marriage.

When any society degrades Holy Matrimony, there is always a horrific impact of spiritual, moral, social, physical, and economic decay. It comes because people separate themselves from the God's blessing, and incur the curse of sin. Therefore, they endure the results of being detached from God's goodness.

Some things in life are good for us because of their inherent goodness. Also, some things are bad for us because they are inherently bad. God has told us to choose what is good. That can only be done by obeying Him. His ordinances and constraints are always for the

good of humanity. God is not the enemy of mankind, and He does not willingly afflict anyone.

Notice: *"God blessed them."* He ordained a kind goodness, that can make life worth living. Within His blessing, God ordained the deepest satisfaction, comfort, support and welfare for individuals, for families, and nations. Human suffering is great because of disobedience.

Along with His blessing, God decreed the permanent sanctities of Marriage. Any corrupting of marriage by sin is a sin against God, Who originated it. That is a choosing of what is evil in lieu of what is good. That prevents us from receiving what He ordained for our good.

ANY sexual intercourse with anyone but your spouse is a sin against God. It is also a SIN against the human body! Notice 1 Corinthians 6:18: *"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."* Also: *"But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul (Proverbs 6:32)."*

That means that something is WRONG with the man that commits adultery! He scorns the most basic premise of marriage. He scorns the commandment of God, thus despising Him. For example, God charged King David with that sin, along with adultery and murder, when he had sinned with Bathsheba. See 2 Samuel 12:9, in the Holy Bible.

In the grip of his lust the adulterer ignores the binding obligations of his marriage and/or of the marriage of the woman that he sins with. He despises the restrictions that God placed upon Marriage.

God placed an unavoidable mandate upon holy marriage. It was first spoken by Adam under God's inspiration. Notice Genesis 2:23-24:

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they two shall be ONE flesh." (My emphasis).

The word "Cleave" means more than spouses physically holding one another. It means more than sexual union. It includes both, but it mainly has to do with inseparable union. "They two shall be one flesh, Genesis 2:24."

The act of cleaving together requires harmony in basic areas of agreement and assent and purpose. As long as spouses focus on areas of harmony, they will have internal calm and pleasant relationship.

If they focus on areas of disagreement, strife, diverging purposes, or on extra-marital attentions, they will not have harmony. If they do not repair the problems, their cleaving

together will be weakened. In Christian experience, believers are offered a high means of dealing with discord. We can be blessed by believing what God has said about marriage, and by letting what He said affect our union.

Ephesians 5:25 bids husbands to love their wives, and verse 22 bids wives to submit to their husbands. This can help resolve marital conflict, without casting either spouse as a failure. The Scripture states that: "*Love works no ill to his neighbor*", Romans 13:10. How much more does this apply to one's spouse!

It is precious when the Holy Spirit reveals the inner quality of Divine nature and purpose in our born again spouse. How beautiful sterling, Godly character is! It is a beauty that surpasses natural attributes. That supernatural quality adds to our regard for our spouse. It has been my happy privilege to see that in my own wife. She is a Godly woman, and what a treasure she is!

A heart that is taught by God, will esteem Godly character more than common mortal attributes. If less than desirable mortal attributes are visible, (and each of us must cope with them because we are all mortal) the beauty of the Spiritual so excels the mortal as to render it trivial. Such esteem shows where the treasures of our heart is deposited. Heaven is to be our home, and Godly nature is to be our pursuit. Notice 2 Peter 1:4: "That by these ye might be partakers of Divine the nature."

Most people are dominated by their physical senses. They never develop spiritual abilities. Thus, it is easy to think of one's spouse on the basis of their mortal attributes. Every one is subject to failures, weakness, and too often they are enslaved by their passions.

We believers in Jesus Christ are New Creatures in Christ. We are delivered from the old sinful way of life, and we are called into holy obedience to the Words of God. That means that divorce, strife and ill will are "out"! We are not to tolerate such things in our inner attitude, and we are not to yield ourselves to them outwardly. We have been given the gift of Eternal, Divine Life in Christ. Being alive with holy animation, we are to yield ourselves to the will of God, Romans 6:13.

Because we are married to a mortal spouse, we must constantly practice the Divine attribute of forgiveness. The required forbearance, long suffering, and patience with others certainly applies to marriage. We must not focus on things of discord, or be overtaken with strife. We must set ourselves to refuse them when they occur, because our spouse is likely to ignite the same problem in the future.

I am not talking about outright sin, I am talking about the "little things" that make for friction and disagreement. Believers should be warned about strife.

Notice James 3:16: "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." Often, people let those little things become major issues and ultimately cause a marital rift.

Therefore, in the light of the Scripture, let us perceive the idea of "cleaving together" as a commitment that will withstand everything that could destroy our marriage. Through faith, spiritual growth, and with God's help, believers can overcome such threats. We must make a fervent effort to live a Christ-like life before our spouse, lest we cause them to fall. Notice how the Scripture endorses the idea of helping each other. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Nowhere does this concept work better than between spouses. God has called woman man's 'helmet'. She is exactly that, spiritually, as well as mortally. Scripture calls her the 'weaker vessel', but she is supremely important to the well being of her husband. How much, God in His wisdom, has provided for human welfare.

All ethnic groups recognize the marriage bond, though ceremony and traditions may differ. American states issue a Marriage License and a Certificate of Marriage. They become the legal records of a marriage. God does not require such records to validate a marriage; they are merely for human legal and social benefit.

Although in time, "Common Law" marriages become recognized by our Government, they are outside of God's Mandate. Such marriages begin with either fornication or adultery because the couple are not married before sexual activity begins.

It is an error for Government to set aside or ignore God's Mandate. Marriage is to be approved by the Government, not made by it. Properly, Government ought to recognize what God joins together. No human exigency can change God's Mandate.

There is spiritual, moral, and legal parts of marriage. When a marriage rightly corresponds to them, it is right and it receives God's favor. God regards marriages as lawful or unlawful, according to His statutes.

That is not the same as the legal records which are for the benefit of society and of Government. Some people recognize the statutes imposed by Government on marriage, but ignore the moral and spiritual parts of it. The Courts of our Nation often appear to ignore the moral issues of marriage. They default to merely the legal aspect, and that often seems to be based upon a misguided philosophy.

There is no such thing as marriage between man and man or of woman and woman. That is a perversion of God's mandate. It will provoke God's wrath and promised judgment. The concept of homosexual 'marriage' is appalling to any but a reprobate mind. Such a 'marriage' cannot produce any off spring. It is against human nature. It a corruption of what God decreed.

Romans 1:26-27 shows that homosexuality is perverted sexual lust. It can't beget even illegitimate offspring! It can beget deadly disease. God judged it according to Genesis 19:24-25. It is yet due His future judgment.

