

The Purpose Of Marriage - Part 1

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December 7, 2013

Today's state of marriage is not very good. Fifty percent of the marriages end in divorce.

This is a quote from a church paper that was sent out. "Irving Benson and Jesse Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days." The implication is once you get married it's all over with and in the world that's kind of the way it is.

We have now same-sex marriages that are commonplace. We had a full page article in the Yakima paper. Now, they're talking about same-sex divorces. And they've got to get all the legal things in place to allow same-sex divorces. So, it's just a mess.

Now, let's turn over to Genesis 1 and verse 27, and begin in the beginning about marriage. Genesis 1:27, this is something we cannot forget. Notice what we see here.

Genesis 1:27. *God created man* [and that means mankind, humankind: *God created man*] *in his own image* [in His image], *in the image of God created he him* [meaning mankind] ... (KJV)

But notice.

27) God... male and female created he them. (KJV)

So, it was God's design to have male and female in humankind. So, we have to ask the question, "In planning creation, why did God create the sexes? Why did He create male and female?"

It certainly wasn't for reproduction because there are animals and organisms on earth today that are unisex and they reproduce among themselves. They don't need male and female. The angels are sexless. We know that in Mark 12. So, it wasn't necessary for reproduction that God do that, that He would do that.

Another question is, "Okay, create the sexes, male and female, but why marriage? Why bring them together? Why not reproduce promiscuously as most animals do, and frankly, as many people do today?" God didn't intend that.

There is great confusion today over every aspect of marriage as we know. The women's liberation advocates say that the sexes are the same. The only differences are due to the way they were raised in the environment and the oppression of women. The male chauvinists say that the men are superior in every meaningful way. And, in

fact, some ministers in past years in the Worldwide Church of God preached that. I've heard it, got the notes on it.

So, all of this is the point that today male and female roles are often reversed; they are often confused.

And yet, the Bible, as we know, provides a very simple answer to why male and female, why marriage. So, this is going to be the first of a two-part sermon. Today we're going to cover the purpose of marriage, what is the purpose of marriage? And then the next time we're going to answer two questions: What does God want us to learn in a marriage? And then the second thing we'll cover next time is: How do we solve problems in a marriage God's way? Not man's way, but God's way.

So, today we're going to talk about the purpose of marriage. Now, we're going to begin by discussing three fundamental facts about marriage. The first one has five parts and that will be the longest. Then we'll cover two more, and then conclude with a couple of points.

1. The first fundamental fact about marriage is that men and women are different.

Anyone with a brain, anyone with eyes to see understands that men and women are different. Men and women are wired differently. They are created differently.

Now understand, what I'm about to cover there are exceptions, yes. There are individual differences, yes. Much of it is due to the way our parents raised us and the type of family we grew up in. Yes, there are individual differences, but in general these five points about where men and women are different hold true.

A. Okay, the first one, and this is the big one, is men think and women feel.

The husband says to the wife, "Honey, you're just not being logical." And she says back to him, "You don't have any feelings. You don't care." They're just different. Men think logically. Women react to their feelings.

A woman, a wife, walking out with a new dress showing it to her husband, what's on her mind is how this new dress makes her feel. She feels good. She feels beautiful. Guess what's on the man's mind? How much does it cost? That's what's on his mind. Just different. Men are more guarded in the expression of their emotions and women are more expressive of their emotions.

Another example: Wife says to the husband, "Do you remember when you gave me this necklace?" Now she's thinking of how the gift of the necklace from her husband made her feel, how warm and fuzzy and wonderful it was. She remembered what she had on. She remembered where they were and she asked her husband, "Do you remember when you gave me this necklace?" And the husband looks at her and says,

“Huh?” He doesn’t remember. Most men, they don’t remember. They don’t remember the time. It’s just right over the top of their heads in many cases.

He’ll say to her, “Honey, you’re on an emotional roller coaster. I cannot keep up with you.” And she says, “You never show any feelings.” Wired differently.

Go to a funeral. Who is doing most of the crying? Women. Men are sitting there stony-faced. Very rarely do you see a man cry at a funeral or at a movie because men were taught—I certainly was—the John Wayne stereotype, that if you show emotion, it is a sign of weakness. Men don’t show emotion. And yet, women are full of emotion. And this is a huge difference between men and women.

Now, going back to the beginning again, let’s go back to Genesis chapter 3 this time. We’re going to see that Eve was deceived by her feelings. We’ll look at verse 6 of Genesis chapter 3. We’re just breaking into the context. Satan is there. He has tempted her to eat the fruit that God told her not to eat.

Genesis 3:6. *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, ... (KJV)*

... the desire to eat and all the emotions that come with taste and sight and smell.

6b) ... and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, ... (KJV)

Emotions come in in that regard.

