



2 Cor. 5:18

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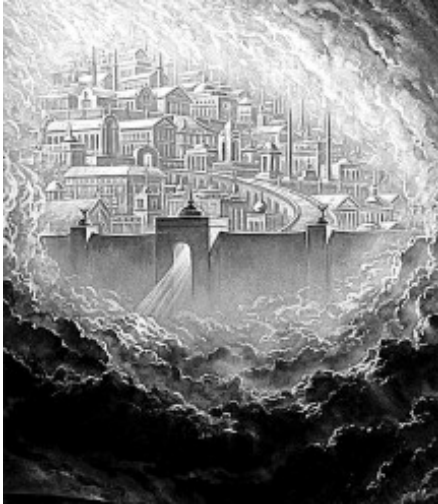
One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

No. 70

JANUARY 2010

The Bride of Christ

David Clayton



In Ephesians chapter 5 there is an interesting passage which deals with the marriage relationship. It outlines the attitudes and commitment which should exist in a Christian marriage. It is an especially interesting passage because while it speaks of husbands and wives, the passage has a deeper meaning as it is intended to teach vital lessons concerning the relationship between Christ and the church. In verses 25-27 we read:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (26) That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (27) That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:25-27)

Here we find that the word of God compares the relationship between a

husband and his wife with the relationship between Christ and the church. The church is presented as the "Bride of Christ." In Revelation 19:7,8, it says,

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Rev 19:7-8)

The Bible presents the consummation of this relationship of Christ with His church, using the symbolism of a wedding. This is interesting. Marriages sometimes grow a little stale, but most married people can remember that one of the most beautiful and intense periods of their lives was that time when they met, courted and got married to that person whom they loved above all others. It was an experience that was the central point of most people's lives. We look backwards at it, and count forwards along our lifeline from that moment. It is an event that we remember for the rest of our lives. Even when the shine wears off our marriage, we never forget that first love.

Now the Bible presents Christ's relationship to the church using that kind of terminology. It says that Christ loved the church so much that He gave Himself for it. A good man will die for his wife, he is her protector and he will face any challenge rather than allow her to be hurt. Christ is like this and it says that He gave Himself for the church. His ultimate aim is to present

the church to Himself as a bride, on His wedding day, spotless, pure, clean and beautiful, as a bride dressed out in her wedding apparel, prepared for her husband. This is the consummation of the plan of salvation.

A Great Mystery

What is the essence of this marriage to Christ? What does it really mean? We read again in Ephesians 5:31,32,

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. (32) This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph 5:31-32)

In verse 31 Paul explains the union which takes place between a man and his wife. A man and his wife become "one flesh." This is a literal union which actually takes place when a man and his wife come together in the consummation of a marriage. This is not really a mystery; the biologist can explain how it takes place. It is not difficult to explain this physical union of bodies which takes place between a

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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Editor: David Clayton

Publishing committee: ... Howard Williams
..... Karleen Williams
..... Jennifer Clayton
..... David Clayton

P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.

Phone: (304) 932-4543
Jamaica: (876) 603-0821

email: vidclay@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.restorationministry.com>

man and his wife and which results in the conception of children. This is not a mystery.

But Paul says that he is talking about "Christ and the church." This is what he is referring to as a "great mystery." What is this mystery? It is the secret of how Christ and the church can become one. This is the mystery which Paul refers to over and over in his writings. It refers to the union which takes place between Christ and His people. Is this really true? Can this be accepted literally? Do Jesus and His people really become one entity?

In 1 Corinthians 6:17 the apostle Paul tells us,

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. (1 Cor 6:17)

I have heard people explain this verse in such a way that it has made me wonder if they really believe it. Some say that this is not literally true, but only true in a figurative way. They have argued that it is not possible for two persons to live in one body. They have

explained that what really happens is that, as we read the Scriptures, our thinking changes and we begin to think *like* Christ and so because of this, we may say, figuratively, that Christ lives in us, but it is not literally true.

But the Bible is very insistent and very clear in expressing the truth that Jesus Himself lives inside of the believer. Jesus Himself says, "*my Father and I will come and make our home with you (John 14:23).*" The apostle John says, "*truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son (1 John 1:3).*" Paul says, "*Your body is the temple of the living God. God has said, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them (2 Cor. 6:16).'*" This is too clear and is repeated too often in the Bible and by too many people for us to believe that it is merely a figurative idea.

1 Corinthians 6:17 tells us clearly, "*he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.*" It is wonderful to read it; it is even more wonderful to believe it. Now this is the essence of what it means to be married to Christ. In Ephesians 5:28,29, we read:

Love of Himself

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (29) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: (Eph 5:28-29)

We can easily understand the truth of this. When Adam first saw Eve, his comment was, "*this is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. This wonderful being just came out of my side, she in nothing more or less than an extension of me!*" So Paul concludes that the man who loves his wife, in loving her, is in reality loving himself! There is no better way of saying that a man and his wife have truly become one, totally united. A man should love his wife because she is him. How much more true is this of Christ and His church-bride. In fact, the human experience does not even perfectly illustrate the relationship between Christ

and His church. A man and his wife become physically joined together, only at certain times. But the Bible uses this to illustrate Christ's relationship with His people at *all* times, and it says, He has become *one* with us. Therefore, in loving us, Christ is loving Himself. What the Bible is telling us as forcefully as possible, is that we and Christ have become one in the fullest sense that it is possible for two to become one.

