

WARFARE FOR YOUR MARRIAGE



IDENTIFYING THE BATTLE FOR
YOUR HEART, HOME, AND FAMILY

RICHARD ING

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WARFARE
FOR YOUR
MARRIAGE

RICHARD ING



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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**Warfare for Your Marriage:
Identifying the Battle for Your Heart, Home, and Family**

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my dear wife, Beatrice, and my four beautiful children, Susan, Richard Jr., Robert, and Ryan, who were given to me by wonderful Lord Jesus Christ. They have blessed me richly and brought much meaning to my life. We have spent countless precious times together, as we still do. As the saying goes, “Good players make good coaches.” My wife and children have done the same for me as a husband and father.

PREFACE

In ancient Rome, a man could not be a senator or hold any other public office until he was married and had at least one child. Otherwise, he was considered unfit to lead or provide wise counsel. But marriage is no longer a sign of leadership potential or wisdom. Today, depending on the study you prefer, the divorce rate for first marriages in the U.S. is somewhere between 40 and 50 percent. For many years, it was said that the divorce rate among evangelical Christians was even higher, some putting it at 54 percent or more. This would suggest that Christians know just as little about marriage as non-Christians, and that Christian wisdom regarding marriage is sadly lacking. This statistic has been challenged, however, especially concerning the ways in which various studies have defined “evangelical Christians.” Subsequent studies have found that the divorce rate is much lower among people who regularly put their religious faith into practice—those who regularly attend church services, read their Bibles, or pray, either privately or with others. Studies that defined Christians by such activities found that the divorce rates among “serious” Christians was in the range of 35 to 38 percent.¹ Even accepting these lower figures, the fact that more than one in three Christian marriages is doomed to fail highlights a serious problem.

Marriage is such a daunting experience that many avoid it entirely by choosing instead to cohabit, or “shack up.” In 2012, around 40 percent of all babies born in America were born out of wedlock.² In other words, nearly half of our citizens choose fornication or adultery over marriage. The Bible says that illegitimacy brings a curse on the family that continues for ten generations. (See Deuteronomy 23:2.) If this is true, America is in deep trouble with God.

This is not a book on Christian psychology and counseling but rather a direct counterattack on the kingdom of darkness and the lusts of the flesh. My purpose is to cut to the chase by identifying the true source of most conflicts in marriage and to explore how our attitudes toward marriage can carry over into almost all our other relationships. I will expose the evil spirits that Satan uses to attack and destroy marriages and explain how you can be delivered from them.

1. See, for example, Bradley R. E. Wright, *Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites...and Other Lies You've Been Told* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2010), 133; and W. Bradford Wilcox and Elizabeth Williamson, "The Cultural Contradictions of Mainline Family Ideology and Practice," *American Religions and the Family*, edited by Don S. Browning and David A. Clairmont (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 50.

2. <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/360990/latest-statistics-out-wedlock-births-roger-clegg> (accessed November 12, 2014).

INTRODUCTION

I did not become a born-again Christian until just before my forty-sixth birthday. By that time, I had been married for nineteen years and had four children. As a “big sinner,” I had made many mistakes and suffered through many frustrations—most of which were of my own doing—for the first ten years of my marriage. An ambitious attorney, I strove for fame and fortune while neglecting my wife and children, even though I thought that I was doing them a favor. Bars and golf courses were my playground, and for years, I had alcohol in my bloodstream twenty-four hours a day. I will not dwell on or glorify my sins, except to tell you that I was no model husband and father and that my marriage was in shambles. This book is not based on a marriage that was picture-perfect from the outset. It took years for me to wake up and make the decision to build a marriage that would last “until death do us part.”

I am now in the winter of my years, having recently celebrated my seventy-seventh birthday. My understanding and wisdom about life, marriage, and God are far deeper than when I started on my faith journey, thanks be to God. My goal for this book is to share the understanding and wisdom I have gained along the way, both from personal experience and from counseling Christians and non-Christians alike. It is not about philosophy or keys to a happy marriage; it is about the truth.

Many years ago, a group of six married couples in the church I first attended, where I also served as an elder, were having private sessions that featured videotaped testimonies by famous Christian marriage counselors. These couples were so excited at the wisdom shared in the video presentations that they invited our church elders to attend one of their “marriage encounters,” hoping that this might grow to become a wider church program. After we viewed what they considered to be the best of the presentations, they asked us, one by one, to share our opinions. Each of the elders praised the tapes and felt that they were an effective way of illustrating how to make marriage a wonderful, lasting relationship.

When my turn came, I praised the values and insights of the presentations but also told them that I was troubled that the people featured on the videos

never spoke of the roles of the Holy Spirit and God in marriage. They never talked about the importance of a husband and wife praying and worshipping God together. The tapes were more in the mode of the popular book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* by Dr. John Gray. The faces of the couples in the room showed displeasure at my remarks. In fact, they invited all the church elders but me to their future sessions.

A few months later, those six married couples expressed a desire to be “remarried,” or to participate in a vow renewal service, at an expensive hotel with a dinner reception to follow. Again, they invited all the elders of the church—all except me. Some of them apparently thought I was “too spiritual.” I am sorry to say that, within two years, four of those six couples were divorced; within five years, the other two couples followed suit.

Over the last twenty or so years, I have presided over the marriage ceremonies of many couples. I always insist that an engaged couple attend three marriage counseling sessions with me prior to the wedding. To this day, to my knowledge, none of the couples I have counseled and married have gotten divorced.

The high rate of divorce among Christian couples is an embarrassment to the kingdom of God. I fear that some unbelievers see the high divorce rate and conclude that Christianity is phony or, at the very least, hypocritical.

How am I qualified to teach on the subject of marriage? After all, I am not a professional marriage counselor, nor have I had any formal training on the subject. I can speak only from experience and by revelation from God. So, what are my qualifications to speak about marriage?

My main qualification is my own marriage and family. I have never been divorced. I have been married since 1964 to the first real girlfriend I ever had. We have four children, three of whom are also married. We have seven grandchildren. We have never been separated during marriage, and we have worked together in the same office for almost forty years. Together, we have operated a private law practice, a real estate brokerage, a travel agency, a collection agency, and a bimonthly newspaper; and, for the last twenty-five years, we have labored together in my ministry work. We have traveled to many countries—equaling about eighty trips to various countries around the world—and, in many cases, it was just the two of us. We have

played golf together for more than thirty years and are together twenty-four hours a day most of the time. We enjoy each other and are best friends.

It was not always that way.

The first ten years of our marriage were tumultuous, filled with fights, arguments, alcohol abuse, silent treatment, sleeping on the couch, and misery. Practicing law was stressful to me, and striving to be a financial success was driving me away from my family. I neglected them while spending long hours at the office, participating in frequent activities to support various candidates in the political arena, and taking numerous business trips to foreign countries. We were heading for divorce like a speeding car without brakes approaching a cliff.

As a young lawyer, I was hell-bent on becoming a multimillionaire before the age of forty. Being an attorney was like living in a pressure cooker. I did a fair amount of trial work and was so aggressive that I became a full partner in my law firm within four years of graduating law school. I brought in so many clients and made so much money for the firm that the other partners could not deny my success.

A couple of years later, I became the sole practitioner in my law practice, because I made more money that way. I didn't have to pay for the hideously high overhead of an office with heavy oak doors and a penthouse view. By lowering my office rent and expenses, I could take home most of the money I earned. To attract even more clients, I joined many clubs and neighborhood associations, did charitable work, and managed the campaigns for several politicians, including a congressional candidate. I learned to live on four hours of sleep every night.

Financial success followed. I drove around town in a Lincoln Continental Mark IV wearing dark sunglasses. I planned to build a lavish house in the most expensive area of the Hawaiian island where we lived. I often worked until nine at night and then received phone calls from clients who wanted to talk shop with me over late dinner and drinks. They knew where to find me. After dinner came the customary bar-hopping before I stumbled home around two in the morning—or later. I told myself I was doing all of this for my family. In reality, I was on my way to divorce—and to hell.

The big blow-up with my wife inevitably came, and we began to discuss divorce. I suddenly realized that we were at the edge. It was when the realization sank in that I could lose my kids that I sobered up. I loved my children dearly, even though I didn't spend much time with them. What resulted was an agreement with my wife that I would never work past six in the evening, and never on weekends, unless it was absolutely necessary. I kept that agreement for more than forty years.

Over time, our marriage steadily improved. Mind you, I was not yet going to church. For the next ten years, we learned a lot about marriage and each other. But the biggest turn of events came when I was almost forty-six years old: God came back into my life. More accurately, I came back to God, since He had never left me. Reflecting now, I can identify many evidences and circumstances that clearly point to the constant presence of God in my life. I just didn't recognize them at the time.

Currently in our fifty-first year of marriage, my wife and I are as happy as can be. Our marriage has not been all roses, because God gives us chastening, trials, problems, and tests in order to perfect us in Christ. But it is a powerful, strong, and enduring marriage, full of excitement and wonder.

This book covers most of what I present to couples at my premarital counseling sessions. It also draws from a series of lectures about marriage that I taught in my church. The response to those messages was positive, with many requests that I write a book. Thus, I offer this work in sincerity and with a desire to help other married couples to not only stay married but also have a great relationship with their spouses. This work is also for their children who will be profoundly influenced by the health of their parents' marriage.

“You Are Gods”

There are more than five hundred Bible verses on the subject of marriage. Marriage was created by God in the garden of Eden, for the first husband, Adam, and the first wife, Eve. When Adam and Eve sinned, they not only destroyed their relationship with God, they also rejected God’s principles on marriage and the rightful relationship between husband and wife.

In Scripture, God is portrayed as a Father searching for a bride for His Son, Jesus. He desires a church—or bride—without wrinkle, spot, blemish, or any such thing. She is to be holy in His sight, made clean as a virgin. For God, the search is like looking for a needle in a haystack. Nevertheless, He will find a beautiful bride one day, made perfect in the image of His Son, Jesus. (See Romans 8:29; Revelation 19:7–9; 21:2, 9; 22:17.)

Marriage is a battleground—a clash of principles between God’s kingdom of light and Satan’s kingdom of darkness. In order to shape His bride, God seeks to reverse the poisonous effects of what Adam and Eve did in the garden and to reestablish His eternal principles of life. At the same time, Satan fights to maintain his evil principles so that he can attain his goal of destroying the church and all Christians and ruling the world. (See Revelation 13:7; Daniel 7:21, 25.)

There is not only a law of sin in the members of our body (see Romans 7:23); there is a poison deep within our unconscious minds and DNA that compels us to respond to people and circumstances in the ways that we do. It turns us into predictable, self-righteous, robotic beasts.

The law of sin receives its impetus from something deep within our psyche. Almost the entire history of mankind has revolved around humans “playing God.” Indeed, the foundation of many religions is the belief that man is god, as we will discuss in further detail later on. It started with Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve wanted to be as God. (See Genesis 2:15–3:24.) They disobeyed God’s command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. As soon as they ate of the forbidden fruit, their spirits’ light went

out, and they saw their nakedness, or flesh, for the first time. From that moment on, their flesh took control over their minds and hearts, demanding their attention and even their worship. Adam and Eve began to identify with their flesh and soon became obsessed with it. The first thing they did was sew garments of fig leaves to protect the flesh and hide from God, for Flesh and Self had become their gods.

Perhaps they thought, *This must be what God really looks like! We made it! We're gods!* When God drove them out of the garden of Eden, they probably thought that He was merely jealous or fearful. This deception has been passed down to you and me—and to everyone else in this world. We still think and act as gods, whether we realize it or not.

Jesus knew it. He said to the Pharisees, *“Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’”? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)...”* (John 10:34–35). In this passage, Jesus was referring to Psalm 82:5–6: *“They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are unstable. I said, ‘You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.’”*

Some Bible teachers claim that this statement means that Christians are already running around as little gods. This is not true. God was saying, in effect, “I created all of you to be My children, the children of the Most High, but you act as if you are gods equal to or higher than Me.” If they were actual gods, why would they be walking in darkness? And why would the foundations of the earth be out of course? They were not gods; they only *thought* they were.

Jesus was chiding the Pharisees for becoming angry at His claim to be the Son of God. *“The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God’”* (John 10:33). “After all,” Jesus is pointing out, “you accept the saying that you are gods yourselves, and yet you reject My claim.”

The Lord knew that, subconsciously or unconsciously, human beings believe they are gods. We may not admit it or even be aware of it, but we instinctively and compulsively act like gods. Like the law of sin, a god complex controls our minds and actions.

Craving Worship

Deep down, we crave worship. We believe that we deserve to be worshipped, admired, and loved. We even create religions that embrace this idea. Hindus believe that all people are gods; they just don't know it. Their story goes like this:

Once upon a time, we were all gods in a spiritual, heavenly realm. But gods are absolute. There is no up or down, fast or slow, hot or cold, good or bad in the realm of absolutes. Win-lose games are not possible. So, we gods decided to create a world based on relativity and on the flesh, so that we would be able to play games. We would forget that we were gods and would become mere humans. The object of the game would be to realize once more that we are actually gods. If we fail to realize that we are gods in this lifetime, we die and are reborn, again and again, until we attain enlightenment as to our true identity as gods. Sometimes, a "god" could be reborn as another life form, such as an animal. The game would finally end for those who had attained the realization that they were actually gods. At that point, they would return to a state of perpetual godliness in the absolute realm where gods exist.

Hinduism is known as a religion of a trillion gods, because there are trillions of life forms on earth. One can be born a cockroach in the next life. That's one of the reasons why Hindus refuse to step on bugs or eat animals—they could be some of their ancestors.

An actual Hindu mantra says, "Worship the god in you, who is you." If you chant this mantra every day, as often as you can, it will permeate the very core of your being and cause you to realize your godhood. At least, that is their belief.

This mantra is already built into our genes—yours and mine. Take care of number one—you! You are the big Uno, the big kahuna. That's what we are taught.

Buddhists believe that we are already Buddhas—enlightened ones and gods—and that, as in Hinduism, we have to be reborn, again and again, on the wheel of life and death, until we discover that we are Buddhas, or gods. Meditating and chanting are supposed to help in this transition, along with

reaching an understanding that suffering comes from human desires. Chanting “ohm, ohm, ohm” is supposed to create a vibration within you that unites with the universal vibration and brings you in line with your godhood, or “Buddha nature”—your true state as a god.

They believe that there are many avatars, or ascended masters, and many Buddhas who are now gods. When they return to their original state as gods, people can pray to and worship them. They are alleged to assist others in their life’s journey and help them attain nirvana. There is a Buddha for travelers, a Buddha for businessmen, a Buddha for the sick, a Buddha for mothers, and so forth. In Japan, there is a temple featuring statues of five hundred Buddhas. They ran out of space for any more.

The Roman Catholic Church adopted a similar belief by canonizing many individuals who were deemed worthy to become “saints,” that they might be prayed to, revered, and even worshipped. There is a saint for carpenters, a saint for travelers, a saint for mothers, and so on. There are more than ten thousand Roman Catholic saints, as well as many others that are revered by the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Lutheran church and the Anglican Communion acknowledge pre-Reformation saints, even today. Although they don’t call them “gods,” people honor and revere them. They create statues of them, call upon them, sing songs to them, and place flowers and other items of worship on altars dedicated to these “saint-gods.” These saints are often represented by carvings of wood and stone, yet their worshippers deny that they are idols.

Roman Catholics claim that they do not worship the Virgin Mary, but if you visit a Catholic cathedral and locate its statue of the Virgin Mary, you will likely find its feet plastered with red lipstick.

Some religions, such as Shintoism, appoint or designate certain living humans as gods on earth (called *Jizo*). The emperor of Japan, for instance, is viewed as a living deity. There are Jizos appointed in every area of the world where there are Shintoists. They are considered demigods.

The emperors of ancient civilizations in Rome, China, Japan, and other nations have long declared themselves living gods worthy of receiving worship and obedience. The pharaohs of ancient Egypt proclaimed themselves living gods and demanded huge statues in their likenesses that

their subjects were required to worship and provide with offerings, under penalty of death.

Even today, there are wayward doctrines within the body of Christ suggesting that all Christians are “little gods.”

Aspiring to Godlikeness in All the Wrong Ways

In traditional Christianity, humans were never gods, even though Adam was created perfect in wisdom and all his ways, and he communed with God before he was cast out of the garden of Eden.

*Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, “Thus says the Lord God; ‘You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed **cherub** who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.’” (Ezekiel 28:12–15)*

I believe that the above passage refers to Adam before the fall. He wanted to be as God, and yet his efforts to become Godlike resulted in “iniquity being found in him.”

Desiring to be a god goes to the very substance of who we are, what we do, and what we have. This core belief automatically affects the way we think and behave, because *gods are always right, and they never lose*. In their own perception, most people believe they have rarely been wrong their entire lives. A famous disc jockey in Hawaii used to say, “It is not true that I was never wrong. I once thought I was wrong, but I was mistaken.”

Almost everything we do is an attempt to prove ourselves right and to win. We do not say things in order to be wrong; we say them in order to be right. We defend ourselves and say things that make us look righteous, intelligent, and correct. We dress ourselves so that people will accept, admire, and even worship us, unless we cannot afford it. Some people spend thousands of dollars on a dress or suit they’ll wear only once for

some gala event, to be right in the eyes of others. Even if we say, “Don’t look at me; I’m ugly,” most of us are really thinking, *Look at me; I’m good-looking, smart, and worthy of your admiration*, or, at the very least, *I may not be good-looking, but I have money, power, and personality*. After all, gods deserve to be admired, worshipped, and adored.

Gods are winners all the time. Our schools teach it. It’s called high self-esteem. We give kids a gold medal or a trophy just for entering the race. Never mind coming in first; you’re already a winner. It’s marvelous for self-esteem, although the Bible says to esteem others as better than you. (See Philippians 2:3.) We produce self-centered people, rebellious, proud, defiant, and disrespectful to authority, just like father Adam and mother Eve. (See 2 Peter 2:9–22.)

Emperors and kings aren’t the only ones to make claims to divinity. We do it, too! We may cover it up, but almost everything we do in life is dedicated to being seen as right and victorious. “Almost everything” means 99.99 percent of what we do.

Even when we lower our heads and mumble, “I guess I was wrong,” it’s often to make ourselves look right. *Look at how humble I am. I’m so humble that I’m almost like God!*

Always a Winner

In every dispute, argument, fight, battle, and war, people are rarely ever wrong in their own eyes. That’s why we have so many divisions in the church, with so many cults and denominations. At last count, there were over thirty-four thousand denominations and independent Christian organizations in the world. Everyone clings to his or her “right” doctrines and thinks that his or her group is the only one that holds to the truth. Cult members declare that they are the only people who will go to heaven, and they deny their membership access to any contrary opinions or doctrines from the outside, claiming that any contrary belief is of the devil. In other words, “Don’t let anyone tell you that we are wrong. We are never wrong; we are always right. No use talking to us, because it has been determined for all eternity that we are right. If you persist in telling me that I am wrong, I will walk out, because you’re of the devil. God told us this.”

People will do anything to be right. They will lie, steal, commit adultery, swear, and covet their neighbor's wife and possessions. They will bear false witness and even resort to murder to be right. We've been killing one another since Cain killed Abel, and the Bible says it's going to be even worse at the end of the age.

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. (Jude 10–16)

Our prisons are filled with self-righteous murderers and criminals—little gods running around. We even kill ourselves to be right. "See? I told you I would kill myself. No one would believe me."

How great it feels to be right and to win. Stick it to the other person; ram it to him or her. Prove that you're a god deserving of admiration and worship. You're a winner! You deserve worship! I saw a grown-up father slap his six-year-old son for laughing and jumping around in glee when he beat his father at a game of checkers. Gods never lose.

We have a systemic problem, because everyone else thinks he is a god, too. Everyone else thinks he has to be right and win all the time, just like you and I do. That's how most fights, wars, disputes, disagreements, arguments, and divorces start. No one wants to admit to having been wrong. Nobody wants to lose. No way. Even in marriage, your spouse is just waiting for opportunities to prove that he or she is a god.

They say that Rome was not built in a day. Well, an unhappy marriage is not made in a day, either. It is usually a long and drawn-out war, not just a single battle or an occasional skirmish. Red wins today, but black is waiting for tomorrow, for the next spin of the wheel. That's what happens when two gods marry.

Marriage is often a war of attrition between two gods. Which god is going to outlast the other? Who is going to win the final battle and prevail over the other? Stay tuned to see the results of the never-ending drama—not on the television but in front of it. Back and forth they go in an endless war which nobody wins until somebody dies.

Expert Fighters All

We're all battle-proven warriors when it comes to winning in the wars of life. Ever since we could walk and talk, we've been at it. Couples who have been married for just a few years are experts at being right. They've had a lot of practice. Here are some weapons of marital warfare: give the silent treatment, swear, get angry, yell, slap, punch, shoot, mumble under your breath, curse, burn rubber, stay out all night, get drunk, sleep on the couch, burn dinner, spit in his or her food, quit your job, slam the door, refuse to cook, withhold sex, rip his favorite shirt, scratch her beloved car, take a lover, blame him or her for your failures, talk behind his or her back, gossip, complain to your friends, argue, call him a bastard, call her a witch, shove her, scratch his face, kick him in the groin, spit in his or her face, don't show up, come late, withhold love, nag, nag, nag—ad nauseam. You name it—it's been done.

We say that we want to be happy and to make our spouse happy. But we lie. The truth is, happiness is being right! We'll do anything to be right and win every argument. After all, we're gods, and gods are never wrong! We will even divorce the other person to be right. I'm a god, so I never lose.

Wrong.

An Endless War

A couple divorces. The wife wins custody of the kids, and the husband gets visitation rights and has to pay child support. The wife is gleeful. She thinks she won. But the war isn't over yet. It's only round one. Cue the football cheer—"Fight! Fight! Fight!" The ex-husband isn't through yet. He refuses to pay child support, or he pays only a part of it, or he is always late for work and gets fired, or he quits his job, so he doesn't have to pay alimony or child support. The ex-wife files a petition for noncompliance or contempt of court. As a last resort, she refuses to let Dad see the kids or even runs off with them.

Another version: Dad comes late to pick up the kids, making Mom late for her appointments; or, he brings the kids home late and never calls. Mom keeps telling the kids what a jerk their father is. Mom moves to another state so that Dad can no longer see the kids. Mom remarries and convinces her new husband to adopt the kids. Dad kidnaps the kids and disappears. On and on it goes.

As an attorney, I've handled many legal divorces, and I've never heard a wife or a husband admit to being wrong. Each and every one played the right-wrong game, "talked trash" about the other, and did everything in his or her power to teach the kids to hate their father or mother. After the divorce, the skirmishes go on and on. Some want an attorney who can cuss and yell in court to make their spouse look bad. I've been fired by wives who complained that I wasn't harsh enough.

When one of the spouses passes away, the surviving ex-spouse will often continue to blame the deceased for everything that was wrong in their marriage and life. Many marriages are all battlefield, no bliss.

Summary

Ever since Adam and Eve first sinned in the garden in their attempt to be like God, mankind has had a god complex. It's in our DNA. *Gods are always right, and they never lose.* Almost everything we do is calculated to make us seem in the right. God even revealed this to us—"You are gods" (John 10:34)—perhaps speaking tongue in cheek. We seek power and riches so that people will admire and worship us as worthy.

The problem is, every other person in the world is also trying to be a god. Every argument, fight, dispute, battle, and war is between two or more parties trying to be right and to win. God tells us to bless those that curse us and to love those that hate us (see Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28), but to the flesh, this command is ridiculous.

We spend so much time trying to be right. Happiness, to us, is winning and being right. This leads to much conflict and resentment in our relationships, especially marriage. But who cares? So long as I'm right, I'm happy! You don't have to kiss my feet; my hand will do.

How to Be a God

It's not easy being a god. You need to know how to dominate, challenge, and defeat other gods, in words as well as in deeds. You need to master confrontational conversation that will let the other gods know you are able to defend your god status and your correspondingly large ego. You need to contest every contrary idea and point of view that comes your way. In short, you need to let the rest of the world—and especially your spouse—know who's boss.

Many of us inadvertently or ignorantly use phrases in our conversations that challenge, confront, and put the other person or persons in the wrong. It's wise to try to avoid saying things like...

“No way.”

“That's stupid.”

“But....”

“That's wrong.”

Remarks like these can have the effect of closing off the recipient's mind and heart, escalating even minor arguments and disputes. These are fighting words that immediately put other people on the defensive. Instead, try to use phrases like...

“I agree.”

“Good point.”

“And also....”

“That's true.”

Remarks like these find places of agreement and keep the other person's mind and heart open to further communication, in which you can represent your point of view.

How to Kill Communication

As a god, you must exercise your power effectively in order to dominate others. You must know how to shut your opponent's mouth and put him or her on the defensive, as quickly as possible.

What happens if one spouse is bigger, louder, smarter, richer, or more powerful than the other? Answer: The other spouse either shuts down or learns how to lie to avoid losing. Let's say the husband dislikes his wife's closest female friends and forbids her to see or talk to them. Let's say he tends to "win" in these confrontations, primarily because he is physically bigger, louder, and more intimidating. While her husband is at work, the wife will secretly meet her friend for lunch. When her husband comes home from work, he asks her, "What did you do today?"

"Nothing," she replies. Or maybe she says, "I went to my mother's house."

She lies.

To avoid losing, we lie all the time.

Many marriages are unhappy due to a lack of honest communication. Some of it is a matter of personality, of course, since there are people who are naturally quiet and dislike constant verbal communication—not everyone has a bubbly personality. But there is a vast difference between being quiet out of contentment and keeping quiet to avoid confrontation. One can have a quiet marriage partner and still maintain a healthy dialog. But when communication dies because of fear, anger, or efforts at self-defense, the two parties are apt to drift apart and become unhappy. Children will sometimes keep the marriage together, but when they grow up and move out, the two empty nesters become bored and unhappy spouses who are stuck with each other.

I know aged couples who live in large houses—the wife lives upstairs; the husband sleeps in the basement. There are days when they don't bump into each other, intentionally or otherwise, so they hardly speak. They each have their own car and go their own separate way. The wife leaves the house early in the morning to avoid the constantly grumpy husband, or vice versa. Each spouse tends solely to his or her own needs. The wife meets friends at a mall or restaurant. The husband goes to MacDonald's or to a

local tavern. By living apart within their own home, they have perfected the art of being right and never losing—by never having to engage the “opponent” in conversation or battle.

Your Friends Make You Right; Your Enemies Make You Wrong

Your friends are the people who make you feel good about yourself, back you up, and affirm you. In their eyes, you’re always right. That’s probably how you fell in love with your spouse. When you find someone who agrees that you are worth admiring, you’d better not let go of him or her. It’s hard to find good friends. When you find your best friend of the opposite sex, you get married!

When you have a best friend, you can spend hours talking on the phone, shopping, eating, and so forth. I had a really great group of friends in middle school and high school. We hung out together every day and spent many fun times together. Eventually, college, the military, and marriage split up our gang, but it was wonderful while it lasted. We spent lots of time backing each other up and affirming one another’s “rightness.” I have some friends from childhood who still call from time to time. The bonds we created as kids have lasted over sixty years.

My wife and I dated for more than three years before we got married. We saw each other every day and would still spend hours talking on the phone. Many couples do the same during the courtship period. Unfortunately, years later, many of those same couples cannot stand the sight of one another. At some point after the wedding ceremony, they stop caring for each other, specifically in the area of affirmation. “I do” eventually becomes “I don’t.”

Conversely, your enemies (well, those people you perceive as your enemies) call you “wrong,” look down on you, treat you as someone to be avoided, make snide comments about you, and are often confrontational, argumentative, and critical of you. They make you feel as though you can never do anything right. It may seem that they always have to be one up on you. Eventually, you learn to stay away from them.

As we grow into adulthood, it becomes easier to avoid those people we perceive to be our enemies. When you were a child, you had no choice but

to rub shoulders with cocky cousins and unfriendly classroom bullies; but as you grow up and become increasingly independent, you are able to choose the people with whom you want to associate. You rid your life of your enemies.

That's what divorce is about.

Making Enemies of Your Spouse and Children

Lots of people lack charm and lose friends because they are overly argumentative, confrontational, and critical. They constantly give others unsolicited advice because of their desire to be admired for their intelligence and to seem superior to you.

Someone I once knew would often stop by my law office and put me on the defensive by pointing out things that were "not right." He would say, "Hey, we were talking about lawyers at our lunch meeting, and nobody knew you," or "Gee, who chose the color of your furniture?" He was a "Mr. Know-it-all." At times, he seemed downright arrogant. I'm sure that his intent was not malicious, but he was obnoxious. He probably thought he was merely being funny.

I recently came across an interesting Internet post written by Craig Newmark, the founder of Craigslist. Here's what he wrote:

I'm a nerd, seriously hard-core, and sometimes that translates into being a know-it-all....My boss told me that it had become a real problem with about half my co-workers. However, he said that my saving grace was my sense of humor. When trying to be funny, well, didn't matter if I was funny or not, at least I wasn't being [a jerk].

The advice was to focus on my sense of humor and worry less about being exactly right. For sure, don't correct people when it matters little.

It took a while to get noticed, but it did get noticed, and some tension got less tense. That felt pretty good.

Also, I realized that I'm not as funny as I think I am, so I backed off a little. ...I get a lot more done when I take myself less seriously. It's particularly useful in public speaking. Not long ago, I got the last word regarding this

from Oscar Wilde: “If you want to tell people the truth, make ’em laugh. Otherwise, they’ll kill you.”³

When Craig Newmark stopped acting like a god and ceased demanding to be right all the time, he started to make some friends. Would this be true outside of the workplace, too? You bet—especially in marriage, the relationship on which, if you’re married, you ought to spend the majority of your time and effort. How boring and frustrating it must be to be married to someone who is always looking for an argument or a fight, someone who is overly critical just to prove their intelligence and boost their ego.