6 continued) ... she took of the fruit thereof, and [she ate it], and [she also] gave [it to] her husband with her; and he did eat. (KJV)

So we see that there wasn’t a whole lot of thinking and logic going on, but there were feelings. And Satan played into that and she was deceived. Notice 1 Timothy 2:14. Paul addresses this directly. He’s talking about this dynamic of being deceived and the interaction between Satan and Adam and Eve. I’ll read it out of the New Living Testament. It puts it in modern English, doesn’t change the meaning at all.

1 Timothy 2:14. *And it was the woman, not Adam, who was deceived by Satan and sin was the result. (NLT)*

Now the oldest manuscripts say “*having been seduced by deceit.*” That Eve was seduced by deceit. In other words, she did not think it through. She was reacting on emotions.

Now it was a worse sin for Adam because he wasn’t deceived but he still ate it. He knowingly did it, whereas Eve was deceived by the emotions and the feelings. And, obviously, that’s something that women have to be very careful about.

The point is God does both. God thinks logically and critically, and yet, God has emotion. God does both.

Look at Christ's example. Let's go to Luke 19 and look at verse 27. This is looking forward to a day that all the enemies of God are going to be eliminated. And this is going to be a day that is very serious. Luke 19:27, Christ says:

Luke 19:27. *But those [my] enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring [here], and [kill] them before me. (KJV)*

"I want to see that it's done." Christ knows that those who would not accept His way of love would not accept His rulership and command over them. He knows that they must be removed. They must be killed. It is better for them that they don't live an eternity in misery and rebellion. It's better for all of those remaining because they're not influenced by these people that just don't want to accept Christ's rule. So, that is a very logical thinking decision that God and Christ have made and Christ will implement.

But look at the other side of that, Jesus Christ. Let's go to John chapter 11 and look at verses 32 through 36. John 11, we're breaking into the context. Lazarus has died and Mary is coming toward Jesus.

John 11:32. *And when Mary was come [to] where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if [you had] been here, my brother [Lazarus wouldn't have] died.*

33) When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, ... (KJV)

Notice His attitude. Notice His feelings.

33b) ... he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. (KJV)

He wasn't cold and heartless. He didn't say, "Well, that's your problem," or, "you'll get over it." He didn't say that. Look at verse 34.

34) [He says], Where have [you] laid him? They [told] him, Lord, come and see. (KJV)

And in verse 35, it says:

35)..Jesus wept.

36) Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! (KJV)

Well, Christ wept because Mary was crying. All those around Him were crying. And He had great feelings because of their suffering. Those feelings were great enough that it caused Him to weep. He had deep feelings for all of those people.

So you see Christ has the perfect combination, very logical, very intelligent thinking and on the other hand, He has emotions that allow Him to have great feeling. Decisions have to be made on logic and on fact, but they must be tempered by feeling, by empathy, by compassion.

So the conclusion is: Yes, men think, women feel, but God and Christ do both.

B. Now a second big difference between men and women is that men tend to see the overall picture, women tend to see the details.

I was in a conversation with one of Dorothy's aunts. We were having dinner. This was years ago and I asked her "How are you feeling today?" And I got a three-month summary of every doctor visit, every pill, every ache, every pain, and it took probably fifteen or twenty minutes. Now if you asked that question to a man, "How are you feeling today?" he would say, "Fair. Okay." Look at the difference. And you women know this. When you talk amongst yourselves, the details flow. With a man it's a one or two-word answer.

When we owned our business, it was in the wintertime. I was in Portland. The sun had set. It was dark. It was raining cats and dogs. And I was headed to a call, 6 or 7 o'clock at night. And I needed a model number and a price, of a particular thing that I needed to discuss with this dealer. I'm in the car and this is the day before GPS. We just barely had cell phones—those gigantic things that were there.

And I am fighting for my life in Portland traffic, freeways, exits, dark, raining, water all over the windshield. And I call the office and our office manager—a woman that I dearly love to this day.... I said "I need the model number and the price." And I'm fighting for survival on the freeways here.

And she launches into a litany, a history of that part, what the model number was a couple of years ago but then they changed it to this model number; but then it was not available; but now it is available and now it's over here; and now it's got this new model number. And it used to be this price, but then it changed to this price; but when the new model came, it went to this price. And I said, "I don't need the details, I just want a model number and a price. And I'm trying to survive on the freeway."

Men and women are wired differently!

Now the opposite example is: Dorothy and I a few years ago were up at Chinook Pass. It was in the late spring/early summer. And there's a huge meadow just above the pass there. And we decided to hike up a little bit above the meadow. And we were trudging through the grass.

And Dorothy says, "Oh, look at the flowers!" And she was maybe a step behind me off to my right. I'm looking around; I don't see any flowers. And she's down on her knees

and she says, "Look!" And so I look down. I squat down. And there are these little flowers, beautiful little flowers about the size of an eraser on a pencil. I mean they're about the size of an aspirin. But she saw them. And I'm trudging through, stomping all over the flowers. And I'm thinking about what I'm going to do tomorrow and where I have to go next week and this kind of stuff. And these flowers are just beautiful.