One of the greatest problems with the Christian faith today is that most of us do not take the teachings of the Bible seriously, or literally. When we find that something is not true *in our experience* we think of it as figurative. In doing this we adjust the Bible to suit ourselves, rather than allowing the Bible to change our thinking, and consequently, our lives. Let us remember that the truthfulness of the Bible does not depend on our experience.

Now while it is true that every Christian is joined to Christ, it is also true that the church as a whole, is not yet ready for the marriage to Christ. Christ develops this relationship with us individually, but on a greater scale He is going to be married to the entire church one day. When the entire church is ready, clothed in white raiment, the righteousness of saints, all of us together, clothed in His righteousness, then will come His wedding day and He will be married to the church.

Union with the whore

It is interesting to note that everyone on the earth will be involved in some kind of union. Not everyone will be married to Christ, but everyone will be in some kind of relationship. What alternative will be open to those who do not unite with Christ? We find the answer in Revelation 17:1,2.

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: (2) With whom the kings of the earth have commit-

ted fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (Rev 17:1-2)

Everybody is going to be involved in some kind of a union. It will either be marriage to Christ, or fornication with the prostitute. But the principle of union with Christ is different from that of union with the whore. When a person is joined to the Lord, they become one *spirit*, but what about when a person is joined to a prostitute? Here is what it says in 1 Cor. 6:16:

What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. (1 Cor 6:16)

This verse comes just before the one which tells us that the person joined to the Lord is one spirit, and it is in direct contrast to it. Those joined to Christ are united with Him *in spirit* – those joined to the harlot are united with her, only *in body*.

When a man is intimate with his wife, the action seems the same as when a man is intimate with a prostitute. But the experience is as different as night is from day. One experience involves the heart and the spirit, there is tenderness, gentleness, warm feelings. In the other relationship, it is nothing but business. It is only the carnal satisfaction of flesh being excited. It is an external thing and has nothing of the heart in it. In fact, if a man cares about a woman he will never treat her like a prostitute. By its very nature, relationship between a man and a prostitute requires no love, just a desire to satisfy selfish animal instincts and to do a business transaction.

Conformity vs Transformation

So let us apply the principle of these two kinds of relationships to the two relationships which the Bible presents as the destiny of all on the planet. The relationship with Christ which is a relationship based on united spirits and which is founded on love, and the relationship with the prostitute which is based on an external union of bodies

and is only a business deal, entered into for mutual profit. Romans 12:2 shows us very clearly what is the difference between these two kinds of union:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom 12:2)

Here we find two kinds of behaviour. One is called “conformity,” and the other is called “transformation.” What is the fundamental difference between both? Conformity is superficial change, it is adjusting the outside, it is putting on the right clothing, it is modifying the behaviour to create a certain appearance, but there is no change on the inside. Transformation, on the other hand, comes about by the renewing of the mind. It is a change which takes place from the inside and affects the entire being. It is not just a cosmetic adjustment of certain actions, but it is a recreation of the entire being from the inside.

There is only one person in the universe who can change anybody from the inside. Everything else in this world, no matter what agency, institution or person we turn to, can only deal with conformity – outward change. Nothing can change anybody on the inside, except the spirit of God. Therefore, if we are not married to Christ, we will never truly change, we can only conform.

Different Principles

This is the difference between the Old and the New covenants. In the New covenant God says, “*I will put my laws in your hearts and in your minds, I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and to do them.*” (Hebrews 8:10; Ezekiel 36:27). In the old covenant the laws were written on tables of stone. In 2 Corinthians 3:7, Paul refers to the old covenant as “*the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones.*” When something is written on stones, it can make demands of me,

but it cannot change me. I may try to meet those demands, I put my body to work, I put my hands to work, I put my feet to work in not stealing, in not telling lies, but my heart remains the same because stone cannot change human hearts. So the principle of the old covenant is external behaviour, the principle of the new covenant is change on the inside, by union with Christ.

Now the principle of the prostitute is conformity, external change, and sadly, the majority of religions today, and even so-called Christian groups build on the principle of the harlot. They try to change people by rules, regulations and church authority. In fact, it is not just the churches, it is every system which is based on the principles of this world. These principles are intrinsically the very foundation principles of Satan’s kingdom, that is, keeping people in subjection to the minds of others by external rules, authority and force.

It is true that at one time God gave the law and used that kind of system to keep order and to preserve human life even among those who were chosen to represent Him in this world. In the letter to the Galatians we read,

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (Gal 3:19)

But the system of law was a temporary measure, intended to last only until the seed should come. This cannot be the Christian method because Christianity does not deal with the form of change (the external), it deals with real change (the internal). This is the principle of the New covenant, the principle of Christ in you, the principle of union between Christ and His bride. The more we understand this, the more we can see why it is a dangerous thing to continue to relate to the Lord on the basis of the letter of the law. We must move from the external law, that which only governs outward behaviour, to

Christ Himself, the living law who in uniting with us, transforms us from the inside.

