

## Needed, a man to fill the gap Pt 1

*In the Defense of Marriage*

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**Bible Text:** Matthew 19:1-12

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We are continuing our study through this epistle or this book and more or less the life of Christ. The 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew.

“And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan.”<sup>1</sup>

And the word “coast” we have in our minds that means something along the edge of a sea or ocean. A better understanding of that today would be the borders. He went along the borders of Judea. Judea is part of the southern part of Israel and it is the area where Jerusalem itself is. It is part of the state, the territory there.

“And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him.”<sup>2</sup>

It simply means testing or they were trying him. Indeed, they had not an interest to learn the truth. That is not uncommon. Many people are trying to trip us up, ask questions sometimes not for their own edification or not for clarification or learning, but trying to trip us up or... and that is what they are doing here with Christ.

“Saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”<sup>3</sup>

Now there were two primary schools of teaching among the Pharisees and Sadducees in the days of our Lord. There was the group that was called of the school of Hillel which said that a man could divorce his wife for any reason at all. If she displeased him about a matter he was free to divorce here. And then there was the other school of Shammai and I don't say that I am pronouncing that word, that name exactly. It is a Hebrew word and so... But anyway, it is another school that held to strictly only for adultery could there be granted a divorce.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 19:1.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 19:2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 19:3.

And so they are trying to put the Lord in a position wherein this controversial issue he will be forced to pick sides one way or the other and lose favor. Of course, our Lord fears not for the favor of men. But he knows very well what they are trying to do.

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.<sup>4</sup>

I want to begin a series of messages on the subject of marriage. Marriage, the institution of marriage is under great attack in our present day society and we need to reestablish some rules, foundations, principles, as they are set forth in the Word of God.

I would help all of us to remind ourselves about this important institution and the vitality and the importance of marriage to our society and the home.

I was just listening to Fox News this morning and I was want to say this. No matter how long you have been married, there is always something to be learned about marriage and our roles in marriage. I want to confirm that by saying that I was watching something on Fox News this morning and there was a little section on there, the person being interviewed had written a book about listen to your grandfathers. She had already previously written a book listen to your grandmother. Well, now she had written this book listen to your grandfathers. And I kind of tuned my ears up. I thought I might listen

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 19:4-12.

to hear what they might have to say. It was an interesting discussion.

But one of the things one of the men said something to this nature. He talked about how to keep love fresh in your marriage.

Well, I perked up my ears even more and I learned something. I am not going to tell you what I learned, but it was good benefit, good information and I thought, well, that will be good for me, well, simply what it was is that you need to write love letters.

And so that is one of the things that he does. He writes love letters to his wife. He started doing that when he was... of course when they were courting he was in the navy and World War II and he started writing love letters to his wife and he has not stopped writing love letters to his wife. He would seem to me a man of several years. I thought, well, that might be something good for all of us. I will tell people that one of the ways in which you keep your marriage going and fresh is you don't stop being sweethearts, courting each other.

Well, that just simply proves the point that they say no matter how long you have been married there are some things to be learned and some things we need to remind ourselves about marriage. I could relate names and call names to you and you know very well and I could tell you about experiences and people that I know personally that have been married for a long time and tragically their marriage came about in divorce.

People that you never would have thought would have ever had a divorce. The fact of the matter is, according to statistics, there is a 50 percent chance now today that if you get married that you are going to have a divorce. Now that is overall. That is not everybody. You attend church regularly and a church going couple, you are less likely to have a marriage and certainly a divorce. Certainly that is true as the saying is the family that prays together stays together. And the statistics prove that statement that once you have prayed together and go to church together are less likely to have a breakup.

But even that is no guarantee. Even those families there is about 30 percent of those that end up in divorce. Tragic! Divorce is rampant in our country and not only is divorce rampant, of course, but one of the things that brings about divorce is immorality. That is not the sole reason always for divorce, but that is the most prominent reason for divorce.

You are well aware that recently, last month, our congress, our liberal, humanistic congress that we now have for the most part—and I don't mean everybody in that congress—but our congress voted to repeal the don't ask and don't tell rule concerning homosexuality in the army. This was a great victory for the homosexuals. This was something that President Obama promised as he was campaigning for the office of president. And so he was elected with a large majority. And so this congress also, a Democratic congress was elected on his coat tails, so to speak. And so it reflects on the attitude of our nation that this is what our country wants. And certainly it is true that homosexuality and the principles of marriage and the rules of marriage as set forth in the Bible are being constantly undermined and downgraded and destroyed by the society, our

government and the schools in which we put our children and young people through.

Which brings us to emphasize the importance, then, of us understanding the rules of marriage.

Vice President Biden said when this law was repealed by congress that the next step, and this is the agenda of the homosexuals, we see it going on, the next step would be a nationwide same sex marriage law put in place.

But regardless of what the government may do and what stand they may take, we believe the Bible is the authority for every thing about our lives, how we are to live and every area of our lives and especially in this area.