Homosexual 'marriage' is thus identified as an unlawful (per Genesis 1:28) concept. It defies God's just demand for holy conduct and accountability. The sins of Sodomy so offended God that He laid the name as an execration upon those who practice it, and burned their cities because of it. Genesis 19:4-25.

Malachi 2:14-16 states: *"Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not He make one? And wherefore one? That He might seek a Godly seed. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel saith that He hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of Hosts: therefore, take heed to your spirit that ye deal not treacherously.*

God stated why He made the marriage union between a man and a woman. It was that He might seek a Godly seed. Such seed can be gotten only in a marriage that in agreement with God's mandate. Such a marriage is Godly. Every other kind of marriage is ungodly.

As surely as God is the One Who originated Marriage, He is also the One Who created the sex genitals; the emotions and sexual desires, and every right thing that makes sex function in human beings. But He never intended for sin to enslave humanity by those things. His constraints are to prevent what He gave for good from becoming destruction. Disobedience permits such destruction to occur.

For our good, He restricted it all to a holy, blessed, union of husband and wife. He will bless people who obey Him, and punish those who disobey Him.

Marriage according to God's terms is the ONLY fitting estate for His purpose. Neither Adam nor his offspring existed before God created them. Dare we flaunt the wisdom and benevolence of the Creator? Adam proved God's warning valid: dare we ignore Him?

The blessings of God are evident in marriages that honor Him. The curse, and the ruin that attends it, are evident outside of God's blessing.

The obligations in Marriage are great. They require our best conduct. Every marriage requires diligent, and constant attention and watchfulness. We must work to maintain and nurture our family. We are obligated to provide for our family. That is sometimes difficult. According to the Lord Jesus, the world is to be a better place because we are here.

Now think of our children. It should sober us to know that every baby born to mankind will exist for ever; either in heaven or in the Lake of Fire. Babies ought NOT to be

conceived out side of a Godly marriage. **Every parent** shall give account to God for their children.

Babies need not only the love and care of both parents, they also need the love and care of God, the Creator. They can gain it in a Godly marriage. Children are exposed to a deadly threat when they are reared without reverence for God. They're exposed not only to the social ills of our time, but also to eternal ruin.

How deeply people hurt and pine away in their ruin, because they don't live within God's will.

The Scripture says that the way of the transgressor is hard.

In the Law of Moses, God offered some help for problems in marriages. It was to relieve and prevent injustice, cruelty, and distresses that arise in marriages. Israel disobeyed, and their history is a lesson to everyone on the results of disobedience. God later removed the Law of Moses and brought in the New Testament, so that through faith in Jesus Christ we can live according to His will.

God had a good reason for His careful provision in Marriage. It was not just to keep people from having 'fun!' It was to safeguard people and assure them of happiness and security. John 3:16 abundantly proves that God seeks the best welfare for all of mankind: *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Mark what the Lord Jesus said about marriage in Matthew 19:5-6. *"...for this cause shall a man leave his father and his 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."* Such a marriage is more than a tradition.

According to Jesus Christ, God intended that the marriage of a man and a woman is to be permanent in this world. God intended that the Godly children of such parents should bless the world. While He was on the earth, Jesus also expressed His love for children and blessed those that were brought to Him.

"And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them."

But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God."

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark 10:13-16.

In Matthew 18:6, Jesus also said that it would be better to have a mill stone hung around your neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea, than to offend one of the little ones that believe on Him. Does that sound like He is indifferent about the murder of babies which is commonly called "Abortion"?

CHAPTER THREE

The Scriptures show that when a man and a woman initiate their Marriage Covenant and then their sexual union, God creates their marriage bond. He joins them together, whether they understand that or not.

The Scriptures show that fornication does not constitute marriage. True, there is a 'one flesh' union, but notice 1 Corinthians 6:16 *"What! Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith He, shall be one flesh."*

Verse 18 bids to flee the sin of fornication, therefore, fornication cannot be made to mean marriage. Thus, "live in" sex partners are both sinners.

Fornication is the sinful, sexual union between an unmarried male, and an unmarried female. Adultery is sexual intercourse between two people, one or both of which is, or has been, married to someone else.

There is a noble, Divinely given grace that marks the difference between marriage and fornication or adultery. It appears in the synergism of their Covenant (marriage vows), sexual union and the marriage bond whereby God joins them together. That synergism is proven by inseparable cleaving together in life, according to the Scripture. That synergism isn't present in fornication or adultery. It is a delusion to pretend that they are. Marriage MUST precede sexual union in order to obtain that grace in the marriage bond.

That bond is profound. God intended it to be permanent as long as the spouses live in this world. The Lord Jesus said the spouses are no longer two, but one flesh and bids: "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

Now consider this. Until a man is married, he is still under the auspices of his father's house, even though he may be an adult and live apart from his father.

When he takes a wife, he leaves his parents and begins a "new family" unit. It becomes 'his house'. His lineage is still from his father, but his family is distinct from his father's family. Acts 16:31 is directed towards a believer and his 'house'.

Mercifully, parents will not be lost if their children choose sinful lives and die lost. Also, children need not be lost because their sinful parents die lost. Each person is responsible for their own life before God. But Acts 16:31 offers a foundation for faith and hope. By it, a believer can claim the members of his family for God's Kingdom. Each of them will have to come to personal faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, but God's holy influence can help in that purpose.

1 Corinthians 7:14 shows that a believing spouse can sanctify an unbelieving spouse. Thus, a believer can gain God's grace for their children, and holy influence on their spouse. They can be freed from the ruin of heathen pollution. This is clearly a function of

Acts 16:31! How deeply God cares for individuals and for families, and has provided great extensions of His grace to save them.

It is God's blessing in the house of the righteous, i.e., believers. Proverbs 3:33: *"The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but He blesses the habitation of the just."*

Hebrews 13:4 says: *"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God shall judge."*

God is never indifferent about marriage. His Word warns of retribution for sex sin. Some forms of retribution occur in this world. Some will come at the Great White Throne of Judgment.

Thus, I am persuaded, sexually transmitted diseases are part of God's judgment upon the sex sins of mankind. They would never have occurred in mankind otherwise. The Scripture shows that God shall judge and punish sinners with eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:11-15.

A fitting end to this chapter is the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Yet, **Whoever will, may come** and be saved from our sins. Revelation 22:17; Romans 10:9.

Jesus said that every sin that man shall commit shall be forgiven (upon repentance and receiving it through faith in Jesus Christ) except the unpardonable sin. That sin is NOT an ordinary sin that people commit. All other sins can be forgiven, and will be, because Jesus paid our 'sin debt' at Calvary. Acts 16:31 therefore applies to mankind in general. What a blessed promise!