There are still some Christians who believe that natural change is unrealistic. They contend that it is not possible for a person to change unless he is educated in new kinds of behaviour. They feel that it is not God's plan to transform a person by a miracle so that in a moment he no longer desires to do the evil which was once his pleasure. They feel that we need to be continually instructed in the law and reminded constantly of its requirements, or else we will not have any reason to change our behaviour. They fear that unless the law is continually held up before Christians they will be tempted to take advantage of grace. But this is folly, anybody who will take advantage of grace is not a Christian. The friends of God, the children of God do not depend on instructions in order to live righteously, for the life of God in them naturally produces the fruit of the spirit. When we have to use external methods to produce proper behaviour in people, then we may know that we are operating on the principles of Babylon.

Natural Religion

In Romans 2: 12-15 we find an interesting passage which clearly expresses this truth of "natural religion."

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: (15) Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) (Rom 2:12-15)

Paul says that these gentiles, who know not the law, do **by nature** the things contained in the law! Let us consider that carefully. They have never learned what the law says, because they "have not the law." But still, they do the things contained in the law! How is that possible? It is because they have the law written on their hearts. How did it

come to be written there if they have not the law and have never seen or heard of the law?

It is clear that these gentiles have experienced the new covenant, they have been changed by the indwelling of the spirit of God and so they do the things of the law, although they have never learned of the law. This is what I refer to as natural religion, the religion which naturally produces the behaviour of Christ without a person being told how to behave, but which comes about simply because such a person has come under the control of the spirit of Christ. They show the "work of the law written in their hearts." This is exactly what Christ says He will do for His people by the new covenant:

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (Heb 8:10)

The new birth is a real experience, and just as, when a person is born as a human, he does not have to be taught to become a human, but is human simply by virtue of his birth, the same is true of the born-again Christian. Such a person does not need to be taught how to be a Christian, but produces Christian behaviour simply by virtue of the fact that he is born of God. John tells us this plainly:

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 3:9)

Notice why he does not sin: It is because his seed, the very life of Christ remains in him.

The old covenant basically says, "read, learn and conform." The New covenant on the other hand, produces transformation through the literal, real, impartation of the very life of Christ Himself. It is natural religion as opposed to legal religion. Christ's mar-

riage is all about the principle of the new covenant: One spirit uniting both the bride and the Bridegroom.

Brothers and sisters, we need to ask ourselves, upon what principle are we operating? Are we operating on the principle of union with the prostitute? Conformity without the heart involvement? Or have we really understood and accepted the principle of the new covenant, which produces the new creation?

The Great Obstacle

This brings us to the next question: What is it that prevents us from experiencing this new covenant? We sometimes come to the place where we say to ourselves, "I understand things which are so beautiful. The truth makes me want to cry and to laugh and to sing and to jump! And yet, I don't find the righteous life appearing naturally. I am still working and struggling with little success. Why is this so? The answer may be found in Romans 7:1-6.

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? (2) For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. (3) So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. (4) Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. (5) For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. (6) But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we

should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom 7:1-6)

Let us make sure that we get the point of the illustration: Here is a woman and she is married to a man. There is another man that she likes and to whom she would prefer to be married. But she cannot have this other man because her husband is still alive and the law forbids her to be married to any other man while her husband is still alive. But if, and when the first husband dies, then she is free to marry the second man. Now it is clear that the second husband is Christ. It says so plainly in verse 4. The woman represents me, the individual. So here we find that I, the woman, desire to be married to Christ and if I should be married to Christ, then I will become **one spirit** with Him. He and I will be joined as one. My problems with sin would be over, I would be done with conformity, with pretense, with failure and guilt. I would be living in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

But, let us not forget, first, something has to happen. Before I can be married to Christ, the first husband must die. But who is this first husband? Who does this first husband to whom the woman is married, represent? This first husband represents the **carnal mind**, sometimes referred to as “the old man,” or, “the body of sin.” Paul divides me, the individual into two parts. One part of me, the will and the conscience is represented by the woman, who desires what is good and wants to be married to Christ. The other part of me, the carnal mind or the body of sin, controls and dominates the will and the conscience and compels me to do as it desires. This part is represented by the first husband. So I am married to my other half and my other half is the carnal mind!

A little further on in chapter 7 Paul describes the conflict which arises in a person as a result of the conflict between these two parts of him, represented as the wife and the first husband. This quote is taken from the New

International Version.

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. (16) And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. (17) As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. (18) I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. (19) For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. (20) Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. (Rom 7:15-20 NIV)

Partial Death

This is the problem with every person who is not united with Christ. They can never be united with Christ as long as the carnal mind lives, and so their lives are constantly tormented by this friction between their consciences and the carnal mind. The carnal mind is the part of me that puts self in control of my life. As long as this part of me remains alive, Christ cannot live. That is what the Bible teaches.

Many of us are not willing to die one hundred percent, but we try to die maybe eighty or ninety percent. But the truth is, a person cannot die unless he is fully dead. Eighty percent dead is to be still very much alive and it is so with us when we cannot surrender fully to Christ. We remain very much alive and very much in control, but we put on a façade, a pretense of death, so we change outwardly, we conform! We change our behaviour and we start keeping most of the commandments. But we wonder why it is that we still don't love our enemies and care for anybody too much except ourselves and our own, and why we cannot see the glory and power of God manifested in our lives. It is because we deceive ourselves that self is dead when in fact we have only given God bits and pieces.

