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“CELEBRATING MARRIAGE”

by Carol Gordon

“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.” (1 Peter 3:8-9 NIV)

Marriage is designed to be a blessing from the Lord. He alone can help us know how to love our spouse. He knows their heart and He knows ours. He can fit us together even when we seem so opposite to one another. In fact, He plans for us to be opposites, and men and women are pretty opposite creatures, so that we will have a full range of balance.

One of the Lord’s prayers in John 17 is that we be one with Him and our Father. So we need practice becoming one. This is one of the purposes of marriage. It takes a lot of work to learn to share life with another. Did any one tell you before you walked down the aisle that marriage is a lot of work? It doesn’t come easy to the sin nature to “become one flesh.”

Think of marriage as a training ground to walk with the Lord. You will have to employ every Biblical instruction for the “love walk” to walk beside someone you can see. You will need prayer to help you decode every signal and nuance from your spouse. Ask Him your questions, He has the answers. Then you can communicate more easily with your loved one.

I recently saw an article on research that was done on how couples referred to themselves. If they spoke as “we” they were a stable, well adjusted couple. If their talk was all about “I” and “he or she” trouble was on the horizon. I can recall growing up that people referred to their “married life.” Today you seldom hear that phrase used. So many couples are like “independent married singles,” who go on with the same lifestyle they had as a single person. They never become “we.”

The world teaches people to seek for someone who will “meet their needs.” That is really sad and funny, since no one comes equipped for that. Only Jesus Christ is our “Needs Meeter.” We draw from Him for our needs and pour out the overflow of blessing on our spouse. Only the Lord has the resources to draw out of each of us the treasures He has put in us.

Jesus said in John 15:13, **“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”** Then He did this as our example. Marriage is training in laying our self-life down because we love. We are all much more self-centered than we ever thought. Marriage will show us just how many ways this can manifest. The test comes repeatedly, “Will I insist on my own way or prefer my spouse.”

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There is a dividing line for our Christian walk given many places in Scripture. One I like is Jer. 17: 5-9. The first two verses say, **"Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives."** There are many marriages that feel like a desert, parched and dry. This is because they have thought they were smart enough or strong enough to do marriage in the flesh. They did not seek the Lord for His constant help.

An intimate relationship like marriage brings issues to the surface quickly. Sometimes on the honeymoon. If we operate in the natural, spouses try to hide who they are because of fear of hurt and rejection. It is easier to back off, and build walls. That is why it is so dry, no grace is being poured out to nourish the relationship.

When we ask the Lord to change us, He will make our lives to look like verses 7 & 8: **"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."** Now that is the picture we want our marriage to look like. Green pastures and still waters running deep for our family.

Don't forget verse 9, **"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"** We must remember that the enemy is always trying to fool us into thinking we are right and our spouse is wrong. Be ever alert to humble our hearts before the Lord and say, "Change me, Lord!"

There is a simple grid we can use. Women need to be cherished, and men need to be respected. One word for both of these is HONOR. If we will continually honor one another, the Lord can do great things with our marriage.

Remember His criterion is giving. John 3:16 says, **"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"**. If we are to be like Him, we will be givers also. This is made plain in 1 John 3:16, **"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren [spouses]"**.

(All Scripture references are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted)



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NEWS AND NOTES

Dear Partners and Friends:

Most places here in the USA are having WINTER! Most of us are looking forward being able to get about without snow. Some wonderful prayer times are happening so the goodness of the Lord is near!

I was particularly blessed to attend Kenneth Copeland's Ministers Conference in Texas, the only week in January that roads were clear. Pauline and I had a great time. Met new friends and renewed old acquaintances.

I am making some progress toward the wider venues I mentioned before! Keep praying for me in this.

My January guests on HeartMenders.tv were Shawn Perkins, Cynthia Huffmyer, and Cindy Pipkin. The first Monday I did a New Year greeting. Hope you are tuning in each week to see what is new.

REMEMBER TO BE EVER FAITHFUL IN PRAYER! CHALLENGES ABOUND. KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON THE LORD AND NOT ON THE NEGATIVE CIRCUMSTANCES. COVER YOUR FAMILY AND THE BODY OF CHRIST! Pray for A GREAT AWAKENING and for His people to move ever closer to Him. Again, I invite you to join any of our prayer teams, for HM Prayer Requests, HM Support Team, and Media Outreach. Do be part of a prayer group where you live. Always include your home church and Heart Menders, as well.

Thank you again to our financial partners. Your gifts of \$5 to \$10, \$20 to \$30, or \$50 or larger, are urgently needed to help us share the message of healing for the broken hearted and the restoration of families.

Please keep praying, "LORD, HELP CAROL FULFILL YOUR CALL ON HER LIFE!"

Your sister in Him,

Carol Gordon

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