I got to thinking to myself, "How much of life have I missed?" You know by not focusing on the details, not living in the moment and focusing on the details.

Now let me give you two Biblical examples of this. The first one is going to be ignoring the big picture and the second one is going to be ignoring the details.

Let's go to 2 Samuel chapter 6. And this is the example of when the ark of God was taken, and then, God through miracles has made it possible for the ark to come back to Jerusalem. 2 Samuel chapter 6, we're going to begin in verse 12. And notice this: David is bringing the ark back to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 6:12. *And it was told king David saying [It was told to him], The LORD [has] blessed the house of Obbedom, and all that [pertains] unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obbedom into the city of David with gladness. (KJV)*

It was a great, joyous celebration.

13) And it was so, that when they that [bore] the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, [they stopped and then they] sacrificed oxen and fatlings. (KJV)

And when that was done, they took another six paces and did it over again.

14) And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. (KJV)

And if you've looked into the history of that when men had this long robe, what they would do if they had to run, they would pick up the skirts of it and tuck it into the rope around their center or the leather strap around like we would have a belt today. And then they would run. Or they would just pick it up.

And obviously David is dancing here. He's got the skirt up probably to his waist or mid-thigh and he is dancing and kicking his legs and all of that. You're seeing some of David's legs. And he was dancing with all his might. So, in verse 15:

15) So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the [Eternal] with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16) And as the ark of the [Eternal] came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter [David's wife] looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the [Eternal]; and she despised him in her heart. (KJV)

Now what she did is she saw the detail of the dancing. And she saw that probably some younger women looking at David's legs. Who knows? Or she thought he was just making a fool out of himself. The king is out here. He should be dignified and very circumspect but he's out dancing and kicking up his legs. And she despised him.

The point is though that she missed the meaning of the whole occasion because she was so focused on the details. The ark is coming back to Jerusalem. That's the big picture; that's what should be focused on. Not getting obsessed about maybe this one little detail. So, that is something that, obviously, all of us need to pay attention to.

Now, let's look at the opposite where the details are ignored to someone's hurt. Let's go to 1 Samuel 15. We'll begin in verse 1. I think we're all familiar with this. We've read it many times before, the account of the Amalekites and what Samuel told Saul to do.

1 Samuel 15:1. *Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint [you] to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore [Notice this: Listen you] unto the voice of the words of the [Eternal]. (KJV)*

"Listen to every word."

2) Thus [says], the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid [in] wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. (KJV)

And the account was that Amalek would not confront Israel face to face. They didn't want a fair fight. They would wait for the lame, for the infirm, for the elderly, for the children, for the stragglers and they would wipe them out—very cowardly. And God, obviously, didn't take kindly to that. Verse 3:

3) Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; ... (KJV)

That's the big picture but notice the details. God is now giving the details.

3b) ... but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and [donkey]. (KJV)

All the animals, the little ones, the young ones, the old ones, men and women. Verse 9:

9) But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good [good in their view], and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, they utterly destroyed. (KJV)

Verse 22:

22) *Samuel said, [Has] the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? ... (KJV)*

In detail—not just the big picture, but in detail.

22b) *... Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to [listen, which he didn't do] than the fat of rams. (KJV)*

Saul ignored the details to his own peril. He lost the kingdom because he didn't pay attention to the details.

Now, a good example is prayer because prayer involves both the big picture and the details. In Matthew 6, we have the outline of the prayer and that gives us the big picture, the overall format, but notice—we won't turn there, but—in Revelation 5:8, it tells us that incense is a symbol of the prayers of the saints. And in Leviticus 16, we're told that incense was beaten up small in a mortar and pestle, ground down very small to the consistency of flour. And then it was brought into the veil and then it was incinerated and then the cloud of that incense went over the mercy seat. That tells us that our prayers go up to God, but the prayers have to be beaten small. Meaning: We have to not only get the big picture in Matthew chapter 6, but God expects us to cover the details.

Now think about this. God designed the overall plan for mankind, this gigantic big picture overall plan for mankind, and He designed the snowflake. God does both. He sees the big picture, but He also focuses on the details. He has both in perfect balance.

C. A third difference between men and women is that men tend to be more aggressive and to take more chances. Women tend to be more security motivated, safety and security motivated.

Now, it's no more apparent than in our driving habits. The wife says, "Honey, it's raining hard outside. Could you slow down? Please." What does he say? "Don't worry. I can handle it. I'll take care of it." You see men view an instance like that as a challenge. Women view it as a danger. And we're just wired differently that way.

Men have been given many of God's leadership qualities—more aggressive. You know we talk about alpha-male, those characteristics. God gave man the physical strength to go along with that leadership ability, some of the characteristics that He gave men. Peter says in 1 Peter 3 that women are the weaker vessel, meaning physically weaker. Generally women don't have the muscle strength that men do. I think that's obvious.

