

The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

- whoever *desires to become great* among you, let him be your *servant*. And whoever desires to be *first* among you, let him be your *slave* Mt. 20:27
- Not just great and first in worth value importance
- but also great in function and use.
- Deeper our commitment to serve, more useful to the Lord and the happier we will become.
- Seek to lead – running in circles – no destination.
- Seeking to serve – we climb to success!
- *more blessed to give than to receive*, Acts 20:35

Bringing this Service into Our Home

- Husbands and Wives must also become servants
It is *more blessed to give* in the home also!
- *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.* Phil. 2:3-4
- Husbands and wives are included.
 - Both must set aside selfish desires of youth.
 - Look at needs of spouse as more important.
 - Wife sees husband's interests as more important
 - Husband sees wife's interest as more important.

Such Service is Nonsense to Gentiles

- *Gentiles exercise lordship* ... Marriage is a competition for time, money, comfort and ease.
- Each expecting / demanding the other to serve.
- Even the wisest Gentile says marriage is 50-50
- No Leader – work, money, time, activities 50-50
- Still becomes a competition – each calculating where we are on the scale and feeling cheated.
- A marriage built on selfishness will be stunted, crooked, twisted and often end in divorce.

Bringing Service into Our Home

- *rulers of the **Gentiles lord it over them**, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 Yet it shall **not be so among you**; but whoever desires to become **great among you**, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be **first among you**, let him be your slave — Matt 20:25-27*

- Great divide between Gentiles and Christians.
- A Christian home is built on service / sacrifice for one another.
- Competition recognized as a problem
- Selfish ambition and conceit banished.

Greatest Obstacle

- Lack of Faith in God's Way.
- Unless I get what I want I can't be happy.
- Giving up my needs and desires – makes miserable
- Can't stop competing - feel angry when shorted
- Feel demeaned, stepped on or made to feel small.
- We Cannot Do it until we change this premise/attitude
- Solution:
- *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Prov 3:5-7*
- Until we let go of Gentile thinking – Never be Happy!

Potential for Happiness in the Home

- God revealed long ago – more potential for joy in home than all other endeavors.
- Do we trust God? Can we accept His wisdom:
- ***Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.*** *Eccl 9:9*
- Greatest return, leading to true satisfaction (*our portion in life*) found in effort we put into learning to serve in our marriage.

If We Doubt...

- Don't trust God's original intent in creating it.
- Crowning moment: God made "*male and female*" "*in His image*" giving *dominion, putting all things under our feet* Gen. 1:26-31; Ps. 8:6
- God had Adam spend time alone, naming animals experiencing amazing creation God gave him.
- Wanted Adam to see that he was incomplete alone
- Greatness God planned for man could not be achieved alone. God made it very clear:
- *It is not good for man to be alone.* Gen. 2:19-24

Made Adam Alone To Reveal

- *it was not good for man to be alone*
- All God made and even Adam's divine image would not have been good without Eve.
- Many things enjoyed / endured when shared.
- No animal, fish, or bird, hobby, job, etc. could bring joy and pride of accomplishment without Eve by his side to share it with.
- God let him see all these things and after he was fully aware, Adam was put into a deep sleep.

After Adam Woke

- *This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man. For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. Gen. 2:23-24*
- Ecclesiastes – a further description of God’s intent
- ***Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life ... that is your portion in life, Eccl 9:9***
- With Eve, Adam was complete, fully prepared to enjoy all life could bring, as was Eve with Adam.
- Every challenge, achievement, joy and happiness reaching full measure in each others company

Marriage as a Great Masterpiece

- Requires both genius and hard work.
- In marriage, God has supplied the genius.
 - Created us in His image / after His likeness.
 - Created male and female
 - Given the power to be one flesh with one we love
- Because of God's wisdom, our marriage is a potential masterpiece of function & elegance.
- Bringing joy and security to husband / wife and great blessings to their children.
- Since we all have this power from God, the deciding factor will always be our own efforts.

Loving and Serving

- Selfishness of sin dooms a good marriage to mediocrity or even a lifetime of unhappiness.
- Human wisdom has rushed in with self-help and how-to marriage manuals – often leading wrongly.
- As with all consequences of sin, only God truly understands how to resolve them.
- God's wisdom for marriage falls into two broad categories of “loving” and “serving.”
- Service and love as God created them.
- Not as man has twisted them. Human Wisdom:
 - Service = Both vying for lording over
 - Love = selfish enjoyment of pleasure.

Jesus Swept all this Aside

- The *service* necessary to make marriage a pleasure is the same *service* the church gives to Jesus and Jesus gives to the church.
- The *love* which God created to share in marriage is the same sacrificial *love* Jesus gave the church and the church gives Jesus.
- A husband learns to *love* and *sacrifice* for his wife as Jesus did for the church.
- A wife learns to *love* and *serve* her husband as the church does Christ (Eph. 5:21-33).
- Don't have to learn anything new! Just make our marriage exactly like Jesus and His church.

The Potential is Still Available

- An excellent wife is the crown of her husband. Pr. 12:44
- He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD. Pr. 18:22
- A prudent wife is from the LORD. Pr. 19:14
- An excellent wife who can find? For her worth is far above rubies. Pr. 31:10
- Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.” Pr. 31:28
- “Rejoice with the wife of your youth.” Pr. 5:18
- Though OT focuses on husband – equal for wife

The Manifold Wisdom of God

- Manifested in in the church, (Eph. 3:9-10), will also be in our marriage (Eph. 5:21-33).
- When we say “*I love you*” we mean:**
- My love for you is: “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends.* (ESV) 1Cor. 13:4-8

This is What “*God is Love*” means

- Created in His image this is the love Adam felt when he awoke and saw Eve and the love Eve felt toward Adam.
- We are in God’s image only when our love is:
 - *patient and kind,*
 - never “*rude*”
 - never “*insisted on*” getting our “*own way*”
 - Never “*irritable or resentful*”
 - *bear all things,*
 - *believe all things,*
 - *hope all things,*
 - *endure all things,*”

- When we bring this *love* and *service* into our marriage
- it has the potential to become a masterpiece.
- The sacrifices to make this possible will be nothing when compared to the blessings that such a marriage will bring.
- Not only to us, but to our children, our grandchildren and our brethren.
- *It truly is more blessed to give than to receive*