CHAPTER FOUR

God has always demonstrated concern for human families. He promised the Patriarch Abraham that in his Seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed, Genesis 28:14. God has also invested human sexuality with the ability to pro create other human beings, each as much in the 'Image and Likeness of God' as was Adam and Eve!

It is a sin of treason against God if people take what God gave and intended for good and for blessing, and use it to ruin and to defile themselves and other people. They usurp Divine agency and commit sin with it. God gave strict commandments NOT to do it. *"Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14)."*

Fornicators and adulterers conceive babies outside of God's provision. Today, many add murder to their sin of fornication or adultery, by murdering their baby. It is called Abortion. The womb, because of abortion, has become a deadly place for many babies! People ignore or choose not to accept these facts, but they are true. Such sinners will give account to God at the judgment for the babies they have murdered.

People who espouse supposed "sexual freedom" are under the condemnation of Psalms 2:1-5.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and His Anointed, saying, Let us break their BANDS asunder, and cast away their cords from us. (My emphasis.) He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His displeasure."

Isn't that what is happening in our society today? Don't sexual perverts seek to desecrate Marriage, by imposing their 'choice' of sexual orientation? Aren't many sex sinners practicing fornication? They choose to call it "A live-in relationship." Harmless sounding names for sins doesn't purge them: they're still sins. Legal sanction doesn't help. The Legal system of the United States is under the same indictment of Divine justice. Psalms 2:1-5 applies equally to Governments, Judges and to individuals.

The Divinely given high, and exalted privilege of pro creating human beings, each made in the Image and Likeness of God, requires great responsibility. God holds fathers and mothers and accountable for their "family unit" and for the offspring within it. Notice that God commended the 'wise woman' in Proverbs 14:1. *"Every wise woman builds her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands."*

The Philippian Jailer in Acts 16:31 didn't know that salvation would ensue for his 'house' when he asked how to be saved. But Paul and Silas told him: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house."* Thus, God extended salvation to the first European convert and to his 'house'.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house (Acts 16:31)." It is ever the same, for all who wish to be saved from their sins and from the eternal punishment for sins.

The jailer and all his, was baptized the same night, rejoicing and believing in God with all his house. Certainly, that verse intends his family, not the building he lived in when he was 'off duty'. Surely, Acts 16:31 is a great promise.

Godly parenthood is such a high, sacred position, that God demands that children honor and obey their mother and their father. That is the first of the Ten Commandments with promise, according to Ephesians 6:2. According to Exodus 21:17 the death penalty was incurred when a child cursed his father or his mother.

God is the Creator of mankind. When He saves a lost soul, it is by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, Titus 3:5. James 1:18 tells us that God begets us (born again believers) with the Word of Truth. In this way, He becomes literally, our heavenly Father.

A husband and wife begets children through sexual conception and child birth. In this manner they become Pro Creators. By Divine Agency, they together, CREATE a human soul, which has never existed before! It is an awesome responsibility to conceive a child! God's command in Genesis 1:28 to replenish the earth was extended to all the human race through Adam and Eve.

God provided for the best possible environment for a baby to be born into. He demands that husbands and wives respond in kind, by living within Holy Wedlock.

When men and women desecrate their moral character and conscience by practicing sex sin, they lose the moral conviction and stamina to set right moral standards for their children. Children must have a moral conscience in order

to be responsible citizens. Many parents aren't able to control their children today. So the Government seeks to take the role of parents. But an amoral Government can't induce a moral conscience in children.

Acts 16:31 is the promise of God for the sake of a Godly family. Christian faith produces strong moral qualities. Responsible parents ought to work to instill that in their children. It can become a strong reference for them.

A baby is a new human being entirely. It begins with a blank slate as far as active intelligence and experience goes. They do not have the maturity and the extent of intelligence that Adam and Eve had at creation. They were created as adults. Babies must gain maturity, and the parents are intended to be their first

and chief teachers. The parents are responsible for the child until it reaches the time when it can reasonably make choices based on instruction and experience. Thus, Proverbs 22:6

bids to train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

God's Presence hallows holy wed lock. Wed lock is holy and sacred even among unsaved spouses, because marriage was instituted before sin entered the world. Many unsaved married people also become aware that there is a mystic reality to their marriage. It is not an empty ritual!

God's Presence and general blessing is in every marriage that is made in accord with His Institution. That does not mean that they receive God's gift of eternal life simply by getting married. Eternal life must be received by personal faith in Jesus Christ. Rather, it means that they are under the blessing of Genesis 1:28. That was not given for salvation from sin; there wasn't any sin in this world at that time. It was for blessing in pro creation, for family, and for social welfare of man kind.

Lust, sin, greed, and faddish ideas are not grounds for disregarding God's purpose. When people turn away from what God has given, they ALWAYS descend to a corrupt existence. Witness what is happening in our National society today. Crime, injustice, out of control children and every other social ill can be traced to an abandonment of Divine Law. That social track will incur God's judgment. Every nation of history has proved that fact.

Because of man's disrespect for Divine Law, human society has had to institute laws regarding divorce, remarriage, division of goods, child custody and support. Alimony is a dreadful substitute for Divine provision! Also, alimony does not release us from responsibility to God.

In His kindness, under the Law of Moses, God permitted divorce upon the condition of adultery. Jesus in the New Testament conceded the same. But divorce isn't God's will, and it is not His best for people. Divorced persons often must deal with distresses that attend divorce. Also, God will judge any sin involved, at the Judgment Day, unless they repent beforehand.

There is much misery and distress in society because people ignore or defy God's wise, holy, provision. The Lord Jesus said that when a man divorces his wife, except for her sex sin, HE causes HER to commit adultery!

He puts her away, supposing that he is free from her and can 'get on' with his life as he pleases. Yet he must stand before God to give account of himself. God has said that He is going to judge adulterers and whore mongers.

The only way to escape that part of judgment is firstly, not to divorce. Secondly, by repentance and obtaining God's forgiveness for sins. Because Jesus promised that every sin that man commits shall be forgiven him (upon his seeking it is implied), adulterers can be forgiven and saved from penalty at judgment.

According to Romans 5:12, sin and death entered into the world by one man, Adam. Since Adam is the federal head of the human race, every descendant of his is born into the same condition of sin into which he fell. Romans 3:23 emphatically states that all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God. People ARE lost in sin by means of their sin nature, inherited from Adam, and by their own choice.

1 Corinthians 15:22 states: *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* That is, those who are descended from Adam all die because of their sins. Those in Christ, by virtue of the new birth, shall all be made alive. The natural descendants of Adam are born but once, and will die twice, according to Revelation 20:15. Those who are born again through faith in Christ, are born twice, and will, maybe, die once, if at all. Some believers are going to escape death when Jesus Christ comes from heaven to receive us to Himself.