So, men were given many of God's leadership qualities, but women were given God's caring, protective, and nurturing qualities. Women focus on the safety and the security of their family, of their brood, so to speak. It's needed for raising and caring for children. Don't mess with mamma bear. If you've been in the woods, that's one thing you're told.

If those cubs are around and mamma bear is there, you had better get out of the way! Because mamma bear and human mothers focus on the safety and the security and the welfare of their children.

Also women, it's been my observation, have been given a long term stamina that men have not been given. Men can have a burst of strength and do the heavy lifting so to speak, but at the end of the day they're crashed out on the couch and mama keeps plodding right along. She takes care of the kids. She gets up with them in the middle of the night. She nurses. She feeds. She does all of the chores steady, steady, steady with long term stamina. God has given her that ability.

Now, let's look at the difference. It's no more apparent than these two differences, when you look at the encounter between David and Abigail. Let's go back to 1 Samuel chapter 25. David is on the run from Saul. He's being pursued and he's got several hundred men with him, but if you're on the run, you run short of food and water and other necessities. And he is in that situation. Verse 2 of 1 Samuel 25:

1 Samuel 25:2. And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, he had three thousand sheep, a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. (KJV)

It was a shearing time.

3) Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife [was] Abigail: she was a woman of good understanding ... (KJV)

She was smart. She was intelligent. She had wisdom.

3b) ... and of a beautiful countenance: but the man ... (KJV)

I'm reading out of the King James. It says:

3 continued) ... the man was churlish ... (KJV)

We don't often use that word. It means *rude or mean spirited*.

3 continued) ... [he] was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb. (KJV)

So you have this beautiful smart woman married to this jerk. And, obviously, it was an arranged marriage. It was common in those days. With her wisdom, she wouldn't marry somebody like that unless it was an arranged marriage. Verse 5:

5) And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, [he says,] Get ... up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: (KJV)

Because David needed provisions. Verse 7, this is what they said speaking on behalf of David, as though David were speaking.

7) And now I have heard [referring to David] that [you have] shearers: now [your] shepherds which were with us, we [did not] hurt them, neither was there [anything] missing unto them, ... while they were in Carmel. (KJV)

“We took care of them. We protected your men.” Verse 8:

8) Ask [your] young men, and they will [show you]. Wherefore, let the young men [meaning David’s young men] find favor in [your] eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray [you], whatsoever [comes] to [your] hand unto [your] servants and your son David. (KJV)

He’s asking for help. He’s asking for provisions. Verse 10:

10) And Nabal answered David’s servants and said, Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? ... (KJV)

Now it’s obvious that Nabal knew who David was. I mean the situation with Goliath. He was in Saul’s court. Everybody knew. So he [Nabal] is just on a path now to exalt himself and have power and control over the situation and over David. He goes on to say, very insultingly:

10b) ... there [are] many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

11) Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto [a man that I don’t even know where they’re coming from]? (KJV)

“I don’t know who he is or where he’s coming from.”

Verse 13, now the alpha male comes out in David and he is not happy. “*And David said unto his men;*” he says, “*Get on every one of you. Grab your sword. Strap it on.*” We would say in the Old West, “Put on your guns. We’re going to war.”

13b) ... And they [put] on every man his sword; David [put on] his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred [men] abode by the stuff. (KJV)

Or the provisions just to keep it safe. Verse 21:

21) Now David had said, ... (KJV)

He’s saying this to himself and to the men there on their way.

21b) ... Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow [has] in the wilderness, ... (KJV)

He said, "I protected him for nothing!"

21 continued) ... so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: [for] he [has reputed] me evil for good.

Just the opposite of God's way. "I did good to him. Now he's giving evil back to me." So, the alpha male rears its head.

22) So and more also do God [to] the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertains to him by the morning light any [male]. (KJV)

Now, some of those males could be Abigail's children or relatives—most likely both. Now let's go back to verse 18. Abigail senses trouble brewing and she takes action.

18) Then Abigail [hurried up], took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep [already] dressed, and five measures of parched corn, a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on [donkeys]. (KJV)

Verse 23, notice what happened.

23) When [she] saw David, she [hurried, she jumped] off the [donkey], fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground. (KJV)

Before a word was said! David's looking down at this beautiful woman kneeling at his feet. Verse 24:

24) [She] fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: ... (KJV)

She's taking all the blame, although, as we'll find out, none of it was her fault.

24b) ...and [she says] let [your] handmaid, I pray speak in [your] audience, and [please] hear the words of [your handmaiden]. (KJV)

She did this to get his attention. She's smart. She humbled herself, didn't exalt herself because David was going to wipe out possibly members of her family or of her servants that she dearly loved. So she humbled herself and got his attention. Verse 25:

25) Let not my lord, I pray [you] regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, ... (KJV)

If you look up the Hebrew, it means *stupid or wicked or dolt*. Again, an arranged marriage. And she said:

25b) ... folly is with him: but I [your] handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom [you did] send. (KJV)

She said, "I wasn't there. I didn't see it happen. I heard it went badly." Verse 26:

26) Now therefore, my lord [talking to David], as the [Eternal lives], and as [your life lives], seeing the [Eternal] has [withheld you] from coming to shed blood, and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now let [your] enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord [to David], be as Nabal. (KJV)

Stupid, dumb, jerks. Verse 32, notice David's attitude and the result of this.