Paul says we cannot have Christ until the old husband is dead. That is the straight truth. The songwriter expressed it perfectly:

*You have longed for sweet peace
and for faith to increase
You have earnestly, fervently
prayed;
But you cannot have rest or be
perfectly blessed,
Until all on the altar is laid.*

*Is your all on the altar of sacrifice
laid?
Your heart, does the spirit control?
You can only be blessed and
have peace and sweet rest,
As you yield Him your body and
soul.*

This includes even our opinions, it includes the doctrines which we cherish, it includes the principles which we hold so dear – many of them based on the existence of the self-life. Why should we cling to something which prevents Christ from living? We have lived too much of our lives like that! We have suffered too much to continue with this way of life! When will we learn that our way only brings disaster? We need to give up all and to trust the Lord with everything. We need to say, “Lord, I believe You know best. I don't know how I am going to be happy, but I believe I will be happy with You. I choose to die so that you may live.”

If there is a God who cares so much that He gave His Son for me and has been reaching out for me for all eternity, and who has never left me alone for a moment of my entire life, then how could I be so stupid as to keep on resisting Him? What is there about my way that is so precious that I can't give it up? But the Bible tells us clearly what our problem is. The old husband is still alive. We are unwilling for self to die.

The habits of our lifetime have conditioned our thinking and our behaviour. We have been saturated with the thinking that we have to make our own choices and decisions, to chart the

course of our own lives, and when we have read Christ's appeals to surrender, we have not been radical or decisive or extreme enough in severing the strings which have kept us bound to self, the old husband. We have not understood what it means to give it all away.

The Greatest light

When Christ appears on the horizon there is no light which can compare to that light? When we come to see Him, the light of the world, it happens to us as it happened to Paul on the Damascus road. Our glory is cast down into the dust where it belongs. We come to see ourselves and our ways for the foolish, meaningless things they really are: All our ideas, our schemes and our dreams are revealed to be no more than trash, when we see His glory. The next thing which is bound to follow is that we will hear His voice asking us, "why are you kicking so hard against the pricks? Why are you resisting my voice as I speak to your conscience? Don't you know that I have loved you since eternity? Don't you know that all I want is the opportunity to make you happy?"

Like Paul our inquiry is, "who are you Lord? I thought I was serving You all along. Who are you really?" And we

hear His answer, "I am Jesus, the one who loves and wants to make you happy." Finally we have met Him, we have seen Him as He is, we have seen ourselves as we really are and our only response can be Paul's response. "Lord, what do you want me to do?" God help us to end as Paul ended: "whereupon O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

For the rest of his life Paul was obsessed, single-minded (read his testimony in Phil. 3:7-10). People said he was mad. I suppose it seems to be a kind of mania to be so single-minded and so wholeheartedly focused on one object only. People might say, "man, open up your horizon, be more balanced." But nothing could turn Paul from his course. It wasn't even the work or the mission so much, which moved him, it was Christ. What he saw on that Damascus road never left his mind. Every opportunity he had he repeated the story of that life-changing experience. It burned its way into every fiber of his being and determined the subsequent course of every moment of his life.

This is what needs to happen to us. Sadly too many of us don't have the courage to give it all to Jesus. Con-

sider the following illustration:

Trust

A man is very much in love with an attractive woman. She means everything to him, but sadly, although he has asked her to marry him several times, she keeps on telling him, "no, I need to think about it some more. I don't think I know you well enough." What is the problem? Obviously she is not sure that she can trust him. Very often that is the problem. He may be a good-looking fellow, yes. He may be financially stable and may offer security and may seem to truly care about her, but unless she is certain that she can trust him she will continue to be hesitant.

But if this man is truly a trustworthy person, what is it that needs to happen in order for this obstacle to be overcome? Obviously all that needs to happen is that the woman must get to know the man better. The only reason for not trusting a trustworthy person is the fact that I don't really know him well enough. His trustworthiness is unknown to me because I don't know him well enough.

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Jamaica Campmeeting

The 2010 Jamaican campmeeting will be held from **Thursday April 1 – Monday April 5**. This year we return to the **Mount Glory campsite** near Moneague in the garden parish of St. Ann.

Our theme for this year is "Baptize us Anew."

Our focus on Christ remains undiminished and in fact, we are even more filled with the determination to know nothing and to focus on nothing but the love and grace of God, manifested and poured out on us in Christ Jesus. It promises to be a great campmeeting and we are expecting a wonderfully spiritual and solemn

time. We encourage all who can attend to make every effort to be at this campmeeting.

As usual those attending will have the option of sleeping in the dormitories or of pitching their own tents. Married couples who desire to be together are advised to take a tent and sleeping bags. The tenting facilities are not the best, there is no shade, but the available space is adequate for a few tents.

No meals will be provided this year. In an effort to have all the ladies fully involved in the meetings we have decided to follow this course, so please make provisions for your own meals.

Visitors from outside of Jamaica who wish to attend, please call 1(304)932-4543. We will make arrangements for pickup at the airport and accommodations.