When marriages become the battleground for contentious gods, it is often the children who suffer the most, with wounds and scars that remain with them well into adulthood. Many of these children become broken in heart and in spirit, and they’re the ones who end up being the real losers.

On a trip in Malaysia, I met a nineteen-year-old young woman who needed help. She looked tired and bedraggled. Through an interpreter, she told me that she hated herself and suffered with feelings of rejection. She told me that her mother had long hated her father and had wanted to get a divorce for years. When she’d first entertained the idea, their sons were five and six years old, so she’d planned to divorce her husband when the youngest son turned twelve. But when the son turned eleven, the mother got pregnant again, forcing her to stay in the unhappy marriage. Her next child was the exhausted nineteen-year-old I was speaking with, who shared with me that her mother had hated her and picked on her all the time because, supposedly, she was to blame for her mother’s misfortunes. Once when she was five, her mother pointed at a dog and said, “That’s your mother! I’m not your mother. That dog is your mother!”

The Lord led me to cleanse the memory from her mind and to help her to forgive her mother. I commanded the spirit of rejection to leave her and asked the Lord to merge her two personalities: the hurt little girl and the almost-grown woman. The young lady was sitting in front of me on a folding chair. As we prayed, she flew backward a distance of almost two rows of chairs. God set her free from self-hatred and rejection. The next morning, as we began class at a local Bible college, I looked for her and saw a beautiful girl who positively glowed with radiance. I could hardly believe the change in her appearance.

Children of splintered marriages are defenseless when they are young. They often suffer as the targets of anger, bitterness, and scorn generated by the broken relationship between husband and wife, and they are forced to pay a huge emotional price for it later in life. The spirits of rejection, resentment, bitterness, anger, hatred, and rebellion are often passed down through generations, and children are easy targets for the devil. How much better it is for children when their parents' marriage is a vibrant, loving one!

The big lesson: You don't have to be right all the time. You don't have to win every argument. Play a win-win game, not a win-lose one. Let your spouse "win" and be right as often as you can. It may work miracles, and in the end, both of you will win.

Winning Friends and Influencing People

In his book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie writes that if you want a person to be your friend, you should find out his favorite food, his hobbies, his favorite places to visit, and so forth; and, if you share any of his tastes, let him know. Doing so makes him "right"—it's a powerful affirmation—and he will consider you to be a friend. It sounds like manipulation, but if you are sincere, it is wisdom.

Some people never learn how to win friends and influence people. They just want to win—period! They end up influencing no one and making zero friends.

Again, you must learn to create love by making the other person right. Some people call it charm; I call it smarts. Bite your lip and control your mouth. Follow the admonition of the apostle James:

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our

members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (James 3:1–10)

When my children were in middle school and high school, our family became interested in quarter horses. To control a horse, we would put a bit in its mouth that was connected to the reins which are used to apply pressure to the bit. The more stubborn a horse is, the more severe the bit must be in order to counteract the horse's strength and command its attention. With a tiny bit, you can tame a thousand-pound horse.

Some of us need to put a holy bit in our mouths and learn to control our tongue and our ego.

After warning us to bridle our tongues and to stop speaking words tantamount to cursing, the apostle James spoke of applying wisdom to what we say.

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13–18)

A wise man speaks with meekness and wisdom, not with cunning words that come from a heart of bitter envy and strife. Being right and winning at all cost—including the price of one's marriage and children—is not wisdom from heaven but foolishness from the kingdom of darkness.

A conversation that is fashioned after heaven is pure, peaceable, gentle, easily accepted, and full of mercy and good fruits. The words spoken are

without partiality and do not seek to promote one over another. The person speaking should not be hypocritical, offering advice when he himself has the same fault. His or her words should bring peace instead of strife. Be a peacemaker. Jesus said, “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*” (Matthew 5:9).

It is alright to make an opponent wrong in court or in a game of sport, but marriage is not a contest between opponents, for a husband and wife are one flesh (see, for example, Ephesians 5:31), and “*no one ever hated his own flesh*” (Ephesians 5:29). When you make your spouse wrong, you’re shooting yourself in your own foot. Whenever a husband puts his wife down and criticizes her, he is actually putting himself down and causing himself shame. If his wife is so bad, why did he marry her in the first place? He must be a poor judge of character. If they have been married for several years, how come he hasn’t been able to change her by the influence of his own “godly behavior”?

Make the other person right whenever you can. It keeps him or her on your side. Everyone has a point of view. To open up someone’s mind and heart and get him to accept your point of view, or at least listen to it, agree with them first and watch what happens. Of course, there are times when you shouldn’t agree, as when the other party is suggesting something illegal or immoral.

More than once, I would enter a courtroom and immediately defuse the tension by shaking the opposite attorney’s hand as I smiled and said something nice.

“Hi. Thanks for calling me back. I appreciate it.”

“You know, your client’s right and I don’t blame him for getting angry. My client is sorry. Can we talk a little bit?”

“Hey, nice necktie. Looking good!”

You’d be surprised at how the other party will trip all over himself to return the compliment.

Once, we settled a case and my client promised to pay \$9,000 within thirty days. He was an engineer and had to take a trip to Guam. In the flurry of travel arrangements, he forgot to mail the check. Upon his return, I received a nasty message from the opposing attorney informing me that he

had put the case back on the calendar and we were due in court on Monday morning. It was Saturday.

On Monday morning, as we got out of the elevator and walked down the long hallway to the courtroom, we saw the plaintiff, who was well over six feet tall, with his two attorneys, who also were six footers. They gave us the evil eye as we walked toward them. It was like walking “the green mile” or facing Goliath. My client said, “Brrrr!” I walked up to the attorneys, and said, “We’re really sorry. You guys are completely right. My client just got back from Guam and he completely forgot about the deal. Thanks for calling me.”

Their faces immediately softened and they looked at each other. Finally, the plaintiff said, “Well, if your client can write a check for the full amount right now, we’ll drop the whole thing.”

My client pulled out his checkbook, wrote the check, and everyone left smiling and happy. The case ended there. We had a good lunch.

Make somebody right and they will fall all over themselves to return the favor. It works in business, sports, and, believe it or not, marriages, too.

Filling the Love Tank

Every time you make your spouse right, you gain a little love; every time you make your spouse wrong, you lose a little love.

So why do married couples spend so much time creating hate? Keep making your spouse wrong and the well of love eventually will run dry. Refill the well every day by creating love—that is, make your spouse right as often as you can. When was the last time you told your spouse that you love him or her, or gave him or her a compliment? Look for ways to keep the love well-filled to the brim. That’s why smart spouses buy flowers or little gifts from time to time. They hug and kiss, or throw a smile their spouse’s way as often as they can.

I have learned how to often tell my wife how beautiful she still is, how she looks like the same girl I married more than fifty years ago. I say it in all sincerity, even though it’s now a habit. Spend time thanking your spouse. I say, “Thank you, Honey” at least six times a day. He or she needs to be

appreciated and affirmed as someone who is worthy. Never let the love well run dry. Fill it up daily. Don't tell me that you can't because you don't have love for him or her any longer. That's just being too busy loving yourself and blaming others for your unhappiness.

If you keep driving your car and forget to put gasoline into the tank, your vehicle will soon stall and die. Likewise, if you haven't thanked your spouse or allowed them to be right for more than a week, you're about to stall on the freeway of marriage.

Some marriage counselors claim that men look for respect and admiration while women want to feel needed. When a wife disrespects her husband, it is a grave mistake, because, no matter how accomplished he is, it makes him wrong. He may store up the hurt in the back of his mind and wait for the opportunity to retaliate, consciously or unconsciously.

Make a wife feel unwanted and unneeded, and she will store up the hurt somewhere and get even with "hubby" down the road, knowingly or not. It's human nature. Spouses keep jumping at each other's throats and don't understand why. Maybe they're trying to say something.

I remember back in the hippy days of the sixties, bumper stickers used to say, "Make love, not war!" Maybe we should paste it on billboards all over the world. Make love, not war! Perhaps not the kind of love you're thinking of, but love nevertheless. What if everyone in the world tried to make everybody else right? It would be paradise. If everyone in the world spent their time making everybody else wrong, it would be hell on earth. Maybe some of us know what that hell feels like.

How God Made Us Right

God sees through the "I'm right, you're wrong" games we play. One thing is for sure: if we act like gods, we are wrong already. Adam and Eve made that mistake. There is only one true God, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus, when He came to earth in the flesh, was the only sinless and righteous person on earth. Everybody else was wrong. But our Lord Jesus died on the cross to make us right before God. He took upon Himself all of our wrongs in order to make us right. He paid the price for us through His sufferings and death. That's love.

We actually have no righteousness of our own worth talking about. Our best efforts are like filthy rags to God. (See Isaiah 64:6.) Instead, the righteousness of Jesus is imputed or given to us to make us right and acceptable before the throne of God. (See Romans 4:11, 22.)

First, Ask Yourself

Every time you are on the verge of an argument, ask yourself, “Am I just trying to be right? Am I just trying to prove that I am a god? Is it worth it?” If it is not life threatening, drop it. Over time, learn how to speak loving words and not challenging, confrontational, and argumentative words and phrases. The Lord Jesus did not come to earth in the flesh in order to lord it over us. He came as a humble servant.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5–8)

The Greek word translated as “servant” in this verse means “slave.” A servant or slave has no social status and is looked down on by society. But God honors the humble and contrite of spirit.

For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. (Isaiah 57:15)

Humble yourself, make peace, apologize, repent, and ask forgiveness. A husband who knows how to say “I’m sorry” is a wise man and will find peace. Of course, this applies to both husbands and wives. It does not mean that one should be a doormat to be stepped on. It means we need to have hearts that are slow to anger and quick to forgive.

In the eyes of God, godliness is not winning and being right. It is humbling ones’ self and being a servant to all.

Exceptions to the Rule

Before we go any further, let me say that wisdom must prevail. There are cases in which separation and/or divorce are in order, although I've found these cases to be rare. I've had cases where a husband was so abusive that his wife's life was in danger. In one situation, the husband would often come home drunk and swearing. When he was not drinking, he was a wonderful person, but when he was drunk, he would yell, swear, and hit his wife. Still, he refused to submit to counseling. When he threatened to kill his wife, it was finally time for her to make her escape.

A Christian friend of mine was married to a religious husband, who was somewhat schizophrenic. He threatened to kill her many times. She would always pray and ask God to protect her. One night, he got drunk and called his wife to tell her that he was coming home to kill her. As she prayed, God told her to flee. She did and, eventually, she had to file a petition for divorce, since her husband would not change.

In yet another case, an angry husband was constantly pushing his wife down and holding a knife to her throat during his fits of rage. She would literally tremble in fear and had to "walk on eggshells" around her own house. On several occasions, he choked her until she passed out. He refused to submit to professional counseling. I advised her to go to a shelter for abused women. It was not his first marriage, and his past wives had gone through the same experiences.

Wisdom dictates that there are times when a person is so out of control or demonized that he is capable of violence and even murder. In cases where all reasoning and normalcy are out the window, a battered spouse cannot let themselves be the victim of rage. In cases like these, Satan is at work and is controlling the other party.

Summary

When one spouse is overpowering and winning most of the arguments, the "loser" will start to defend him or herself by either lying or shutting up. No matter who wins, communication dies and the couple will drift apart. Your best friends make you right most of the time, while your enemies make you wrong. We avoid our enemies. The same is true in marriage. If

one spouse is overpowering, the other spouse will seek to avoid him or her. The ultimate avoidance is divorce.

A little love is created each time you make your spouse right; a little love is lost every time you make your spouse wrong. Keep filling your marriage with love. Be teachable and seek wise counsel from those in spiritual authority over you. The Lord Jesus was the only one who was truly “right,” but He died on the cross to make us, the eternally “wrong,” right before God.

Moses was the only one without sin when he came down the mountain with the Ten Commandments written in stone. He saw the people dancing naked around a golden calf. Yet, he asked God to take his life and forgive all the people. *“Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, ‘Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written’”* (Exodus 32:31–32).

The first Adam was the opposite. He blamed Eve to escape punishment and then pretended that he was righteous. It didn’t work. Before you get into an argument, ask yourself, *Am I just trying to be right just to beat the other person and prove that I’m a god?*

3. LinkedIn, “Best Advice: Make ’em Laugh—or They’ll Kill You,” <http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130226113317-5062-best-advice-make-em-laugh-or-they-ll-kill-you> (accessed November 12, 2014).

Agreements Run the World

Agreements are everywhere. The meaning of every word in every language is created by agreement. If we were not able to agree on the meaning of words, we would not be able to communicate. If you read a document written in Tibetan, assuming you don't speak Tibetan, you would not be able to understand or gain anything from it. You would receive no knowledge or power, and the document would be worthless to you. It is meaningless to you because there is no agreement regarding the meanings of each word. If, however, the document was written in English, you would have understanding and possibly gain knowledge and power, because you know the agreement.

Agreements rule more than words or language; they run the world.

Worldly Governments Run on Agreements

The world runs by agreements. There are many peace and cooperation treaties between nations—agreements on trade, commerce, finances, air space privileges, border control, mutual cooperation of militaries, and on and on. Groups like the World Trade Organization, the Geneva Convention, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, the European Union, the United Nations, and many others represent cooperation and agreements between and among nations. Without such treaties and other forms of agreement, the world would be in a constant state of turmoil and chaos.

Governments make laws, rules, and directives to regulate their own citizens and internal affairs. Laws, rules, and regulations are forms of agreement. As citizens, we agree to obey the laws in our communities.

Societies Function Through Agreements

Agreements are important means of creating and maintaining peace within a society and of regulating commerce and other activities. Societies establish institutions such as the military, the police, and departments of

justice in order to enforce these laws and agreements. They create courts, prisons, reformatories, and detention facilities for those who break the agreements. Without laws and a system to enforce them, there would be anarchy and chaos.

Some people are poor at keeping agreements or intentionally work at getting around them. They lack integrity and honesty. Instead of obeying the laws and rules, they do all they can to get away with flaunting the established order.

In Honolulu, when the city hired a professional group to plant vans with hidden cameras to track down speeders and people who drive through red lights, the public outcry was so great that the City Council canceled the contract on the ground that it gave too much advantage to the police. Violators wanted a more level playing field. To them, breaking the law and beating the police is the game they play.

The Military Runs By Agreement

In the military, if a soldier doesn't keep agreements, his or her fellow soldiers may die. If a patrol radios for air cover at 0800 hours and it doesn't come until 0900, the patrol either cannot move forward or is overrun by the enemy. Without strict obedience and submission to authority, there can be no military effectiveness. They will not win against a well-trained enemy that never breaks ranks or fails to follow proper protocol.

God's army is described as follows: *"They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks. They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down"* (Joel 2:7-8). An army that cannot obey ends up shooting each other or stabbing each other in the back.

Breaking laws and agreements is a characteristic of Satan's kingdom principle of violating authority. Obedience is a principle of God's kingdom. Some Christians try to function in both of these kingdoms at the same time.

Fads and Beauty Are by Agreement

What you wear, the makeup you use, even the way you talk and walk are established by agreements. If other people in society do not agree that your clothes, makeup, eyeglasses, and car are “acceptable” or “cool,” you probably wouldn’t wear them. Customs and traditions are created and upheld by agreement. In Fiji and Samoa, men wear skirts called *sulus*. In America, social convention—agreement—dictates that only women wear skirts. In Japan, you can slurp your noodles; in America, slurping is considered impolite. Burp aloud after dinner in the Middle East and your host will be pleased and honored. Do so after dinner at your girlfriend’s parents’ home in America and you may never see her again.

Beauty is by agreement. In the Renaissance period, beautiful women were chubby and short. In Polynesia, a beautiful woman had to be at least three hundred pounds to be attractive. Japanese women had to walk pigeon-toed to be admired while Chinese woman had to have tiny feet. In some communities and tribes, women must have tattoos all over their faces or large plates in their lower lips. Some tribes see missing front teeth as a sign of beauty. Others swoon over long necks wrapped by metal bands that look like refrigerator coils. Walk down the street in America with a plate in your lips or tattoos on your face and you will quickly recognize the fact that different agreements for beauty and fashion exist in different places. In America, a woman must be slim and at least 5’ 9” tall to have a chance at becoming Miss America. Centuries ago, such women would have been considered freaks.

Agreement in Sports and Games

Every game or sport is created by agreement—poker, chess, bridge, football, basketball, baseball, volleyball, golf, soccer—you name it. They are all created by forming agreements called “rules of the game.” If you play by different rules, you are not playing the same game.

Anyone can win a race by cutting across the infield, but doing so would be illegal according to the rules of track and field. Even the Bible recognizes this fact: “*If anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules*” (2 Timothy 2:5). Once, at the Honolulu Marathon, a runner was caught catching a ride on a bus to the

finish line. He was crowned with shame and barred for life from future participation.

In some games, breaking the rules is called “fouling.” There are different kinds of fouls. There are normal fouls, there are intentional fouls, and there are flagrant fouls. There are minor infractions and major infractions. When you are caught breaking a rule, there is almost always a penalty or punishment. Thwack a player’s arm when he is in the act of shooting a basketball, and the other player will get two or three free throws. Commit too many fouls and you’ll be tossed out of the game. Intentionally punch a player or referee, and it is a flagrant foul and you will be expelled from the game.

In marriage, some spouses play by different rules, knowingly or unknowingly, and commit fouls from time to time. A relatively minor infraction can lead to a minor penalty, such as sleeping on the couch or receiving the “silent treatment.” As in basketball, however, a flagrant or serious foul can lead to being tossed out of the game completely. If a husband is caught sleeping with a woman who is not his wife, he may be out of the marriage game, even if it is the first time. Come home drunk late at night, and you may have to sleep in the penalty box—on the couch. A judge in a divorce court may become the referee.

Good players know the rules and play by them. Players who are unaware of the rules or ignore them won’t be playing for long. Some athletes have been caught using illegal performance-enhancing drugs or gambling on the results of their own games and have been stripped of medals, kept out of the Hall of Fame, and generally shunned by the sporting community.

Business Runs by Agreements

Your workplace functions by agreements. When you accepted your job, you agreed to a myriad of agreements, both written and implied. Your boss expects you to perform at a certain level, show up on time, work well with others, and to represent your organization to others in a professional manner. Depending on the job, there is an implied agreement that you will complete a certain amount of work every week. If you work in a factory, there are agreements around the amount of production and the level of

quality. Break these agreements and you will be disciplined, demoted, or even fired.

Unwritten rules may apply to who is allowed in a certain break room or to the tasks assigned to newcomers. There are often “pecking orders” among the employees. Workers with seniority may be given certain privileges.

Relationships Run by Agreements

The basis of relationships is agreement. If you constantly break agreements with someone else, your relationship with that person will suffer. If they lose their trust and faith in you, your relationship is in jeopardy.

Some people don’t realize that a close relationship with the Lord is a two-way street. God keeps His promises when we keep ours. Over and over again, the Israelites rebelled and disobeyed God and His delegated authorities or prophets. They failed to keep their part of God’s covenant and so God did not speak to Israel for four hundred years prior to the birth of Jesus. There were no prophets during this time because Israel had fallen out of relationship with God. It was only due to His grace and mercy that he reengaged with them at all.

When Jesus completed His mission by dying on the cross for our sins and rising bodily from the dead, He canceled our old covenant with God and established a new covenant in His blood.

If we fail to keep our part of the covenant, God will disregard His part, even today. *“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord”* (Hebrews 8:9). Some Christians are still trying to resurrect the old covenant, even though it no longer exists. (See Hebrews 8:7–13.) The word *covenant* means “solemn agreement.”

What Happens When You Agree

People crave validation and agreement. They want other people to agree that they are worthy to be loved and admired. After all, gods are worshiped and adored. Therefore, when other people agree that you are worthy of respect, love, and adoration, you love it. This may not seem very spiritual, but it is a key to getting along. Learn to make others right and you will find yourself in a win-win situation. The boyfriend a woman marries usually is the one who makes her feel more right than all the other suitors. The ones she rejects are those men who did not make her feel right about herself. The people you love and accept are those that agree with you about how great you are.

I had a friend, Susan, who was about to quit her job. "My job is awful," she lamented. "The head of the secretarial pool is a witch and our boss is a grump."

"Why is she a witch?" I asked.

"She scolds us all day long and finds every little thing wrong with our work. Everyone is upset all the time. She picks on me all the time on every little thing."

"Why is she so picky?"

"I think it's because, last year, the senior president and his secretary retired and they chose another woman to be the secretary for the new president. She thinks she is better than the president's secretary!"

"What about your boss?"

"He stomps into the office every morning, slams his door, and talks to no one. At lunchtime, he walks out and says nothing. Then he comes back and slams his door shut until it is time to quit work."

"What's his problem?"

"I don't know. Everyone is scared of him and nobody respects him as the boss."

"Since you're going to quit anyway, how about playing a game at the office?"

"Like what?"

“Agree that the head of the secretarial pool is the best secretary in the company. Then, treat your boss with an extra dose of respect. Call him ‘Boss’ and tell him that you respect him.”

“Okay.”

About a year later, I saw Susan on the sidewalk in front of my office. She ran up to me and gushed, “Guess what? I began to tell the head of the secretarial pool that she was the best secretary in the company, and she began to take me out to coffee breaks and lunch. Eventually, she treated me like her own daughter. I came in early in the morning, cleaned my boss’s desk, and brought him coffee. He asked me why I was being so nice to him. I told him that he is our boss and we need to take good care of him. He ended up taking me to lunch at least once a week.”

“Did you quit your job?”

“No! Two months ago, the senior vice president retired and I told my boss that the secretarial pool’s leader was the best secretary in the company. She was promoted to being the secretary to the senior vice president. And guess what? I was appointed the new head of the secretarial pool.”

There are many people out there just dying to be validated by others. Sometimes it is called “paying a compliment” or “polishing the apple,” but at other times, it’s simply called “agreeing.”

Church Is Filled with Agreements

There are many agreements in church, too. Duties and responsibilities, respect, obedience, submission, all are implied agreements. Church members agree on the unwritten rules of paying tithes, daily prayer Bible reading, and attendance on Sunday mornings. There are also implied laws relating to submission, obedience, integrity, loyalty, and spiritual authority.

In addition, there are written laws and promises in the Bible. Break them and you are in trouble not only with your pastor but also with God. Disobedient people break both the laws of God and man. It’s in their heart. There are many little gods out there that obey no one and choose to live by their own laws. Father Adam and mother Eve started it; we’re walking in their footsteps.

Expectations are another form of agreement. Your pastor has expectations. These expectations may include diligence, spiritual maturity, love, loyalty, submission, and obedience. Meet them, and you may be promoted to an elder's position. Few sheep become shepherds without fulfilling these expectations. Your pastor knows who he can trust, who is loyal or diligent, and who is rebellious or unreliable. He knows who is first in line to volunteer and who disappears when there is work to be done.

A pastor looks for people who know how to keep their agreements. Those who do not are called untrustworthy and disloyal. Those who keep agreements may eventually be called pastors, elders, and deacons. Those who really keep agreements with the body of Christ and with God often end up being called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

In the church, God makes most of the agreements. His Word is an agreement, and a promise to us. He backs up His word all the time. Besides laws, the Bible has more than five thousand promises from God—and He keeps all of them! Promises are agreements.

Laws of nature govern the universe. An atheist may think they were made by “Mother Nature,” but God made all of nature. As far as I can tell, an atheist is someone that doesn't believe in the existence of God—until something goes wrong. Then he blames God: “why did God allow the tsunami to kill so many people?”

Life Is a Game of Agreements

There are many laws, agreements, contracts, rules, and regulations in life. That's why life is often called a game. It is filled with problems to solve. The same person who is a champion in sports can be a poor player in the game of life or marriage. It doesn't seem like fun and games at times, but not all games are fun in the traditional sense. The ancient Aztecs and Mayans played a certain game once a year. Members of the winning team were treated as kings for a year, but the captain and a few members of the losing team were decapitated on the spot.

You are a player in life, like it or not. In order to be a good player, you need to both know the rules and agreements, and keep them. Some people don't realize that life and marriage are games too, and fail to see that

problems are to be solved, not complained about. Therefore, they bounce and bump around without vision or goals in mind and are often crybabies. They are poor players. It's almost like walking into a stadium filled with spectators, thinking that you are going to sit close to the boxing ring and not realizing that you are actually the one people came to watch. Some people get married with no idea that there are rules, regulations, and agreements in marriage, that they are the actual players, and that others are watching.

Games Are to Solve Problems

Games are filled with problems. Solve the problems better than your opponent and you win; fail to solve them, and you will lose, unless your opponent is worse at solving problems than you are.

We teach our kids to play at war on their iPads or computers. When they grow up, many of them play real war games. Every other year, members of the military from several nations gather in waters around Hawaii to play war games. It is referred to as Rim of the Pacific, or RIMPAC. In 2012, Russia participated. In 2014, it included twenty-two nations completing together, with China as an observer. It is intended as an exercise in how to play together according to certain rules and to solve problems, so that nations of the world will be better at working together, all in the hope that trust will be built and the threat of war will be reduced. Some, however, believe that it is part of a bigger game, called "forming a one-world government."

Most of us participate in games merely as fans and spectators. We take vicarious satisfaction when our favorite team wins.

Marriage is not a spectator sport. If you are married, you are a player in the game. You were not dragged unwillingly into the ring. If you ignore or don't know the rules and agreements, you will not be set up to win. Solve the problems in marriage and you will be a winner with a happy marriage.

How to Become a Winning Player

Failing to live up to your agreements demonstrates a weakness in character. Professional sports teams take into account an athlete's character

and reputation for keeping society's laws. No matter how talented a college player is, if he has had frequent brushes with the law, he becomes an investment risk. Professional sports is big business and they cannot afford to invest money and time into a young prospect who might commit a crime and embarrass the organization by being suspended or even barred for life.

A prospective spouse who does not keep his or her agreements and promises is a bad investment in marriage, too. The ability to make and keep agreements is the key to power and success in life. Running away from making agreements does not accomplish anything except unreliability and irresponsibility. Good players know the rules. Many a golfer has lost a tournament because of ignorance of the game's rules. Likewise, many spouses have lost their marriages because they didn't know the rules either.

How to Become a Losing Player

Gods make laws and agreements but consider themselves to be above them. They break existing rules and invent their own new rules whenever they can get away with it.

Some politicians live a double life. Their public image is one of austerity and moral uprightness, but secretly, they make sweetheart deals in exchange for compensation and spend copious public funds on entertaining friends or perhaps maintaining a mistress.

Throughout the history of mankind, kings and emperors have made their own rules whenever it suited them to do so. The Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' day were hypocrites on an impressive level. To the public, they were learned holy men. In private, however, they ignored God's laws or sidestepped them to please themselves. There are many historical accounts exposing how priests would marry a prostitute, sleep with her overnight, and then divorce her in the morning. One priest did this fifty times in one year.

Even today, some of our religious organizations interpret the Bible in ways that are advantageous to their lifestyles or to appease society and governments. It is the work of the spirit of antichrist that makes men think they are gods who are above the law.

In general, mankind is poor at keeping agreements with God and with each other. Divorce represents a breach of contract, breaking the promises made between a husband and wife. It's a lack of integrity. When we said, "I do," we made an agreement to love and to cherish our spouse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, for better and for worse, until death do us part.

Too often, when we say this, we lie.

The Marriage Agreement

Marriage is a contract. There are many blind agreements in marriage that spouses may be unaware of. A bad marriage is full of broken agreements, whether or not the parties knew about the agreements or expectations. A husband may not know that his wife expects him to take her to her mother's house twice a week. A wife may not know that her husband expects a willing lover every time he feels amorous. Most newlyweds wander around in the dark for the first few years of marriage before they realize what their spouses expect. Some never realize it.

It is best to make clear what the agreements are before you marry. Often, a person doesn't even know what he or she is expecting out of their future spouse, let alone what they themselves are agreeing to. How can your spouse know what you want if you don't tell him or her? Or worse, how can a spouse meet your expectations and goals if you have never specified them and don't even know what they are yourself?

If you don't agree with, or are unable to meet, the expectations and goals the other person has, don't marry him or her. If you agree, keep your agreements. The more a couple is faithful to keep their agreements, the stronger their marriage is. Keeping agreements doesn't mean that you have to love doing all the things you promised to do. Scrubbing the toilet is not fun, but if you agreed to do it, then do it. Often, we are forced to make agreements we don't like, but that's life. We don't always like to obey God, either.

In marriage, most problems are caused by implied agreements or expectations that the offending party didn't know existed. Most men think of sex, sex, sex—whenever and wherever. Most women think of having

kids and making a family home—and that's it! For many women, sex is only a means of getting what they really want. Other than that, it is incidental. There are, of course, exceptions. Therefore, we need to get into the habit of making things clear and realistic.

When I conduct marriage counseling, I have couples create a written marriage contract that lists their agreements. Of course, the contract is not legally binding, and it can always be altered if both parties agree, but at least, they have written down many of their implied expectations in a way that can address problems before they arise. Among the points that need to be discussed and agreed upon are the following:

- Who works? One? Both?
- What bank accounts? Whose name on each account? What banks?
- Are all assets split fifty-fifty?
- Who pays for household goods and expenses? Both? One? Out of which account?
- How much should be put aside and saved each month to buy a house or apartment?
- How long will it be before buying a home? What kind of home? Where?
- How many children? How soon? Under what conditions?
- Who takes care of the kids? Who gets up at night to feed and change diapers?
- What kind of schooling for the children—public, private, religious?
- What about religion? Where will we worship?
- How much time will be spent on church activities?
- Should there be mutual agreement regarding gifts to parents? Family?
- Where to live after the wedding? How much to pay for rent?