32) David said to Abigail, Blessed be the [Eternal] God of Israel, which sent [you] this day to meet me: (KJV)

David said, "God did this. You're following God's admonition, God's inspiration." Verse 33:

33) And blessed be [your] advice, ... (KJV)

He's listening to her.

33b) ... and blessed be [you], which [has] kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with [my] own hand. (KJV)

David listened and learned from this woman at his feet.

34) For in [every] deed, as the LORD God of Israel [lives], which [has] kept me back from hurting [you], except [you had hurried] to come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any [males]. (KJV)

And you see the point is that she had the security and the safety and the well-being in mind of, obviously her family but, all of the servants, all of these innocent servants of this jerk. And she felt for those who would be harmed. She had sensitivity to know what David would most likely do and she ran to him in a hurry because she knew and had this sense of what David might do.

So you can see here in this encounter that a man and a woman can counter-balance one another, listening and learning from one another. But, you see, God has both in perfect balance, aggressiveness and protectiveness. God takes action when it needs to be taken. He protects those that He loves and He does it in a perfect balance.

D. The fourth difference between men and women is that men are more decisive and dogmatic, whereas women tend to be more open-minded and more easily influenced.

The wife says, "Well, maybe we should do this but my friend Mary says 'That won't be any good.' So maybe we should do this other thing. But, then again, we might do this third thing." And the man is sitting there shaking his head saying, "Would you please make up your mind. Just let me know what you're going to do." And she's bouncing all over thinking of all the possibilities that could happen.

On the other hand, she can say to her husband, "Maybe you should consider this..." He says, "Nope! Mind's made up. Don't want to discuss it." She is more open and she is more easily influenced by the opinions of others where he tends to be closed down, dogmatic, very decisive.

Now, we've seen already that Eve was easily influenced by Satan. She accepted Satan's statement that God was a liar. She accepted that and was influenced by her emotions, but conversely to that, the other side of that, is that men think that changing a decision is a sign of weakness. We saw that in David. David set out to kill people. He changed that decision. But we think, men think there is something that just diminishes the maleness of a man to change a decision.

Let's go to Exodus 32. Moses and Christ, the God of the Old Testament, are on the top of Mount Sinai. We'll begin in verse 7. Notice what happens here. Exodus 32:7.

Exodus 32:7. *And the [Eternal] said unto Moses, "Get [you] down! [Go back down the mountain.] for [your] people [which you brought] out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.*

8) They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: They have made [them] a molten calf, and [they've] worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto [it], and said [looking at the calf], These be [your] gods, O Israel, which have brought you up out of the land of Egypt. (KJV)

Totally ignoring God. Totally diminishing anything God has done for them. Verse 9:

9) And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people: (KJV)

Verse 10 is the key here.

10) Now [wherefore] let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of [you] a great nation. (KJV)

"Rather than Abraham," God says, "I'm going to wipe them all out and start all over with you." I can think of some people today who would say, "Yeah, that's a great idea. Let

me be the patriarch of God's people down through the ages." But notice Moses' reaction.

11) Moses besought the [Eternal] his God, and said, LORD, why does [Your] wrath wax hot against ... (KJV)

He reminds Him:

11b) ... [They're Your] people, which [You have] brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? (KJV)

And he says, "If You go ahead and do this," (in verse 12), "the Egyptians are going to speak, and say:"

12b) ... For mischief [for evil] did he bring them out, to [kill] them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? ... (KJV)

"You're this evil God that just performed all these miracles to get them out of Egypt and then kill them in the desert." He says:

12 continued) ... Turn [You] from [Your] fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against [Your] people.

13) Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, [Your] servants, to whom [You swore] by [Your] own self, and [said] unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. (KJV)

He says, "Please remember the plan and what You said." Notice God's reaction, Christ's.

14) And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. (KJV)

God listened and changed His decision. It was not a sign of weakness. Just as David changed what He was going to do. It is not a sign of weakness. In fact, one of the characteristics of Christians should be the following. Let's go to James 3 and verse 17. James is talking about the wisdom that comes from God, from above. And it includes being able to listen and to be appealed to. James 3:17.

James 3:17. *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, [it is] gentle, [but notice this] easy to be [entreated], ... (KJV)*

Easy for somebody to come to one and reason with them and talk with them very calmly. No walls, no barriers.

17b) ... full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.
(KJV)

God has both of these in perfect balance. God is decisive. Yet God is easily entreated as we've seen here. So, let's understand that.

E. The last difference between men and women is that women are very sensitive to other people, whereas men can tend to be indifferent to other people.

Men are more task oriented, job oriented whereas women are very sensitive to others.