If you intend to attend this campmeeting, we would appreciate if you let us know a few weeks beforehand if possible. The camp fee will be \$500.00 per night, or \$2000.00 for the duration of the camp. (US \$6.00 per night or \$24.00 for the duration of the camp..

God bless you. We expect a great blessing and we look forward to seeing you there.

PRIORITIES

By Marsha Russell



These things which we regard as important are often impressed on us in early life by factors such as our parents' influence or perhaps by our associates or what we read in later years. One thing is certain and it is that the priorities which we embrace are based on the principles that we hold as important and they are the underlying motivation to all the choices we make in life.

I can still remember my wedding day and the excitement and wonder of entering a new chapter of my life. I was twenty-one and my fiancé was from a different parish and so after marriage I would really be living a new life. As the Lord would have it, in just a few months we found ourselves not only newlyweds but also soon-to-be-parents. It was a shock in more ways than one but the Lord had a plan in the whole scheme of things and I can look back and say that it was all His doing.

1 Timothy 2:15 states,

Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

This text though often interpreted in different ways, is full of thoughts to ponder.

There is a promise in this text which you and I may claim. Here we find the suggestion that the role of childbearing is one of God's means of saving us women in God's kingdom. But of course if we pursue this path of motherhood with the wrong focus then it

will be very difficult for us to experience the blessing mentioned in the text.

Maybe you have figured out by now that the priority that I want us to look at is the important role of being a PARENT.

In today's society the roles have been so revised that in some parts of the world parents obey children and not the other way around. In other parts of the world children are treated as slaves to make life easier for their masterful parents. But God wants a balance and that balance can be found in His word.

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. (Psalms 127:3)

If you find that the Lord has blessed you with one, two, three or more, then count it all joy, for the trials that you might suffer in the years of training and molding these minds for the heavenly kingdom is for your salvation as well as theirs.

In looking at the priority of parenting I ask all parents who read this article to remember that even though you might not be the best parent in your eyes or even in the eyes of others, you can accomplish much through the grace of God. Even if your children are grown and are out of the house there is still a work for you to do. When that child is fifty, even though you may be seventy, he or she is still your child and there is still a lot that you can do.

God has entrusted these little ones to us to mold and care for and oftentimes we lose sight of this work and focus on some other work to the peril of our children's souls.

'The training of children constitutes an important part of God's plan for demonstrating the power of Christianity. A solemn responsibility rests upon parents so to train their children that when they go forth into the world, they

will do good and not evil to those with whom they associate.

Parents should not lightly regard the work of training their children, nor neglect it upon any account. They should employ much time in careful study of the laws which regulate our being. They should make it their first object to become intelligent in regard to the proper manner of dealing with their children, that they may secure to them sound minds in sound bodies.

Many who profess to be followers of Christ are sadly neglectful of home duties; they do not perceive the sacred importance of the trust which God has placed in their hands, to so mold the characters of their children that they will have the moral stamina to resist the many temptations that ensnare the feet of the youth. (Child Guidance page 21.)

If you feel discouraged about your parenting thus far, take heart, the one who calmed the sea, the one who created life can create a new beginning for you, and a new way to better parenting.

So, just for today let us consider that if I cannot do many things to improve my parenting, there is at least one thing which I can do for sure, and that is to put my children on my prayer list. Pray for them often, pray about all the habits and tendencies that we know will prove their ruin if Christ does not step in, And He will answer our prayers. He will step in if we just believe His promise to hear us and answer.

Today is a new opportunity to choose a change in the direction that our lives have been taking in raising our children. Even at this moment, we may give this most critical task the priority which it deserves. What do you choose to do?



Marriage – God’s Design



something designed by God?

design:

- 1 to plan and carry out, esp. by artistic arrangement or in a skillful way
- 4 a working out by plan, or development according to a plan

By God’s grace, in the coming months we hope to look at marriage as He designed it, and endeavour to see how we as women fit into this master piece.

Let us take a look away from ourselves for a change, and view the overall picture. There is a purpose and plan for my life; God designed it as a master Artist and planner, in a skillful way, He has a purpose for my life, inclusive of my marriage.

The important question is, is my life conforming to God’s design? Is my marriage working out according to plan? If your answer is no, then we need to ask why.

Are you fighting your present situation and making no more progress than someone fighting quicksand? You fight your husband, and every verbal punch you land leaves a bruise on you as well. It is time for a change. You do have a choice in how your life plays out. It’s time to take stock, and discover your place as a child of God. We are witnesses to give God praise and pleasure in every area of our lives – **including our marriage**. Rev. 4:11 says

“.....for thou hast created all things, (including marriage) and for thy pleasure they are and were created”

We often tend to think that we can sort things out on our own, but there is a Master Mind that designed marriage and not surprisingly, He also provided a “user manual” for our help. We all know what are the consequences if we do not follow the manufacturers instructions laid out for the new stove or fridge we bought. Why are we so careful in temporal things, but when it comes to God’s design we use it and do with it as we please, but expect the manufacturer to honour our claims?