- How much should be spent each month? Spent on what?
- How much can each party spend without asking the other's permission?
- How many cars? Who will own the car or cars?
- What about hobbies? How much money and time should be spent on hobbies?
- Who gets to spend a night out with friends? How often?
- What outside activities for each? Exercising? Spas? Golf?
- How many days a month will be spent with her parents? His parents?
- Who cooks each meal? How often should we eat out?
- What kind of food? Who washes and dries dishes?
- Chores: Who takes out the garbage? Who scrubs the toilet, tub, sink? Who vacuums the carpet?
- Who washes the cars? Cuts the grass?
- Who shops for what? Together?
- Sex—how often? What are the exceptions or excuses allowed? What's forbidden?
- What does the wife want in terms of love and respect? What does the husband want?
- How much time is devoted to individual interests, such as reading?
- What should be done if an argument cannot be solved?
- What particular things is expected of the other spouse?
- What are you willing to put into the marriage?
- What do you want your spouse to put into the marriage?

These questions and a sample contract are included in the back of this book as Addendums A, B, and C. Please spend some time going over them

and filling in your thoughts. If you are contemplating marriage, it might be useful to have your prospective spouse fill them out, too. Then compare your answers, discuss them, and make some agreements.

Every few years after getting married, revisit your agreements together. Again, there is nothing wrong with amending agreements or provisions, as long as both of you agree to the changes. The vital point is to keep expectations clear and stated.

Being Christlike Is to Keep Your Agreements

A person may give the appearance of piety by standing in church with hands raised to heaven and tears running down his face, but at the same time, he could be living with his girlfriend in unwedded bliss with two illegitimate children. God will not be mocked. You cannot be rebellious and holy at the same time. You can't worship the true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob while also operating as your own god.

Many Christians agree with their mouths but are far from God in their hearts. *“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matthew 15:8–9). Keeping your agreements with God is called “obedience.” Keeping agreements with your spouse is called “wisdom.”

Summary

Agreements are everywhere. They run our world. Fads and concepts of beauty are created by agreement. There are many implied agreements in your workplace and church. God sets the rules in church, and pastors teach us what they are. Governments and societies are run by laws, rules, regulations, and agreements.

Every sport or game we play is created by agreement. We form them through rules and regulations. We play many games in life. Games are created, in part, so we can learn how to solve problems and gain satisfaction by doing so. The people that solve the most or biggest problems usually win

the game. Life is a game inasmuch as it is full of problems to solve and rules to live by.

Every relationship is built on agreements and rules—many implied and hidden. Marriage is an agreement, or contract, between two individuals and God. A good marriage is one in which the spouses keep their agreements with each other and with God.

People playing god make laws and agreements but consider themselves above them, privileged to make and break rules with impunity. We are not gods.

Agreement: The Source of Power

Agreements Give Power

As I pointed out in the previous chapter, agreements are all around us. They run the world. The universe was created by agreement. Adam was created by agreement. “*Let Us make man in Our image*” (Genesis 1:26).

We need more understanding about agreements before we move on, especially in the area of power, both secular and spiritual.

Common language itself is an agreement that gives great power. In Genesis 11:1–9, the people on earth had only one language. They were in total agreement with each other, at least when it came to language, and they had much unity and power because of it.

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

In much the same way as the early Babylonians, modern scientists reach for the stars and visualize the day when mankind can inhabit not only the moon, but also other planets in distant constellations. These scientists find power in the unity of language and mathematics—mathematics being the

language of science. People from different countries and cultures can all relate to the common language of numbers, mathematics, and scientific formulas. A computer scientist in China can have the same understanding and knowledge as a computer scientist in France, and so forth. It is the commonality of mathematics and scientific language that allows scientists around the world to work together to propel science forward.

Sadly, in the day of Babel, the hearts of man were evil and the main power they sought came from their desire to be like God and to reach heaven on their own, without His help. In order to stymie their evil intentions, God confounded them by inflicting them with the confusion of many different languages. The result was disunity and a sudden loss of power. The point is clear: unity and agreement produce power.

Bilateral and Unilateral Agreements

Some agreements are called “bilateral” and some “unilateral.” A *bilateral* contract is one in which each of the parties to a contract makes promises to the other party or parties. For example, in a contract for the sale of an automobile, the buyer promises to pay the seller \$20,000 in exchange for the seller’s promise to deliver the title and possession of the car to the buyer upon receipt of the \$20,000.

In a unilateral contract, however, only one party to the contract makes a promise. An example is when party A declares that he will pay \$50 to the first person to run around the block in five minutes. Party B is not obligated to run around the block in five minutes, but, if he does, and if he meets all the requirements of party A’s promise, party B is entitled to the \$50. Party B doesn’t have to promise party A that he will run around the block in five minutes. He just does it.

Express and Implied Agreements

Written or spoken agreements are called “express” agreements. But there are two kinds of agreements that do not have to be in writing or spoken aloud. One is called an “implied” agreement and the other is called a “constructive” agreement. Both are important to understand. There will be consequences if you ignore their presence in your life or don’t know they

exist. Many of our problems are caused by ignoring, not knowing, or otherwise breaking implied agreements. Knowing which implied agreements are in operation is valuable because breaking an implied agreement often incurs some kind of penalty, whether monetary or the loss of respect, trust, or friendship.

When you take a taxi somewhere, you never sign a contract, but you are still obligated to pay the fare. It is an implied agreement the instant the taxi begins moving forward. Likewise, when you order a bowl of soup at a restaurant, there is no written contract to sign and you are not required to say, "I'll pay for the soup." Failure to pay either the taxi driver or the restaurant waiter will get you into trouble.

In churches, there are many implied agreements regarding loyalty, submission, obedience, and chain of command. In some churches, you must wear a suit and tie; in others, you can come in a bikini. In Hawaii, there are several Sunday morning church services held on beaches and you can put on beachwear. Simultaneously, some worship in huge cathedrals with ushers and flowers.

When you enter into marriage, there are all kinds of implied agreements. You may be unaware of their consequences or even their existence. Regardless, if you fail to keep them, there may be dire consequences. For instance, forget your wife's birthday and you will find that you may have breached an implied agreement. Don't believe it when she says, "Oh, don't buy me anything for my birthday. I have everything I need." She wanted you to buy something, and is hurt and disappointed that you forgot. Not knowing about implied agreements can be like stumbling around in the dark.

Once you are aware of the implied agreements of a marital relationship, however, your confusion may decrease and the chances for a happier relationships will vastly improve.

Constructive Agreements

Constructive agreements are made for the public good. A doctor comes across the scene of an accident and helps an unconscious victim. He applies first-aid or renders other medical services and accompanies the patient to

the hospital. The hospital cares for the patient. Both the doctor and the hospital are entitled to payment for services rendered. Obviously, this cannot be a written, verbal or implied agreement, since the victim is injured or even unconscious, so the courts have “construct” agreements for the public good. Without them, few doctors or hospitals would treat an unconscious victim. This is an over-simplification of contract law but, for the purposes of this book, simply be aware that many types of agreements exist in the world.

Expectations

There is a famous story that goes something like this: A tribal chief had a daughter of marriageable age who was beautiful, but also had an awful temper, was impatient, and wielded a sharp tongue. None of the men in her village dared to marry her, even when the chief lowered the requirement for her hand in marriage to five cattle. He then lowered the price to two cattle and still the men were too afraid of her awful tantrums and sour disposition to ask for her hand.

Finally, a man from a different village came and offered ten cattle for her hand in marriage. Of course, the chief was delighted. On the night of the wedding, the bride was curious as to why the offer far exceeded the asking price. She thought her husband foolish. The wise husband said, “It was because you are well worth the price. I believe you to be the most beautiful, gracious, and gentle woman I have ever met. I made a good bargain.”

From that moment on, the once-fiery daughter became the most gracious, gentle, and loving woman in the entire countryside, and the couple became famous. She had been won over by the wise and kind words of her husband, and she strove to meet his expectations of her. In short, she agreed with his expectations.

The Power of the Godhead Is in Agreement, or Unity

The power of the godhead is found in the perfect agreement or oneness among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 1 John 5:7–8 says, “*For there are*

three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.”

Jesus is the Word of God. (See Revelation 19:13.)

The name of God is “Lord Jesus Christ.” The name of the Father in the Old Testament is “*Lord of hosts*” (Jeremiah 10:16). The name of the Son is “Jesus.” The name of the Holy Spirit is “Christ.” “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:27). The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are One. Herein lies the power of the godhead.

That is why we pray the blood of Jesus and the Word of God. Whenever we do, the Holy Spirit comes in agreement and brings the power of the godhead. Try it. Pray all the Scriptures (the Word) you know about the blood and feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. Every demon in the kingdom of darkness knows this power and trembles.

The Power in Us

Agreement is the seat of power for humans, too. “*How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had surrendered them?*” (Deuteronomy 32:30). One can chase a thousand and two can chase ten thousand, because of our Lord. The power is increased ten times where two pray in agreement and unity.

If three or more pray together, the power increases exponentially. That’s why entire churches should pray together; not only the members of a single church but many believers in unity with other churches, even around the world.

Matthew 18:19 says, “*Again I say to you that if two of you shall agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.*” Many Christians have testified that when they have prayed together in perfect agreement with another believer, God has performed miracles.

One of the members of the first church I belonged to worked in the personnel department of a large hospital. Her daughter phoned one morning, and said, “Mom, did you know that so-and-so’s son got into an

automobile accident and that he has been in a coma in your hospital for three months?” Her mother called a nurse she often prayed with and they both went to the room of the comatose patient. Together, they prayed, referencing Matthew 18:19: “Lord Jesus, you said that if two of us agree as touching anything we ask, it shall be done for us by our Father in heaven. We agree that this young man will come out of his coma in Jesus’ name.” When they said “Amen,” the young man opened his eyes and came out of his coma. Someone else heard about this and asked these two ladies to pray for another coma patient. Once again, they prayed in agreement and the patient regained consciousness.

I have used this prayer often when praying for the healing of people, and God has honored it many times.

Matthew 18:20 states, “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*” Jesus agrees to be there whenever two or three Christians come together in unity in His name. It is a promise of God.

Perhaps that is why our Lord Jesus sent His disciples out two by two instead of one by one. (See Luke 10:1.)

Husband and wife are two, and yet, one. When they pray together in agreement, they are powerful. Test it out. Set aside a time every day when you can pray together as a couple, and watch God work miracles in your marriage and beyond.

God actually challenges us to test Him on this in order to see if He will not keep His word. “*‘Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that **there will not be room enough to receive it**’*” (Malachi 3:10). Test the Lord; see if He will keep His word. Pray together in agreement and with faith and see what God does.

God wants us to be in unity with one another. Satan knows this and works constantly to keep us apart.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like

the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing—life forevermore. (Psalm 133:1–3)

When we are in perfect unity and harmony in the church, the Lord anoints everyone in the church. The anointing runs down from the leaders at the top (Aaron's beard) to those people at the bottom (the edge of Aaron's garments). The dew of Hermon that the psalmist references was the only sustenance or water that plants in the desert received. It was precious and came from the heavens to bring life. Similarly, God promises that where there is unity in the church, He will command the blessing and provide life forevermore.

In marriage, the principle of unity, oneness, or perfect agreement works the same way. When a husband and wife are in perfect agreement and harmony, one with the other, God will command the blessing, even life forevermore. They become as one flesh. (See Ephesians 5:31.) Power is bestowed into the relationship and even the children are blessed. Where there is no agreement, there is no power and the marriage remains fragile and divided. Where there is agreement between husband and wife, and when these agreements are kept, the marriage is headed toward blessing. As the prophet Amos asked, *“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”* (Amos 3:3). Seek agreement with one another, wherever possible. Then keep your agreements. God keeps all of His promises; we should aim to do the same.

Penalties for Breaking Agreements

When a person constantly breaks his promises and agreements, he becomes untrustworthy and no one will put faith in him. This is true whether the person is aware of the agreements or not. Some people are so used to breaking their agreements that they will hardly commit to anything. Ask them to meet at a certain place and time and they will say, “I’ll try,” leaving themselves an out if they fail. “Oh, I didn’t really promise to be on time,” they hastily excuse themselves. “I said ‘I’ll try’ but I didn’t promise.”

Good relationships are created when we clarify our agreements and then keep them. Don’t say, “I do!” and then don’t.

In marriage, a good relationship between husband and wife is based on trust and faith. Break too many of your promises and the marriage becomes weak and unstable. There is then little trust or faith in one another, and little power in the relationship. *“If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand”* (Mark 3:24–25).

There is usually a penalty whenever one breaks his/her agreements—disunity and loss of power is only the beginning. Prisons are filled with people who have failed to keep their agreements with society. They are lawbreakers and considered by society to be untrustworthy, so they are set aside and placed in prisons. If the offense is relatively minor, there is a monetary fine to discourage future infractions. The worse the infraction, the more severe the penalty. Sometimes, lawbreakers are put on probation.

In marriage, as in other relationships, there are also forms of probation and penalty. A person who constantly breaks promises and agreements, whether he or she knows it, will suffer loss of trust and faith from their partner. It often takes a long time to restore that trust and there can be long “probationary” periods.

That’s why it is important to realize what implied—or unspoken—agreements exist in your marriage. It’s difficult to avoid penalties for breaking agreements that we don’t even know exist, or ones we misunderstand, or think to be unimportant. One person may not think it is important for their spouse to remember their anniversary, while another person may be deeply hurt by such a slight. Keep your agreements with God and, in due time, He will exalt you and give you much spiritual power and understanding.

Summary

Agreement and unity are sources of power in both the physical and spiritual realms. Where there is unity, God promises to bless, and even to give life forever more. The power of the godhead is vested in the perfect agreement among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A Christian’s spiritual power is increased when there is agreement with other Christians. That’s why Satan is most effective when the church is divided. The more denominations and independent churches there are, the more division and

weakness exists in the body of Christ. A kingdom or house divided cannot stand. (See Matthew 12:25; Mark 3:24; Luke 11:17.)

Sometimes, we break agreements because we do not know they exist in the first place. Problems in marriage are often the result of not realizing the existence of certain implied agreements, misunderstanding what the agreements are, or ignoring them entirely. We need to understand the different kinds of agreements, such as express, implied, and constructive agreements. Once we become aware of agreements, we will recognize them everywhere in life.

There are usually penalties for breaking agreements, whether or not you knew the agreements existed. At the very least, there is a loss of trust or faith. You can strengthen your marriage by determining what agreements exist and then keeping those agreements. Sometimes, expectations become agreements. When one does not meet the expectations of another person, that person will be disappointed. On the other hand, when one knows the expectations of the other person, he or she can strive to meet those expectations, assuming they are reasonable.

Who Did It?

So far, we have discussed two characteristics of a so-called “god”: (1) gods are always right and never lose; and (2) gods are above the law and are not obligated to keep their own agreements. In this chapter, we will look at the third characteristic of a god.

As a divorce attorney for many years, I’ve heard countless stories about who is to blame, what circumstances caused the failure, what brought about the lack of communication, how other family members are making matters worse, how fights over money or infidelity caused the breakup, and so forth. Sadly, none of these complaints touch on the real issue, and, unlike a good murder mystery novel, none of my clients or their ex-spouses ever discovered who really did it.

Are You a Victim?

Many people truly believe that they have no control over their life. They see themselves as victims of circumstances and of others’ actions. Therefore, they do not see themselves as responsible for what goes on in their life, including marriage. They are innocently being carried downstream, unable to navigate, bumping into obstacles, dumped into lousy jobs, and tricked into an unhappy marriage. It is the reaction of someone who thinks he or she is a god.

Gods can never be wrong and they never lose. When things go right, they take the credit; but if things go wrong, it is not their fault or responsibility. It is always someone else that screwed up. Their marriage is bad because of their spouse. Their job is lousy because of their unfair boss and conniving coworkers. “Poor me; nobody ever listens to me; everybody is out to get me.”

This is a lie. You’re not the victim of your spouse. You never were. You’re the victim of your own bad attitudes, faulty expectations, and lack of understanding. You set yourself up. There was a day when you actually

wanted your marriage and your spouse. You said, “I do.” You agreed to it. You could have said, “I don’t,” but you said, “I will,” and “I do.” You agreed. When you agreed to it, you caused it in your life. If you were tricked, you tricked yourself.

You’re nobody’s victim. You’re not the reaction; you’re the action. You’re not the response; you’re the stimulus. You created your marriage. Then you lied about it.

Power to Create and Cause

You’re powerful! By your own words, you set things in motion. You’re almost like a real god. You may not create things in the same way that God does, but, nevertheless, you can cause things to happen. The Bible tells us that you reap what you sow. (See Galatians 6:7.)

You have been part of the cause for almost everything that has ever happened in your life.

It was the same way with Adam. Adam and Eve were not the victims of the serpent. After the fall, Adam tried to blame both God and Eve. “*Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate’*” (Genesis 3:12). He may have fooled himself, but he couldn’t fool God. Adam played the victim and passed the buck, but God held him responsible. Eve played the blame game, too: “*And the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate’*” (Genesis 3:13).

God held all three parties responsible for what they did. He cursed the serpent, the woman, and then Adam. (See Genesis 3:14–19.) He will hold you accountable for what you do, too. You can fool yourself but you can’t fool God. The flesh will always try to wriggle out by blaming others and making excuses, but the Lord is not deceived.

Adam and Eve never repented, as some claim. I read once that when you get to heaven, you’ll be able to recognize Adam and Eve because they will be the only ones without a belly button. This is not true. Adam and Eve are in the pit.

If they had repented, God would have forgiven them. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us”* (1 John 1:9–10). God has not changed. *“For I am the Lord, I do not change”* (Malachi 3:6; see also Hebrews 13:8).

Adam and Eve could have humbled themselves, confessed their sins, repented, and submitted to the mercy of God, but they refused. After all, it was the serpent’s fault. Why should they take the blame when they did nothing wrong? Instead, they were kicked out of the garden of Eden. They were deceived by their own flesh and insisted that they were innocent victims of the serpent, and even of God. (See Genesis 3:23–24.)

Adam’s descendants are chips off the old block. They think the same way. The serpent is rolling in the bushes, laughing himself silly.

God loves the humble and contrite of spirit. He dwells with them.

For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isaiah 57:15)

God could no longer dwell with the proud and rebellious Adam and Eve. They were no longer in His image spiritually, so He had to kick them out of His presence. In the King James Version of the above passage, it reads, *“... with him **also** that is of a contrite and humble spirit.”* The *“also”* refers to God’s own spirit. God is humble.

Adam and Eve had become proud. Even today, the descendants of the first Adam remain proud, unrepentant, and blameless in their own eyes. They are the victims of their own spouses and circumstances, blameless in their own eyes, or at least not as culpable as the other person. They says things like *“Well, I admit that I was wrong too, but she’s more wrong than me.”*

There are some things over which we don’t have total control, such as the economy. But we have assented to or created most of the things happening in our lives. Other gods may have helped to create, or have joined in causing, some of the problems in your life, but you are a part of the cause in nearly everything going on in your life. You caused your relationships with

family members; you caused your marriage, your children, job, hobbies, possessions, and activities. You created going to the church you attend. You chose your friends, enemies, and mother-in-law. You created living in the community you reside in: your friends and your enemies. You are the cause of who you are, what you do, and what you have. Stop lying!

Make-believe gods refuse to take responsibility for the bad things in their lives.

You Are Responsible for What You Create

The most successful people in life are those who take responsibility for everything they create, good or bad. They acknowledge their failures and move on.

Henry J. Kaiser was an industrialist who created Kaiser Aluminum, Kaiser Steel, Kaiser Automobile, and other companies that were forced to file for federal bankruptcy protection a number of times. Each time, Kaiser would acknowledge that he caused his mistakes, learn from them, and move on. Eventually, he became one of the richest men in America and was responsible for building many other companies, including Kaiser Health Plan, with hospitals in various states including Hawaii, a hotel complex in Waikiki named the Hawaiian Village Hotels, and the wonderful Hawaii Kai subdivision, one of Hawaii's finest housing developments. He died in 1967 and two schools—one in Hawaii and one in California—are named after him. Mr. Kaiser never blamed other people or circumstances.

Playing the role of victim makes you an irresponsible, laid-back crybaby, blaming everyone around you for all your failures. You never learn anything because you remain perfect in your own eyes. Why change someone who is already perfect?

The scourge of marriages in America today is irresponsible fathers who fail to support their children. They refuse to pay child support and spend much of their time pouting and complaining. Many of them quit their jobs in order to excuse themselves from meeting their paternal duties.

Irresponsibility is a trait of mankind, according to the apostle Peter in 2 Peter 2:9–22. This is especially true of husbands. Wives are often forced to

take the lead role in both marriage and society in general because men have abdicated their rightful responsibilities.

Today, many shy away from marriage, commitment, and responsibility by simply living together out of wedlock. According to the 2000 census, 37 percent of heterosexual couples living together in America are not married and 49 percent of babies born in America are illegitimate.

Who Is Responsible for Your Marriage?

By now, you should know that answer to that question. People often say that marriage is a fifty/fifty proposition. It is not. Marriage is a one hundred/one hundred proposition. Each spouse is 100 percent the cause of marrying the other in his or her life. Each partner in marriage made their choice. Therefore, each is 100 percent responsible for making it work.

When we stand before God, we will not be able to say, “I sinned because my spouse did such and such. If he/she hadn’t done that, I would not have done what I did.” God will hold you accountable, as he did with Adam and Eve. You are responsible for your marriage, and for your divorce, too, if it ever comes to that.

The More Responsible You Are, the More Mature You Are, and Vice Versa

As a child matures, he takes on more and more responsibilities. First, he learns to handle his personal hygiene needs, and to dress and feed himself. Then he takes on the responsibility of going to school. Later, he starts to work and earn money for his own personal needs. Still later, he is able to help the family’s finances. As he matures even further, he takes on the responsibility of a wife and then children. Some people mature even further and take on the responsibility of caring for more family members, or for people outside the family. Others take responsibility for their communities. Some serve as mayor of their city or governor of their state. A very few end up being President of the United States. In the body of Christ, some members take on the responsibility of deacons, elders, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers.

God's Responsibility

God is the most responsible person in the entire universe. He is unequivocally clear that He created the world and everything in it. Therefore, He took total responsibility for it and died on the cross to bring us back to the garden of Eden, in order to return everything Adam and Eve lost when they sinned. God is marching us back to the garden of Eden. (See Joel 2:3.) He promised to give you the morning star if you stand up, take responsibility and overcome! *“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations...I will give him the morning star”* (Revelation 2:26, 28).

Summary

Losers play the victim game and never take responsibility for their lives. They make others responsible for their own happiness and safety. Gods never lose, therefore, when something goes wrong, they claim it's not their fault. But if something good happens, they take full credit. However, you are not a victim of anyone or of circumstances. You have set things in motion yourself. Another word for “create” is “cause.” You are the cause of almost everything that has happened in your life. You caused the career you have, the church you go to, and the spouse you have. You said, “I do.”

We reap what we sow.

Wives, Submit to Whom?

Was the Apostle Paul a Male Chauvinist?

The apostle Paul never married, but he recognized that marriage was one of the most important testing and training grounds ever devised by God. What he wrote about the ideal marriage relationship was intended to counter the negative and devastating effects of what Adam and Eve did when they rebelled against God.

Was Paul a male chauvinist and bigot when he said, “*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:22)? This passage is one of the most misunderstood, ignored, and neglected commandments in the Bible. Many pastors avoid teaching on this subject for fear of inciting the women in the church and piling ridicule upon themselves. Most believe it is better “to let sleeping dogs lie.” After all, they reason, some women may rise up and some leave if church leaders insist on a strict adherence to this ridiculous scriptural passage.

Paul’s instruction provokes many important questions. Are women inferior to men? Is he picking on wives? Are men just trying to abuse their wives and force them to obey? What’s the purpose of this teaching? What about gender equality and constitutional rights? To find answers to these questions, let’s consider another scriptural passage.

“The Father Is Greater than I”

Jesus emphasized that his Father was greater than himself: “*Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him*” (John 13:16). “*You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I*” (John 14:28). Why would he emphasize this? Some claim it proves that Jesus was only a man and not God, because He admitted that the Father was greater than He was.

This clearly would contradict what the apostle Paul wrote:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5–11)

Why would God the Father give Jesus a name above every name, including the name of the Father? Why would God say that every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, including those in heaven? Does this include the Father and the Holy Spirit?

The answer is found in the very nature and character of God—humility, submission, obedience, and love. Jesus could never say, “I am greater than the Father in heaven and the Holy Spirit.” Neither could the Father announce that He was higher than the Son and the Holy Spirit, and vice versa. Such a concept would be completely out of God’s character.

When Jesus obeyed the Father, died on the cross, rose from the dead, and returned to heaven, the Father gave the Son a name that is above every name. The Father and the Holy Spirit could do no less. They could never say, “I am greater than Jesus.” In truth, they became one, and the fullness of the godhead—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—became embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ. “*For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell*” (Colossians 1:19). “*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” (Colossians 2:9).

In addition to humility, the very nature of God is love. “*He who does not love does not know God, for God is love*” (1 John 4:8). “*And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him*” (verse 16). The measure of our love for God is determined by the level of humility, submission, and obedience we have toward His commandments and words.

If you deeply love someone, you would never say, “I’m better than him or her.” You would always say, “She or he is better than me. She or he is terrific.”

Jesus came to do the Father’s will as the Father’s servant. When He was in the flesh, the Lord said, “*A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master*” (Matthew 10:24–25). When He completed His task on earth and returned to heaven, Jesus thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He was and is God. He always has been and always will be.

God’s Test for Love Is Obedience

Christians love God, and we are always proclaiming our love for Him in songs, poems, and literature, but to what extent do we really love Him? Many kneel and weep while singing and praising the Lord. Some are not as verbal or expressive but they dedicate themselves to helping the local church, to donating tithes and offerings faithfully, and to sacrificing time and money to serve others. These are all expressions of love, but what is God’s test for love?

Most Christians already know the answer to that question because it’s in the Bible. The Lord Jesus said, “*If you love Me, keep My commandments*” (John 14:15). Likewise, He said, “*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word*” (verse 23). That is God’s standard and test, by which our love for Him is measured.

But obedience to God’s commandments is not the only requirement. One can obey out of fear or desire to avoid criticism and still have a prideful and rebellious heart. One can sacrifice much but do it out of a desire for recognition. One can obey and yet not have a heart of obedience. True obedience comes out of a heart of humility and submission.

People often obey traffic laws because they are afraid that they might receive a traffic citation and pay a fine if caught. But if they can get away with it, they will disobey by choice. At three in the morning, with no one in sight, drivers are far more likely to roll through stop signs and red lights or travel twenty miles over the speed limit.

Children frequently obey their parents reluctantly out of the fear of a spanking or other punishment. One can obey with selfish motives.

God seeks those who choose to walk in humility and submission because their hearts are contrite. One can feign humility but remain arrogant of heart.

The Lord Jesus Is Humble, Submissive, and Obedient

Jesus described Himself as being meek and lowly of heart. *“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls”* (Matthew 11:29). *“Learn from Me,”* *“be like Me,”* *“be meek and lowly of heart like Me”*; this is the calling of every Christian.

The Lord Jesus is the Creator of the world and Lord of all, but He humbled Himself to be in the form of a servant or slave. Few are lower than a slave. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”* (John 1:1–3). *“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him”* (verse 10). *“And to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ”* (Ephesians 3:9).

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:16–19)

The Lord Jesus created the worlds and everything in it, but He came to serve His creation. God dwells with the humble and contrite of spirit.

For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isaiah 57:15)

The word “*contrite*” is often defined as “broken, smashed to pieces.” It refers to being broken, lowly, and submissive. Better to fall on Jesus, the cornerstone of the church, than to have the rock fall on you and grind you to powder. “*Whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder*” (Matthew 21:44; see also Luke 20:18). All saints are called to be humble, submissive, and obedient, just like God.

A Heart of Obedience Compelled Jesus to Die on the Cross

While Jesus loved the world, it was His humility, submission, and obedience to the Father that compelled Him to suffer and die on the cross for the sins of the world. Just before He was arrested, put on trial, and crucified, the Lord Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane with His disciples.

*Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; **nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.**” Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, **Your will be done.**” And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. (Matthew 26:38–44)*

While our Lord Jesus was praying, His sweat fell as if it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (See Luke 22:44.) He was under great stress. He knew the incredible pain that would be inflicted on his body and mind, and the humiliation and shame He would be subjected to if He went

to the cross. He asked the Father, “Is there another way?” The Father answered directly into His spirit, “No, Son, there is no other way.”

Once the Lord determined that it was the Father’s will, He stood up and said to His disciples, “*Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand*” (Mark 14:42). He chose to obey the Father’s will above all. It is the nature of God. His submission and obedience led our Lord Jesus to die on the cross.

Love is His nature and the fruit of the Spirit. (See Galatians 5:22–23.) The Lord Jesus had no intention of disobeying the Father in heaven; He was just confirming the Father’s will.

God desires that all Christians be Christlike in their submission and obedience toward those appointed by God to be above them in authority. A heart of submission and obedience will obey all authority, including civil authorities, unless that authority is contrary to the Word of God. (See 1 Peter 2:13–15.)

When Christians violate man’s laws and become criminals, it brings shame upon the Lord and His people in the eyes of foolish men or unbelievers. So, submit to the laws of men for the sake of conscience towards God. By now you know that love and submission cannot be separated one from the other. Humility, submission, and obedience apply to all Christians, not only wives.

It Is God’s Desire

The apostle Paul knew something when he said, “*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:22). He was not a male chauvinist pig. He understood that God created the heavens, earth, and mankind with two desires in His heart. First, God wants sons and daughters conformed unto the image of His Son, Jesus, perfect in love and obedience (see Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:11–15). Second, He also wants a perfect church to become the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7–9; 21:2; 22:17). As Paul writes, “*That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish*” (Ephesians 5:27). Those are God’s desires, plans, and purposes for mankind, from before He created the worlds.

So, what does submitting to one's husband have to do with it? Almost everything.

It Doesn't Matter What the Other Person Does

Humility, submission, and obedience are issues of the heart. As I stated before, one can act humble yet still be proud or submissive outwardly, yet at the same time inwardly self-promoting, disobedient, and rebellious.