Think of this. What would happen if the husband said to his wife, "Hey, looks like you've put on a little weight lately." How far would that get you? And if a husband did that it would indicate a certain insensitivity toward his wife because women are sensitive about their looks. They're sensitive about their weight. And to say something like that shows a huge degree of insensitivity.

Women have a sensitivity that men do not have. They read others' body language. They read others' tone of voice, facial expressions. They pick up things that just flies past most men.

One of Herbert Armstrong's weaknesses was that he listened to and believed the last person he talked to, whereas his wife Loma had this sense about people and she had a sense about their motives and their agendas. And she would whisper in his ear and advise him accordingly. And boy, I have learned over the years and I am a firm believer in women's intuition. They have a sense. They have been given a gift that most males do not have.

Now, men can more unemotionally look at the facts and make a hard decision. And to a certain extent you have to just divorce yourself from the emotions. In business, I've had to fire numerous people. And you think of their wives, their children. They're going to be out on the street or they're not going to make their house payments or they're going to lose their car by being fired, but sometimes you have no choice. It has to be done and you have to make a very unemotional, logical decision.

But, if the man learns from the woman, she adds consideration. She adds compassion for others and the feelings of others. You can still make the hard decisions, but you can do so in a more compassionate, more understanding, more feeling way.

Now, let's go to Matthew 18 and see that, yes, hard decisions have to be made, but there should be compassion and understanding in our behavior toward all people. Let's begin in verse 1 of Matthew 18, a very familiar passage.

Matthew 18:1. *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (KJV)*

Now, obviously, they had an agenda because they wanted Christ to pick them.

2) *And Jesus called [knowing their agenda, He called] a little child, and [put] him in [front of them, probably, maybe up on His lap; He] set him in the midst of them,*
3) *And [He] said, [Truly] I say unto you, except [you] be converted [changed], and become as little children [in humility and attitude], [you] shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

4) *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

5) *And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name [receives Me.]*

Now here's the key in verse 6.

6) *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he [was] drowned in the depth of the sea.*

7) *Woe unto the world because of offences! ... (KJV)*

Yeah, out in the world there are going to be offences.

7b) *... for it must needs be that offences come; ... (KJV)*

But He's talking about people in God's Church.

7 continued) *... but woe to that man by whom the offence [comes]! (KJV)*

Men can offend because of insensitivity. They can do that. They have a tendency sometimes to do that. And women have a sensitivity that men don't have. You see a woman can soften a man in this area of insensitivity because women are very caring and very nurturing and have deep feelings and help the man be more considerate. But on the other hand, women can learn from the man, which can prevent her from being misled by her feelings and be able to make and help make and understand tough decisions.

So, we've seen five differences. I'm sure you can think of more, but if anyone says that the sexes are the same, they absolutely just ignore reality. I think we all know that.

So, now that we've seen these five differences, let's go to the second fundamental fact about marriage. It's a follow on of what we just discussed.

2. If it's not evident by now, we should be able to see that God gave some of His characteristics to the man and He gave some to the woman.

We've seen this in these five examples. Now, yes, I understand there are exceptions. And in this messed-up world, yes, there are exceptions because everything is discombobulated and confused. And the examples of our parents to us, if it wasn't a

right relationship between your mom and dad, that can throw everything into confusion, but God did give some of His characteristics to the woman, some of His characteristics to the man. And the point is that He created men and women differently on purpose.

He did it on purpose. Let's ask the question, "Why?" Now why would God do that? Why would He create men and women different? That leads back to the introduction. Why have men and women in the first place? Let's go to Genesis chapter 2 verse 18. I'll read it out of the NLT again. It doesn't change the meaning. It just puts it in modern English. Genesis 2:18, very familiar with this scripture.

Genesis 2:18. *And the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. ..."* (NLT)

Eve had not been created.

18b) ... He said, "I will make a companion who will help him." (NLT)

Now why was it not good for the man to be alone? The answer is obvious given everything we've talked about. The man was not complete. By himself, he was not complete.

Now, God created Eve, but she wasn't complete either. She had some of his characteristics. The man had other of his characteristics. So, it is totally wrong to think one is superior and the other is inferior. Or that one is good and the other is bad. Both male and female come from God.

Now, let's go to Ecclesiastes chapter 4 and see what the wisest man on earth at that time said—only Christ has been wiser. Ecclesiastes 4, we're going to read verses 9 through 12.

The second fundamental fact is that God has given some of His characteristics to men and some to women.

Ecclesiastes 4:9. We're told a very straightforward statement.

Ecclesiastes 4:9. *Two are better than one; ...* (KJV)

This is, obviously, if you read it in context, it's referring to men and women—marriage.

9b) ... because they have a good reward for their [labor]. (KJV)

For the work that they do—in the marriage and out of the marriage.

10) For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls: for he [doesn't have anybody] to help him up.

11) And, if two lie together, ... (KJV)

And we know this at this time of the year when it's so cold outside.