Reader, are you born again through faith in Jesus Christ? If you don't know what that means, you may not be, but you ought to find out! Your eternal destiny hangs upon whether you are born again, or not. Romans 10:9-10 clearly states how to be born again. Please read it in your Bible and just DO as it says.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. It is only through the new birth through faith in Jesus Christ, that a person can escape the nature of sin, with which we were all born.

We can only receive the new nature and eternal life in Christ by the new birth. John 3:3-5. When one is born again, he enters a new position of privilege in Christ. He receives access into the grace of God in which he stands, and has peace with God. If he develops his faith enough he can obtain God's grace to help him with every aspect of life, including marriage, family, job, and societal standing in his community. Jesus called such believers the light of the world, and the salt of the earth.

CHAPTER FIVE

Marriage for the believer should be far different, and based upon better premises, than those which unsaved persons know. True believers in Christ will guard their thought life, and their social activities. In that way the fact of Hebrews 13:4 becomes a secure foundation for their home. *"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed is undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."*

That is how God regards Godly marriages. The procreation of the whole human race rests upon that fact. It is a special security for the marriage of believers. Understand that our marriage bed is undefiled IF we keep it that way! In the fear of God, we limit our sexual activity to our spouse alone, in thought and in deed. We can gain God's blessing by obeying His decree. Genesis 1:28.

God given authority for man and wife is invested in Genesis 1:28. It is the source of authority upon which believers can draw, in dealing with their family. That authority can help us to avoid the failures that unbelievers have. Parental authority is also a powerful influence on children. If we honor God, His blessings will help us in our times of need. Praise God.

The Lord Jesus Christ recognized and sanctioned marriage when He was upon the earth. He even acknowledged the marriages of unsaved people, and those outside of mainstream Jewish society.

Thus, marriage is not uniquely a Jewish custom. It is not unique to the Law of Moses, though Moses wrote much about it. Marriage is not unique to an era, and it is not to be abandoned in favor of current human ideas. Notice Saint John 4:16-19.

"Jesus saith unto her, Go call thine husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou hast well said I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou hast now is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

Notice that Jesus acknowledged that she had been **married** five times. Each was a valid marriage in His sight. The woman at last became a 'live in' with a man she was not married to.

We conclude then, that a marriage after a divorce is a valid marriage in God's sight. It is not His perfect will, but He does permit it, and He acknowledges it as a marriage. The Law of Moses also permitted divorce according to Deuteronomy 24:1-2.

"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then LET him write her a bill of DIVORCEMENT, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and BE another man's WIFE." (My emphasis.)

While Jesus was on the earth, He ministered and lived within the constraints of the Law of Moses. He fulfilled it and then He brought in the New Testament when He arose from the dead. Jesus referred to both Genesis 2:23-24 and Deuteronomy 24:1-2 in His reply to the Pharisees' question about divorce. Matthew 19:3-6.

They had asked Him if it was lawful to put away (divorce) a wife for "every cause." According to Jesus, God never intended divorce for a man or his wife at all. No provision was made for divorce in Genesis 2:23-24. Divorce was permitted under the Law of Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1-2, as Divine mercy due to the hardness of human hearts.

Under the provisions of the New Testament, if a husband and wife live together within the bounds of God's blessing and provision, they will never divorce!

Ephesians 5:22-25 shows us how to maintain a Christian marriage. If we truly live according to the New Testament, we will never fall into divorce. Notice Romans 13:10: *"Love works no ill to his neighbor."* How much less to our spouse! When Christians divorce, there is ALWAYS a failure in Christian living involved on the part of one or of both spouses.

In our new nature through the new birth, hardness of heart is done away. If we live in harmony with our new nature in Christ we can make sure that it stays away.

Because of the hardness of heart among the Jews under the Law of Moses, God permitted divorce. He also recognizes divorce and remarriage among all the people of the earth.

There is a measure of Divine Presence in each true marriage, as long as each spouse lives according to the Divine plan of Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:23-25. This is the general state of marriage for all people today.

God holds sinners accountable for their adultery, the same as He does for believers. That means then that He recognizes marriage as valid for saints and sinners alike, on the basis of Genesis 1:28.

Unsaved people can have a happy marriage if they observe the sacredness of marriage and do not defile their marriage bed by adultery. They can claim a measure of God's blessings if they live within the original plan, as Jesus noted in Matthew 19:4-6.

Sin or sainthood is not the issue in God's holy Institution. Sin was not in the world at that time. Therefore, God did not deal with it then as He does now. He never intended for man to sin. If Adam had never sinned, human hearts would not have become so hard as to require God to make an allowance for what He did not intend. How happy mankind would be if we had never sinned!

Adam did sin, and now we must deal with the results. Thank God, by God's grace and mercy, we can overcome the lusts of our flesh that seek to dominate our God given

sexuality. We can obtain the blessings that God provides for us in Christ Jesus. Notice Colossians 1:13-14.

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son: in Whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

We can obtain that blessing through Acts 16:31. *"And they said unto him, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house."*

It is true that believers are new creatures in Christ. We have the nature of Jesus Christ living in us. That should control all of our disposition and activities. Galatians 5:16 tells us to walk in the Spirit and we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. According to the Apostle Peter, we can become partakers of the Divine Nature, through God's exceeding great and precious promises. 2 Peter 1:4.

The New Testament tells us how to deal with the impulses of sin that seek to take us captive through our lusts.

Incidentally, God gave us holy sexual appetite, and other appetites that are holy and acceptable to God. But sin seeks to capture those holy, God given appetites, and by them to make us slaves of sin.

Romans 6:16: *"Know ye not that to whom ye yield your selves to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness?"*

Although we are new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) we are still in our mortal body. We are yet subject to temptation, and influences in the ungodly world around us. (That isn't a case or cause for us to sin.) We also have a determined enemy that goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8. We are to resist him, being steadfast in the faith, according to verse nine.

1 John 5:4 tells us that faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we can overcome every threat. In fact, Romans 8:37 tells us that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

We must constantly be on our guard. We must be watchful lest daily stresses and temptations deceive us, and make us fail. Notice Colossians 3:18-21. *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."*

Earlier we said that the Presence of God is generally in marriage. Then the question of why Christians divorce begs an answer. It is because one or the other of the spouses fail

to live according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That doesn't say that they don't believe on Jesus. They simply don't act as believers in the area of marriage.

The submission of the wife to her husband does not intend that she is to be his slave, or that she is to submit to ungodly behavior. No place in any Scripture does God ever bid ANYONE to sin. No, the word "submit" has to do with orderly living according to the Word of God, with her husband.