The apostle Peter instructed us as follows:

*Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. **For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.*** (1 Peter 2:13–21)

The apostle Peter went on to describe how our Lord Jesus suffered for us, yet being sinless. It is important to understand what Peter is saying.

1. *Obey every law of man for the Lord's sake.* It is the Lord who sends kings, governors, and other rulers to punish evildoers and praise well-doers. While there are evil dictators and rulers, God's will is for us to have obedient hearts. It is God's will that you obey and be recognized for your well-doing in order to silence the ignorance of foolish men who are anxious to find fault with Christians.

Christians shame the Lord when they willingly break man's laws and are punished by civil authorities. We also shame the Lord when we disobey His commandments regarding the relationship between husband and wife, especially when our divorce rates nearly equal that of the world's. Of

course, when man's laws are against God's laws, it is better to obey God. (See Acts 4:19.) "*We ought to obey God rather than men*" (Acts 5:29).

2. *Use your liberty in Christ to honor all men, love the brotherhood of Christians in the fear of God, and honor those that rule over you.* Don't use your liberty to proudly and maliciously lord it over others as someone who is superior to them. It is God who determines whether you and I will go to heaven or hell. Many who thought that they were doing well as Christians have ended up in hell. Therefore, fear God and obey Him.

3. *Servants are to submit to their masters with all fear (of God), not only to good and gentle masters, but also to the wicked, overbearing, unkind, and cunning masters, including husbands.* It is God's way, so do it out of conscience toward God, because the Lord commands it. If necessary, endure grief and suffering given wrongfully in order to honor God. Have faith in God.

The book *Lilies Amongst Thorns* describes the true account of Christian Chinese prisoners at hard labor prison camps who were respected and desired by their wardens and guards because they were honest, diligent, and obedient. They gave their authorities no problems and worked hard without complaining. They brought honor to Jesus Christ, and by their example, converted many fellow prisoners and even prison guards.⁴

4. Peter said that there is no glory if you are buffeted for your faults and you take it patiently. After all, it is justified and natural for a master to chasten and punish his servants if they err. *The glory is when you do well yet are unfairly criticized and punished, suffering for it and taking it patiently.* It is acceptable to God and to your credit and glory.

5. *The Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us, although He was perfect in love and obedience, so that we could follow in His footsteps.* This speaks to how and why we should submit to our authorities, both good and bad. Likewise, wives should submit to their husbands. There is no glory if one submits only when his or her authority is kind and fair. The glory arises when one submits to an authority who treats him or her badly.

Peter continues as follows:

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of

their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands. (1 Peter 3:1–5)

The submission and obedience a wife gives her husband is not based on how well the husband treats her. It should be based on conscience toward God, in reverence and fear of Him, because He commands it. The godly responses of a submissive and obedient wife who chooses obedience to God's commandments above the dictates of her flesh and worldly instincts may well change her husband for the better and convert him into a believer in Jesus Christ. It is not the outward adornment of a beautiful hairdo, jewelry, or clothes that will win a husband over to God; it is the inner person of the heart—meek, quiet, and peaceful, which is highly favored of God.

Sanctify Your Husband

If your spouse is not a believer in Jesus Christ, the family is, nevertheless, sanctified by your faith. 1 Corinthians 7:14: *“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.”* Through a wife's faithfulness to the Word of God, including her desire to submit to her husband, he can be won over and become a believer. God will bless that household and marriage because it is holy and clean in His eyes.

God wants wives to learn love through humility, submission, and obedience toward their husbands. In so doing, they acknowledge and obey the law of God, and agree with His plan and purpose for their lives. God wants wives to conform to the image of His Son, Jesus. Obedience and submission are tests, trials, and sufferings that all Christians must go through in order to be perfected in Jesus Christ. Their rewards are in heaven.

The lordship of a husband is one of the hardest things to agree with. “*For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body*” (Ephesians 5:23). That is God’s method of training wives to be Christlike. And in the process of being Christlike, mothers and wives teach their children and husbands to be conformed unto the image of Jesus Christ.

Our Homes as God’s Training Ground

Mothers have the task of teaching their offspring love through obedience. The greatest model and influence on a child is its mother. Children learn by watching their parents interact with each other. Both boys and girls learn submission and love by observing Mom and Dad. Can a child learn love and obedience from a mother who is the boss of the house, who constantly tells the children how stupid their father is, and who criticizes the husband by pointing out his errors all the time? No. Can children learn love from a father who berates their mother all the time and is indifferent, confrontational, irresponsible, angry, and unforgiving? No. Children copy both their mother and father.

Submitting to your husband doesn’t mean letting him walk all over you. It means seeing him as someone who has the authority of God living in him. Obedience to him recognizes that authority, whether or not he exercises that authority well. It recognizes that God appointed the husband as the spiritual head over the family, even as Christ is the head of the church. Everyone is under some kind of authority, including the husband.

Arguing or contending is not necessarily a sin, so long as rebellion is not the underlying spirit or motive. Sometimes, you have to reason something out, and the reasoning out is not always serene. But in the end, husbands have the responsibility to take into account what his wife is saying before making the final decision. Once the husband makes the decision, the wife should submit to it. But remember, husbands, you’re responsible for the outcome.

Women are not viewed by God as being lower than men. They just have different roles to play. They are coheirs of the kingdom. They walk a different path to the same goal: perfection in Jesus Christ. One path is

through submission and obedience, the other is through love. Reaching the goal of perfection requires both paths.

A Christian brother prayed over this and God gave him a vision of two cups. One was a thick, coarse ceramic cup, like you would see in a coffee shop. The other cup was a fine piece of chinaware, thin, delicate, and elegant. God asked him, "Which cup is the stronger vessel?" "The thick cup," answered the brother. God asked, "Which is the weaker?"

You know the answer. This is not to say that either cup is better than the other. Both cups have their usefulness at different times. You would not use fine china to serve truckers in a rest station; neither would you use a thick mug at a garden party. Both have unique strengths and uses.

The Church as God's Training Ground

Another of God's training grounds is the church. The apostle Paul instructed the saints not to allow women to teach men in the church. "*And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence*" (1 Timothy 2:12). Why did Paul say that? Is it because men are smarter than women? This is another tough Bible passage avoided by most pastors.

I believe it is partly because children learn character, submission, and love in church, too. If women were to lead men in church, it would seem confusing and contradictory to them. On one hand, wives are to submit to their husbands at home; on the other hand, men have to submit to their wives in church. It is contradictory and inconsistent.

God's standard for perfection in Christ must be adhered to in church. It is not that men are superior to women; it is God's kingdom order. In Satan's kingdom, women rule; in my experience, most witches, by a ratio of more than ten to one, are women. The church needs to clearly reflect God's kingdom order in which men hold the authority.

Even now, there is a distinct lack of submission, obedience, loyalty, and obedience between the church and the Lord. If the relationship between wives and husbands is the same as the current relationship between the church and Christ, we may be failing miserably. A church that fails at submission and obedience will be a church in which divorces occur more

frequently. The institutions of both church and marriage are both designed to reflect God's kingdom order and purposes, and they are closely intertwined. When one suffers from disobedience, the other likely will as well.

School as God's Training Ground

A third training ground is school. When Satan's kingdom reigns, women become the leaders and men the buffoons. That is what is taking place in many of our public schools today, including universities. Women are becoming the leaders over men. There are more female medical students than males right now. When I went to law school, men outnumbered women twenty to one. Today, there are more female law students than males. Lesbian and gay clubs abound within universities. I was shocked when I visited my alma mater. It is not just about gender equality and women's rights, it is a spiritual battle of the kingdoms, and Satan is winning. This is not to say that women cannot be physicians or lawyers. There are humble and loving female physicians and lawyers. However, women often use such powerful careers to abuse their God-given roles.

That is why Satan attacks our marriages, churches, and schools so vehemently. He wants to put women in charge of virtually everything. His object is to destroy Christianity and rule the world. It started in the garden of Eden when Eve failed to obey God's principles regarding marriage and the line of authority. She took control and made a decision that has affected mankind ever since.

Humility, submission, and obedience are among the most difficult things to learn in life. They are traits that reflect God's character and nature; they go against the grain of the mind and flesh of carnal man. That is why the apostle Paul insisted that wives should submit to their husbands in all things, even as unto the Lord. Humility, submission, and obedience are matters of the heart. You cannot move into perfection in Jesus Christ without true submission and obedience.

A Heart of Humility, Submission, and Obedience

The overall issue is *not* whether wives must submit to and obey their husbands. The overall issue is submission to God’s authority. All Christians are to obey authorities.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. (Colossians 3:18–25)

As Watchman Nee said, “God establishes the husband as the deputy authority of Christ, and the wife as the representation of the church. Unless the wife sees the authority that the husband represents, the authority God has set up, it is difficult for her to submit. She has to see that it is not a matter of her husband but a matter of God’s authority.”⁵ In other words, husbands represent Christ as the head, and wives represent the church in submission and obedience.

All Christians—married and single, young and old, husbands and wives—are to be humble, submissive, and obedient to the authorities set over them by God. It is God’s way.

Summary

The apostle Paul was not being a male chauvinist when he instructed wives to submit to their husbands, even as unto the Lord. The issue is not which is greater: male or female; rather, the issue is obedience, love, and growing into the image of Jesus Christ. God measures love by obedience and humility. It takes humility to submit and obey. The Lord Jesus came to obey the Father. Obedience led Him to the cross.

Obedience is a choice. Our children learn submission, obedience, humility, and love mostly at home from mother and father, in church, and school. An unsubmitive wife and an unloving husband cannot teach what

they don't have. Our marriages reflect the spiritual condition of the church. The church has become worldly, unsubmitive, disobedient, and unloving. At the end of this age, submission, obedience, and love will be mostly absent in our churches and families. "*And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold*" (Matthew 24:10–12). Nevertheless, God will have His bride of Christ.

4. Brother Dennis Danyun, *Lilies Amongst Thorns* (Lancaster, UK: Sovereign World, 1993).

5. Watchman Nee, *Authority and Submission* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1988), 59.

Husbands, Love Your Wives

Husbands Represent Christ—Be Careful

Husbands, God appointed you to represent Him. He made you the head of your household. There is a chain of command that comes from the throne of God through Christ, and then to His delegated authorities. You represent Christ in your family. Even as Christ loved the church and gave His life for it, you are to rule over your family in like manner, as Christ the church. He is the head of the church. He loves the church and died for it.

And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45)

There is a world of difference between the first Adam and the last Adam. The first Adam was quick to blame his wife and suggested that God kill her instead of him. He was a living soul who fought to stay alive, even if it meant that his wife had to die in his place. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, was sinless in a world of sinners. Yet, He died for the sins of all in order to give us life. God has called husbands to be like the last Adam, our Lord and Savior.

Many wives claim that if their husbands would just show them more love, it would be easier for them to submit. Likewise, many husbands blame their willful wives for their own inability to sacrificially love them. Both are excuses, justifications, and defenses for disobeying God and ignoring His commandments.

The apostle Paul said this about the responsibility of every husband:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His

bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:25–33)

It is not an option. The standard of love that God expects out of husbands towards their wives is clear: *“just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”*

For the sake of the church, Jesus humbled Himself and *“made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross”* (Philippians 2:7–8). How is it possible to love your wife with such intensity and determination?

The True Story of Dr. Viktor Frankl

This is a famous true story of a Jewish psychiatrist named Dr. Viktor E. Frankl.

Dr. Frankl lived with his wife, brother-in-law, and three children when the German Nazis swept through Poland, captured that nation in seventy-two hours, and arrested or killed all the Jews they could find. His life was spared when his captors discovered that he was a famous psychiatrist and could be of use to them in the Jewish concentration camps. He subsequently ministered at various death camps.

In the last camp he was assigned to, however, he had no privileges and was thrown into a barracks packed with half-dead Jews covered in lice and suffering from malnutrition, dysentery, and various other diseases. Everyone was fighting to survive and viewed all others in the barracks as enemies. When the paltry and rotten food was delivered, they fought over it like rats. Guards regularly beat up random inmates in order to keep the rest in line through fear. Unrelenting beatings, starvation, lice, sickness, nakedness, and hopelessness had turned the prisoners into animals.

One morning, it was Dr. Frankl’s turn to be humiliated. The guards ripped his clothes off, beat him, and threw him into a tiny, dank, frigid solitary cell.

As he laid there in incredible pain, he came to a number of harsh realities. For one, he had no control over his physical body. The Nazi guards had the power to do anything to him they wanted. There was no relief. Hatred and anger welled up within him. But in the midst of his misery, he suddenly received a realization that would change his world, and that of others around him. He realized that no matter what anyone did to him and his body, and no matter what the circumstances were, there was one thing no one could *ever* take away from him: his ability to respond in the way he chose.

At that point, Dr. Frankl made a monumental decision that despite deprivation, starvation, and cruelty, he would respond to his situation with love.

When he was released from that terrible cell, he began to smile and greet everyone with love. He helped the sick and fed those who were so weak that they could not feed themselves. He shared his food and even greeted the guards. People began to respond to his love. They smiled back, began talking to one another again, and joined him in caring for the sick and helpless. They changed from being animals to being human beings again. Even the guards began to sneak him extra food, which he gave to the other prisoners. Even as many prisoners were taken to the gas chambers, those remaining in the barracks wept for them and comforted one another. Their love was contagious.

Finally, the day came when the allied troops liberated the death camps. They began the task of relocating the former inmates. Dr. Frankl was a tireless worker and volunteered to talk to the former prisoners, one by one, to find where they came from and to make arrangements for them to return home. He often worked fifteen-hour days. The allied soldiers saw that he was extremely healthy, energetic, and cheerful, and they began to suspect that he may have been a spy for the Nazis. But when they questioned the prisoners from his barracks they were surprised to hear the numerous reports of how Dr. Frankl had helped them and cared for them. He was with them twenty-four hours a day.

When the allied workers asked Dr. Frankl what his secret was, he told them his story about choosing to love. Here are a few of Dr. Frankl's comments:

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.⁶

Our greatest freedom is the freedom to choose our attitude.

Love is a choice. Every day, we make choices about how to respond to the people, circumstances, and world around us. In the world there is hatred, bitterness, anger, poverty, violence, killings, murder, and rejection. How should we respond? How should a wife respond to a wayward, bossy, or indifferent husband? How should a husband respond to a nagging, manipulative, and rebellious wife?

It is your choice. No one can take away your right to choose how you will respond. You are not a self-righteous robot with no options.

What was true for Dr. Frankl is true for everyone. No one can take away your right to respond in the manner you choose. You have complete liberty in the Holy Spirit to love one another.

It is a principle that all of Jesus’ disciples followed. It is what all the martyrs of God grasped and held on to. They had choices to make—renounce Jesus and live in this world or cling to Jesus and lose their life on earth. They chose to respond with love for Christ. Others responded by denying the Lord Jesus, as if they had no choice but to save their lives. *“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”* (Matthew 16:25; see also Matthew 10:39; Mark 8:35; Luke 17:33; John 12:25). The martyrs of God chose to die for the sake of the gospel.

At the end of the world, or age, the same principle will apply to all Christians. Satan’s beast is going to require every man, woman, and child to have the mark of the beast or die. (See Revelation 13:16–18.) Those who take the mark of the beast will go to hell. Revelation 14:9–11 says:

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment

ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

We will have to respond to the same challenges and circumstances that God’s people have faced over the centuries. No matter what the circumstances are, and no matter how much pressure is put to bear, we can respond the way we want to. We have choices, and we live by our choices. Have faith in God or turn away. Nobody can take that right away from you.

Wives can choose to submit to their husbands, and husbands can choose to love their wives, no matter what.

How God Loves

There are four kinds of love in the Greek language: *eros*, *phileo*, *storge*, and *agape*. *Eros* refers to a romantic, sexual kind of love, especially between male and female. *Phileo*, or *philia*, is a love between friends. *Storge* is love between family members such as mother and child, father and son, and, sometimes, very close friends. The highest kind of love is *agape* love—unconditional love. “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8, 16).

Agape love has nothing to do with romance, friendship, or family. It is an enduring love that lasts through eternity and is based on unbreakable agreements and promises. It is how God loves us.

In Deuteronomy 7:6–9, Moses spoke to God’s people as follows:

*For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has **chosen** you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not **set** His love on you nor **choose** you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because **He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers**, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who **keeps covenant** and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.*

God chose Israel to be His people. He did not love them because they were mighty or powerful or attractive in any way. He set His love on them because God made an oath and covenant with Abraham—that Abraham’s descendants would be God’s people and God would love them as His children. (See Genesis 17.)

Over and over again, the Hebrew people disregarded their covenants with God and, over and over again, God forgave and protected those who loved Him. He continues to love His people who love Him and keep His commandments. And as He so graciously loves us, we are to love Him. *“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name”* (Psalm 91:14).

We can set our love upon—choose to love—our spouse. Love is not just a response. *“We love Him because He first loved us”* (1 John 4:19). Before we were even born, God already set His love upon us. Love is a choice God made. When Jesus went to the cross, His agreement to love us could not be broken. He loved even those who crucified Him.

Humans seldom know how to love. They vow to love and cherish each other, through sickness or health, for rich or for poor, for better or for worse, until death do them part. But, as we’ve stated, nearly 50 percent of marriages in America end up in divorce, and the divorce rate among Christian evangelicals is not much better.

Choose to Love

We make choices every day. Although we may think otherwise, we are not compelled to make the choices we do. We can respond the way we want and nobody can take that privilege away.

Dr. Frankl was not compelled to be bitter, hateful, and vengeful. He was not a robot. Neither are we. God encourages us to keep our agreements and oaths, even as He does. It doesn’t matter if your wife is submissive and obedient to you or stubborn, argumentative, and disagreeable. It is still God’s commandment that you love your wife. When you appear before God, you will not be excused from your oath because your wife was disobedient, rebellious, or ugly. Either you obey God’s commandment to love or you disobey. It’s your choice.

As mentioned are earlier, the apostle Peter said that if a wife submits to and obeys a wonderful husband, what glory is there for her? On the other hand, if she submits to and obeys a harsh husband who does not treat her well, it is to her glory and pleases God.

In the same manner, it is easy to love someone who is beautiful, charming, and submissive. There is not much glory in that. Loving our wives is what God desires for all husbands. Jesus Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, even while we were in sin. Obedience was His choice. It doesn't matter to the Lord if a person is skinny or obese, tall or short, beautiful or grotesque, smart or stupid, charming or cranky. He loves them all. So should husbands love their wives.

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7). Sow love with others, especially your wife and family, and you will reap great rewards in the end.

Choose Good over Evil

When Jesus walked the earth in the flesh, He chose the good over evil. *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good”* (Isaiah 7:14–15). The Lord Jesus had to make choices every day, like you and me. He chose the good each and every time. He chose to obey the Father in heaven, even when led to suffering and death on the cross.

Adam and Eve desired the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of both good and evil. They chose evil. God has given us the right to choose between good and evil, obedience or disobedience, love or hatred.

God Chose Your Wife for You

One of the major realizations of my life was that God gave my wife to me to love and cherish, no matter what. All the thoughts of past girlfriends and the opportunities to marry other girlfriends disappeared. It is God's will that I be married to my wife, and no other, and to love her. All the other girlfriends were rejected by God as my wife. It is God's intention that we be

together, for better or for worse, for good or for bad, in sickness or in health, for richer or poorer, to love and to cherish, until death do we part. It is something I agreed to.

When I realized this, all the things that used to upset me about what she did or said no longer had the same effect. I saw them as challenges and opportunities to love my wife. We worked together in my law office, just the two of us, for forty years. We averaged about fifty-five calls every weekday. Besides our law practice, we owned a real estate brokerage firm, a collection agency, a bimonthly newspaper, and a travel agency. For the past twenty-nine years, I have served as an elder and then senior pastor of my own church, as I still do today.

We raised four children and put all of them through college. Two of my children graduated from law school. We also raised quarter horses for more than ten years. We became born-again Christians together. (I was an Episcopalian and Baptist in my youth, and my wife was Congregationalist in hers.)

People marvel that we could stay together twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, except for perhaps a few times a year when my wife would attend women's functions or have dinner with her girlfriends, and vice versa. We go everywhere together, golf together, and travel together, even today. During the last twenty-five years, we have traveled all over the world, around seventy-five to eighty trips total. It has been an incredible adventure, and it goes without saying that we are better than best friends.

I can honestly say that we have not seriously argued for more than forty years. Our spats are so brief and mild, and occur maybe a few times a year. They go something like this:

"I told you to file that document."

"You didn't."

"I know I did."

"No, you didn't. Oh, by the way, Paul invited us to dinner tomorrow night."

"Oh, okay, what's the occasion?"

It is possible to choose not to argue for argument's sake.

Be a New Creature in Christ

My wife and I are not perfect. We just try hard to obey God. We fail sometimes, but we know that we are not the same people we were when we first married. Like many couples, we had our problems over the first years. But we took a step back, looked at ourselves honestly, and made a commitment to change our attitudes. I agreed to not work after 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and not to work on weekends unless I had a trial coming up. We also agreed that my wife would come to work as my secretary, since the children were old enough. We agreed to seek God together.

We had been away from church for the first eight years of marriage. After that, we sought the Lord diligently and found Him ten years later. Actually, He was always with us but we didn't know it. When we returned to church, our lives changed forever. We have served the Lord Jesus for more than thirty years now, and He has served us from before He formed the worlds.

One Flesh

No man hates his own flesh. *“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself”* (Ephesians 5:28). My wife is no longer the same woman I married; she is far more Christlike. Hopefully, I am not the same guy she married because I am far more Christlike. As we continue in the Lord as a couple, we become more and more like each other. People have commented that we are so much alike in thought and action. Actually, we complement each other.

Foreigners tend to hold me in awe because of the books I have written and the fact that I am a minister, although there is nothing to justify that attitude. Some dare not come too close to me for fear of overstepping etiquette limits. But my wife completely disarms them with her sense of humor. She will give well-known prophets nicknames and joke with them. In Fiji, she borrowed a guitar during a class break and gathered a group of Bible college students to sing with her. The students enjoyed themselves, breaking into grins all around the circle, and from that moment they would seek her out whenever there was a class break.

Husbands Are Held More Accountable by God

Headship is not a frivolous matter. As husband, you have been appointed and anointed by God to be the head priest of your household. *“For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body”* (Ephesians 5:23). The reward for those chosen by God to lead is great, but the punishment for failing to take responsibility for those under you is great also. A husband will be held accountable by God for the spiritual condition of his wife and immediate family.

Because husbands represent God’s authority in the family, they must be careful not to misrepresent Him. When Moses and the Israelites came to the desert of Zin and settled in Kadesh, there was no water for the congregation and they began to murmur.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.” So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.” (Numbers 20:7–12)

God had instructed Moses to speak to the rock but, because Moses was angry at the people, he struck the rock twice instead. Although water came forth abundantly, Moses had compromised God’s testimony. God provided water because of His love and concern for the people of Israel, but the message Moses conveyed was one of anger. He misrepresented God. For that reason, God did not allow Moses to lead the people into the Promised Land.

Husbands, be careful in handling God’s authority and testimony as His head priest of your household. Do not misrepresent God, as Moses did, by conveying a message of anger. You represent God and God is love.

The Tongue and You

A wise man knows when to speak and when to be quiet. He knows which matters are weighty and worth arguing over and does not waste time fighting over trivial things. He rarely complains so that when he does, others will know that it's important. He learns to give in when it doesn't really matter.

I don't particularly like Korean food because much of it is spicy, but my wife loves it. If she wants to eat Korean for lunch or dinner, I will willingly suffer indigestion. My wife knows that I don't care for it, so when there are things that I like and she doesn't care for, she gives in to me. When we were first married, I took up golf and spent many hours golfing with buddies, especially on Saturdays. She disliked it, because it took up many hours, especially on weekends when she needed to go shopping. The more she complained, the more I played golf.

After playing golf for eight years, I quit the game for the next thirteen years. It was strange because as soon as she gave me approval (someone told her that it was beneficial for me because it reduced stress), I lost interest in the game. I was playing the right/wrong game. The more she didn't like it, the more I liked it, but when she said it was okay for me to play, I quit.

After the children got out of college and law school, I took up the game again. However, it was only three or four times a year. I wasn't really interested. One day, my wife accompanied me to a golf driving range. She took a few swipes at the ball. Then, she got some clubs and went out with me to golf with some friends. She played horribly and complained about how stupid the game was. I kept my silence. Before long, however, she started puttering around and went out with me to golf a few more times. Within a year she was taking lessons and golfing with me every week. We started golfing with friends and took vacations to different islands to play golf. We have now been golfing with each other for more than twenty years, and she is a worse golf nut than I am.

In the beginning, I would offer advice and she would become upset because it made her game worse. I learned to keep my mouth shut and look the other way. Now, she is the one looking outside the window every day to

check the weather. Almost daily, she watches the Golf Channel, especially if Tiger Woods is playing. She can watch the same golf tournament over and over again without being bored. More often than not, she is the one dragging me out of the house to walk nine holes on a golf course close by.

Talk about a turnabout. She is a delight to play golf with. Her passion makes everyone around her more excited. In the process, I have learned to never laugh when she hits a bad shot. I always praise her when she makes a good shot or sinks a putt. She is blessed when I praise her and a big smile covers her face. Never criticize when you don't have to. Never give a lesson unless asked. How wonderful it is for married couples to both work and play together!

Be Appreciative

I never stop praising my wife, telling her how beautiful she is, and how I love and appreciate her. At least once a week, I compliment her from my heart. She knows my sincerity. I learned to thank her for everything she does for me. I learned to say "I'm sorry," even when I know that I didn't do it—although these times are rare. Often, she will come back later and admit that she was wrong.

Never say unkind things about your wife to others. Some spouses cannot wait until their partner leaves the room. They immediately start criticizing him or her as soon as they are out of earshot. In an earlier chapter, we discussed unity as the source of spiritual power. When you criticize your spouse to others, it is like criticizing yourself and displaying your own divisiveness. People will think less of you.

A Husband's Submission

You cannot separate submission from love. The natural result of love is humility, submission, and obedience. God wants wives to practice love by submitting to their husbands, and God wants husbands to learn humility, submission, and obedience by loving their wives. They are two sides of the same coin.

A husband who demands submission and obedience from his wife must first have at least the same degree of submission and obedience towards God, the leaders of his church, and even his own parents.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth’” (Ephesians 6:1–3). The Bible does not say at what age a person is released from this commandment. To expect his wife to submit and obey while the husband does not give submission and obedience to his parents and God’s leaders, makes him a hypocrite.

Finally, we quote Watchman Nee again:

Husbands. The Bible teaches that wives should be subject to their husbands; yet husbands should exercise authority with a condition. Three times in Ephesians 5 are husbands called upon to love their wives even as they love themselves. Undoubtedly there is authority in the family; nonetheless those in authority need to fulfill God’s requirement. The love of Christ for the church sets the example for the love which husbands ought to give their own wives. As Christ loves the church so should husbands love their wives. The love of the husbands ought to be the same as the love of Christ for His church. If husbands wish to represent God’s authority they must love their own wives.⁷

Summary

As the spiritual head of the family, husbands represent God’s authority. As such, husbands need to be careful not to misrepresent God. When Israel dwelt at Kadesh, there was no water and they complained. The Lord instructed Moses to call the congregation together and speak to a large rock known in that area and water would come forth. Instead, Moses was upset by the people’s murmuring and he struck the rock twice in anger. Water gushed forth but Moses had misrepresented God with his anger instead of God’s love. For that mistake, Moses was denied entry into Canaan.

God is love and those that represent His authority must show God’s love and not anger, resentment, or a contentious spirit. The “godlikeness” in a husband can change, sanctify, and cleanse his wife.

In the true story of Dr. Viktor Frankl, we learn that we all have the power to choose how we will respond to people and circumstances. He chose to love, even in the face of great evil. That's how God loves us. He sets His love upon us and chooses to love us throughout eternity. God never breaks His agreements and promises.

God chose your wife, and no other woman, to be with you. If we are truly born again, we are a new creature in Christ. We are one flesh with our wives. Husbands will be held more accountable by God, because His leaders are held to a higher level of responsibility. Wives are taught not by shouting, controlling, or threatening, but by a husband's love and a correct representation of God's authority.

Even as a wife is to submit to and obey her husband, a husband is to be humble, submissive, and obedient to those appointed over him in authority, including his pastor, church, and parents. Otherwise, he is out of God's kingdom order and is exercising his authority incorrectly.

6. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1984), 66.

7. Watchman Nee, *Authority and Submission* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1988), 188.

How to Make Love in Marriage

Creating Love

Years ago, I gave a class on how to make love. It's not what you're thinking right now. It has nothing to do with romance or sex. As part of the class, I had the group close their eyes and send love to the person to their right by declaring in their mind and heart that they love that person, even as God loves that person. After a few minutes, I asked them to send love to the person to their left, and then in front and in back of them, then to everyone in the room. I gave them five minutes to do so each time. "In your heart," I instructed, "tell them that you love them and acknowledge that they love you too. Ask God to help you love those around you."

As we were completing our love exercise, the door suddenly opened and a complete stranger walked in and began hugging people in the group. Then, he stopped, and exclaimed, "Oh, I'm sorry. You don't know me. I'm Doug's friend and he told me to come here tonight, but I don't see him. When I opened the door, I felt so much love that I couldn't help myself."

Fearing or Neglecting to Love

Most of us have experienced rejection and the failure of those around us to love us. In some cases, those who are supposed to love us, such as a mother, father, relatives, etc., have rejected or neglected us instead. Often, a parent can favor one child over the others. They may pick on the child who is less favored while showering love on the others. This creates hurt and insecurity.