“For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13)

This therefore begs the question, what is God’s will? It is His will for you to have a joyful, heavenly marriage. Regardless of what kind of person you have been in the past, with instructions from God’s word, you can become a heavenly-gift bride. You can still be your man’s dream come true, and in the process your dreams will come true also. God wants to work in your life. Yield your stubborn will and follow His instructions laid down in the Bible.

Sisters, our first desire should be to bring pleasure to God. It is His intent and purpose (**design**) for you. But, *“they that are in the flesh cannot please God”* (Romans 8:8).

We are living too near the close of probation to be content with a superficial work. The same grace which we have hitherto considered sufficient will not sustain us now. Our faith must be increased, and we must become more like Christ in conduct and disposition in order to endure, and successfully resist, the temptations of Satan. The grace of God is sufficient for every follower of Christ. {1T 307.1}

Those we love may speak or act unguardedly, which may wound us deeply. It was not their inten-

tion to do this; but Satan magnifies their words and acts before the mind, and thus hurls a dart from his quiver to pierce us. We brace ourselves to resist the one whom we think has injured us, and by so doing we encourage Satan’s temptations. Instead of praying to God for strength to resist Satan, we suffer our happiness to be marred by trying to stand for what we term “our rights.” Thus we allow Satan a double advantage. We act out our aggrieved feelings, and Satan uses us as his agents to wound and distress those who did not intend to injure us. The requirements of the husband may sometimes seem unreasonable to the wife, when if she should calmly, candidly take the second view of the matter, in as favorable a light for him as possible, she would see that to yield her own way and submit to his judgment, even if it conflicted with her feelings, would save them both from unhappiness and would give them great victory over the temptations of Satan. {1T 308.2}

This cannot be done in our own strength, we need supernatural help.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you”, (Matt. 6:33).

This is the only way we are going to follow his blueprint (**design**) for marriage, we need to desire and seek for that change of heart and “the thing planned for, or outcome aimed at, (**design**)” will be realized.

My friend, a relationship with God is the key, the key to all of life, including your marriage. **HOW IS YOUR HEART?**

Your sister in Christ

Naomi Morris

Liquid of Life

Lenworth Frankson

Water is the basis of all life including the life in the human body. Whether we refer to it in a spiritual or in a physical sense, without it we die. It therefore should come as no surprise to us when the Scripture refers to the Holy Spirit, the very life of God, as “the water of life,” for indeed without his spirit we die spiritually and physically.

It is said that we cannot live without water for more than a few days. Some research suggests that a person could survive without water anywhere from eight to fourteen days. It all depends on the situation however, because the rate at which the water and liquids are leaving the body without being replenished can determine one’s survival as sweat, urine, and tears leave our bodies and it is very hard to predict how the water inside is being reduced and by how much. Our muscles are 75% water; our blood is 82% water; our lungs are 90% water and our brains are 76% water. Even our bones are 25% water. The truth is our health and efficient functioning without question, truly depend on the quality and quantity of the water we drink. We need water and lots of it.

On the subject of WATER Ellen White made the following comments:

In health and in sickness, pure water is one of heaven’s choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system and assists nature to resist disease. {MH 237.1}

..bathe frequently, and drink freely of pure soft water. {HR January, 1871}

Water is the best liquid possible to cleanse the tissues. {R. & H., July 29, 1884}

Thousands have died for want of pure water and pure air, who

might have lived. . . . These blessings they need in order to become well. If they would become enlightened, and let medicine alone, and accustom themselves to outdoor exercise, and to air in their houses, summer and winter, and use soft water for drinking and bathing purposes, they would be comparatively well and happy instead of dragging out a miserable existence. {CD 419.4}

As you read on you will see that these statements although written many years ago, are true and supported scientifically.

It is said that “the most powerful healing substance known to man” is clean drinking water. For those who might be skeptical about this then let’s take a closer look at the many functions of this liquid of life.

Water relieves and prevents lower back pain, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, headaches, migraines, asthma, allergies, colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, depression, hypertension, cholesterol, hangovers, neck pain, muscle pain, joint pain, bloating, constipation, ulcers, low energy levels, stomach pain, confusion and disorientation. It maintains muscle tone, weight loss, clear and healthy skin. It regulates body temperature, it removes toxins and wastes, cushions and lubricates joints, decreases risk of kidney stones, protects tissues, organs and the spinal cord from shock and damage. It also assists in the digestion & absorption of food, and in the transportation of oxygen and nutrients to the body cells.

There is no substitute for water, period.

Beverages that contain water are not good enough because they counter the positive effects of water. Many of them are just outright bad for you. Some of them contain lots of sugars that stimulate the pancreas, boosting your insulin levels and taking your body out of

its natural fat burning state. Sodas contain sugar, sodium and acid that slowly destroy your system.

Weight Loss

Drinking a lot of water is one of the more important things to do when attempting to lose weight although we should remember not to drink it too cold. Drinking cold water slows down the metabolism and works against the body’s efficiency in burning fat. Water contains no calories, fat, or cholesterol and is low in salt. It is nature’s appetite suppressant, and it helps the body to metabolize fat. Research shows that low water intake causes an increase in fat deposits and high water intake, on the other hand, reduces the amount of fat deposits. Without enough water, the kidneys cannot function properly and as a result, some of their workload is placed on the liver which then prevents the liver from operating at its best. When we diet we restrict the amount of calories we take in, to some degree. This lessens the total amount of water available to our bodies since about 30% of the average person’s water intake comes from the food they eat. For this reason dieters should increase their water intake to ensure hydration.