Marriage has been established by God. Christ himself makes... confirms that and makes... quotes from the Old Testament, the very first book of the Old Testament, the book of beginnings, the book of Genesis. And he speaks about creation, how God created man. You might want to turn there just for reference. In the first chapter of Genesis we have God making man. In verse 27, the sixth day, verse 26, he said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."<sup>5</sup>

God's design and God's creation of man was that he was made in the image of God. Part of that is that he was made without sin. That doesn't mean that he was not subject to sin, but he was made perfect in the sense of being innocent. And then he was made as a tripart being. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, they three are one, equal. And so man has three natures: a physical nature, he has a soul and he has a spirit. I don't know if this simple explanation of that is sufficient, but the body is given to man to make him world conscience or environmental conscious of where he is and what he is subject to. You feel the benches you sit on. You can feel the temperature of the room because you have a physical body. You have a soul. That soul makes you conscious of who you are. There is something about what is proper in your dress and your behavior and it dictates something of your nature. It is your real nature. And then we have a spirit. That spirit is a means whereby that we are made to be God conscious, to commune with God.

Of course we know that our spirits are now depraved, dead in to sin. So we have not the ability to commune with God nor to walk in fellowship with God because of our sinful natures being dead in trespasses and sins. But God made man originally as the image of God and so he created him in verse 27 we read.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."<sup>6</sup>

So that he created both man and woman to reflect something of the glory of God. That is the whole purpose of creation. Everything about creation, the universe, the stars, the sun,

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:26.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:27.

the moon, all were... everything that God has created has been created for the purpose that it might glorify God. And everything that happens in the universe is by the will of God to bring about glory to him.

Indeed, the Word of God says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter.”<sup>7</sup>

I am reading from Ecclesiastes the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter in verse 13.

“Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”<sup>8</sup>

The word “duty” is added there by the translators to give some understanding of what is expressed by the word “whole.”

“Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole... of man.”<sup>9</sup>

This is the sum total of man’s existence. The very reason why man ever was brought into existence is given to us by the Holy Spirit was that he might fear God and keep his commandments.

Again, in the fifth chapter of Matthew our Lord said, “ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”<sup>10</sup>

Certainly he is speaking to believers, but it is true of all people that they are to live in such a way that God would receive glory from their lives.

Paul says in Corinthians the sixth chapter, he said, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”<sup>11</sup>

The sum of our existence, both our bodies and our spirits, belong unto God. They have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and so therefore everything that we do is to the glory of God.

Paul makes that more clear in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1 Corinthians. He said, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”<sup>12</sup>

Now that pretty well covers everything. I don’t know anything outside of that eating or drinking. That pretty well constitutes our existence.

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<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiastes 12:13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 5:16.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:20.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Revelation the fourth chapter we read, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”<sup>13</sup>

For thy pleasure, for thy glory were they created.

So if we are to glorify God, we need to learn how are we to do that and it is that we are to live according to his rules and his laws and his principles. This is the sum, whole duty of man, to fear God and to keep his commandments.

Now today we have got what I call five different kinds of marriages. Of course the first one is not really a marriage. It is no marriage it is just simply live ins. And that is very common. It is not unusual anymore to hear about people that they are living together.

In days past that was something that was spoken about in very hushed tones and it was a shame to be known that a man and a woman were living together and were not married.

But today we have in every realm of our society. People are living together and never taking their time or consideration and don't think there is an necessity at all for them being married. So that is no marriage, a live in situation.

We also have as we mentioned the same sex marriages. That is not a marriage, but that is just a simple thing, the same thing again, simply that here it is the same sex people living together. It is not a marriage, though that is what they want to do is they want to get it legalized so that they can some way or another remove to some degree the stigma that they are doing something wrong. We are married.

Well, regardless of what society may say and what the government may say, it is a shameful, disgraceful relationship and it is sin that they are living in.

And then I refer to this as seasonal marriages, that is Hollywood style and it is also characteristic of our society even today. They change spouses with every change of season. It is just ongoing thing that this person is married to this person for a while and the next thing you know they have divorced him and they are marrying somebody else. Why did they bother to get married at all? But it is just changing seasons. Every other year they change spouses. After for or five years they change spouses and pick up another one.

That is the attitude that the world has towards marriage.

There is a biblical marriage.

Hebrews the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter we read, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled:

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<sup>13</sup> Revelation 4:11.

but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”<sup>14</sup>

And now note that statement. And if nothing else that tells us anything at all about marriage that one verse of Scripture would be sufficient to tell us that, first of all, there is an improper relationship involved where you read the words whoremongers and adulterers. That is talking about those who are involved in sexual relationships beyond the bounds of marriage and those who are violators of their marriage vows by adultery.

Whatever the case may be, whether married or unmarried, if they are violating God’s rules and principles in their relationship, the Word of God says God will judge.

The fact of the matter is when you read through the Scriptures you will find that people who live in this kind of lifestyle, they are going to experience the judgment of God.

In the sixth chapter of 1 Corinthians Paul talks about these kind of people and he says in the sixth chapter, “The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind...”<sup>15</sup> That is homosexual types of people.