Sometimes, the person you love does not return your love. After a few experiences of rejection, we become afraid to love again. It hurts when the other person does not love you back. Of course, sometimes it is just a part of life, as when a boy is infatuated with a certain girl and learns that the girl does not feel the same way. Even with such a common occurrence that most can just laugh it off, some are crushed in heart and spirit by the rejection. I

know of someone who stayed in his room and house for over thirty years because a girlfriend broke up with him in high school.

We learn to build walls around our heart to avoid being hurt. Later, we find it difficult to make close friendships because every time someone gets too close, we push them away, often unknowingly. We isolate ourselves from others so they won't hurt us. Rejection creates fear.

Some people have a personality that naturally draws people to them. Some people have smiles that light up a room. Others have such warm personalities and charm that people are inevitably attracted to them. But, you don't have to have a great personality, charm, or looks to love people and be loved back. All you need to do is ask God to help you to spread the love of God abroad in your heart. Love is meant to be shared and spread around the world; it's not a gift for a select few, but a promise to all of God's people.

Love Changes the Atmosphere and People Around You

Love can change the atmosphere and attitudes of those around you. I was in a Japanese restaurant with my wife not long ago and, as I looked around, I noticed that almost all the diners were sullen and silent. No one was talking; it was strangely quiet. When the waitress came to take our order, we told her that we needed a couple more minutes. She turned around abruptly and walked away in an angry manner.

I decided to close my eyes and create love for everyone in the room. I directed my love to the people at the next table, and then the next, and eventually everyone in the restaurant. After a few moments, I opened my eyes and it was like the room had suddenly become much brighter, as if someone had turned on a light dimmer switch to "high." All the people were now animated, laughing, and conversing. I told my wife a joke and she burst out laughing. Just then, the waitress returned with a big smile to take our order. What a change!

He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and

walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:9–11)

Try It—You’ll Like It

I shared my Japanese restaurant experience with my congregation on a Sunday morning and during Bible Study on the following Tuesday night, one of my members asked to share an experience. She related that she had worked at a local military hospital as a nurse for almost thirty-five years and never told anyone that she loved and appreciated them. While driving to work on Monday morning, she recalled my message and decided to try it. She closed her eyes in the car in the parking lot and asked God to help her love her fellow workers and to send love to everyone she worked with. Then she briefly did the same before entering the building.

When she met her fellow nurses and other workers a few minutes later, they were smiling at each other and the place had a different atmosphere. She was able to tell them how much she appreciated and loved them. Some of them wept and the atmosphere was electric! There was happiness and love at the workstation and office all day.

She wanted to attend a funeral service the following morning but knew that her supervisor was a stickler who insisted on two weeks’ prior notice for any leave of absence. She thought, *Oh why not? I have nothing to lose.* She was surprised when her boss smiled, and said, “Sure, no problem. Just fill out the application.” This woman had tears in her eyes as she related the story.

Passing on the Love

Anger and bitterness are things that can be passed on to others around us, too. A sullen person enters the room and immediately people are affected. They walk on eggshells. But love is contagious, too.

There are some Christians that ooze love. They walk into a room and people look up and good feelings come to them. They experience love, warmth, and light coming from that person.

I was in an airport in Taipei, Taiwan, waiting for a connecting flight to take us back home to Hawaii. Our mission team was chatting with one another as we waited. We were having fun. An American couple introduced themselves to us and asked me if I was a pastor. I answered in the affirmative, and they exclaimed, “We could tell because of the love in your group.” It turned out that they were missionaries.

I’m not trying to say that it happens all the time or that I am special in any way, but I do believe that we should not be afraid to spread God’s love to others around us. It can change the atmosphere and be a light shining in the darkness around us. The love in our hearts will fade if we don’t give it away. The more you give away, the more you get back. At the very least, creating love for others will change your own mood.

As Christians, we should create love every day, especially for our spouse and children. Something happens in the spiritual realm that touches the hearts of those we send love to, especially our spouse and children.

Darkness surrounds the earth, especially in these end times. A few years ago, I was trying to nap on an airplane two hours out of Manila, Philippines. Suddenly, I had a vision. I saw planet earth was in front of me, the size of a softball. To my left, I saw lightning flashing and flying toward earth. I heard thunder and felt that there was a battle going on between God’s kingdom and the forces of evil. The globe was almost completely black. I could see only a few pinpricks of light.

We are surrounded by the kingdom of darkness, where there is much hate, anger, violence, and evil. Jesus Christ was the light of the world when He was walking in the flesh on earth. *“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life’”* (John 8:12). *“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”* (John 9:5)

God is love, and wherever He is, there is light. When Jesus returned to heaven, His true worshipers became children of light.

“While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. (John 12:36)

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Walk as children of light.*** (Ephesians 5:8)

***You are all sons of light** and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.* (1 Thessalonians 5:5)

We are to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ—lights in a world of darkness. (See Romans 8:29.) There is such a need for more true love today. The world is dark and the kingdom of Satan is overcoming the children of light.

The Lord Jesus said this about His children:

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14–16)

If there is a difference between unbelievers and the people of God, it is love, or it should be. If God is love, then unbelievers cannot have God's love in their hearts. They can have *eros* (romantic love) or *phileo* (brotherly love) or even *storge* (family love), but they cannot have *agape* love (the unconditional love of God). At the same time, all true believers, as children of light, should be filled with God's love. As the love diminishes, the light goes out too. "*And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold*" (Matthew 24:12).

Christians should be walking in love, creating love, and spreading God's love to everyone around them, and to the whole world. Love is what connects every Christian with all other Christians around the world. Love should be the foundation of our marriages. Each one of us is responsible for spreading God's love to his or her spouse and children. It is our God-given gift and responsibility.

Create Love for Your Spouse and Family

Just the atmosphere of love can touch others around you. Close your eyes every morning and send love to your spouse and children. Pray, and ask God to help you love the people around you. Ultimately, you can create love for everyone you come into contact with. Love is a choice and

something you can create. Create as much love as you can for your spouse and family. Spread the love in your heart to those around you at work, at school, on the bus, or wherever you happen to be. Freely received, freely given. Create an atmosphere of love wherever you go.

Some years ago, a woman at church shared that she was so happy because, the previous week, she had discovered that one of her fellow workers was a Christian, too. They had worked together for almost fifteen years and she never suspected it. “Now,” she gushed, “I have a prayer partner.” Although I rejoiced with her discovery, I was saddened as well that it took fifteen years for her to find out that someone she worked with five days a week was a fellow Christian. It was not even a big office. As Christians, we should be so different from those around us, that they begin to notice us. Love is that difference.

As the old adage goes, “Share the gospel all the time; and if necessary, use words.” *“The love of God has been poured out in our hearts”* (Romans 5:5). If your heart is filled with the love of God, your conduct, words, and attitudes should spread and convey that love to others. Love is not static, it is moving and dynamic. It is not something you can just ignore and put on the back shelf or keep under wraps. It has to be used, spread to others, and practiced.

Do You Have the Love of God in You?

The apostle James speaks to us about faith and works of faith. Faith is useless if it is not manifested in the world through works of faith. Faith must be dynamic and moving.

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish

man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. (James 2:14–24)

Likewise, love is dead without works of love, and as Paul explains, works without love are also dead.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1–3)

Without love, all your works are worthless to God. When a man gets to heaven, all of his works will be judged by God.

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:11–15)

Any of our works on earth that were not done out of love for God and man, will burn up and be lost. There is no reward for works that are done out of love for self. Love for God must be manifested in this world through our deeds and conduct.

As Christians, we all should be demonstrating and spreading God's love in our hearts. 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 says:

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in

the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love endures forever. It reflects our perfection in Jesus Christ. All gifts of the Spirit, including prophecy, knowledge, and tongues will vanish, but love will remain forever.

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:8–13)

How can one spread God's love to the world and, at the same time, withhold love from his spouse and children? Marriage is your starting point. In his book *Crystal Christianity*, evangelist Charles Finney stated that you can put two Christians side by side and not know outwardly which one is a true Christian and which is a deceived Christian. Both claim to love God, both read the Bible faithfully, and both donate much time and money to the church. They seem equally zealous, pray much, share the gospel all the time, and appear diligent for the things of God. The only difference is in the heart. The true Christian does everything out of love for God, with no other motivation. The deceived Christian does everything out of love for self. He does church things and religious works because "it is part of my religion," or perhaps because he fears that if he does not do these things, he will lose his salvation. He may be trying to attain notoriety, acceptance, and the praise of men. But in everything he does, there is always an element of "self" involved.

God is love and love is God. He has chosen husbands to lead the way in his family and teach them how to love.

Love is the central theme and nature of the kingdom of God. Not all of us have been called to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. But each one of us has been called to spread the love of God abroad in our hearts. Each of us, every day, can send love to our spouse and family, and

push back the darkness in our families and in the world. We should not be hiding the light and love of God under a bushel.

Summary

God is love and His children should be people of love. In the flesh, however, many Christians have suffered rejection and are afraid to love. Yet, we are instructed to love God and our fellow humans. Love is proactive and God's love must be spread abroad from our hearts to others. Practice spreading love to those around you by praying and asking God to help you to love your spouse, your children, your coworkers, your neighbors and friends, and, ultimately, the world. Pass on that love. As the apostle James said, faith without works is dead. We can say that we love others, but without works or outward evidence of our love, our love is dead.

Excess Baggage

What's That on Your Back?

My term “excess baggage” does not refer to beer bellies or thunder thighs. It refers to unforgiveness, deep hurts, rejection, bitterness, bruised and broken hearts and spirits, and the like. People that have a wounded spirit or broken heart can cover up their hurts for a time but, sooner or later, the hurts will come to the surface and create all sorts of problems in marriage. They can become marriage-breakers.

These hurts of spirit and heart, mind and soul, are not exclusive to modern times. They are what Christ came to heal. *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”* (See also Isaiah 61:1–3.) Wounds of the heart and mind often lie dormant until after the wedding ceremony. One may think he or she is “over it,” but, in reality, those feelings have only been buried and covered over. They can spring forth again and again.

There are people who are brokenhearted, having lost a loved one, suffered rejection, or experienced relationships that went bad, perhaps a failed prior marriage or the betrayal of a loved one.

The Bible was written at a time when modern terms such as schizophrenia, paranoia, multiple personalities disorder, catatonia, and bipolar disorder were not yet coined. The Old Testament alludes to these hurts as conditions of the heart or spirit. Proverbs 15:13 says *“by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.”* King Solomon used the phrase *“broken spirit.”* In Proverbs 18:14, he asks, *“Who can bear a broken spirit?”* In Psalm 34:18, the words *“broken heart”* and *“contrite spirit”* are used. Psalm 147:3 states, *“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”*

Schizophrenia means “two souls or minds” and there are shades of it that range from light to dark. Some forms are minor and some are scary. The

New Testament mentions it in James 1:8: “*A double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*” Some versions of the Bible use the term “double-souled,” or “two-minded.”

It does not mean that we are suffering from mental illness in any way. The Bible does not characterize brokenheartedness or a broken spirit as a lunatic spirit or mental disorder, but it acknowledges that these conditions need to be healed. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is given for this purpose. (See Luke 4:18.)

Carrying Hurts into Marriage

Old or even fresh wounds, suppressed memories, and unfinished or damaged relationships can negatively affect current behavior. Anger and bitterness that have not been resolved or dissolved can rise to the surface and explode unexpectedly and for no apparent reason. Your spouse can be bewildered at the sudden uncalled-for remarks or conduct that appear to be overreactions. Yet the sudden anger or intensity may have little to do with present circumstances and can be subconsciously directed at a mother, or father, or other person from the past. Someone just pressed your buttons.

I had a good friend in college who was severely rejected by a father who favored an older sibling who was taller, better looking, and smarter than he was. It seemed that everything he did was rubbish and everything his older brother did was praiseworthy. For years, my friend would get drunk and come to see me in the wee hours of the morning to unload his hurts. However, once I married I could no longer spend much time with him. He soon married also, but caught his wife in extramarital affairs, which only increased his low self-esteem and bitterness. He eventually remarried a kind and gentle woman, and began a tumultuous marriage relationship. His unsuspecting second wife often called me to come and stop my friend from wrecking the house in a fit of anger that she could not fully understand.

Even years after his father died, my friend’s emotions were on a roller coaster. No matter how much counseling he received, the anger would still occasionally flare up, leading him on another rampage. Until the day he died, his family walked on eggshells. In other moments, however, he was a wonderful guy with a big heart and a desire to help other people. Sadly, at

the time, I was not yet a practicing Christian and was ignorant about how to help someone in his condition.

The hurts of the past are excess baggage that you need to get rid of before marriage. If you have unresolved hurts from the past, your marriage will likely be colored by, if not controlled by them. Many people don't even know that they are still sick in their heart. They believe that they are over the hurtful experiences of their past, but they are not.

When romance is at a high level and dreams are being shared, the past rarely comes out of the closet. But, over time, the intensity of romance levels off, reality hits, and past wounds may be triggered and relived in the present.

I've heard many a wife or husband complain that their spouse sometimes acts like a little girl or boy. People who have suffered rejection at an early age will often act that age, as the hurt little boy or girl comes to the forefront and manifests as a temper tantrum or petty bitterness. The parents of a friend of mine divorced when he was ten years old. Later in life, his spouse would say that he acted like a ten-year-old kid sometimes.

It would be wise to clean house before the wedding ceremony. Get rid of bitter memories, crippling attitudes, lingering hurts, and negative emotions so that they will not interfere with your marriage. Leave the negative and excessive baggage on the pier.

Unforgiveness and Bitterness

Do not bring unforgiveness into the marriage. Spirits of resentment, anger, bitterness, hate, revenge, and even murder can be attached to unforgiveness. Although anger and bitterness are initially directed at people in the past, they can trigger negative reactions aimed at those nearest us. Many a marriage has been ruined by the bitterness and rejection suffered in early childhood. It is like a disease that never quite goes away. Like chickenpox that lies latent deep within your cells and then pops up as shingles later in life, anger and resentment can rise up from the distant past and affect the present in painful and disfiguring ways.

We will discuss how to rid yourself of anger in a later chapter.

Unforgiveness Brings Curses

In Matthew 18:22, Jesus instructs us to forgive a brother who sins against us not seven times but “*up to seventy times seven.*” He then shares a parable about a servant who owed a huge debt to his master. The master would have thrown the servant into prison until he paid all that was owed, but because the master was moved with compassion, he forgave everything that the servant owed him and let him go. Then, this same servant went after a fellow servant who owed him a small amount. The second servant begged for more time to repay the first servant, but the first servant threw him into prison. When the master found out, he was angry. He said to the first servant, “*‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.*” (Matthew 18:32–35).

Unforgiveness can carry curses. Who would want to bring evil spirits or curses into a marriage?

Our Lord Jesus suffered many things and died a painful death on the cross, so that all of our sins can be forgiven. Should not we forgive others their sins against us? Fear God and forgive quickly.

Make a List of People to Forgive

The first step is to make a list of all the people you need to forgive, including those that you thought you already forgave. Sometimes we just think we forgave somebody but, in our heart of hearts, we really didn't. You need to complete the process.

Unforgiveness is like an onion. You have to peel off one layer at a time until none of the unforgiving spirit is left. I once thought I had forgiven someone, but a few months later, I found myself talking negatively about her. My wife said, “I thought you said you forgave her.” I prayed and forgave her once more. A few months later, my wife caught me speaking negatively about that person again. I prayed and forgave once more. It took

four times of “forgiving” until I reached a point at which I had no more negative thoughts of that person, only positive ones. Love finally came in and bitterness left for good.

Here is a partial list of people you might need to forgive:

Parents, siblings, cousins, grandparents, uncles and aunties, ex-spouses, ex-boyfriends, ex-girlfriends, ex-in-laws, spouses, children, grandchildren, friends who betrayed or hurt you, neighbors, acquaintances, fellow students, teachers, fellow employees, employers and bosses, pastors, church members, drivers on the highways, rude strangers, dog owners, and so forth.

During every spiritual warfare seminar I give, I have the audience close their eyes and I say, “Forgive the following persons:...” Then I run through the above list slowly, giving enough time to contemplate and then forgive. Many weep as they remember past hurts and ruined relationships, especially with parents and family members.

Ask God for a Forgiving Heart

If you don’t think you can forgive, pray and ask God to give you a heart of forgiveness for that person. In a fishing village in the Philippines, an elderly lady stood in the healing line, stooped over and breathing laboriously. She had asthma. When she stood in front of me, the Holy Spirit said, *Unforgiveness*. I said to her, “You need to forgive someone. You know who it is, right?”

She answered, “Yeah, it’s my blankety-blank son-in-law. I hate him. He yells at me all the time, disrespects me, and never says anything good about me.”

I said, “Well, you have to forgive him.”

She replied, “I don’t want to. I hate him.”

I remarked, “Then keep your asthma.”

She looked at me, and said, “You really think so?”

I said, “Yes, if you want to be healed, you have to forgive him. Let’s ask God to give you a forgiving heart so you can forgive your son-in-law.”

She prayed, “Dear Jesus, please help me to forgive my son-in-law. Give me a forgiving heart. Amen.”

“Sister,” I asked, “can you forgive him?”

She nodded and prayed, “I forgive my son-in-law in Jesus’ name.”

Instantly, she rose from a crouched position, stood up straight, and shouted, “I’m healed; I’m healed! I can breathe; I can breathe!”

Pray that God will give you a forgiving heart. Remember, you cannot just pray, “Lord, I forgive everyone who has ever hurt me from the day I was born until now.” It doesn’t work that way. You need to name that person, if you remember the name, and tell God specifically what it is that you forgive. Don’t say, “Whatever they did to me.” Be specific.

When I first became born-again, I thought I had forgiven everyone I could remember. As I was praying one morning, the faces of three young men appeared before me. These three had bullied and tormented me for a short time when I was in the eighth grade and I had completely forgotten about it. It was thirty-five years later. I couldn’t even remember their names, but I knew that God was showing me people I needed to forgive. I did.

I pray that God will do the same for you.

Repent of Your Own Sins

The Bible says that God will not forgive you unless you forgive others for how they have sinned against you. After forgiving others, repent of your own sins and ask God to forgive you for any sins that come to mind. Although God forgives freely and you repented of your sins before, make sure by coming before God once more with a repentant heart. This does not necessarily mean that He didn’t forgive you already.

Ask Him to show you sins that you have forgotten. When I first became a Christian, I would pray that God would show me sins I had forgotten. From time to time He would show me, in a vision, sins I had committed as a ten or twelve-year-old. Ask God to reveal even sins that we may not think are sins.

Years ago, while I was in Fiji, one of my students related how she had been taken to heaven one night, with two angels as her escorts. One of the angels called her a thief.

She told the angel, “I’ve never stolen anything!”

“Oh yes, you did!”

The angel gave her a vision of the time that she had been babysitting for her pastor’s children years previous. She had been hungry, so she took a can of sardines from the shelf and ate it, vowing that she would replace it the next day. The next morning, she went to a grocery store, bought an identical can of sardines and replaced it.

“That’s not the same can of sardines,” the angel said. “You stole the first one.”

The angel then gave her a second vision in which she was attending a night meeting and suddenly thought of something she forgot at her home nearby. When she went to the front door, she couldn’t find her slippers, so she “borrowed” a pair and went home. When she returned, she replaced the slippers she borrowed. “You didn’t ask permission,” said the angel. God is very precise.

A few years later, I was in the Philippines and went to take a shower. I brought my fresh clothes and towels. Once in the shower, I realized that I had forgotten my soap. There were about six or seven bars of soap on a ledge next to the shower, left there by other members of the mission team. I reached out to “borrow” someone’s soap when I recalled the Fiji girl’s experience. Conscience compelled me to dry myself off, put my clothes back on and walk to my room to get my own bar of soap.

Summary

Don’t take unforgiveness, bitterness, resentments, anger, and frustrations into your marriage. It’s not fair to your spouse and family. Past hurts that haven’t been resolved or dissolved can affect the entire family, because it colors your attitudes toward those around you. Distrust, anger, and frustrations are often taken out on your family members without you even being aware of it. They become trigger points.

God can heal the brokenhearted, those that are wounded in spirit and stuck in prisons of their mind and emotions. Better to forgive all those that have hurt you than to take it out on your spouse and children.

Unforgiveness brings curses, according to the Bible. Why bring curses into the marriage? Make a list of people who have hurt you in the past and forgive them, one by one. Ask God to break every curse over you caused by unforgiveness.

Pray, “Dear Jesus, now that I have forgiven those who have sinned against me, please break every curse of unforgiveness that came upon me because of my unforgiveness. When You died on the cross, You served as my curse, having been made a curse for me, for it is written, ‘*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*’ (Galatians 3:13). I hereby declare every curse caused by my unforgiveness to be broken in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Then ask God to forgive your sins.

Damaged Relationships of the Past

Unfinished Business

There is a saying that goes something like this: Everyone has a past, but when the past has you, you're in trouble. There are things in the past, such as bad relationships, that can haunt you the rest of your life and affect your current relationships, including the one you have with your spouse. People carry over bitterness, resentments, hatred, and anger into their marital relationships, and these feelings prevent them from having liberty in the Spirit to love their spouses.

For instance, if you had a bad relationship with someone, anger can boil up unexpectedly for no apparent reason, or in a manner that is obviously an overreaction or unreasonable. I have always believed that present-day spousal or child abuse is a result of a bad childhood in which the current perpetrator was the victim. Past hurts not only affect your present attitudes, but they also can explode to the surface as anger, moodiness, or despondency.

In this chapter, we will look at how the past memories of bad events or incidents, and the emotions attached to them, can be suppressed subconsciously and yet influence present-day outward behavior. Suppressed memories do not necessarily involve intentional sins against you, and therefore, they are not always solved by forgiving. In fact, most of the time, these memories are long forgotten.

Give It To Jesus

I once met a pastor who was around fifty-five years old. He told me that he had a terrible temper and would throw tantrums at home. His wife often told him that if the church knew how he would shout obscenities and throw things around, they would lose all respect for him. No matter how hard he tried, he could not defeat anger.

As he was relating the above story, the word *unfair* came to me. I asked him about it and immediately his eyes became red and teary. He told me

that when he was six years of age, his father died. He was the only child. When he was eight, his mother remarried and later had three girls with his stepfather. Since he was much older, his stepfather picked on him all the time and made him do everything on their farm. Worse, since his siblings were girls, he had to do all the hard manual labor. His stepfather never made the girls do anything, but he had to be up at 4:30 in the morning to feed the cows and take them out to the pasture. He worked long hours; the girls relaxed all day. But his stepfather doted on the girls and gave them everything they wanted, while he got nothing but beatings and scolding. He hated his stepfather and, as soon as he reached eighteen, he ran away. He never saw or spoke to his stepfather or family after that, and his stepfather had passed away a few years previous.

I asked him to pray and ask Jesus to come into the room and sit in the chair opposite him and take the place of his stepfather. Since he would be talking to Jesus, it was not necromancy, and he was not talking to the dead. I walked out of the office. Thirty minutes later, he came out of the room red-eyed and smiling. He said that he told his stepfather everything through the Lord Jesus and ended up forgiving him and asking for forgiveness in return. He told his stepfather that he loved him.

The following year when I visited his country again, he came to pick me up at the airport instead of my usual friends. He thanked me profusely. Since the day he gave Jesus all of his burdens regarding his stepfather, he had never experienced another fit of anger. He was a different person.

In another case, a woman had grown up constantly fighting with her little sister. As adults, they hadn't talked to one another for over fifteen years. We prayed and asked Jesus to stand in the place of the little sister so that He could take her the message. I overheard the woman say, "Oh Honey, I'm so sorry. I don't even remember what we argued about so long ago. Please forgive me. I forgive you. I love you."

It was around 9:30 p.m. when the meeting ended. The next morning, I received a phone call from the woman. She said, "You're not going to believe this. Last night I got home around ten o'clock and took a shower and had something to eat. The phone rang around 11:00 p.m. and it was my kid sister calling from Los Angeles. She said, 'Oh, Honey, I'm so sorry. I

don't even remember what we argued about so long ago. Please forgive me. I forgive you. I love you.”

Another time, a young woman around twenty years old related to me that two years previous, her parents had gone through a nasty divorce. There was only the daughter and her brother, and they both lived with the mother. She had been her father's pet, but ever since the divorce, her father never contacted her. She was very hurt. She had married, but her father never even showed up at the wedding. She was now pregnant with her first child and knew her father was aware of the pregnancy. We prayed and asked Jesus to come into the room, sit in the chair opposite the young woman, and be in the place of her father. She said, “Oh, Daddy, how come you didn't come to my wedding and you never called to ask me how I am and how my baby is?”

At eight o'clock the next morning, her phone rang and it was her father. He said, “I'm sorry that I didn't come to your wedding. I wasn't ready to see your mother. How are you doing and how is your baby?” They met for lunch that very day.

If you have relationships that are fractured, your heart may also be broken and you need to complete that relationship. Ask Jesus to sit opposite you and be in the place of the person that you need to have closure with. Tell Him everything you want or need to tell that person, as if that person is sitting in front of you. Get everything off your chest. Cry, yell, scold—whatever you've been holding back. But, stay in control. Don't throw things around or punch the wall. Then forgive them and ask for forgiveness in return. Tell them you love them and then let them go. You will find peace and joy through Jesus Christ. He will heal your deep wounds and complete your relationships. Your mind will not strive and the bitterness in your heart will disappear.

In most instances, it is impossible to have the actual person physically sit in front of you and allow you to pour out everything you have held back for all these years. Give it to the Lord Jesus, and He will take it and heal your wounds and, at the same time, mend your broken relationship.

It is not fair to your spouse and children for you to keep carrying bitterness, resentment, and anger because of the past. Let them go and give them to the Lord Jesus.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28–30)

Bad Memories

When we experience something traumatic, we often come to conclusions or perceptions that form subconscious attitudes that can control our current responses and behavior. A toddler can touch a hot stove and conclude that it is not good to touch a hot stove again. That is a positive result. On the other hand, a person around five years of age can get lost in a department store and conclude that mother cannot be trusted. From that time on, he has a distrust for his mother that he cannot understand. That is a negative result and perhaps a bad memory that needs to be erased.

Dr. Wilder Penfield

The human mind is an incredible thing. It stores everything that has ever happened to us. Scientists say that we use less than ten percent of our brain. A physically healthy mind will store up all your memories, even events that take place while you are sleeping.

A neurosurgeon by the name of Dr. Wilder Penfield, was featured in the first chapter of one of the bestselling self-help books ever published, Thomas Harris's *I'm OK—You're OK*. Penfield's sister suffered from epileptic seizures and he was determined to discover a way to control and eliminate them. He made an amazing discovery through various experiments.

With the permission of his patients, he placed electrical nodes on various parts of the central cortex of the brain and passed a low level of electrical current through them. To his amazement, the patients began to recall long-forgotten events of the past. One woman in her fifties recalled standing in her crib when she was less than two years old. She could actually smell the apple pie that her aunty was baking in the kitchen and could hear her mother playing the piano and singing a song. She was able to recall the lyrics and sing the melody. Not only that, she felt the emotions of that

moment in time. She had a feeling of well-being and peace. There were other patients who experienced the same amazing ability to recall long-forgotten and distant events they would not otherwise remember consciously.

Memories are stored up in your body and mind. Sometimes, they are connected to certain areas of your body, such as your knee, chest, neck, and throat. Masseurs have related to me that their clients sometimes begin to weep or cry with the painful memories that come to the surface when a specific area of the body is being massaged. A person who injured a knee in an automobile accident in early childhood may find that while his right knee is being massaged, memories of the almost-forgotten accident come to the forefront. Along with the memories come emotions and thoughts that are associated with that experience, such as fear.

The importance of this is the fact that human behavior can be controlled by attitudes, conclusions, agreements, and thoughts that are formed during childhood or during a traumatic incident. These negative conclusions can subconsciously influence and even control our behavior toward others. Sometimes, physical pain can even arise when certain triggers bring back the physical postures and trauma from a long-forgotten event.

One young lady related to me that she could not go to the beach or swimming pool. She had a fear of water and would become nauseated. I had her close her eyes and recreate the feeling of being afraid of water. Within a few seconds, she began to weep as God showed her a past event in her life that had brought on the fear. When she was four years old, her older brother drowned while swimming. I asked her what thoughts and conclusions came to her at the time. She answered, "Don't go near a beach or swimming pool. You will die!" We immediately renounced the lie by having her repeat "It is not true. I will not die if I go near a beach or swimming pool. It's a lie. It is okay for me to swim in the ocean or in a swimming pool." A few years later, I met her husband, and he reported that his wife's fear of water had disappeared.

The devil looks for opportunities to plant negative thoughts and lies in your mind, especially during times of trauma. In those moments of trauma, fear, and stress, the devil introduces lies that affect our future conduct. "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a*

roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). He doesn’t care how young a person is, and, in fact, he picks on the young and innocent. Lies can become strongholds.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4–5)

Traumatic Memories

While the mind stores up countless memories indiscriminately, some memories are more acute and exert a much larger influence on our outward behavior than others. These memories are “sharp memories” or “primary memories,” and the mind uses them to protect us.

Sharp memories are usually memories of events that involve (1) threat of death or bodily harm or the loss of someone or something dear or close to you, and (2) incidents of rejection. The events that cause these sharp memories are called traumatic events.

Traumatic events can sometimes be explained in terms of survival. Any incident that directly affects survival in a negative way is a threat or traumatic event. The loss of a pet or object that you love and closely identify with can also trigger a “survival” mode in your mind. For instance, when a beloved parent, family member, or a favorite pet dies, or your house burns down, is destroyed, or lost, it is a traumatic event that your mind can perceive as a threat to your survival or well-being. Reactions to traumatic events vary from person to person. One person may be crushed when her pet dog dies; another may just shrug her shoulders.

When we experience a traumatic event, our minds often come to a conclusion, attitude, or perception that later forms the basis for negative behavior, although some conclusions and attitudes are beneficial. A woman had a fear of the dark. God revealed that when she was four years of age, her mother had locked her in a dark closet as punishment for misbehavior.