11) And, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? (KJV)

When I used to travel all the time, boy I'd crawl into a motel bed and it was cold. And I just missed Dorothy right next to me. And she said the same when she was home alone too. How can you have heat? How can you be warm when you're by yourself? Verse 12:

12) And if one [prevails] against [one of the two], two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (KJV)

The point is that the male and the female combined have a down payment on every characteristic of God. I'll say that again. Combined, men and women have the earnest, the down payment, of every characteristic of God. God gave some to the woman, some to the man. That's the second fundamental fact.

3. The third fundamental fact is that marriage involves the coming together of two fundamentally different beings.

Why on earth would God do that? Bring together in a marriage two fundamentally different human beings. I think it was ten years ago, maybe fifteen years ago? A very popular book was Men are from Mars; Women are from Venus and the author tried to point out that fact that they are different, vastly different.

And the fact is that after a couple is married, after the honeymoon, after the newness wears off, these differences will come to the forefront. And so God says, "Okay, you wanted to get married? Now, you're married. What are you going to do about your differences? What are you going to do about these fundamental differences between male and female? Are you going to let these differences separate you and cause argument and friction and trouble? Or are you going to learn from each other to become a complete person? Which is it going to be?" God is saying to all of those who are in the Church and who are converted.

Let's go to Matthew 5 verse 48 and see a fundamental principle that Christ gave in His very first sermon right at the beginning of his very first sermon. Notice what He says. This is our job as Christians. Matthew 5:48, He says:

Matthew 5:48. *Be [you] therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (KJV)*

Now, the Greek word for "perfect" is Strong's 5046 and it's the Greek word "teleios." In English it's spelled "t-e-l-e-i-o-s". Notice what it means. Now think about this. It says:

complete in growth, meaning you grow to completeness. It means *complete in mental and moral character*.

Christ is saying, "I want you to be perfect. I want you to be complete in mental character and in moral character. Be you perfect." And that can only happen when we take on all of God's characteristics, not just the part given to the man or the part given to the woman, but we combine them and take on all of God's characteristics.

So, the third fundamental fact is that: Marriage involves the coming together of two fundamentally different people.

So, we've seen these three facts of marriage. Now in the rest of the time, we're going to ask this big question because this is the big question. Why on earth did God do it this way? What was in His mind? What is the purpose of marriage to bring together in a union two fundamentally different people?

Now, the fact is that marriage marks the beginning of a family. God created family. Let's go to Ephesians chapter 3. Marriage starts the family, the beginning of the family and the concept of the family was created by God. Notice what this says, Ephesians 3 verse 14:

Ephesians 3:14. *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

15) Of whom [referring to the Father] the whole family in heaven [number one] and [the whole family on] earth [number two] is named. (KJV)

There is a family in heaven and there is a family on earth.

Now the Greek word for "family" is Strong's 3965. It's the Greek word "patria" and it's spelled in English "p-a-t-r-i-a." Zodhiates in his Complete Word Study of the New Testament says the following; I'm quoting now from Zodhiates.

In Eph. 3:14,15 we have God presented as "the Father" [but notice this] who has only one *patria* (family). [God has only one family.] This indicates the oneness of God's family, both Jews and Gentiles, both the saints of the OT as well as those of the NT who were all baptized into the body of [Jesus] Christ...

God has right now a spiritual family, but He has a physical family on this earth, all of us baptized down through the millennia into the body of Jesus Christ. You see God is creating physical families that are a type of His spiritual family. And all of us at the end of the day are going to be all a part of God's spiritual family. God created the concept of family and marriage begins the start of a family on the physical level.

You see, our destiny, as we all know, is to be married (part of a family) to Jesus Christ. Let's go over to Revelation 19 and read verses 7 and 8 just as a reminder. Our destiny

is to start a family with Christ. Christ is the husband, the Church is the wife. Revelation 19 verse 7.

Revelation 19:7. *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give [honor] to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife [has] made herself ready. (KJV)*

Okay, who is the wife? Verse 8:

8) *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. (KJV)*

Therefore, His wife are the saints of God.

So, if we want to be in God's spiritual family and marriage on this earth is a type of that spiritual family, then we must, to our peril if we don't, we must pay attention to the whole concept of marriage because it is a type of what's going to happen to us spiritually when we are changed.

Marriage, therefore, is bringing together two fundamentally different beings to come together to be a complete person. We're half. The male has half; the female has half; but coming together if they exercise God's holy spirit, if they learn from each other, if they have humility, they will become a complete person.

So, men and women are to become what? One flesh. Right. Let's go to Ephesians 5:31. Through this physical marriage, men and women are to become one flesh. I'll read it out of the New King James.

Ephesians 5:31. *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ... (NKJV)*

Now too many times, that doesn't happen. And I can tell you in almost every case it's not good if husband and wife don't leave and establish their own life, their own domicile.

31) *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and [his] mother and be joined to his wife, ... (NKJV)*

But notice. Here's the focus here.