Colossians 3:19 bids the husband to love his wife. The word love in this verse means to direct his will towards her, and to find joy in here. It is NOT predicated on modern romantic ideas! He isn't to let himself become embittered towards her for any failure of hers.

On the subject, there is a vital Gospel ingredient that is needed to prevent strife between husbands and wives, family members and society in general. Every Christian should know it well, and practice it constantly. It is found in Matthew 6:14-15 and Mark 11:25-26. *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

In our western society, we assume that human love is the most important part of marriage. It important, but the ability to forgive is also very important! It is in this way that the word "Love" works it highest benefit. Husbands must DIRECT their will to forgive their wife, and wives must DIRECT their will to forgive their husbands! They WILL make mistakes. Forgive each other. Both spouses need God's forgiveness. therefore, forgive.

That is how a husband can prevent himself from becoming embittered towards his wife. It is how the wife can keep from becoming embittered towards her husband. Does the Scripture teach such a concept elsewhere? Surely!

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

Notice how 1 Peter 3:1-4 invokes the behavior of a Christian woman. *"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. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is no corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."*

Thus, if believers in Christ live according to the Word of God, there will never be a divorce among them. There can be no cause of divorce. It surely requires vigilance, and determined commitment to God's Word, but it does work! It also receives God's blessings in so many ways that there is not room in this little book to relate them all. Certainly, Acts 16:31 is one of them! "*And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*"

CHAPTER SIX

The Bible gives clear facts about marriage. When a man is first married, he leaves his father and his mother, and becomes the head of a new family unit, called his 'House'.

The wife is united to him in holy wed lock, so much that she becomes one with him. According to Jesus Christ, they are not two, but one flesh, because God, in a way that seems mysterious to us, joins them together. That joining is more than mere sexual union, as in the case of fornication. God does not enjoin marriage upon fornicators. That is a sin.

It should be noted that the husband NEVER becomes the SPIRITUAL head of his wife! That is reserved for her Lord, Jesus Christ, alone! If he became her head, she would have to pray through him to get to God. Instead, she can pray directly to God through Jesus Christ.

Now let us consider why mere human love is not the ultimate basis of marriage. Our vows and wedding and Divine joining are. When those are correct, we are married, even if we don't love each other. Truly, in the Gospel of Christ, we are bidden to love each other, but even if we don't, we are still married.

It is also true that love is the best environment for a marriage. I am saying that mere human emotion is not the source of the marriage bond. If it were, all Christian believers would be married to each other, because Jesus Christ commanded us to love one another as He loved us. John 15:12. No, the marriage bond is something that God establishes.

Through union with her husband the woman enters into his 'House', and it becomes jointly her 'House'. Normally the spouses devote themselves to each other, and work to make their 'House' their home. They enter into the sacred union by covenant first, and then they consummate their wedding with sexual union. It is at that time that they become one flesh, in the way that Adam said in Genesis 2:24.

The sexual union of husband and wife is primarily for pro creation of children, but it's purpose is by no means limited to producing children. Notice what 1 Corinthians 7:2-5 says.

"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence, and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (Lack of self control.)

This Scripture shows that sexual union is to be rendered duly each to husband and wife. that is so that satan can't tempt them with adultery because of the lack of sexual satisfaction in wed lock.

In this way, married sex is a God given safeguard against sex sin, which might become enticing because of unrequited desire. God has placed in the marriage union a Divinely sanctioned way to meet the insistent demands of the sex desire that He gave to man and woman. He created it in us, and He graciously provided a pure way to deal with it.

Notice that married sex is not sinful: it is right, and it is blessed by God, as we noted in Hebrews 13:4. *"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled."*

Married sex is not a reward for behavior that is deemed acceptable by either spouse, and it ought not to be withheld to punish behavior deemed unacceptable by either spouse. (This presumes behavior other than adultery. Adultery is the Biblically recognized grounds for divorce. Also, adultery may expose a spouse to deadly venereal diseases. That fact must be considered.) Married sex is the conjugal right of each spouse. It is meant to be a willing gift shared with each other by consent.

Of course, there are many other aspects of wedded life. I repeat that one of the most important things in all Christian living, is to learn to forgive and forget offenses. that is especially important between spouses. That requirement does not find it's place only in marriage. It is a solemn warning and requirement in order to gain forgiveness from God for our own trespasses.

Mark 11:25-26: *"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

Each husband and each wife MUST learn to forgive the offenses of their spouse. When such is an unconditional response, there can be no offenses to cause resentment or bitterness. Each spouse must guard their heart and mind, so that they do not lay up grudges and offenses. Don't 'keep track' of each little detail of offenses so as to use them for leverage in future disagreements. Don't use them as a cause for seeking revenge.

Another thing that the husband and wife should learn to do, is to agree on things of concern for the welfare of their 'House', including the children and social activities. The Lord Jesus Christ taught that agreement of two or more is a powerful way to assure answered prayers. Matthew 18:19.

The correct usage of our confession of God's provisions and promises is very important for obtaining His help. Mark 11:23: *"For verily, I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."*

Other advantages accrue to believers who live in holy wed lock. First, they have access to God through faith. He makes all things work together for their good. By using the Scripture as the Lord teaches us to, we can powerfully affect the life and welfare of our

children, e.g., Proverbs 22:16: *"Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

God's grace touches every aspect of their lives. They can be free from fear, anxiety and stress. God's peace can be in their home.

In order to have a firm security in these things, we must daily follow Jesus, and be taught by Him how to apply the provisions and promises of God to ourselves. Those functions aren't just automatic without our co-operation.

We must exercise personal faith, because without faith it is impossible to please God, according to Hebrews 11:6. Also, the Lord Jesus said that unless we deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow Him, we cannot be His disciple. A disciple is a learner; we might say a student. We must learn to be led by the Holy Spirit, so that He can guide us into all truth. He will show us how to receive what God has promised.

As the Holy Spirit thus taught me, I learned a great lesson that I had never heard anyone teach before.

During a Church service one Sunday morning, I heard the Lord say in my spirit: "You send My power unto (He called the name of my son) your son.

At first, I didn't quite know what He meant, but I began to say, "Lord, I send your power unto (I called the name of my son) my son." As I continued to do this on a frequent basis, I got bolder in it. I began to realize that if I could do it for one of my children, I could do it for all of them. To my delight, it worked wonderfully. One of my wayward children walked into Church one Sunday morning some time later, and re-dedicated their life to Christ. Therefore, I know that it will work for all of them!

I began to realize that this was part of the blessing of Acts 16:31. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house."*

The Lord continued, over time, to reveal to me more and more of what is available to us, through applying the Scripture as He taught us to do.