Lies of the Enemy

Negative attitudes, agreements, and conclusions are often lies of the enemy. I ministered to a woman who wanted to love her mother but had a difficult time doing so. It was revealed through prayer that when she was three or four years old, she had been taken shopping to a sale at Sears and Roebuck by her mother. In the frenzy of shopping she became detached from her mother. She became frightened and cried. Someone took her to the Lost and Found Department where she was given an ice cream cone. She stopped crying and, when mother came to claim her twenty minutes later, she was calm and seemingly unperturbed. Meanwhile, the devil had whispered to her, *Your mother doesn't love you. She abandoned you. You're going to die. You cannot trust her.* When she renounced the lies of the devil, her love for her mother came flowing back.

In another case, a Pakistani couple came to live in Hawaii. The woman's parents also immigrated and lived less than a block away, however, the wife hardly ever visited or talked to them. As we asked God for the reason, she saw herself when she was about six years old. Apparently, she had done something naughty, and her father climbed a ladder and put her on the roof of the house for punishment. She screamed for her mother all day and into the evening, but nobody came to her aid. Around eleven at night, her father finally brought her down. By that time, the devil had placed a bunch of negative conclusions in her mind: *Your parents hate you. They want you to die. Your mother does not love you; otherwise she would have rescued you. Don't ever trust them.*

I had her rebuke the lies of the enemy, saying, "I renounce the lies of the devil. It is not true that my parents hate me and want to kill me. They love me, took care of me, and want me to be alive and happy. My mother loves me and she didn't rescue me because my father would not allow her. It is not true that I cannot trust them. I can trust them and love them." A big smile came to her face and she could hardly wait to go home and see her parents. She was in her fifties at the time. Imagine how many years she had been living the lies of the devil in misery.

Rejection Is Traumatic

Rejection is a traumatic event. It is a threat to the well-being or survival of a person, especially of a young child. Love and acceptance, on the other

hand, affects survival positively. An enemy rejects you and is a threat; while parents, siblings, and friends accept and love you. That helps you survive. Rejection and unforgiveness are the two main reasons behind juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior. Many lives and personalities become twisted because parents, family members, and close friends failed to love and accept them. The desire to be admired and loved fuels almost everyone, and if we are constantly looking for love and not finding it, we can become bitter, vengeful, antisocial, and even criminal.

Being bound by Satan is not limited to physical problems. (See Luke 13:16.) One can be bound emotionally and mentally by the lies of the devil. The devil is a liar.

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44)

Once the lie is believed or agreed with, a person can live the rest of his or her life according to Satan's lie. He or she is bound by Satan. Our prisons and broken marriages are filled with Satan's lies. Often, it is only the natural reaction of the human mind. However, it is also possible that the devil has forced lies and negative conclusions into the mind and created strongholds that are difficult to overcome. Satan will take advantage of negative attitudes and reinforce them with demons that continue to bombard the mind.

Other True Examples

A young woman came down with the same kind of sickness every year exactly at Christmas. When we asked Jesus to reveal what had happened to her, she recalled sitting in her living room at five years of age. She saw a Christmas tree and her parents busily preparing for a party that night. She cried because they had forgotten to feed her lunch and eventually vomited on her dress. Her aunt came to her, kissed her, and said, "You poor thing. We forgot to feed you lunch." She was given some good food and ice cream, and her father took her for a ride in his brand new Buick.

"What did the devil tell you?" I asked.

“It’s good to get sick,” she replied. “People will love you.” We renounced the lie and, as far as I know, she’s never been sick on Christmas since.

An elderly widow would grow ill and had to stay in the hospital three or four times a year, even though her doctors couldn’t find anything wrong with her. When we asked Jesus to show us what had happened, she remembered going to the hospital to have her tonsils taken out at the age of six. During her stay, friends and family came to visit her and she felt loved. Afterward, whenever she felt lonely or unloved, she would become sick enough to go to the hospital. It was the only time her children came to visit her. When she renounced the lie, her unexplained sicknesses went away. I called her four children and explained that their mother was lonely for them and that they should call her at least once a week.

A man in his mid-fifties had to wear a hearing aid. Jesus showed him that when he was twelve years old, he heard his father yelling at his mother, calling her horrible names like “whore.” He remembered thinking, *I don’t want to hear this! I don’t have to hear this! It is not good to hear this!* From that time, he became hard of hearing. As soon as the lie was renounced, his hearing returned to normal. The next meeting, he announced that he had discarded his hearing aid because he no longer needed it.

One of my clients came to my law office after receiving a divorce petition from her husband. I told her, “Before our next appointment, I want you to think about any ways in which you may have contributed to the divorce.” I wanted to rehabilitate her. Hawaii is a no-fault divorce state, meaning one doesn’t have to prove a cause for a divorce to be granted. If one party wants a divorce, it is automatic. The only issues to resolve are property settlements, child custody, and child visitation rights. Although we could not stop the divorce action, perhaps we could get at the cause and prevent a future divorce should she remarry. She became livid at my request, and said, “I’m not the one who caused this divorce. It’s my husband. He is the one who has a girlfriend. I don’t have a boyfriend!”

Two weeks later, we met again and she admitted that, at first, she had been angry at my suggestion. But as she began to think about it, she couldn’t push away some memories of what had occurred during her marriage. She admitted that soon after the wedding, she found that she couldn’t stand her husband. Whenever he tried to get close to her, she

would push him away and become cold toward him. When they watched TV in the evening, she would insist that he sit far away from her. “There is lots of furniture in the room,” she would say. “You don’t have to sit next to me.”

After a while, she encouraged him to take up bowling once a week, then twice a week, and then four times a week. She felt better being alone at night. As she recalled this, she began to cry. “That’s how he met his girlfriend.” She admitted that he had been the nicest guy she knew. Her husband’s girlfriend even called her one day, and said, “You sure you don’t want him? He’s a really nice guy.”

“Yes,” she replied, “you can have him. I don’t care.”

We continued to pray and asked God what had happened in this woman’s life when she was young that had caused her to push her husband away, Jesus showed her that when she was in the fifth grade, her best friend from next door used to come over after supper and they would play jacks. Her best friend would then copy her homework. At the end of the school year, her best friend won the award for the best homework. She recalled being upset at this. Then, she said, “When I was in high school, another friend stole my boyfriend.”

“What did the devil tell you?” I asked.

She answered, “Don’t trust anyone. All they want to do is get close to you so they can steal your things.” She started to weep.

“That’s a lie,” I told her.

Together, we recited the truth: “I can trust other people. I can trust Jesus. It is alright to let people get close to me and to love me.”

She wept, and said, “I know I caused my divorce. Now it’s too late.”

It’s not too late for you. Whenever a lie of the devil comes into your mind, you need to immediately renounce it as a lie, and substitute it with the truth.

Anorexia Nervosa Is Healed

A twelve-year-old girl in Malaysia was dying of anorexia nervosa. She had not eaten solid food for two years. She became so sick that the only foods she could handle were liquids or a piece of bread soaked in milk. Her dark hair had turned light brown from malnutrition. When I first saw her, she was lying on the floor, her head on her mother's lap. The doctors gave her only a few months to live. She looked like a prisoner in a World War II death camp—skin and bones, elbows and knees.

Her parents revealed that when the girl was two, they had given her to her maternal grandmother to raise, because they could not afford a fifth child. Her father had gone to Indonesia to find work.

As we prayed, Jesus took her back to when she was four. She saw herself sitting at a kitchen table eating. Her grandmother said to her, "You're a fat pig. You eat too much. Your parents dumped you on me because you eat too much." When she was ten, her father returned from Indonesia and they were able to take her back home. But from that time on, she couldn't eat.

"What did the devil tell you?" I asked.

Through an interpreter, she replied, "If my parents ever take me back, I will not eat because they will abandon me."

"It's a lie," I said.

I had her parents both tell her that it was not true, that she could eat as much as she wanted, and that they would never leave her again. We renounced the lies of the devil.

When I returned an hour later, during a class recess, she was in the Bible college cafeteria eating a meal for the first time in two years. When I returned a year later, my host pastor reported that the young girl was now eating normally and had so much energy that she would often sweep and mop the floor at one in the morning. Her parents came with her to see me and remarked that the only thing she could not eat was chicken. We prayed and asked Jesus the reason. It turned out that when her maternal grandmother had made those unkind remarks about her being a fat pig, she had been eating chicken. We renounced the lies of the devil once more and declared that it was permissible to eat chicken. I learned that night that she was eating chicken once again.

A year later, I returned to Eastern Malaysia. My pastor-host picked my wife and me up from a hotel and, on our way to the church, we stopped to pick up someone else. Three young girls were at the front door. They were all tall and had long black hair. The one in the middle kept waving vigorously at me.

“You know who that is, right?” my host asked.

“No,” I replied.

“That’s the girl that almost died from anorexia.”

Demons Are Lying Spirits

When someone agrees with the lies planted by the devil in his or her mind, a door is opened that allows evil spirits to enter. There have been several cases in which, soon as the lies are renounced and truth is verbalized, demons come out immediately. All this happens without any intention or action on my part to cast them out.

Years ago, in Labasa, Fiji, I was teaching a congregation of about two hundred people and I touched on the subject of hurtful and suppressed memories. I asked if anyone had a recurring problem and desired to pray about it. A woman in her forties came to the stage and related that she had been married to a wonderful man for almost fifteen years. But somehow, she rarely found that she could allow her husband to touch her or become intimate with her. She tried hard to be a good wife but she couldn’t overcome this one area. It made her feel sorry for her husband.

I told her to close her eyes and pray with me, asking God to show her what had happened when she was young that caused this problem. She almost instantly blurted out that when she was twelve years old, her stepfather had sexually molested her. I asked her what this incident said to her. “Hate all men. Don’t let them get close to you. All they want to do is force themselves upon you, abuse you, and humiliate you.” We renounced the lies of the enemy.

I had her pray: “It is not true that all men want to sexually abuse me and humiliate me. It is not true that I cannot trust men. I love Jesus, and He was a man. I renounce the lies of the devil. It is alright to love my husband and

to give myself to him intimately. It is alright for him to love me back. I do love my husband and I want to give myself freely to him.”

Almost as soon as she said, “Amen,” she started to cough and dry heave as lying spirits came tumbling out of her—spirits of rejection, shame, embarrassment, fear, hatred of men, distrust of men, and so forth. There was no attempt on my part to cast devils out. They came out automatically as she renounced their lies.

How to Get Rid of Bad Memories

After renouncing the lies of the devil, pray and ask the Lord Jesus Christ to help your conscious mind remember what happened to you in your early childhood that caused you to experience feelings of rejection, distrust, anger, rage, or whatever it is that has you in bondage. Then, keep your eyes closed and allow God to reveal it to you. Sometimes, an actual event from your past will instantly come to mind. In other cases, it may take a few sessions; after all, your mind has suppressed the hurtful memories for many years in order to overcome the hurt. These things may not willingly come forth.

I’ve had a number of people tell me that they have little or no memories of their childhood. The memories of rejection by a parent or parents are so hurtful that their minds have suppressed almost all of their childhood memories. Invariably, however, God will bring memories to the forefront. Let all your thoughts and emotions come to the surface, but stay in control. You don’t have to start yelling, swearing, and throwing things around.

Go through the memory from beginning to end. Ask the following questions:

What time of the day was it?

Where did it take place?

What were you doing?

Who else was there?

What was being said and done?

What did the other person or persons say or do?

What did you say or do?

What went through your mind?

Go step by step, moment by moment, through the memory. Don't describe the emotions, just the events. For example, refrain from saying, "She was angry" or "She hated me." Just stay with the physical events as they happened and what was done or said.

Complete the memory and then open your eyes. After a few seconds or more, close your eyes and pray. Ask God to wipe out the memory.

Keep your eyes closed and go through the process all over again. Go through the memory, step by step. You will find that it has started to fade away. Go through it again a third time and a fourth time, until you find that it becomes difficult to remember.

Why does it go away? No one really knows, but it seems that there is no reason for the mind to store up the memory with all of its original energy and intensity when it no longer represents a threat to one's well-being or survival. The lies of the devil are severed from the memory and the blinking red lights have gone out as the memory becomes like all the other benign incidents and memories in your life. Negative conclusions, lies, and emotions will disappear along with the memory.

It is vital to understand that nothing happens without God. He is the one that makes brains and minds and He is the healer of brains and minds. Demons flee because of the presence and anointing of God. It is the Lord who will take away the hurtful memories, along with the hurts.

Ask Jesus to Enter into the Memory

If the memory is particularly bitter and vivid, it may be helpful to add another aspect to the process. Jesus is God, and therefore, He is omnipresent. That is, the Lord is everywhere at the same time. He was there when you experienced rejection and hurt. Go back to your bad memory and look for Jesus. He may appear in human form or as a light or a presence. Look for Him in your memory. He was crying for you and loving you while the bad incident was occurring. Find Him, and when you do, run into His

arms and let Him hug you and hold you tightly. Feel His love, and hear Him say, “I love you. I will protect you. Give your cares to Me.”

Sometimes, I ask the person’s spouse or friend, or even a church member in attendance, to hug the person and say, “Jesus loves you. Let Him have all your burdens.”

After that, you may find that the painful memory has turned into a good one, and that the lies of the enemy have been cast out.

A Caveat

If you have been going to a psychologist or psychiatrist, do not attempt the above without guidance from a pastor or Christian with experience in this area. Schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, and paranoia, especially for cases in which a person has already been clinically diagnosed with such disorders, may need to be handled with a different spiritual approach requiring special training and knowledge that only God can give. Books such as *The Rule of Engagement* and *I Give You Authority* by Charles Kraft, *Victory over the Darkness* by Dr. Neil Anderson, and *Pigs in the Parlor* by Frank and Ida Mae Hammond can give you further insight into matters of spiritual deliverance. This book is intended for issues about marriage and not intended as a guide to deeper spiritual healing for the brokenhearted and poor in spirit.

Summary

When a person has broken relationships, especially with parents and siblings, the hurt, anger, and resentment caused by these fractured relationships can carry over into marriage. The emotions and bad memories these events created can bring moodiness, depression, and unexpected or unexplained outbursts of anger and bitterness. Instead of accepting these situations as hopeless, seek healing of heart and spirit from the Lord Jesus by giving Him your hurts and bad memories. Ask Him to be in the place of the person who hurt you, be they living or dead. Talk to them, through Jesus, and make amends with them.

Bad memories of traumatic events usually create feelings of personal rejection. Our Lord Jesus told us to place our burdens on Him so that He could provide rest for our souls. Always renounce a lie of the enemy as soon as you detect it. Reverse the lie by acknowledging the truth. Ask God to reveal bad memories that have resided in your subconscious mind. Let Him recall them for you, step by step. Ask Him to wipe out these hurtful thoughts. Then watch as they disappear. When the Holy Spirit prompts you, go to those bad memories and look for the Lord Jesus. He was there. Let Him embrace you. Feel His love and protection.

How to Fight in Marriage

Now things are going to get a little more complicated because, for centuries, the church has neglected the spiritual war between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. (Hosea 4:6)

It is not that knowledge of deeper things is unavailable. Casting out of devils, speaking in new tongues, healing the sick, and raising the dead have always been part of God's remnant church. Those who have not pursued them have excused themselves, reasoning that these things are no longer necessary, because the church is already mature and perfect in the sight of God.

The writer of the book of Hebrews lamented that many Christians remain spiritual babes their entire lives.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12–14)

It is understandable that the six foundational truths contained in Hebrews 6:1–2 must be taught; however, the church must move beyond them into spiritual maturity in Christ. Most churches, however, camp around the cross of Jesus and what He did for us without exploring our further role as mature Christians. The apostle Paul and other apostles instructed us to move on in the Spirit.

The standard for all believers continues to be: *“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink*

anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17–18). If you’re not casting out devils, speaking in tongues, or laying hands on the sick so that they recover, you are still a babe in Christ. Millions of Christians on earth today are doing exactly what Mark 16:17–18 says. You need to be in that group.

The apostle Paul said that when we became born again, an earnest deposit of the Spirit of God was placed in us. It is only a tiny bit of His Spirit, and not the fullness thereof. As we mature spiritually, His Spirit grows in us until we shine as the morning star. *“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the **earnest** of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Corinthians 1:21–22 kjv).* In real estate parlance, an “earnest money deposit” refers to a small amount of the sale price submitted by the buyer along with a bona fide offer to purchase. A larger down payment is made when the seller accepts the buyer’s offer. Then the entire payment is completed when the title is transferred at the real estate closing.

When we became born again of the Spirit, we are given a small portion of His Spirit. As we pursue God and spiritual things, the light in us grows stronger and stronger in the spiritual realm, until one day, we shine as the morning star. *“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).*

The Bible is clear that Jesus cast out devils and instructed His disciples on casting out evil spirits many times. He was not telling fairy tales. He was exposing our real enemy, our adversary the devil and his kingdom. (See 1 Peter 5:8.) Jesus is not a liar. He is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. (See John 14:6.)

It is not my intent to insult you or to imply that you are inferior in any way. My desire is that your marriage would become a wonderful experience and that it would last “until death do we part.” I pray that you will not choke on the meat.

Pray...

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes

of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. (Ephesians 1:17–19)

Satan, not Your Spouse, Is Your True Adversary!

Satan doesn't want your marriage to succeed. He has appointed evil spirits, strong men of discord, jealousy, dissension, hatred, resentment, adultery, poverty, and misunderstanding to trip up and destroy your marriage. You are under spiritual attack.

The apostle Paul said, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 6:12). You're not fighting against your spouse; you're fighting demonic powers that are exerting influence over you and your spouse. Satan hates your marriage. He constantly attacks Christian marriages, whether or not you are aware of it. He oppresses and suppresses spouses and their children all the time in order to bring about discord, dissatisfaction and resentment.

The fact that the divorce rate of evangelical Christians is nearly that of the general public is evidence of this struggle between Satan's kingdom and the kingdom of light. The apostle Paul's statement in Ephesians 6:12 is not an opinion. It is truth. If you are not fighting and resisting evil spirits that are attacking your marriage and your children, you are losing.

Satan attacked the Lord Jesus from the outset of His ministry. (See Matthew 4:3–11.) He attacked Peter in the presence of Jesus: *“Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men’”* (Matthew 16:22–23).

Later, Satan entered into Judas and led him to betray the Lord. (See Luke 22:3.)

Get the Devil Out of Your Marriage

Jesus acknowledged that Satan is the prince or ruler of this world for the time being. *“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me”* (John 14:30). The apostles also acknowledged that Satan’s kingdom rules this present world.

Satan appoints strong men—ruler spirits—over every country, area, church, family, individual, and marriage. Dissension, discord, anger, bitterness, hatred, unforgiveness, and resentment are evil spirits. Satan appoints princes to reign over every geographic area, country, city, town, village, family, marriage, and individual. Some areas are ruled by strong men of murder and violence; other areas are ruled by sexual perversion, areas like Sodom and Gomorrah and now, America. Some countries are ruled by spirits of witchcraft, disease, death, poverty, pride, and violence. Some areas have multiple strong men ruling over them.

These strong men rule from thrones in the mid-heavens, the atmosphere around the earth. That is why Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. *“And you...who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience”* (Ephesians 2:1–2).

Power to Bind and Loose

The Lord Jesus taught us that Satan’s strong men must first be bound up before we can defeat them. *“Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house”* (Matthew 12:29; see also Mark 3:27; Luke 11:21). This means that in order to effectively war against Satan’s kingdom, you must bind up the strong men, or ruler spirits, that have control over the area or person.

My daughter graduated from law school and was hired under a one-year contract for a judge. Each night, she came home in tears, distraught because the women in her office were talking behind her back, criticizing her relentlessly and finding fault with her at every turn. No matter what she did,

she was considered to be the village idiot. She would stand in front of the judge's office, knowing that, on the other side of the door, they were talking about her. When she opened the door, the conversation would suddenly stop, with one or more of the women caught with their mouths open.

Finally, on a Sunday, one of our church members asked my daughter if she had prayed to bind up Satan's ruler spirits that were fighting against her. (I wondered why I hadn't thought of that in the first place.) On Monday, she came home from work smiling and in a good mood.

"How was your day?" I asked.

"Great!" she answered. She related that she began binding up spirits of jealousy, discord, and so forth, as soon as she parked her car, on the way to the office, and even as she stood outside the office door. The change was so dramatic that within a few weeks, she was part of "the gang." When her contract was over, the office gave her a big party and sincerely wished her well. There were balloons, gifts, and "we will miss you" cards.

She learned an important truth: Satan appoints strong men to resist you at work and in marriage. Your enemy is not your fellow workers or your spouse. Sometimes, it may seem as though you are being your worst enemy, but often, it is the devil.

Power for You, Too

All Christians have the power and authority to bind evil spirits and loose the captives. "*And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*" (Matthew 16:19; see also Matthew 18:18). Pray to bind the demonic powers that are trying to bring division and discord into your marriage. Learn how to bind Satan's ruler spirits or strong men.

Pray as follows:

The Word of God says that whatsoever I bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever I loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. I come against the strong man of marital discord and (fill in the appropriate attack) in the name of Jesus, and I command you to come to attention. In the name of Jesus, I bind you up with chains from heaven. I bind you

hand and foot, and I cut off your cords, in Jesus' name. You are a defeated enemy. Jesus defeats you. He spoiled principalities and made of a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. I command you to stop harassing me and my family. I loose our souls from your oppression and control. Leave, in Jesus' name!"

That is just a sample prayer. Seek the Holy Spirit and he will reveal what to pray and how to pray. It is the anointing of the Spirit that binds and looses and sets you and your family free from Satan's devious tricks.

Binding the enemy is a privilege given by God to all believers in Jesus Christ.

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment—this honor have all His saints. Praise the Lord! (Psalm 149:6–9)

God inhabits the praises of His people. Praise God all the time, and the presence of the Lord will be with you and your family. The two-edged sword in your hand is the Bible. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. (See Ephesians 6:17.)

Binding Satan's demons is the key to the kingdom of God. (See Matthew 16:19.) We are in a war against the kingdom of darkness. Ignorance is no excuse.

Fighting for Your Marriage

Who or what is the strong man or ruler spirit controlling your marriage? Is it distrust? Self-righteousness? Rejection? Pride? Anger? The spirits of Jezebel and Ahab? Is it jealousy or insufficiency of finances?

Pray, and God will reveal them to you, although you probably already know most of them. It could be more than one. Demons usually work in a nest in which one or two of them operate as the top guns.

Abominations in the House

“Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing” (Deuteronomy 7:26). If you bring a cursed object into your house, it will bring curses with it into the house and invite evil spirits and ghosts. It is an abomination to God and may result in sicknesses, mishaps, nocturnal visitors, and bondage. Get rid of the cursed objects and repent before God.

Cursed objects include occult articles; hexagrams, satanic symbols, or other items used in witchcraft; idols, like Hawaiian aumakua; games like Dungeons and Dragons and Ouija boards; lucky charms; pornography; occult books, like *I Ching*; Smurf and Cabbage Patch dolls; adorned rocks; occult artwork; altars; masonic lodge emblems; statues of Buddha, Kwan Yin, or Shiva; images of frogs (Revelation 16:13), owls (Isaiah 13:21; Deuteronomy 14:15, 16), sharks, lizards, and snakes.

Whenever God allows us to cleanse a house, the first thing we do is go through the premises and throw out any cursed object. People have become sick because of cursed objects. A woman from Vancouver, Canada, claimed that whenever she comes to Hawaii, she can sleep for ten hours at a time. But at home, she was unable to sleep for more than an hour or so. As she was speaking, the Lord gave me a vision of a painting with a mother of pearl dragon on a black velvet background. It turns out that the woman was originally from Korea and, two years previous, during a visit home, she had purchased a painting of a dragon made with mother-of-pearl on a black velvet background. It hung right above her headboard in Canada. As soon as she got rid of the painting, her sleep habits returned to normal. Demons had been harassing her because of the cursed object.

In another case, a fellow pastor was at home alone when he heard noises in his daughter’s room. He walked down the hallway, stood in front of the closed door, and heard voices, as if a party was going on. He abruptly opened the door and turned the light on. On his daughter’s bed, about forty or fifty dolls stared back at him. He grabbed the dolls, made a pile of them in the front yard, poured gasoline on the pile, and lit a match. As the dolls burned, he could hear screams. The Bible speaks of witches using statues or dolls to bewitch people and hunt them to kill them:

Likewise, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own heart; prophesy against them, and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Woe to the women who sew magic charms on their sleeves and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of My people, and keep yourselves alive? And will you profane Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?" Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against your magic charms by which you hunt souls there like birds. I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, the souls you hunt like birds. I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall no longer be as prey in your hand. Then you shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel 13:17–21)

When I was in Mexico a few years ago, a young man around thirty-six years of age was brought to me in a wheelchair. He had not spoken in twenty years and was unable to function, physically or mentally. His sister shared that when he was sixteen, he went out with his friends and returned after three in the morning. His head was shaven and he was uncommunicative. As she was relating this incident, the Lord brought to my mind the King James Version of the above passage from Ezekiel: *"And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you?"*

I said, "Witches stole his soul." Then, I prayed and asked God to send as many angels as necessary to go and retrieve the pieces of the young man's soul that had been stolen away. I prayed that the angels would bring them back quickly, place them in proper order, and bring them back to life.

The young man immediately stood up and began speaking in Spanish. After twenty years of silence, his speech returned and he was able to function normally again. The pastor's wife led him to Jesus Christ within minutes.

A young girl who was half-Hawaiian came to our church and sat in the front row. After service, she expressed that she desired deliverance. She explained that she had met a wonderful sailor in the U.S. Navy, who had

been stationed in Hawaii for two years. They fell in love and wanted to marry and move to his parents' home in Florida. She expressed fear that he would discover the fact that her terrible temper often led to anger tantrums in which she would break dishes and smash mirrors. She was really in love with the man but was afraid that her anger spells would ruin the relationship.

As she was speaking, I had a vision of a shark. I asked, "What is this shark I see in your house?"

She was surprised, and answered, "It's my family aumakua" (a Hawaiian family god).

"What is it?"

"It's a painting of a shark in my bedroom."

I said, "Get rid of it. It is bringing curses to your family."

She repented and destroyed the shark painting when she went home. Then we were able to cast the devils out of her. Her anger tantrums never returned, and the last time I heard, she was married and lived in Florida.

If you are not sure about an object, pray about it. However, it is better to be safe than sorry. Throw it away. Sometimes a person cannot be delivered because there are things in the house that hold him or her in bondage. As long as the item remains, demons have a right to oppress and cannot be kicked out. Don't just store them in the garage or try to pray over them. Repent and get rid of them.

Our members have cleansed many a "haunted house" and often find that once the house is cleansed of cursed objects, the ghosts and evil spirits leave.

Computer Games

Computer games and pornography can carry curses, too. Some time ago, I spoke at an early-morning prayer meeting. After the meeting, a couple in their fifties came to me. The husband was bent over and shuffling his feet as they approached.

"When did this start?" I asked.

The wife looked at her husband, and said, “About five years ago. That’s when you bought your computer, remember?”

She related that her husband would play Dungeons and Dragons until the wee hours of the morning and, soon after, he became sick.

He repented of his addiction and for bringing curses into the home through the computer. Dungeons and Dragons, and many other computer games, deal with witchcraft, as one can choose to play the role of various supernatural beings, including powerful witches, warlocks, sorcerers, and demons. Many children play these games, not realizing that it can affect their minds and bring curses on them and their family.

Many years ago, the cartoon movie *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* featured an automobile race. As the winner crossed the finish line, a black and white checkered flag flashed on the screen. Witches and the occult often use a black and white checkered flag to open the souls of people and put demons into their minds.

This article can still be found on the CNN.com website:

Cartoon-based illness mystifies Japan

December 17, 1997

TOKYO (CNN) — A Japanese television network called in doctors, psychologists, and animation experts to find out why a popular cartoon triggered seizures in hundreds of children nationwide.

More than 700 people, mainly school children, were rushed to hospitals Tuesday after suffering convulsions, vomiting, irritated eyes, and other symptoms after watching “Pokemon,” a popular cartoon based on Nintendo’s “Pocket Monsters” video game.

Two-hundred people, from age 3 to a 58-year-old man, were still in the hospital Wednesday with epilepsy-type symptoms more than 24 hours after the showing, the Home Affairs Ministry said.

The network said it plans to cancel next week’s show if the cause of the incident remains unclear.

The show is Japan's most highly-rated program in its 6:30 p.m. time slot. Tuesday's episode, "Computer Warrior Porigon," featured characters fighting each other inside a computer.

Most of the children developed the symptoms about 20 minutes into the program after a scene depicting an exploding "vaccine bomb" set off to destroy a computer virus. It was followed by five seconds of flashing red light in the eyes of "Pikachu," a rat-like creature that is the show's most popular character.

Some other children were stricken later, while watching excerpts from the scene in TV news reports on the earlier victims.⁸

Satan will use computer games, movies, and television to force minds or souls to open, that he might invade. Many individual cases go unreported.

Besides *Pokemon*, there may be thousands of other movies, books, television programs, and computer games that open souls to demonic powers and hypnotic suggestions. It sounds weird and a little scary, but do not underestimate the cunning of Satan as he seeks to control the minds of humans around the world. He is hard at work at this very moment, deceiving the world and destroying the church and all Christians. It is far better to know what is going on than be a clueless victim.

Being a Soldier for Christ

In the Bible, God's name is the Lord of Hosts. It is mentioned in many scriptures. As I mentioned before, the word *hosts* means "armies." God is the leader of armies. (See, for example, Isaiah 22:14; Zechariah 7:12; Jeremiah 46:10; Malachi 2:12.) He is not the leader of Cub Scouts. Jesus Christ is the leader of armies made up of both angels and Christians mature in Him, trained as soldiers. He will return to earth on a white horse, with His armies also on white horses.