Water Retention

The best way to beat bloating is to give your body what it needs and that is a lot of water. There are those who say that drinking a lot of water “bloats them up” or it makes them “retain water.” In fact, the opposite is true. These people are retaining water because they’re not drinking enough water. The human body functions in a “survival mode” and it responds accordingly to anything it perceives as a possible threat to its survival. If you deprive your body of ample amounts of water, you are threatening its survival. In response, your body kicks into its survival mode and holds onto every drop of water it possibly can for future needs and pur-

poses. This water is often stored in extra-cellular spaces and appears as bloated hands, legs and feet.

Using diuretics to decrease water retention could be damaging in two ways. Not only is the survival mode activated, where your body hoards as much water as it can, but you are also draining your body of valuable vitamins and minerals. If you have long-term water retention issues, you may be ingesting too much sodium (salt). Our bodies can only tolerate so much sodium. The more sodium you take in, the more water your body will retain to dilute the sodium concentrations. By simply cutting down on your sodium intake and drinking plenty of water, you'll notice considerably less bloating. Please remember that it is always advisable to consult with your health professional before making changes with your medication.

Water and Digestion

Digestion of solid foods has to happen in the presence of water so that proper digestion occurs. This does not mean that we should drink water or other beverages with our meals because in doing so we diminish the flow of saliva from our salivary glands. Ellen White had this comment to make concerning this.

“Many make a mistake in drinking cold water with their meals. Taken with meals, water diminishes the flow of the salivary glands; and the colder the water, the greater the injury to the stomach... . Food should not be washed down; no drink is needed with meals. Eat slowly, and allow the saliva to mingle with the food. The more liquid there is taken into the stomach with the meals, the more difficult it is for the food to digest; for the liquid must first be absorbed... eat fruit with your meals, and the irritation which calls for so much drink will cease to exist. But if anything is needed to quench thirst, pure water, drunk some little time before or after the meal, is all that nature requires. {R. & H., July 29, 1884}

Waste and Constipation

Our bodies are constantly working to expel waste and toxins. Since water helps digestion and rids the body of waste, it only makes sense that the more water we drink the better it is. When the body doesn't get enough water, it takes what it needs from internal sources. The colon is a primary internal source. When this happens, constipation usually follows. Normal function commonly returns along with proper hydration.

Water and Body Temperature

Water helps us maintain our body temperature through perspiration. Perspiration dissipates excess heat and cools our bodies. Without water, this delicate balancing act of the body is disrupted.

Water and the Kidneys

Our kidneys remove wastes like uric acid, urea, and lactic acid to name a few — all of which are dissolved in water. When there aren't adequate amounts of water, these wastes aren't removed effectively and kidney damage may result.

Water and Joints

Cartilage tissues between the vertebrae of the spine and at the end of long bones retain a lot of water. Cartilage needs water for the purpose of lubricating the body's joints during movement. When the cartilage is well hydrated, the two opposing surfaces glide freely and minimize damage to the joint caused by friction. Conversely, dehydrated cartilage increases friction forces to the joints, resulting in joint deterioration and pain.

Water and Back Pain

Minimizing back pain can be as simple as hydrating your body! The water stored in your spinal disc core supports approximately 75% of the upper body's weight. Your spine is dependent upon the hydraulic properties of water.

Water and Muscles

Muscles are primarily composed of water. Therefore, it's only logical to

drink lots of water especially when you are trying to increase muscle mass. Proper muscle tone that is desired can be maintained through adequate water intake along with nourishing and exercising the muscle. It prevents the sagging of skin that sometimes follows weight loss and maintains clear, young and healthy skin.

In addition, water removes wastes from and transports nutrients to the muscle cells. It also ensures that a proper muscle contraction can be achieved so that the working muscle is properly exhausted. Bodybuilders also tend to ingest a lot of calories, supplements and proteins, really taxing their kidneys in the process. Drinking a lot of water takes some of the strain off the kidneys as it filters the blood.

Water and the Brain

This gray mass of matter is made up of 85% water. The brain is about 1/50th of the body's total weight and it uses about 1/20th of the body's blood supply. Dehydration causes energy generation in the brain to decrease. In fact, studies have linked depression and chronic fatigue syndrome with dehydration.

Water and Migraines/Headaches

Dehydration can and often times cause headaches and migraines. When the temperature is very hot migraines are often experienced due to dehydration. To further complicate the matter, dehydration brings on stress and stress so often brings on headaches.

Water and Pregnancy

Morning sickness is common in the first trimester of pregnancy. Research shows that one reason for morning sickness is dehydration. It's a signal being sent by the fetus and the mother's body that she needs to drink more water. When the mother isn't drinking enough water, she's dehydrating the baby and herself. This is a result of the mother being the provider of water to the fetus during the time

the fetus is in the womb growing and developing.

Water and Asthma

A recent study found that dehydration could play a significant role in asthma and allergies. One researcher believes that the lack of water vapor in the lungs causes the airways to constrict and for the asthmatic's lungs to produce mucus, the two factors that cause asthma attack. The researcher recommends that people with asthma drink at least 10 eight-ounce glasses of water every day, along with a pinch of salt, and to avoid caffeine. This is because salt regulates water in the body and caffeine robs the body of needed water.