It is a wonderful privilege to connect Matthew 7:24 with Acts 7:31, and with other Scriptures. It works in this manner. I know by the Scripture that I have a 'house' because I am married and with my wife I have five children. We prayed over each one of our children and dedicated them to the Lord when they were but new born infants. We persevered in seeking to train them in the ways of the Lord when they were growing up in our home. In our own daily life, we sought to build our 'house' on the Word of the Lord Jesus, by doing what He says. We believe His Word, and also in His faithfulness.

Notice now the words of Matthew 16:16-18: *"And Simon Peter answered and said unto Him, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee,*

but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The revelation that God gave Peter, is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus builds His Church upon that revelation in all those who by it believe in Him. God puts it in them, and Jesus builds His Church upon it.

Therefore, we can withstand the onslaughts of hell also. Jesus is anointed by God with Divine abilities to deliver us.

"And there was delivered unto Him the Book of the Prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:17-19)

Jesus is anointed By God to do all these wonderful things for everyone, but especially for those who believe in Him. God wants all these things to be done for us because of His love. John 3:16. Praise the Lord.

In Psalms 89:19: *"Then Thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people."*

This is a Messianic Psalm, speaking of Jesus Christ before He was born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus Christ is the Mighty One, exalted by God out of the people. He is mighty to save, and He is my Lord! Praise God. God has anointed Him with all the help that I or any other person could ever need in this world. That anointing became active in His ministry after He was baptized by John the Baptist. Acts 10:38 says He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and power, and that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil.

He is still the same today. He still does good, and heals those who are oppressed by the devil. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We can build our life on Him as our foundation, (our Rock) by doing what He said in the Gospel.

If we habitually practice what He said, both God and man 'see us' as being what we practice. Thus, our works verify our character, good or bad.

We may connect this fact with Mark 11:23, and say without doubting in our heart: "Jesus Christ is my Rock: I am built upon Him, through doing what He said." In that way we are establishing in ourselves what God promised in Acts 16:31. We can boldly say: "My 'house' shall not fall, it shall stand: when the storms of life assail us.

It is vital for us to understand how to get what God has promised. The facts of redemption exist due to what God and Jesus Christ did. We have access to everything that Christ did. We have access to everything that God has provided for us through believing

His promises. Faith does not cause those facts or promises to exist; faith makes it possible for us to receive them. We experience their results through believing God's promises. For example, God's gift of eternal life can only be gotten through faith.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

In a parable Jesus used winds and floods as symbols of contrary circumstances that threaten a 'house'. Floods of ungodliness threatens our 'house' in many ways today. E.g., through drug abuse, alcohol, sex sins, and now also the Internet. But we can boldly say: "My house shall not fall, it shall stand, it's built upon the Rock." Let us hold fast our confession without wavering, for He is faithful that promised, Hebrews 10:23. We ought to engraft our confession into our spirit, so that it is our ready response to any threat.

It is the operation of the Holy Spirit to show us the things of Christ and of God. The Lord Jesus said that He would do that and that He will guide us into all truth. The Holy Spirit wishes to reveal Jesus to us in a personal way. More than just knowing that we are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus teaches us through the anointing that we have received as believers, according to 1 John 2:27. *"But the anointing which ye have received of Him abides in you, and ye need not that any man teach you."*

That working of the Holy Spirit in believers is defined in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10. *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."*

In such a way we need the Lord to reveal Jesus to us as the Anointed One. Yes, we know that Jesus is the Anointed One, because the Scripture says that He is. But we each need a personal grasp by revelation of that fact.

If we deal with a broken heart, we need a revelation that Jesus is the healer of broken hearts. He was anointed to do it, according to Luke 4:18. If we deal with sickness, we need an inner revelation of Jesus as our Healer. He was anointed to do it, per Luke 4:18. When things seem hopeless, and useless, we need an inner revelation that God quickens (makes alive) even the dead, and calls those things that be not as though they were. Romans 4:17.

We can tell when we have an active revelation of some aspect of Christ's anointing. It will give energy and direction to our faith. It will be emphasized in a personal application to our service or need.

Note that Christ, the Spiritual Rock that followed Israel out of Egypt, was not only a shelter, but He heard their words. He was a supplier of all their needs. He even worked in ways that they didn't ask for. Their shoes didn't wear out, their clothes didn't wear out for

the space of forty years! See Deuteronomy 8:4. Christ also heard their murmuring, and judgment came on them because of it.

Christ is not a passive Rock, but an active One. That same Jesus lives in believers today, by His Holy spirit. He desires to be active in us, and to meet our every need. He still works in ways that we may not ask for, at least in His heavenly administrations for us.

In Isaiah 63:1, our Lord is described as "Mighty to save." He is the One upon Whom God laid help for our benefit. Jesus is anointed of God to help us in any way that we need. For instance, we NEED His help to save our loved ones. Acts 16:31 is one of God's responses to that need. It is worth repeating, Jesus is anointed of God with Divine ability in order to help us in any form that we need.

God revealed the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God to Peter. Jesus explained to Peter that he had been given a Divine revelation. He also added to the revelation, so that other believers could be blessed by it. By means of that revelation, Peter became infallible certain that Jesus was more than just a man who did miracles. He was more than any of the Old Testament Prophets. He was actually God in the flesh. Every person who is born again, must have the same revelation. The Church that Jesus builds, is composed of people who have it.

Through that revelation Jesus gave Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. God gives US the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven also through that revelation. According to Acts 16:31, BELIEVING on the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven that will work for us and our house!

The Word of Faith in our mouth is another key of the Kingdom of Heaven, according to Romans 10:8. Verse nine shows that the Kingdom of Heaven opens to us, by using that key. This means that we believe God's Word in our heart, and confess with our mouth what we believe in our heart. That 'unlocks' salvation for us. Acts 16:31 shows that it can include the salvation of our house. The word of faith in our heart and mouth is such a powerful combination that it can work in any way we need.

I believe that in my heart, and therefore, I confess: "My house shall not fall, it's built upon the Rock!" Of course, our confession must not be an empty statement. It must have Divine substance through doing the sayings of Jesus.

"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." (Matthew 7:24). Also: "For if any be a hearer, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was."(James 1:23-24)

By faith then, and with the word of faith in our mouth, God's help that He laid upon Jesus becomes active in me. It's also active in my 'house'. I am a doer of God's Word. Therefore, I confess: "My 'house' shall not fall, it's built upon The Rock, Christ, the One

Whom God anointed with all the help that I need." How often have I witnessed God's help in things that I could not deal with!

Because Christ abides in me, the anointing abides in me and teaches me all things. Note 1 John 2:27: *"But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."*

Again, in Hebrews 4:14: *"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."* Also: *"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward."* (Hebrews 10:35)

"My house shall not fall, it's built upon The Rock." In this form, I am mixing God's Word with faith in my heart, and I am confessing what I believe in my heart.