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of

God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. (Revelation 19:11–14)

Many preachers claim that Christians don't have to worry about Satan, because we already have the victory and Satan cannot touch us. Do not be deceived. We are in a war. The church is a target, along with every saint and every saint's marriage. If this was not so, why would Jesus warn us of widespread deception and the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet?

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved...Therefore when you see the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:11–13, 15–22)

The "abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," speaks of a day when the church will be destroyed and most saints killed. (See Daniel 8:11, 24; 9:26, 27; 11:31.) "It was granted to him [Satan's beast] to make war with the saints and to overcome them" (Revelation 13:7).

I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them,...He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. (Daniel 7:21, 25)

These Scriptures do not support the modern doctrine of pre-tribulation rapture. It appears that the church will be destroyed by Satan's beast and most Christians will fall at the end of the age. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:3.)

The church, and all its saints, have been called to be soldiers in God's army. The apostle Paul instructed Timothy: *"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare"* (1 Timothy 1:18). We, too, are commanded to wage a good warfare.

In 2 Timothy, Paul once more instructed Timothy: *"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier"* (2 Timothy 2:3–4).

The next few chapters will have but little meaning to a reader who does not desire to attain spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ.

Summary

Many Christians avoid hard passages in the Bible regarding spiritual warfare and the casting out of devils, and are therefore perplexed or defenseless against demonic attack. The apostle Paul reminds us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Our marriages are prime targets for Satan, who desires to take away and destroy our testimony. That's one of the reasons why evangelical Christians have such a high rate of divorce. It brings shame to God and takes away our testimony in Christ.

God has given us all the power and authority to fight against and destroy Satan's kingdom. (See Luke 10:19.) Be strong and of good courage, for the Lord is with you. (See Joshua 1:7, 9, 18.) Do not be deceived by preachers who disparage those Christians who both cast out devils and encourage others to stand up against the powers of darkness. If your marriage is being attacked, you need to fight back. We are called to be soldiers for Jesus Christ, and to stand against the kingdom of darkness in this hour. The church is at stake, along with our marriages and the lives of all Christians.

8. CNN.com, <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9712/17/japan.cartoon/>
(accessed November 19, 2014).

Ahab and Jezebel in Marriages

The next three chapters may be the toughest for many people to understand or agree with, but the subject matter is of great importance to those desiring to preserve and maintain a godly and happy marriage. Satan has devised a scheme and strategy to destroy the church—all believers and their marriages—through a nest of evil spirits, headed by powerful ruler spirits named Ahab and Jezebel.

Ahab and Jezebel are major players in Satan's plan to rule the world. They are the antithesis of what a true Christian husband and wife should be.

Ahab and Jezebel are historical and biblical persons. Their marriage, marked by family dysfunction, the rejection of God, worship of Babylonian deities, the destruction of God's prophets, and many other sins, are chronicled in 1 Kings 16:25–22:53. These biblical figures now represent two of Satan's strongmen, or ruler spirits, that control the world. People infested with these two spirits will mimic the behavior of these biblical characters.

Ahab and Jezebel have already destroyed many marriages, churches, and saints, and they will rule the planet at the end of this age. They are part of Satan's earthly kingdom, called Babylon the Great, and they will play major roles in Satan's end-time attempt to destroy God's church and people. (See Revelation 13:7; 17:5; Daniel 7:21, 25.)

God's Ultimate Plan for Marriages

God intends for the true church of Jesus Christ to become the bride of Christ at the end of the Millennium Age.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
(Revelation 21:2)

*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for **the marriage of the Lamb** has come, and His wife has made herself ready...Then he said to*

me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to **the marriage supper of the Lamb!**’” (Revelation 19:7, 9)

And **the Spirit and the bride say**, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)

That’s the destiny of the true church of God. In order for the church to become His bride, she must first be cleansed, prepared, and conformed unto the image of Jesus Christ. (See Romans 8:29.)

The marriage relationship between husband and wife is to be identical with the marriage relationship between Christ and the church, His bride.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:22–32)

The great mystery, now revealed, is that the relationship between husband and wife and between Christ and the church should be identical.

Women Rule in Satan’s Kingdom

In God’s kingdom, men are the leaders, held responsible by God in both marriages and church. He established His kingdom principles on marriage in the garden of Eden. Wives are to be subject to their husbands’ authority, even as the church is subject to Christ’s authority, and husbands are to love their wives, even die for them, even as Christ died for the church.

After marriage, a husband's love, which had been on his father and mother from infancy, must be focused on his wife. *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"* (Ephesians 5:31). Not that a husband should cease to honor and love his parents, but rather, his actions and works of love must be directed primarily toward his wife.

In Satan's kingdom, women are the real leaders, and men are subject to their wives. In Jeremiah's day, Babylon had conquered Israel over a period of time and many had fled to Egypt. But even before that, God's people had begun to worship Babylonian gods and goddesses. The women took over the role of spiritual head of the household as the men stood by and let their wives take charge. They all supported their wives' worship of the Queen of Heaven, goddess of Babylon, which is an abomination to God.

*Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to other gods, with all the women **who stood by**, a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: "As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you! But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble."* (Jeremiah 44:15–17)

Even their elders, kings, and princes worshipped Babylonian gods and goddesses, and followed their wives, who were the head priests of the family. They rejected the God of Israel and flaunted their sins and fornications before all, even participating in festivals dedicated to Babylonian gods and goddesses.

Babylon had a matriarchal society, in which the women inherited the family wealth and were the financial and spiritual leaders. This was also true of the nations that inhabited Canaan when Israel crossed over the river Jordan. God warned the people to remain separate from the unclean customs of the Canaanites. Most of the nations, including Egypt, had a matriarchal society, in which women were the actual leaders. Yes, men had their roles as warriors and held various positions, but the real spiritual, political, and financial power rested with the women.

While male deities, such as Molech and Baal (the generic term for male deities), were worshipped, the cult of Ashtoreth, a female deity called the Queen of Heaven, was far more popular. We will discuss this cult in more detail later.

What and Who Is Babylon the Great?

Revelation 17:3–5 describes and names a female deity as Satan’s chief ruler-spirit of the end times:

So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth.

A woman rules over Satan’s kingdom on earth and will cause women to be world leaders. They will reign over their husbands and much of society at the end of the age. Of course, there is no gender in the spirit world, but this spirit attacks women primarily. Toward the end of the age, females will rule, not males. In Isaiah 47:1, she is called “virgin”: “*Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate.*” (I believe there should be a comma after “virgin.” As you know, there are no punctuations in the Hebrew texts.)

The goddess of Babylon was called a virgin forever, after giving birth to Tammuz, the sun god of Babylon. Today, she is called the Virgin Mary.⁹

The biblical mother of Jesus is a different Mary. She had at least seven children. “*Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?*” (Matthew 13:55–56; see also Mark 6:3).

In Isaiah, she is called Madonna (Italian for “lady”):

Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms...And you said, "I shall be a lady forever," so that you did not take these things to heart, nor remember the latter end of them. Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, "I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children." (Isaiah 47: 5, 7–8)

She is also named "Easter" or "Ishtar," the Babylonian goddess of witchcraft and fertility, whose signs are colored eggs and bunnies.¹⁰

*Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending **after Easter** to bring him forth to the people. (Acts 12:1–4 kjv)*

The Jewish people were already worshipping Ishtar (Easter) when Jesus came to earth in the flesh. This "Easter" was not a Christian festival or holy day at the time Peter was arrested by the King Herod. It was, and is, a pagan holiday, and had been for centuries before Jesus came in the flesh.

This female spirit (the virgin, Madonna, and Queen of Heaven), claims that she is God. In Isaiah 45:5 and 6, the God of Israel says, "I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me...I am the Lord, and there is no other." But this evil spirit challenges God and says, "I am God, and none else beside me. Worship me." This is the spirit ruling over planet Earth today, with countless worshippers, including most of Christianity.

She is no novice. She's been around since the garden of Eden, as we will find out later. She has been killing Christians and the "slain on the earth" for eons. "I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement" (Revelation 17:6). "And **in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth**" (Revelation 18:24). But no one is able to see her. (See Isaiah 47:10).

The Spirit of Ahab

In 1 Kings 16:31, King Ahab broke God's law by marrying Jezebel, a non-Israelite who worshipped Babylonian gods and goddesses. Her father, Ethbaal, was the king of Zidon, a hotbed for the cult of Ashtoreth and Baal. God considers Ahab to be the most evil king ever.

Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him. For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their idols. Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place. In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. (1 Kings 16:25–31)

He soon became an ardent worshipper of his wife's Babylonian deities.

Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Lord, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun. (1 Kings 16:32–34)

Sex orgies and child sacrifice were rampant. Jezebel was beautiful and Ahab was a pushover for good-looking women. His union with Jezebel was a marriage made in hell. She was perfect for him. Ahab loved sex and eagerly participated in ceremonial orgies that were part of the worship of Ashtoreth, the demon wife of Baal.

It is said that "groves" were places of sexual orgies replete with huge carvings of sex organs. Ahab gleefully joined in the fun and pleasures

sanctioned and practiced by his own wife. (See 1 Kings 16:33.) Jezebel was the chief priestess of the cult of Ashtoreth, which also featured temple prostitution and all manner of sexual promiscuity, including homosexuality, incest, pornography, adultery, fornication, infant sacrifice, and disdain for marriage.

So it is with Ahab-infested men today, who love pornography, masturbation, fornication, adultery, and a host of other unclean and ungodly sexual activities.

Babylon Is Already Here on Earth

Historical and ancient Babylonians practiced infant sacrifice, mind-altering drug use, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, disdain for marriage, incest, illegitimate children, astrology, and other occult-related activities. (See Isaiah 47:9–14.) Their culture featured pervasive violence, murder, and female dominance, as well as spiritually weak men. We see all of these characteristics of ancient Babylon being reenacted today at the end of the age.

The Babylonians were completely given over to the worship of fleshly pleasures. Sexual promiscuity was widespread and teenagers volunteered two years of their lives to becoming temple prostitutes. It was customary to offer up one's virginity to a priest or priestess, who were believed to represent the gods. Wives were required to have sex with complete strangers on certain occasions. All the monies collected went to support the temples.

Whenever an unwanted pregnancy occurred, the woman would often give birth and then offer the infant as a human sacrifice to Molech, the Babylonian god of pleasure. A metal statue of Molech, with palms facing upward, was heated until red-hot and the infant was placed on them and burned alive. This practice started long before Moses' day and continued well beyond the days of Jeremiah, the prophet. *“And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord”* (Leviticus 18:21; see also Leviticus 20:2–5; 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35).

In modern times, we are more humane, of course. Instead of waiting until the infant is born, we kill them by injecting the fetus with a strong saline or other solution to burn them to death in the mother's womb. If the fetus is older, we cut them to pieces in the mother's womb or crush their heads, suck their brains out, and then incinerate the remains. This is supposedly a more civilized method of human sacrifice! Worldwide, there are perhaps twenty-six million abortions each year, 1.5 million in America alone.

The Mesopotamians, forerunners of Babylon, invented cocaine, and its use was widespread in Babylon. The priests often used cocaine to induce what they called "temple sleep" to bring about hallucinations, considered a form of dancing with or experiencing the gods in their spiritual realm. Alcohol, and in particular, beer, was also widely used. Who can doubt that we have a worldwide problem with alcohol and mind-altering drugs today?

The sexual revolution swept the U.S. in the 1960s, with the invention of contraceptive pills, the hippie and feminist movements, and widespread sexual promiscuity, fully establishing a Babylonian culture. Northern Europeans have long been known for their liberal views towards sex and served as a catalyst for today's promiscuity in America. Sexual mores in the Far East have also been lax for thousands of years, as multiple wives and concubines are encouraged by ambitious wives. Our world's sexual mores rival those of ancient Babylon. Nay, we exceed them in lasciviousness and evil conduct. Sodom and Gomorrah is fast being duplicated by American society as the deadly effects of homosexuality, warned about in the Bible, are being ignored.

Violence and wars are also signs of ancient Babylon. Even in the Old Testament, we find constant wars and violence being enacted in each generation. Babylon was noted for warring against its neighboring countries, and especially against Israel, until it was "liberated" by Cyrus of Persia in 539 b.c. "Semiramis" (some historians claim that this was not the correct name for the original queen of Babylon), or Ishtar, was called "the Queen of Strongholds" and was worshipped for her military conquests.

Today, physical Babylon is mostly desert, with only a few archaeological sites and perhaps two or three government buildings. Many Christians claim that the return of Jesus is far off in the future, since the Bible describes

Babylon as the trading center of the world at the end of the age. But Babylon has already overtaken planet Earth in the spirit.

In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, "I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow." Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come." And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. (Revelation 18:7–13)

America, with her luxurious living and disregard for God, is now ruled by Babylon, while others nations emulate her and have been made rich by her. Like the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and later, the nation of Judah, she has committed adultery with many foreign gods and rejected Jesus Christ.

The Lord said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also." (Jeremiah 3:6–8; see also Ezekiel 23:11)

America was once God's beloved country, blessed beyond measure by the Lord, but she has turned away and fornicated with other religions. She is no longer a Christian nation. She has been engulfed by Babylon the Great.

Wiping Out God's Church and People

Jezebel and Ahab killed every prophet of God they could find and sought to completely annihilate true worship to the god of Israel. *“For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water”* (1 Kings 18:4). Believers of Jehovah God had to hide in order to escape destruction. So will it be at the end of the world (age). Satan's beast will cause *“all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads”* (Revelation 13:16). Anyone who refuses the mark will be killed. This means you and me.

At the end of the world (this age), Babylon the Great will seek to control every marriage, person, church, and institution, and establish worship to the Queen of Heaven over all the earth. She is cunning. Few know what goes on in the spirit realm. Spiritual blindness and deception are everywhere. She is a mystery spirit that few recognize. Her name is Mystery. *“And on her forehead a name was written: Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and of Abominations of the Earth”* (Revelation 17:5). She is a mystery to the inhabitants of the world, but she rules.

The spirit of Jezebel is the epitome of Babylon's original queen, called the goddess of ten thousand names, including Astar, Cybele, Queen of Heaven, Virgin Mother of God, Madonna, Athena, Pele, Mother Kali, Kwan Yin, Easter (Ishtar), and Mother of Wisdom. Much of Christ's church is now worshipping her and Tammuz, her son. It was part of Ezekiel's vision of the church at the end of the age. *“So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz”* (Ezekiel 8:14).

The sign of Tammuz, the sun god of Babylon, is a Christmas tree.

Hear the word which the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord: “Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not

topple. They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good.” (Jeremiah 10:1–5)

The heathen are the Babylonians, who invented astrology and horoscopes and were dismayed at the signs of heaven. On the eve of Tammuz’ birthday, which is the day after the winter solstice (December 23 or 24), they would cut a green tree out of the forest, stand it upright in their homes, and decorate it with silver and gold ornaments. The next morning, they would celebrate Tammuz’ birth by giving gifts to one another and celebrating for twelve days.

Ancient Druids celebrated the sun god’s birthday by using mistletoe, a so-called magical plant. Modern Druids do the same; it’s called celebrating Christmas as a Christian.

How deceived and stubborn we are. I was asked to leave a pastors’ unity group because I don’t observe Christmas or Easter. Pastors have walked out of my seminars and conferences, after standing up and lambasting me for “destroying the church’s greatest and most beloved celebration.” Some people who have agreed with me have been ostracized and excommunicated by their churches. Yet, there is no mention of those two celebrations in the Bible, and the early church did not observe sabbaths and holy days, including the birth or resurrection of Jesus.

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain. (Galatians 4:9–11)

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. (Colossians 2:16–17)

The apostle Paul admonished the Galatian Christians for observing holidays and festivals, and called it witchcraft and works of the law.

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit

by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? (Galatians 3:1–4).

Babylonian worship was considered so evil by God that any involvement in it was punishable by death, as seen in the story of Achan.

Now Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” And Achan answered Joshua and said, “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: when I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.” (Joshua 7:19–21)

Achan and his daughters and possessions were taken, and they were stoned to death and burned with fire.

Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.” So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. (Joshua 7:24–25)

God destroyed both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and then Judah for worshipping the Virgin and her son, Tammuz. He hasn't changed. We haven't either.

What Is the Spirit of Jezebel Like?

A woman with the spirit of Jezebel is demanding, controlling, and manipulative. She can be seemingly soft-spoken and clinging, but, at the end of the day, she always gets her way. She just uses different strategies. Other women can be loud, blunt, aggressive, demanding, or cunning in order to get their way and control others. She not only bosses husbands, she also controls others around her at work, the church, and elsewhere.

Many women (and men) with the spirit of Jezebel have a strong spirit of rejection, unforgiveness, bitterness against male authority, and rebellion against God. Wives with that spirit are controlling and manipulative, the bosses of their families. Their husbands are laid back, nice guys who live in their own worlds. The husband is often also a victim of rejection. Women tend to counter rejection by becoming controlling, manipulative, and aggressive, so that rejection from people they rule over will be less hurtful or frequent. Power and control make them less vulnerable.

Men react to rejection by having many fears and insecurities. They become nonaggressive, lack ambition, are irresponsible, and passively daydream. After all, if you do nothing, you can't be rejected.

A Jezebel wife does it all. She micromanages and controls the family through constant scolding, criticizing, threatening, bickering, and complaining. She frequently marries a man who has the Ahab spirit in him. She needs someone to play the buffoon. After all, she sits on a beast.

Ahab is a nice guy who allows his wife to be "the spiritual one." She's the prophetess, the one who receives visions, dreams, and "words from God," the headliner. Her husband is mostly un-spiritual. He tags along and acts like he is interested in church, in order to pacify his Jezebel wife and please others. He spends his time supporting his spiritual prophetess wife and volunteers for manual labor. If his Jezebel wife dies before him, he disappears from church and shows his true colors.

At the same time, men can be made into Jezebels, and the roles become reversed.

A Spirit of Witchcraft

Jezebel is often thought of as synonymous with Babylon the Great, although the latter is a worldwide demonic system of witchcraft with many facets. Jezebel is the lead actress. All forms of witchcraft and the occult come out of this spirit, including fortunetelling, astrology, tarot cards, spells, hexes, vexes, and so forth. By definition, witchcraft is the unholy control and manipulation of others. (See Isaiah 47:9–13.) Of course, there are different levels or shades of Jezebel in different people. Babylon the Great seeks to control the whole world.

Jezebel Will Do Anything to Gain Control

In the Bible, Jezebel was a murderous spirit who killed Naboth in order to steal his vineyard and the reins of the kingdom at the same time. Naboth had a small vineyard next to Ahab's palace and the king coveted the land which he wanted for an herb garden.

Ahab tried to convince Naboth to either trade for another piece of property or sell it to Ahab. But Naboth explained that the land was a family inheritance that must be passed down the generations, so he could not sell or exchange for it. King Ahab was upset and didn't know what to do. He went home to pout like a little boy. *“So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food”* (1 Kings 21:4).

In came his wife, Jezebel. *“But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, ‘Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?’ He said to her, ‘Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, “Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you another vineyard for it.” And he answered, “I will not give you my vineyard”’”* (1 Kings 21:5–6). In other words, “Oh you poor darling, what happened, Honey?” Ahab then lied to his wife and never told her that Naboth could not dispose of the land because it was an inheritance that was to be passed down the generations.

Next came Jezebel's sly trick. *“Then Jezebel his wife said to him, ‘You now exercise authority over Israel! Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.’ And she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the city with Naboth”* (1 Kings 21:7–8). “Don't worry, Big Boy. After all, you're the king and we need to take care of the king. You just sit back and take it easy. Be happy. I'll handle it.” Jezebel then used King Ahab's seal of authority to give specific instructions to her followers to bear false witness against Naboth, and then she stoned him to death. (See 1 Kings 21:8–13.)

King Ahab was a crybaby. He was not effeminate and loved to go to war, but, at times, he was a grown man with the mind of a child. His pouting and indecision gave Jezebel the opportunity to take Ahab's seal and rule the kingdom. Ahab men are like that—indecisive, unambitious, momma's boys, laid back, and lazy.

Jezebel women will seize every opportunity to take over the reins of the family, church, or office. They are intelligent, talented, aggressive, and cunning. Jezebel is also a murderous spirit. She kills her own children spiritually and otherwise, and is the ruling spirit behind abortions, morning-after pills, sexual promiscuity, immorality, church divisions, and divorces. (See Revelation 2:20–23.)

Jezebel wrote letters and sealed them with Ahab's full approval. Ahab men love it when their Jezebel wives take over the household, not just the mundane tasks but also the spiritual headship. They can keep playing at their worldly games, lay back and take things easy. In the end, however, God will hold the husbands responsible for what their wives do. Yes, Jezebel was punished by God in the end, but He dealt with Ahab first. (See 1 Kings 21:17–26.)

Jezebel women think most men, including husbands, are either stupid or wimps that have no guts and are unambitious, indecisive crybabies. (See 1 Kings 21:1–20.) She resents having to cater or bow to males. It irks her to no end that most societies favor men. She seeks to reverse God's kingdom order. A wife can be five feet tall and her husband over six feet, but she is the bully. Walk around shopping malls and you will see tiny wives pushing their big husbands around. Of course, the husbands take it, acting like little boys being pulled around by their ears.

Do not be deceived. Ahab has a plan in mind, and all of this kowtowing and promotion of feminist rights is a ploy.

Children of Ahab and Jezebel

The children of an Ahab/Jezebel relationship grow up confused. Daughters take after their mother and sons after their dad. Daughters sometimes become lesbians and CEOs; the sons often become homosexuals. Divorce is prevalent in the family. A Jezebel spirit actually

hates women and brings about diseases of the reproductive tract, barrenness, excessive bleeding, irregular periods, tumors, and cancers of the uterus, ovaries, and breasts. Of course, a woman that has one or more of these diseases, or works as a CEO, is not necessarily infested with Jezebel, so do not accuse someone carelessly.

An Ahab husband capitulates and allows Jezebel to rule by default, because he is irresponsible and passes the buck. This is not to say that men should become male Jezebels. God requires much love by husband for wife. (See Ephesians 5:25–29.) Lack of love often opens the door for Jezebel, as insecure wives are often forced to protect themselves by becoming controlling and bossy.

Be aware that this spirit can inhabit men and turn them into controlling, bossy, and complaining husbands who have to get their way all the time, too. However, this spirit primarily invades women—I would estimate 95 percent of the time. Even in witchcraft and the occult, ten women become witches and psychics for every male witch or warlock.

Summary

Satan's kingdom on earth is modeled after ancient Babylon. At the end of the age, the same spiritual conditions that controlled historical Babylon will be evident on earth. These traits include sexual promiscuity, abuse of drugs, homosexuality, disdain for marriage, illegitimate children, pornography, witchcraft, fortunetelling, wars and violence, the killing of babies, and women rulers, all of which characterized ancient Babylon.

We are worshipping Babylon the Great, even now.

The two main spirits Satan uses to control the church, our marriages, and the world, are Ahab and Jezebel—the actual names of demons. These two characters are historical figures and extensively mentioned in the Bible. They have already succeeded in taking over the body of Christ and much of the world. Ahab and Jezebel are spirits of witchcraft, and they control much more than you can imagine. Jezebel is a controlling, aggressive, and super-intelligent evil spirit that calls herself a god and craves worship and control. She is referred to as the Queen of Heaven, Madonna, the Virgin, and Mother of all mankind.

When Ahab and Jezebel rule over a marriage, the children often become confused and end up becoming the mirror image of those two spirits.

9. For more information on this, read Jules Cashford and Anne Baring's *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image* (Penguin, 1993), and Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God* (Penguin, 1991).

10. See *Two Babylons* by Bishop Alexander Hislop.

Adam's Double Deception and the Betrayal of Eve

Jezebel in the Church

We're not finished with the spirit of Jezebel yet. In the church, she strives for recognition and control, desiring to take over the prayer ministry, Sunday school, music, and anything else she can get her hands on. She seeks attention and worship and loves to prophesy and teach. In the days of Elijah the prophet, Jezebel killed as many of God's prophets and priests as she could find. (See 1 Kings 18:13.) She's still doing it under cover.

She is a seducer of men and male leaders, creating career-ending scandals. She works to destroy the church and its leadership. But she does so undercover. "*No one sees me*" (Isaiah 47:10). She can be found behind church division, discord, and splits. She is a gossip or talebearer that brings strife. (See Proverbs 26:20.) Mind you, women with a Jezebel spirit are usually unaware that they are being led by an evil spirit. Nobody has ever told them.

Jezebel calls herself a prophetess and loves to control the church through her "revelations." (See Revelation 2:20.) I once had a Jezebel woman in the audience stare at me until, in a vision, the person next to me saw gray worms of death come out of her eyes and float through the air toward me as I stood behind the podium. I pondered over it and, the next morning, my wife showed me a book entitled *Queen of Heaven*. The author explained how a woman with a strong spirit of Jezebel can sit in an audience and send gray worms of death to the pastor or prophet out of her eyes. If unopposed, these worms will work to kill the victim over time. I began to pray against the spirit of death.

Some years ago, I returned to my law office after lunch to find a pastor friend waiting for me. He had just returned from a nearby hospital where he had been praying for a popular Hawaiian entertainer who had suffered a heart attack. The hospital room was filled with visitors, so he sat in the hallway outside the door. Suddenly, in the spirit, he saw gray worms flowing steadily and slowly through the air and into the room. "What did

this vision mean?” he asked. God immediately brought to mind the passage in the book of Acts regarding King Herod’s death.

Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king’s personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king’s country. So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died. (Acts 12:20–23)

It struck me odd that the worms ate Herod before he died. Aren’t worms supposed to eat a person’s flesh after one dies, and not before? I answered my friend, “This man is going to die.” At five o’clock that afternoon, he expired. This entertainer was well-known for his promotion of Hawaiian Kahuna religion, famous for its many deities.

In Hong Kong, as I was teaching about Jezebel’s quest to destroy Christian leaders and churches through control, my host suddenly exclaimed, “That’s exactly what happened to the church I belonged to!” Apparently, a girl of about twenty-six years of age had joined my friend’s church. She knew the Bible inside-out, loved to pray, prophesy, volunteer, and support the pastor. She soon became the intercessory prayer leader and Bible school teacher for the children. There were over twelve hundred members at the time. A couple of years later, the pastor’s wife died. A year thereafter, the girl married the pastor. He was seventy-five years old and she was twenty-nine. She literally took over and the church membership dropped to only two hundred members within a short time.

Remember, it’s the spirit and not the woman, although she is the one that gives in to it. There are many holy and righteous women in the church, but Jezebel is self-promoting and self-glorifying. She wants recognition and worship and seeks to rule; after all, she is a queen who thinks she is a god. “*Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me’*” (Isaiah 47:8; see also Revelation 18:7).

As mentioned before, most of the time, the women with this spirit have no idea what is motivating or controlling them. Not all women who strive

for leadership positions have the Jezebel spirit in them. There are sincere women who love God and desire to serve Him and His church without earthly reward. The major difference is that the woman with the Jezebel spirit is self-promoting and her agenda points to her rather than Jesus.

God Will Destroy Jezebel and All Her Children

God hates this spirit. In Revelation, He promises to destroy Jezebel and all of her children.

Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. (Revelation 2:20–23)

I have experienced women who refused to repent and, eventually, fell away from the church. In one case, a Jezebel woman became a witch and a psychic. She called herself a prophetess. In other cases, they were struck with fatal diseases, and God would not heal them. Jezebel seeks to kill the person she lives in. (See Isaiah 47:6.) My wife and I have seen the spirit of Jezebel peering out at us through the eyes of women on their deathbeds.

God promises that all who overcome Jezebel will have power over the nations: “*And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star*” (Revelation 2:26–28). Church leaders who cannot handle Jezebel cannot handle nations, either. It takes a strong and ruthless determination to rid the church and members of this ugly spirit. Do not misunderstand me. By this, I do not mean that you should throw out people whom you suspect have the Jezebel or Ahab spirit, but rather, that you should cast out the spirits themselves.

A Warning

God mentions the worship of Tammuz in Ezekiel 8:14–16. He is such an abomination to God that, in the next chapter of Ezekiel, He calls upon six angels with slaughter weapons, one with an inkhorn. He commands the angel with the inkhorn to mark the foreheads of only those...

*“...men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. **Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.**” So they began with the elders who were before the temple. Then He said to them, **“Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!”** And they went out and killed in the city.” (Ezekiel 9:4–7)*

The angels slew all of God’s people except those that had His mark on their foreheads. All the others were worshipping Babylonian gods and goddesses.

God has not changed. He is *“the same yesterday, today, and forever”* (Hebrews 13:8). If that is so, then God still abhors the worship of Babylonian gods and goddesses, and He still marks the foreheads of those that sigh and cry for the abominations going on in the church.

Today’s Mark of God on the Forehead

Interestingly, we find mention of the mark of God on the foreheads of God’s true servants in Revelation 7:3 and Revelation 9:4, which take place at the end of this age.

After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” (Revelation 7:1–3)

God instructs His angels not to harm those with His mark on their foreheads during the coming tribulation. *“They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads”* (Revelation 9:4).

If Ezekiel 9:1–6 applies to us today, the church is in big trouble.

The Double Deception and Betrayal of Women

Bible scholars have long taught that the serpent beguiled or deceived Eve, and that is true. They blame Eve for causing Adam to sin and allow death to enter the world. But that is not what the Bible says.

It was Satan’s job to lie and deceive—and he did his job well. At the same time, it was Adam’s job to protect and guide Eve. He not only failed miserably, he did it intentionally.

The serpent beguiled Eve, but not Adam. *“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression”* (1 Timothy 2:14). Why was Adam not deceived by the serpent? Didn’t he eat of the forbidden fruit too? The answer, as we mentioned in an earlier chapter, is that Adam didn’t have to be deceived; he had already deceived himself. He already wanted to be like God, but he didn’t know how to do it. He was looking for opportunity. When he overheard the serpent talking to Eve, he found his method. He willingly ate the forbidden fruit with premeditation in his heart.