Water and Arthritis

Arthritis pain and stiffness is a result of joints not being cushioned therefore water can aid to lubricate and provide padding for these areas. When we are dehydrated there is increased friction between the cartilage surfaces of our joints. When the joints move, suction pulls water from the bone marrow to the joint cavity— if there is available water. If there is not enough water, these joints can't glide as they should. So, an increased water intake and be-

ing hydrated can keep that water supply there and reduce some of the pain. Also, with gout, it can also remove uric acid and other toxins.

Coughs and Colds

The best way to fight a cold is just to prevent it from overtaking the body. But perhaps the most important and easiest form of prevention of the common cold is something overlooked: sufficient fluid replacement. Fluids flush out harmful impurities and toxins in our bodies, and aid in the production of mucus. Since the body uses even more fluid than usual when fighting off a cold or the flu, the body can be left severely dehydrated without it. Dehydration, among many things, can result in high fever. This is why extra water should be ingested when suffering these symptoms. In fact, the lack of water can make the cold and/or cough worse. Water is obviously the first choice, but juices, herbal teas and soups are also good ways to ingest water.

Feeling Thirsty

The bodies "Thirst Reflex" is the last signal of excessive dehydration. By the time you become thirsty, the damage has already been done. Don't wait until

you are thirsty! Constantly drink throughout the day! How much water should you drink? The non-active individual needs 1/2 oz. per pound of bodyweight, per day. If you weigh about 160 pounds then that comes to ten 8oz. glasses per day. This is just an average and you'll need to adjust these numbers to your activity level, environment, bodyweight, and diet.

Dr Carl Rothschild states "*Without water, we'd be poisoned to death by our own waste products and... clean drinking water may just be one of the most powerful healing substances known to man.*" I personally believe this to be true because I have proven it.

Water increases not only the quality but also the length of our lives! Only oxygen is more important to human survival. Water plays an enormous role in how well our body functions. Simply put, the more clean purified water we drink, the healthier we become. Knowing all this to be true, shouldn't we now make conscious efforts to drink more water?



DID YOU KNOW...that most people never give a second thought to what they put in their mouths? If it tastes good, they eat it. They never seem to associate their physical condition with what they eat or drink.

If people were to read the ingredients on the labels before putting things into their mouths, they would be amazed at what they are consuming...substances, the names of which they often can't even pronounce, much less know what they are! The truth is, the average person exercises more care in selecting the grade of gasoline to put into their vehicle than they do in choosing the food they consume.

The Bible says we are '*Destroyed for lack of knowledge*' (Hosea 4:6) and 1Corinth 6:19-20 says

"What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's". (1Corinth 6:19-20)

As we walk more closely with God we should seek His guidance in even the food we eat.

Janet Baratz

Available Materials



The following sermons by David Clayton are available upon request:

- Perfecting Faith DVD & Audio CD
- The knowledge of man DVD & Audio CD
- The Godhead and the Gospel DVD & Audio CD
- The Gospel of the Kingdom DVD & Audio CD
- The Bride of Christ DVD & Audio CD
- Credible Witnesses DVD & Audio CD
- Seeing is Believing DVD & Audio CD
- A Point of Contact DVD & Audio CD
- Manifestation of the Spirit Audio CD

All sermons are available on one CD in mp3 format

The Bride of Christ

Continued from page 7

There are many who still doubt that they will be fully happy if they give Christ everything. For them the thought of full surrender to Christ is like taking a bitter tasting medicine continually. Something which hurts and is distasteful, but which must be endured because there are some benefits. However, if there is some other possible way, or if the taking of the medicine can be put off, it is avoided as much as possible. This is the condition of many people who still doubt that they can be happy, giving Christ everything. The problem is that they don't know the Person. They need to know Him better.

Not too late to change

Let us give ourselves a project, let us approach the issue in a practical way as we would do business or as we

would take up some aspect of education. Let us set ourselves a program to get to know Christ.

We all have the capacity to make changes on a superficial level. People have adjusted and changed the pattern of their lives even when they were sixty years or older. Some of us know people who have gone back to school at this age. They changed their program at sixty years of age because they set their minds on obtaining something. If knowing Christ is really important, we will find the time, and the ways, and the wherewithal. I remember an outstanding Christian writer who put it like this: "there needs neither art nor skill for finding God, but simply a heart which determines to apply itself to nothing but Him, for His sake." So if a person asks me, how can I find God, I

wont give him a formula, I will simply say, "if you want Him badly enough, you will find a way to obtain Him."

May God help us to see what He has done, what He wants to do and how we ourselves have limited and restricted His ability to work in our lives by our fear of surrendering fully to Him. May we determine to change our habits, to overturn the way we do things so that our lives become oriented towards knowing and receiving Him. When we know Him there will be no more reservation in giving ourselves to Him one hundred percent. This is the guarantee that we will be included when He takes His bride unto Himself.



Open Face

*Restoration Ministries
P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.
ph. (304) 932-4543
Jamaica: (876) 603-0821*