31b) *...and the two shall become one flesh.”*

Now traditionally, we've thought of this in sexual terms, but I think we've missed the boat in that. Yes, that's part of it, of course, but the Greek word for "flesh" is Strong's 4561 and it's the Greek word "sarx." It's spelled "s-a-r-x" in English. It has a literal meaning and a figurative meaning.

The literal meaning is *flesh as stripped of the skin*. So, sarx means if you had a roast beef. There's no skin on the roast beef. That's just the meat. And that is the literal word, the meat of an animal. No skin, no covering, the meat of an animal.

But the figurative meaning of the word sarx is (I'm quoting now from Strong's.) *or by implication, human nature*. Because, you see, human nature is one's nature underneath the surface just like the beef is what's there underneath the skin.

And so if we look at the meaning of this word "to become one flesh" it means one in nature, one in mind, one in spirit. That's the point of a marriage.

The clear message of marriage is it is the coming together of two fundamentally different people who become one in nature, in heart, in desire, in thinking, and, obviously, in following God. Now, what nature is that? What should be the nature underneath the skin, the human nature? Well we know the answer to that. Philippians 2:5.

Philippians 2:5. Let this mind be in you which was in Jesus Christ, (KJV)

So we see here then that the purpose of marriage is two-fold. And there are a lot of purposes for marriage, but we're talking the big picture here. The purpose of marriage, the first one is that two fundamentally different people, two fundamentally different beings come together to learn to be like God and Christ. They learn from each other to be complete in mind and complete in character.

And the second purpose is that these two fundamentally different beings come together to exercise God's holy spirit, and to learn from their differences, and to relish in their differences but to come together to make a happy fulfilling, successful union.

So, the first is to come together to be like Jesus Christ and God in character and in mind; and, then, to exercise God's spirit in the bond, in the marriage, to have a successful union where they grow closer and closer and closer together because they are growing closer and closer and closer to God and Jesus Christ. That is the ultimate purpose of marriage.

You see, for a marriage to be successful—we're summarizing now. For a marriage to be successful, it takes all the characteristics of God's holy spirit—every one of them. To be successful, a marriage has to encompass all the characteristics of God's spirit and God is watching us! He's looking at us to see if we're going to use His holy spirit to build a marriage or are we going to use our human nature to tear it apart. What are you going to do? He's watching us because judgment is now on the house of God.

Only 50 percent of the people in the United States have an understanding of what it's like to have a mate and to be together and to share a life together, but in marriage, you learn things that you otherwise would never learn. If you've never raised children, it's

hard to be an instructor on how to raise children. And, if you've never experienced marriage, there are things you learn in a marriage you will never learn anywhere else.

And we can learn from the God-given attributes that He has given to our mates—men some, women others. I'll tell you I have learned so much from Dorothy because she is so different from me. I've learned so much from her. I've learned to live in the moment like with the stomping of the flowers. I'm thinking about tomorrow, the next day, what we're going to do and all of this. I'm just trudging through and missing what's going on all around me. I've learned so much about that. You live in the moment. You enjoy that moment.

I've also learned from her to focus on the positive because being a minister, most of my time is spent dealing with problems. As I said many times before, people don't call to say they're having a good day. They call because there is a problem and so you're dealing with that. And Dorothy has this ability to focus on the positive, to focus on the good, to focus on whatever is positive that is going on. Her glass is always half-full. And I have learned from that because you can be dragged down by dealing with problems all day. So, then, sometimes you can assume the worst is going to happen where Dorothy is just the opposite.

The other thing I've learned from her is kindness and gentleness. Women have that gift. They're kind and they're gentle and they're sensitive. The fact is it only took me probably twenty years, maybe twenty-five, thirty years to learn this, but I finally learned that I see kindness and gentleness in her, but then that's the way Christ deals with me. Christ is kind with me and He's gentle with me. So, then the light bulb goes on! And I say, "You know, maybe you ought to be that way with other people. Maybe I should be kind and gentle to my wife and kind and gentle to other people because that's the way Christ deals with me." But you see it first in your mate on a day to day, 24/7 interaction between the husband and the wife.

So, we have to learn to live with these differences. And we have to learn from these differences.

Now, we won't turn there, but you know Ecclesiastes 3 and verse 1 where Solomon said, "To everything there is a season and there's a time to every purpose under heaven." We understand that. For everything there is a season and there is a time for every purpose. There is a time to think. There's a time to feel. There's a time to see the big picture. There's a time to look at the details. There is a time to take a chance. There is a time to stress safety and security. There's a time to be decisive, and yet, there's a time to be open-minded and consider other things. There is a time to be firm, and yet, there is a time to be sensitive.

God is telling us this and we learn from each other. So, marriage teaches us to become a complete person as God and Christ are complete. That's the purpose of marriage.

So next time what we're going to look at is what God wants us to learn in a marriage, specific things, and, then, we're going to look at how to solve marriage problems God's way.