Adam reasoned, “If I get caught, I can always blame Eve.” When Adam was found out by God, this is what he said: *“Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate’”* (Genesis 3:12). In other words, “Don’t blame me, God. *You* were the one who gave Eve to be with me in the first place, and *she* is the one who disobeyed and ate of the tree. Afterward, she gave it to me. It’s not my fault. Don’t kill me, kill her!”

First he blamed God; then he blamed his wife. In his own eyes, he was not responsible. That’s the nature of the first Adam, and it’s the nature of men with the Ahab spirit. They are blameless in their own eyes. It’s called “playing the victim” and “passing the buck.”

The Ahabs of this world continue to blame others for their troubles. They are the victims and not the cause. Their wives or other people are to blame. Adam said, in effect, “I had no choice. My wife forced me to do it. I’m not responsible.” Men get away with this all the time. There are many irresponsible, lazy, jobless, mamma’s boys out there, who allow or persuade their wives or girlfriends to do almost everything. And the women love it.

Ahab husbands use Jezebel wives to shelter them from having to venture out into the world and confront their fears. They are often irresponsible cowards who give lip service to God. Sometimes, he will use the name of Jesus, if he has something to gain by it—as King Ahab did in 1 Kings 22, when he tried to persuade King Jehoshaphat to join him in battle by pretending that he worshiped the God of Israel. Many a politician has used the same ploy, kissing babies and shouting, “Alleluia! Praise God. Thank you, Jesus!”

Ahab men are opportunists, even as the first Adam was.

An Unholy Partnership

Like Satan, Ahab men are temporarily using women for their own gain. It is an unholy union between the devil and the spirit of the fallen Adam. When the time is ripe, the beast will toss the Jezebel women aside.

*And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, **make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.** For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.*
(Revelation 17:16–17)

When the Eves of this world finish doing their dirty work, the spirit of the fallen Adam will rise up and kick them out. The woman who sits on the beast will be thrown down and the beast will stomp on her. The woman is mentioned no more thereafter. Revelation 13 speaks of Satan’s beast and a second beast, but no woman. The same is true with Revelation chapters 14 and 19, which speak of Satan’s dictator beast. Whatever happened to the woman on the beast? She is no more. In the end, the beast rules the world alone.

Some women may gloat over their new-found superiority over men, but it's a devious trick. Adam stood aside and allowed Eve to be beguiled, because he had a secret, selfish purpose. He wanted to be as God and had no intention of sharing his power with Eve. There is no way that the spirit of the first Adam is going to allow the Eves of this world ride on his back by being rulers of this world. The Eves and Jezebels of the world will be dethroned.

The lazy, passive, irresponsible husband is cleverer than you think.

The Return of Adam

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17:8)

The original spirit of the fallen Adam is in the bottomless pit and is not here at the present time, but his spirit of antichrist covers the earth. It has been passed down through the generations. Adam is the one who wanted to be as God, the other god or instead of God, the Antichrist, the man of sin, son of perdition who sits in the temple of God, which is our body, in our hearts, proclaiming that he is God and opposing everything that is God.

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4)

It was Adam who is called “the man” and who became the “*the man of sin*” when he rebelled against God. Destruction and death came into the world through him. It is the spirit of the fallen Adam that rules the world today. The original antichrist spirit of Adam will be in someone who proclaims that he is God, or blasphemes God. At the end of the world, he will go back into perdition.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

Summary

Ahab and Jezebel rule over the church today, but the vast majority of our leaders have no idea of it. God hates Jezebel and will destroy that insidious spirit and all her children. He has decreed death for all who follow her.

It started in the garden of Eden when Eve took the headship away from Adam, without consulting him, by eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Throughout history, men have blamed Eve for the fall, but it is a dirty trick. Women are being used, both by Satan and by the spirit of the fallen Adam.

The truth is, Adam was not deceived by the serpent. He already wanted to be as God, but he didn't have the guts to do something about it. When he heard the serpent beguiling his wife, he sat back and allowed her to be deceived. It was Adam's opportunity to be as God. And men around the world are still taking that opportunity today.

Adam was willing to sacrifice his own wife in order to gain what he wanted. He betrayed Eve. Even today, the Eves of the world are being deceived by the serpent and the spirit of the fallen Adam. That is one of the reasons why the apostle Paul instructed husbands to love their wives, even as Christ loved the church and died for it.

According to Scripture, once the woman sitting on the beast succeeds in destroying the church and ruling the world, the beast will turn against her and destroy her. The beast has no intention of sharing his throne with a woman. Women are being set up by the devil and the Ahabs of the world. The spirit of the fallen Adam is a lazy, jobless, unambitious momma's boy, for the time being. But he has plans.

Many men welcome female domination, because they are too lazy to take on their God-given responsibilities. They have it easy when their wives take over. Wives, on the other hand, are gleeful at the opportunity to be the boss of the family, or the workplace, government, and society in general. They boast of equal opportunity. But the only real equal opportunity is an equal opportunity to destruction. Women die of heart attacks at almost the same rate as men nowadays.

Do not be deceived.

Deliverance from Ahab and Jezebel

This chapter is not for the queasy and timid. It takes determination to rid your family of the spirits of Jezebel and Ahab. Deliverance can be quite daunting; but God will anoint those who desire to do battle against them. Jezebel will not leave easily. We will focus on Jezebel first and then discuss how to get Ahab out of marriage. A word of caution is advised before we proceed. Do not recklessly accuse your wife of being a Jezebel, or your husband of being an Ahab. Not all intelligent and aggressive women are Jezebels and not all quiet, unassuming men are Ahabs. You need discernment from God, as well as godly counsel from mature Christians who are sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Forcing people to receive deliverance by wrongly accusing them of having certain spirits never works. False accusations can create unnecessary and unwarranted conflicts in marriage and other relationships. If, however, you strongly suspect the workings of Jezebel and/or Ahab in your marriage, you may proceed to pray and ask God for deliverance. Remember, where there is a Jezebel spirit, there likely is an Ahab spirit lurking around, as well.

Confession and Repentance

The first step is confession and repentance. If you (woman or man) discern that you have this spirit, confess it to God and repent. Confession exposes Jezebel and Ahab and weakens their ability to resist. They love to hide and work undetected in the background. When their presence is exposed by God, they become fearful and weakened.

I've seen women set free from Jezebel who later shared that whenever they had seen me previously, something in them was telling them flee and avoid me. Evil spirits recognize Christians and will avoid people who are aware of them. Some women have even told me that whenever I walked past them as I was on my way to the pulpit, they felt an urge to scratch my eyes out. Spirits know when there is someone in the room who can cast them out.

Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (Acts 19:14–16)

Sceva’s seven sons used the name of Jesus and pretended to be Christians, but the demons knew that they were lying. Demons can recognize true Christians who have the Spirit of God living in them.

Exposure Weakens Jezebel and Ahab

You will know them by their fruits.

Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:17–20)

Sometimes, when a preacher is teaching about these evil spirits, the spirits will become nervous and start to manifest in the person in which they reside. One time, while I was preaching, a woman in the audience stood up and shouted, “Stop talking about me!” Another time, a woman threw her Bible at my pastor. For the most part, Jezebel women simply glare at the preacher.

A person seeking to be freed from these insidious demons needs to acknowledge that he or she has, or may have, those ugly spirits. This applies to men with an Ahab spirit, as well. Men need to acknowledge their failures in serving God, in not fulfilling their role as the spiritual head of their families, in neglecting their duties as head priest of the household, and caving in to sexual filth.

Repentance on the part of both husband and wife is important. In the event that a spouse refuses to participate, the wife or husband should proceed to cleanse herself or himself from Jezebel and Ahab spirits anyway.

Weakening Jezebel and Ahab

In order to weaken the Jezebel and Ahab spirit, one must determine to obey God and the admonitions given by the apostle Paul. The man who suspects that he may have the Ahab spirit must accept the responsibility of leading his family. Repent and ask God to help you seek Him. Begin to pray for your family and stop playing the victim. Assume responsibility for making your marriage work and in caring for your wife and children. Look for areas of responsibility that you have shirked and avoided. Stop being lazy and passive. Create love for your wife and family, daily and intentionally, with the intent of obeying God. Spend time with your family and stop blaming other people or circumstances.

If you, as a wife, especially, suspect that you may have a Jezebel spirit, recommit yourself to obeying God and submitting to your husband in humility. Do the opposite from what Jezebel does. Help your husband assume his responsibilities. Resist the urge to throw up your hands and say, "Forget it. I'll do it." Resist controlling others, manipulating others, or becoming "bossy." Repent and ask God to help you. He is your deliverer.

Forgiveness Negates Bitterness

Many women (and men) acquire their Jezebel spirit through rejection and bitterness. There is a root of bitterness that includes the spirits of resentment, bitterness, anger, unforgiveness, revenge, and even suicide and murder. Witchcraft gives the illusion of control and power, and many in the world seek such power as a means of protecting themselves against feelings of rejection.

If you are praying for a woman for the purpose of casting out demons, begin by having her forgive everyone that has hurt her in the past, especially her father and other male figures. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, go down a list of the people she needs to forgive, including parents, siblings, relatives, friends that betrayed her, and so forth.

When there is forgiveness for everyone that she can remember, break the curses that accompanied the unforgiveness. Since God will not forgive us until we first forgive others, we need to progress from forgiving others to repenting and asking Him to forgive us our own sins. Repent of any controlling, manipulative behavior or witchcraft. Then, pray to break every curse that came down because of our own sins.

Many Christians do not realize that they have delved into the occult. People often visit a fortune-teller and, as a consequence, pick up curses and spirits. These include tarot card readers, tea leaf and palm readers, horoscopes, I-Ching, and religious fortune-tellers and psychics, such as found in Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Islam, Hawaiian Kahuna religion, and Shintoism. The occult also includes many computer games, such as Dungeons and Dragons and Ouija boards. Bind up and cast out rejection, unforgiveness, bitterness, the fear of men, hatred of men, sexual abuse, *etc.*¹¹

A person with the Jezebel spirit needs to sincerely want to be set free. Sometimes, you can go directly against Jezebel, but at other times, it will be a fierce battle involving other spirits that need to be confronted first. Before you can cast out the Jezebel spirit, you may have to first cast out her servants—subordinate spirits under the control of this ruler spirit. She is the queen and she has many spirits under her, such as unforgiveness, hatred of father or mother, hatred of men, bitterness, rejection, rebellion, fear of men, and other spirits related to rejection and the root of bitterness. She will push her subordinates to the surface as she hides in the dungeon. She is sometimes seen in the spirit as an overweight, naked woman with attendants combing her hair and fussing about her. At other times, she is seen as a black-widow spider with the face of a beautiful woman with dark black hair and bright red lips. She can also appear as a beautiful, young girl who can suddenly transform into an old hag.

Jezebel usually hides until you get under her skin in battle. She will remain silent until she can stand it no more. She may take cover in the marrow of the spine, causing women to grasp the small of their backs. Some people think that she is also the Hindu spirit of Kundalini, a serpent with seven-and-a-half coils living at the base of the spine. One woman had a vision of Jezebel appearing as a pack of cockroaches hiding under the house.

When Jezebel comes out, she invariably starts wailing or screaming. When you hear screaming during deliverance, it is most often Jezebel manifesting and about to leave. The ease of casting out Jezebel depends on how strong this particular spirit is. On a scale from one to ten, a five is fairly strong and an eight delves into Satanism and out-and-out witchcraft.

Sometimes, this spirit will pretend that it has left when it really hasn't. She will sometimes exclaim, "She's gone. We can go home now." When that happens, command the person to say, "Jesus Christ is Lord." Demons find it difficult, if not impossible, to say those words. If you keep binding Jezebel and commanding her to come out in Jesus' name, she will suddenly manifest and start screaming. The screaming is a sign of weakening and she will leave shortly if you persist.

Jezebel is an intelligent and cunning spirit. She can make her host seem intelligent, as well. My pastor related that he once had a fourteen-year-old girl in his church who could multiply a five-digit number by another five-digit number and give the correct answer in seconds. When Jezebel was cast out, she had difficulty multiplying simple two-digit numbers. Again, this is not to say that all intelligent women have this spirit.

Casting Out Ahab

Spiritually, you have to go after the spirit of Ahab in the husband, too. He's the one that allows Jezebel to operate in his family. An Ahab husband may appear physically strong and manly, but inside, he is a passive man who hates to fight and argue with his wife, so he takes the easy way out and caves in to her most of the time. He easily abdicates his rightful God-given authority. This, of course, does not mean husbands should be unyielding and bossy. A telltale sign is his lack of spirituality and a predilection toward adultery, carousing, and sexual adventures. He has no real interest in the deeper things of God and is generally passive, submissive toward women, and unspiritual. He often has a history of being rejected by parents, siblings, or friends.

Ahab and Jezebel go together. It is rare to have a Jezebel wife without an Ahab husband. Ahab is the one who allows Jezebel to rule. Of course, Jezebel can control young girls who are not yet married, too. Often, a mother is a Jezebel and a father an Ahab.

Witchcraft, along with its manipulation and control over mankind, is the tool of Satan. Get it out of your marriage and life. "*And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues'*" (Revelation 18:4).

Trust God and His power. He has given you power over Jezebel and Ahab, and over Satan himself. *“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you”* (Luke 10:19). *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”* (Romans 8:31).

Summary

Exposure weakens the spirits of Jezebel and Ahab. Specifically, these spirits are weakened when their host acknowledges their presence and begins to counteract them by obeying God and submitting to His Word. Jezebel and Ahab find open doors to people that harbor unforgiveness and bitterness toward others, especially toward those who have rejected them in the past. Ahab men often react to rejection by becoming fearful and passive, while women tend to harbor bitterness, resentment, and rebellion. Rebellion is as culpable as the sin of witchcraft. (See 1 Samuel 15:23.)

Seek God and pray for deliverance.

11. For more details, read my books *Spiritual Warfare* and *Waging Spiritual Warfare* (published by Whitaker House), or other books on Jezebel.

In the Image of His Son

So, dear reader, we've come to the end of our journey together in pursuit of a long, enduring marriage filled with love and the fulfillment of God's purposes.

In this book, we have explained the core principles of marriage, according to the Word of God, which started from the garden of Eden. Adam's desire to be as God reversed God's principles of marriage. His fantasy was played out when the serpent beguiled Eve. From that time on, mankind has operated on the basis that man is God. Even until the very end of this present age, the spirit of the fallen Adam controls the thoughts and behavior of men and women everywhere. Either the first Adam, the man of sin, or the last Adam, Jesus Christ, sits on the throne in your heart. There is room for only one.

The spirits of Ahab and Jezebel are extensions of the spirits of the fallen Adam and Eve, as mankind continues playing God. The belief that man is God will come to a climax as the spirit of the fallen Adam—the one who claims to be the Christ who will save the world but is actually the antichrist—makes a final push to rule the world and control the minds of all those who dwell on earth. The mark of the beast is the number of man—the man of sin, the fallen Adam.

Adam and Eve rejected God's plan for marriage and reversed the relationship between husband and wife. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, came to undo the evil and poison generated by Adam and Eve, and all the works of the devil. The writings of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:22–33 remind us of God's principles for marriage, as originally intended. They can lead us back to the garden of Eden where we can restore everything that Adam and Eve lost.

In the Image of Jesus

From before He created the worlds, God purposed to have sons and daughters in the image of His Son, Jesus. *“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the*

firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). It is for this very reason that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for us on the cross.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will. (Ephesians 1:3–11)

The courtship between Christ and His church began almost two thousand years ago, when He rose from the dead. His bride is being prepared right now. The relationship between husband and wife is the same as the relationship between Christ and His church—His bride. (See Ephesians 5:32.) Even as Christ was meek, submissive, and obedient to the Father unto death, husbands and wives are called to be like Him.

We are all in a race to perfection in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul alluded to this in 1 Corinthians 9:24–27:

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Paul understood that God has placed a crown of righteousness before all Christians. He surrendered everything he had in order to pursue Jesus Christ and attain the crown of righteousness laid up for him in heaven. We stand in

awe of such a one as Paul, who was able to endure so much suffering to run the race.

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:22–28)

None of us has come close to suffering as Paul suffered. The great apostle gladly gave up all the fame, wealth, and comforts of the world to pursue that for which he was destined.

Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:4–11)

At the time the apostle wrote this epistle, he was still striving for perfection in Jesus Christ. “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me” (Philippians 3:12). *The New International Version*

puts it this way: “*I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*”

Paul exhorts us to follow his example and seek perfection in Jesus Christ. Great is our inheritance in the Lord, and marvelous is the crown of righteousness laid up for those who run the race to completion.

I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. (Philippians 3:14–17)

Just before he was to be executed, Paul knew that he had completed his course and that a crown of righteousness awaited him in heaven.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:6–8)

The Apostle Paul Saw Heaven

How was the beloved apostle able to endure all his sufferings for Christ? Many Bible scholars believe that Paul was given a preview of what awaited him in heaven if he endured. Early in his ministry, Paul was stoned to death. God gave him back his life and healed his body.

Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. (Acts 14:19–20)

In those days, people’s primary means of transportation was on foot. The very next day, Paul and Barnabas walked to the city of Derbe. Paul’s body

must have been a mess—torn, bruised, and smashed. But God healed him completely.

During the time Paul was dead on earth, he went to heaven and saw and heard things so marvelous there are no words to describe them. Fourteen years later, the apostle wrote these words:

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:2–10)

He was talking about his own journey. Paul knew what was in store for him if he endured all the sufferings to come for the sake of the kingdom of God. God strengthened him by transporting him to heaven and showing him the wonders that awaited him, and all those who dare run the race to glory. The apostle Peter called it “*the crown of glory*” (1 Peter 5:4).

There are different levels and rewards in heaven. God wants you to attain the highest possible reward and fulfill His desire to have sons and daughters in the image of His Son, Jesus. (See Romans 8:29.) Marriage is an important part of that race—one of God’s training grounds.

So, dear reader, we pray that God will open your eyes of understanding and give you revelation in the knowledge of Him and of what He has in

store for you if you run the race.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:17–23)

Strive to obey God.

Wives, submit to your husbands in all things, even as unto the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and died for it.

We pray that you, too, will understand what wonders await you in heaven one day if you endure. May God richly bless and keep you, and may the chastening, trials, sufferings, and tests in your marriage draw you closer to Him and mold you into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ADDENDUM A

What Do You Want?

(Both husband and wife to fill out their own sheet for comparison/discussion later) 1. What do you want out of your marriage?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

2. What do you want out of your spouse?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

3. What are you willing to put into your marriage?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

ADDENDUM B

Agreements

(Both husband and wife to fill out separate sheets and discuss later.)

1. Where do you want to live initially?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

2. For how long?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

3. Eventually, where do you want to live?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

4. What kind of house or apartment? Describe.

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

5. How large? Number of bedrooms?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

6. How much are you willing to spend on a house or apartment?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

7. How long are you willing to wait?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

8. If you need to save money for a house or apartment, how much do you agree to put aside every month in a “house fund”?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

9. Where will you bank?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

10. What kind of bank accounts will you open and whose name will be on them? Separate? Joint?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

11. How will the bills be paid? Out of whose account? What bills?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

12. How many children do you agree to have? When do you want to start?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

13. How often are you willing to have sex with your spouse?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

14. Who will take care of the children before they go to school?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

15. Where do you want the children to go to school?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

16. Who will work? Both? Husband? Wife?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

17. Who will cook? When?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

18. Who will do the family shopping?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

19. Clean the tub? Toilet? Vacuum?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

20. Who will wash and dry the dishes and pots?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

21. Do the laundry?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

22. Cut the grass, maintain the yard, garden, if any?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

23. Wash the car(s)?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

25. How often can wife visit her family? Husband?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

26. How often can wife see her friends? Husband?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

27. What kind of hobbies can wife have? Husband?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

28. How much time can each spend on their hobbies?

Husband: _____

Wife: _____

29. Who disciplines the kids?

SAMPLE OF A NON-LEGAL CONTRACT FOR MARRIAGE

THIS NON-LEGAL MARRIAGE AGREEMENT, made this _____ day of _____, _____, by and between *****, hereinafter called "Husband," and *****, hereinafter called "Wife,"

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Husband and Wife ("the parties"), mutually desire to be lawfully married in accordance with the laws and authority of the State of ***** and the Lord Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, the parties hereto acknowledge that marriage is a contract or agreement between them; and

WHEREAS, the parties further acknowledge and understand that there are many implied agreements, as well as express agreements within marriage; and

WHEREAS, the parties mutually desire to express and set down in writing some of said agreements regarding said marriage.

NOW, THEREFORE, Husband and Wife agree as follows:

I. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DESIRES

1. Husband hereby acknowledges that Wife desires that the marriage last until death of both or either of them and that their relationship will be a loving, kind, and gentle one, with both parties respecting each other and giving as much love as possible; that Wife desires to have children as soon as possible and to raise them together with Husband; that Wife is not particularly desirous of being rich but would rather be just comfortable and is willing to work hard together with Husband and achieve a happy marriage; and that Wife desires Husband to be considerate of her needs and understanding in all things.

2. Wife hereby acknowledges that Husband also desires a marriage that will last until the death of both or either of them and that Husband desires a wife that respects him and will be a loving wife and mother and that will continue to be romantic and loving throughout the marriage, and a wife that will not have secrets or be too moody but will seek to be a cheerful companion and helpmeet to Husband.

II. BANK ACCOUNTS

1. The parties agree to initially open three (3) bank accounts at First **** Bank in ****. One will be a checking account wherein all checks can be signed by either Husband or Wife; a second account will be a savings account in both names for the purpose of setting aside funds to serve as down payment for a house, and a third account will be a savings account for periodic and necessary purchase and maintenance of cars, appliances and for emergencies and unanticipated needs that may arise. All bank accounts will be joint and all savings accounts shall require both of their signatures.

2. The parties agree that neither of them will spend more than \$*** in any given month for personal needs, without the consent of the other.

III. PLACE OF RESIDENCE

1. The parties agree to live initially with Wife's parents at *****, for no more than **** months. Thereafter, they will live in either an apartment or house located within that area known as *****.

2. Both parties desire and agree to purchase a single-family dwelling in the city of **** and preferably around the following areas or neighborhoods: ****

3. Such dwelling shall be in the cost range of \$**** to \$**** (U.S.).

4. The parties agree to set aside at least the sum of \$** each and every month to provide the down payment for the purchase of such a dwelling, and will make every attempt to accumulate a sufficient down payment for the purchase of such house within four (4) years of the date hereof.

IV. CHILDREN

1. The parties agree that children will be a vital part of their marriage relationship and agree to have ** children. In the event that both parties feel that they are able to afford and handle more children, they agree to have ** children.

2. Husband agrees to assist Wife in the raising of the children and will take an active role in their lives and will be the main disciplinarian to the children. Wife agrees to be the primary care-giver to the children, as only a mother can be, and to support Husband in his duties as disciplinarian and encourage and instruct the children to submit to, respect, and obey Husband at all times.

3. The parties agree that the children will be brought up under Christian principles and in accordance with the Bible and the family will be part of the ** Christian denomination and will attend church regularly and as time allows, but at least once a week.

4. The family will pray together and read the Bible together as often as time allows and at least once a week.

5. All other decisions regarding the child or children shall be made by mutual agreement.

6. The parties agree to abstain from arguing and fighting in front of the children.

V. IN-LAWS AND FRIENDS

1. In the event that Wife's and/or Husband's family live in close vicinity, the parties agree that each can visit their respective families once every other week, and preferably during weekends. In such event, the opposite spouse and family will accompany each other on family visits to the in-laws, whenever possible or practical.

2. Each of the parties agree to strive to have good relationships with their in-laws and to render due respect and consideration to their spouse's family members.

3. The parties agree the each can pursue their hobbies but agree to not spend so much time on their hobbies that it disrupts family matters.

However, the amount of time spent is subject to mutual agreement from time to time.

4. The parties agree that they each can spend once a week with their friends so long as the time spent does not hinder or unduly take away from their time together and does not damage their relationship as husband and wife.

VI. INCOME OF THE FAMILY

1. The parties agree that Husband shall be the prime provider of the family; however, Wife may work if both parties agree. If the parties agree that Wife will work, they will discuss matters and make amendments to this agreement in order to accommodate and adjust to the new and anticipated changes that will be required.

2. All income of the parties, from whatever source and whether or not both shall work, shall be the property of both parties regardless of who earned it, marriage being essentially a partnership in this regard.

VII. INTIMACY

1. Both Husband and Wife agree that they will not use sex as a bargaining point or tool in their relationship and will not withhold intimate relations frivolously or as a means of punishing, manipulating, or controlling the other.

2. Unless it is not possible, the parties agree to have sexual intimacy a minimum of _____ times a week.

VIII. HOUSEHOLD CHORES

1. Husband will be responsible for the following: (1) mowing the lawn and keeping the yard and garage in decent order and maintenance; (2) maintaining the vehicles in good working order and appearance; (3) taking the garbage out in a timely and proper manner; (4) maintaining the apartment and/or dwelling in terms of the electrical, plumbing, and other features pertaining to the proper operation of the house; (5) cleaning and maintaining the main bathroom; and (6) ****.

2. Wife shall be responsible for keeping the house clean, including the furniture, floors, stove, refrigerator, bathroom in the master bedroom, and will be the main cook.

3. Each of the parties shall be mutually responsible for and shall cooperate and do the following things together: (1) shopping for food and supplies; (2) cleaning the toilets and sinks; (3) cooking; (4) caring for the children; (5) vacuuming the carpets and keeping the floors clean; (6) *etc.*

IX. BINDING

The parties hereto agree and acknowledge that this agreement may not be legally binding in a court of law; however, it is a morally and spiritually binding contract.

1. The parties fully realize that keeping their agreements will create spiritual power in their relationship and family and that each has a responsibility to the family and God to love, submit to and support each other in the fear of God.

2. The parties acknowledge and agree that this Non-Legal Marriage Contract does not take the place of and is not a substitute for any legal documents such as a Marriage Certificate issued by the State government and signed by the proper authorities.

ETC. (Add other agreements here)

X. AMENDMENTS

1. The parties hereto acknowledge that over time, this Agreement needs to be modified or amended to meet current needs and situations now anticipated by this Agreement and agree that they will mutually discuss necessary or appropriate changes and amendments from time to time.

2. Any and all amendments to this Agreement must be mutually agreed to and accepted by both parties hereto.

3. On or about the anniversary date of their wedding, the parties will review this Agreement and make said Amendments, unless mutually agreed to otherwise.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hands to this instrument on this _____ day of _____, _____.

About the Author

Richard Ing has been married to his first sweetheart, Beatrice, for over fifty years. They have four children. Two are attorneys and two work for the State of Hawaii. Pastor Ing was born and raised in Hawaii, where he resides today. He was a civil engineer before graduating from Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. He recently retired from law practice after forty years. He also owned several businesses, including a real estate firm, collection agency, travel agency, and newspaper.

Pastor Ing was an Episcopalian and a Baptist in his youth but backslid when he embraced the fraternity life in college. At the age of thirty-five, he began to seek God again, but a book entitled *All Paths Lead to God* led him to try many different religions, although he continued to pray to Jesus Christ. When he was forty-five years old, he and his wife were meditating in a Shinto temple when the head priestess tapped him on the shoulder and asked if he “used to go to a church with the cross—Jesus God.” She claimed that Jesus appeared to her moments earlier and told her that Mr. Ing and his wife belonged to Him and to send them to Him right away because time is short. That very night, Mr. and Mrs. Ing went to pray for a heart patient who was going to have open-heart surgery the next morning. Two days later, they received a phone call informing them that a miracle had occurred because the next morning the presurgery exam found that her heart was perfect!

Pastor Ing became born again in a deliverance ministry a few months later. He threw himself wholeheartedly into reading the Bible, serving, and praying, and became an elder in eight months. Two years later, he had a vision in which he was in a company of soldiers dressed in combat uniform and packed into a small building. He recognized it as a training hall he sat in when he took basic training in the U.S. Army. He saw himself walk down the steep steps to the front where he stood behind a wooden podium facing the troops. He then heard a voice say, “Son, I want you to teach My army!”

When he began teaching spiritual warfare and deliverance in Fiji, Vanuatu, and other countries, people would often see angels and white horses. Pastor Ing has given many small (two to three hundred attending)

crusade meetings in the remote provinces of the Philippines, where God would deliver and heal many and thousands came to the Lord.

In 1998, as he was teaching at a Bible college in one of the northernmost provinces of the Philippines, the entire class suddenly fell to the ground and one of his workers had a vision of a huge rice field stretching out as far as the eyes could see. The stalks were so full of grain that they almost touched the ground, but they were still green. The rice then turned into people in white robes. The worker opened her eyes and saw a huge angel standing on the stage with a scroll in his hands. He announced that a great revival was coming to that area. Many smaller angels were flying under the ceiling.

Dr. Ing found out later that many have prophesied that the last and greatest revival of all time would start in the northern provinces of the Philippines. Three years later, Dr. Ing revisited the Bible college and his wife and three other members saw the same angel with two smaller angels on his right and two on his left. Since then, Dr. Ing has concentrated on the Philippines and made more than forty-five trips there.

He is the senior pastor of Light of the World Missions in Hawaii and in the Philippines. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree besides a juris doctorate and bachelor of sciences degree, and is the vice president of New Covenant International Seminary and Bible College, with over two hundred affiliated Bible colleges around the world. Dr. Ing operates a Bible college, Mission House, and Vocational Training Center in the Philippines, along with four churches. He has lectured on spiritual warfare and inner healing multiple times in Fiji, Vanuatu, India, mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sarawak, Bulgaria, Philippines, Guam, Mexico, Switzerland, and on the U.S. mainland. He also lectures on house church restoration for the end times. He will be the first to tell you that he is unworthy, having been a Peter for so long, and only through God's grace and mercy has he been given the privilege of seeing and experiencing the power of God in action.



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