The Lord Jesus said in Mark 11:23: *"For verily, I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."* Because of that fact, I repeat: "My house shall not fall: it's built upon the Rock."

CHAPTER SEVEN

The concept that human love is not the ultimate basis for marriage can be seen by studying the details of the first marriage. For instance, we only assume that Adam and Eve loved each other. I doubt not that they did, but the Bible does not say that they did. They were married without any courtship, engagement, or other traditions that have come along since. God introduced Eve to Adam, and immediately there was a marriage.

Therefore, the will of God was the ultimate basis for their marriage. I am talking about Marriage being God's will for humanity, not whether two people are suited to each other. That is beyond the intent of this book.

I don't mean that we must have a direct indication from God that we should marry anyone. He may do that, but He usually doesn't. The Scripture lists few instances of God choosing a person's spouse for them. The New testament indicates that the choice of a spouse is our personal choice, the only exception being that a believer should marry a believer.

What I am saying is that our agreements, or disagreements, our affections, or lack thereof, social and educational status, or the intensity of our affections are not what constitutes marriage. When we COMMIT ourselves to each other, and COVENANT BEFORE GOD to live in holy wedlock, God joins us together, and THEN we consummate our wedding by the sex act. THAT is Biblical Marriage. All three of these elements appear in Adam and Eve's wedding. Genesis 2:22-25; Genesis 4:1.

Assuredly, love is the best environment and benefit of wedlock. I know of no one who would choose to live with someone that they did not love, if they could avoid it. I am laboring this point, because western society has made marriage dependent on emotion, so much that many couples divorce if they no longer sense love in their marriage. Or else they seek solace with someone other than their spouse. Lack of emotion is not Biblical grounds for adultery or divorce!

The marriage of believers should be vastly different from that of unbelievers. The reason is that believers can learn to 'operate' in a realm that unbelievers do not know. Viz, the realm of Biblical faith.

Both the Old and the New testaments state that the Just shall live by faith. Habbakuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11. Believers who are following Jesus know that we are to live by faith, not by sight.

Such Godly living is what sets the marriages of believers and unbelievers apart. We are to live by what we believe more than by what we feel. We are to bring our feelings into line with what God's Word says; making His Word our reference, rather than our feelings.

It is true that human emotion has funded many good marriages among believers and unbelievers alike. But in our society in these times, human emotion is failing to sustain

marriages at an alarming rate. One out of two marriages end in divorce! That includes marriages that began with good intentions and strong human love.

Grievously, many born again believers are faced with divorce. True disciples of Jesus Christ should hold a sacred respect for His teachings. He taught that it is not God's will for man and wife to divorce. Still, some believers are forced into a divorce not of their choosing. Though God says that He hates putting away (divorce) Malachi 2:16, He is merciful to those compelled by an unbelieving spouse into divorce. Howbeit, if every born again believer would deal with their emotions on the basis of what God said, many such divorces could be avoided.

Believers must guard against a worldly attitude caused by an undue influence of secular Psychology. The Word of God MUST have precedence over secular Psychology in the life of every believer. When Psychology conflicts with the Word of God, it is ALWAYS WRONG!

Some people seem to think that we must always have a perceived, fervent, romantic love for our spouse. If we do, well and good. But simply because one does not feel love does not mean that it's o.k. to divorce. Some people think of incompatibility as grounds for divorce, i.e., for lack of desired responses in each spouse, there is no longer a basis for that marriage. The Court's amoral regard for Marriage cannot make incompatibility grounds for divorce in Gods sight.

The Lord Jesus completely ignored such ideas when He said: "*What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*" Believers must decide who is going to dictate their behavior. The human legal system, or the Word of God? Legal decree cannot negate God's Word.

Other people say: "We've just drifted apart, and no longer have the interest we once had in each other." Again, that is not reason to divorce. Sex sin is the only grounds for divorce, according to Jesus Christ. If you have drifted apart, just drift back together again! It can be done by acting upon the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus bade us deny ourselves: that includes dealing with sexual lust. It includes not seeking an excuse for divorce. We are to live in harmony with our spouse. The wife is to submit to her husband. The husband is to love his wife. If we live according to the New Testament, we shall have the means to deal with problems without turning to divorce. And we can develop or maintain true, satisfying love for our spouse.

Commonly, divorce causes more problems than it solves. But living according to the New testament not only can resolve problems, it can give us abundant life and the blessings of God.

To live with a spouse for 50-75 years with no times of stress may not be easy to do. But in spite of difficulties, we can remain married 'til death do us part.' Remember your wedding vows?

Now let us turn to the issue of a marriage in which there seems to be no love. Surely, it would be difficult to live in such an empty union. If we learn to live by faith, God's Word can provide the means to effectively deal with such a case.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." (2 Corinthians 10:4). In order to live as a New Testament believer, we must learn how to use the weapons that God has made available to us.

One of those weapons is the ability to cast down imaginations, see 2 Corinthians 10:5. For one thing, it is a vain imagination to suppose that it's God's will to divorce simply because one feels no emotion for their spouse.

Remember that before marriage, there was something about your spouse that attracted you. In many cases, there is no lack of effort to gain the approval of an intended spouse. Such effort after the ceremony would 'fix' a lot of marriages. Do what's necessary to gain their approval AFTER the wedding ceremony!

The Bible strongly bids husbands to love their wives. It doesn't ask him to feel emotion first, it just says DO it! It doesn't say if she DESERVES it, or if she is ATTRACTIVE, it just says DO it! That is God's Word. For believers THAT fact alone should be the reason to do it.

"Well," one might ask, "must I do without love for the rest of my life?" The answer is NO. Notice Romans 5:5: *"...because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

We can ask the Lord to revive or instill love for our spouse. Too often the lack of love stems from unresolved conflict. Biblical forgiveness will often resolve the issue, and permit true love to flourish again. Beware that a desire to have another wife or husband doesn't cause love for your spouse to fail. Deep heart searching while in prayer can help identify such problems.

Christians often quote among themselves: "We don't live by sight. We can't depend on our feelings as the basis of whether we are saved or not." Our salvation is by trusting in the Lord and in His written Word.

QUESTION: May we not use the same facts regarding our feelings for our spouse, other Christians, and for people in general? Somehow, when it comes to very deep personal issues, we seem to think that our emotions and sincerity guarantees their effect. If we don't perceive these things, we assume they are not present. We ought not to assume grounds for divorce simply because of lagging responses to or from our spouse.

We should believe what God's Word says about marriage, and yield ourselves to it without reserve. Through believing the Word of God, we can gain His help when dealing with any case or problem. Of course such a commitment has its best result if both spouses have the same commitment to Christ.

Now notice 1 Corinthians 7:13-16. *"And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband."*

Verse 15: *"But and if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."*

In the above verses, the word "depart" means to divorce. The Word of God says that if an unbelieving spouse departs (divorces) the remaining spouse is not under bondage (the marriage bond) in such cases. Why not?! Because the departing one assumes the role of the unbeliever, even if they continue to profess faith in Christ. They are ACTING in the role of the unbeliever!

God has never given to any person the 'right' to dominate another human soul. Therefore, one CANNOT make their spouse do what is right, even with New Testament faith. Let them depart. If you wish, pray for restoration and repentance on the part of the unbeliever. But the remaining believer is not under bondage. That is 'Gospel' according to the Apostle Paul.

Divorce and remarriage are so common today, that many people don't seem to reverence the sacred Institution. Howbeit, it is still a sin to commit adultery. It's a sin to commit fornication. It's a sin to cohabit with 'live in' sex partners. Notice the warning in Hebrews 13:4: *"Whoremongers and adulterers will God judge."*

Such sins are so repulsive to God that He calls them abominable. He utterly detests them. People of any disposition towards God will incur the Divine penalty for such sins.

Notice the warning in Revelation 21:8: *"But the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

Whatever one's idea about eternal salvation, to have a part in the Lake of Fire does NOT mean that one is going to heaven! Therefore, in the fear of God, believers ought to beware of a worldly attitude about marriage and divorce. As children of God by faith, our life style ought to be very different from that of the unbelieving world around us.

Our methods of dealing with marital problems ought to be very different from those of the unbelievers. If we center our life on the Word of God, it's power will work for our good in all things. The Word of God will give us abilities and access to things that unbelievers do not have. According to the Scripture we are wise to fear God: to depart from evil is understanding.

We need to learn to use our faith as the Bible tells us to. E.g., Romans 4:17 states that God calls those things that be not as though they were. Ephesians 5:1 shows that it's proper for God's children to do the same!

We know that we are born again, even in times when we may not feel so spiritual. Thank God, He has said that He will never leave us, or forsake us. It is a great comfort to have that fact ingrained in our conscience. He will help us! He will help us with our marriage, and with everything else that we believe Him for.

Let us trust in the Lord for the benefits and blessings of Acts 16:31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

In Mark 11:23, the Lord Jesus said if we say with our mouth, and doubt not in our heart, but shall believe that what we say shall come to pass, we shall have whatsoever we say.

Therefore, learn to say with your mouth, believing in your heart: "My house shall not fall: it's built upon the Rock. I am a doer of God's Word."

As we have noted, God's Presence in marriages which are made and lived according to His Word. His Presence fills all of heaven and earth, yet multitudes are completely unaware of how close His is to us. We need to become sensitive to God's Presence. Notice Acts 17:28: "*For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.*"

How can we become aware of Him? How can we interact with a person we cannot see? We can do it through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus is so identical with God the Father, that He said: "**He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.**" John 14:9. When we believe on Jesus Christ, we are in reality believing in God the Father. We please God the Father by following Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:10 tells us that everyone that believes on Jesus Christ has the witness in himself. We can perceive the Presence of God by that witness. He dwells in us by the Holy Spirit. We can become sensitive to Him. Not only to know that we are saved, but also to know the Personal activity of God within us. We can KNOW by that witness.

In addition to that, if we are saved, the written Word of God promises that He will never leave us. Therefore, in two ways, we can realize God's Presence with us. First, by the written Word. Second, by that inward witness. We can live in conscious awareness of God's Presence. this is in addition to the general presence of God, such as is in the universe, and also in our marriage. Knowing that God is with us is a powerful comfort and assurance to us.

Married people have a deep, inner awareness that they are married. We can develop that awareness until we are aware of the presence of our spouse, even if we are miles apart. During military service, I was across the ocean. That distance didn't diminish my consciousness of my wife.

Though we couldn't talk to each other, she was just as dear to me as if I had been by her side. I was just as true to her, as if she had been by my side. I sorely missed her, but because she believes in Jesus Christ, I knew that I could trust her.

Knowing my responsibility to God and to my wife kept me in line. I didn't play with temptation, lest I wreck what is dear to me. God's Presence is dear to me. My wife is dear to me. These are treasures that God has given me. To defile them would be profane. The Bible describes the character of a man named Esau like that. Hebrews 12:16-17.

Esau seemed to be dominated by what he wanted "at the moment". When he was hungry, sacred things didn't mean much to him. A bowl of pottage was more urgent to him at the time than a promise blessing in the future.

Just so, sinful gratification is more important to the adulterer than the blessing of God, or the welfare of his wife! Profane! He shall not inherit the Kingdom of God; he gambles it for a momentary sensation! Profane!

Awareness of our spouse at all times, can be such a blessing! What comfort, strength, and assurance flows out of the Marriage Bond. It affects me, it affects my wife. It affects our children and grandchildren. It affects my house!

I know that there are many of God's blessings in my marriage. For over forty seven years our marriage has been based upon the Word of God. Praise God, it has always sustained us.

Also, I have a measure of God's grace upon my life that goes beyond marriage. I am redeemed. I know it. God's Presence is with me ALL the time. I know it. God's blessings 'move' things in life for me. I know it, praise God.

Adulterers and fornicators know no such comfort. It is not present with them. Those who are married but commit adultery do not have such intimacy with their spouses. (There may be a modicum of closeness, but not the intimacy I am talking about.) It can't be had with a secret sin in the heart. In addition, there is a deep awareness of being personally WRONG before God! Such people do not know the restful peace that comes from being right with God.

The grace of God in the forgiveness of our sins can fix a guilty conscience! Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." We must repent and ask God for it.

If we want God's blessings in this life, and in the world to come, we can freely receive them. Jesus said: "*He that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.*" John 6:37. Yes, the worst of sins can be forgiven. Come to Jesus!

If you want to know and be sure that you born again, you can be sure by doing exactly what Romans 10:9 says: *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

Simply say with your mouth, believing in your heart that God has raised Jesus Christ from the dead; "I confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ IS my Lord: I believe in my heart that God has raised Him from the dead. Now, Oh, God, since you can't lie, and I have done what you said in Your Word, I believe that I am saved. Thank you, Heavenly Father for saving me. Amen."

If you sincerely did that, you ARE saved (born again) right now according to God's Word! Praise God. God bless you. Now commit yourself to follow Jesus every day, by doing what His Word teaches about living for Him. Read your Bible every day, and pray (talk) to the Lord every day. Be thankful to Him, and tell Him so! Ask Him to help you develop a Godly marriage, if you are already married. If you are not yet married, then begin now to ask Him to help you choose the spouse that will be a blessing to you by His grace. Amen.

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