Now such who have that lifestyle are not citizens of the kingdom of God. Now I will say quickly and add that those kind of people can be redeemed and can be saved from that lifestyle by the blood of Jesus Christ, by the grace of God. I am not the one that condemns them to eternal hell. I am saying, though, that people who have that lifestyle and are living that kind of lifestyle are not subjects and are not children of God.

But those who live that way are not beyond the grace of God and the mercy of God to save them and deliver them from that lifestyle anymore than what an alcoholic or a drunkard or a dope addict might be.

But here is what the Word of God says about those who have that kind of lifestyle, they are not of the kingdom of God.

So Paul here in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews tells us that those who live by that lifestyle, they are going to experience the judgment of God.

He then says that marriage is honorable. Indeed, there are those, as our Lord points out, who will never be married. And that does not mean that they are under some kind of disgrace or that they are any less capable of being good citizens or children of God in the kingdom of heaven. But he is saying here to us that marriage is honorable. There is nothing wrong with getting married. In fact of the matter, in proverbs the writer says, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Hebrews 13:4.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:9.

<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 18:22.

I am very thankful to the Lord for my wife. She has been a great help and a great blessing and a great means of encouragement to me and I am sure all of you here would say the thing about your wives that they are a great asset.

Well, that is what God intended and that is God's purpose for marriage is that husbands and wives could be a means of assisting, helping each other and doing what God's plan and purpose is for them in... for their existence.

Let's go back to Genesis chapter one again if you would, please. Genesis chapter one and see what marriage as God established it and what its purposes are.

Genesis one in the 26<sup>th</sup> verse.

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion.”<sup>17</sup>

You will note the plurality of it. Man and woman work together in this role of having “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”<sup>18</sup>

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them.”<sup>19</sup>

Well, that is the relationship that God has established.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”<sup>20</sup>

Now here is God's design and purpose in marriage. Here is why God has established marriage for the purpose that the wife might be a help mate unto God, unto the man.

In the second chapter of Genesis our Lord tells us that. You will read in Genesis chapter two the verse 21.

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.”<sup>21</sup>

Well, first of all in verse 20 he says that there was no help meet for man, no comforter of man, no help, no assistance for man.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept:

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<sup>17</sup> Genesis 1:26.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 1:27-28.

<sup>20</sup> Genesis 1:28.

<sup>21</sup> Genesis 2:21.



and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.<sup>22</sup>

God said it is not good for man to dwell alone. Every married person could testify to the fact that their life has been blessed... I should say everyone who has ever married according to scriptural rules and had a Christian home, that their life has been blessed and been enhanced and been greatly... marriage has been a great means of encouragement to them because of that marriage relationship that they have been blessed to have with a God given spouse.

The wife is given to be a help mate to her husband.

Now Paul talked about the role of the wife in Ephesians chapter five. He says wives are to submit themselves to their husbands. That submission is not as a slave, not as someone to be treated as property as we see in the Muslim world and as we see in worlds where Christianity has not had any impact. It is just a tragic thing to think people have used ... tried to discredit Christianity by saying that Christianity belittles women and puts women in bondage. About the opposite is true. If you would just travel through the world you would find that where there has been no Christianity... where Christianity has no impact on society you will find roughly the opposite, that women are used and abused in ungodly manners.

I use this word “used and abused.”

It is the same thing that is going on in America today as a result of the homosexual agenda. It is not to defend women or I should say the feminist agenda. It is not to defend women, it is not to give woman protection, but rather it is to remove the protection that a woman has under her husband, her headship and so it strips the woman of her God given role and thereby she is treated in an unbecoming, disgraceful way.

God said that woman was to be a help mate. They are joined together when marriage takes place by the rules of God. They are joined together in such a way that their lives, their existence is not only enhanced, but they are both physically happier.

According to those who measure these things, people who are married live longer. Of course, some of you women think sometimes that the husband, well, I should take it this way. Billy Graham’s wife, Mrs. Graham was asked the question did she ever consider marrying or divorcing her husband. And she said, “Divorce, no, murder, yes.”

Sometimes husbands and wives may feel like marriage is stressful.

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<sup>22</sup> Genesis 2:21-24.

It is stressful. Life is stressful. Life is full of problems. Single or married it has problems in it. And you are not going to escape problems, stressful existence by abstaining from marriage. But you are going to find that if God blesses you with a marriage and gives you a godly spouse, you are going to find that that spouse becomes a means of your life being... being enhanced and real joy being increased.

Last evening Ruth and I, of course, went to a birthday party. And it was the birthday part of two of our grandsons. And as we started to walk in the door I said to Ruth. I said, "Do you know what we are about to do? We are about to go to a birthday party for our grandchildren."

Now those of you who have not been blessed yet to have grandchildren, I will tell you. You are missing a great joy in life and I like what someone said that if I had known that grandchildren were so great, I would have had them first.

Well, unfortunately, that is not the way it goes. But I have said that grandchildren are a payback for rearing children. It is a great thing to have grandchildren.

Ruth and I, of course, are blessed with 20 of them. I hope that God may be pleased to bless us with even more. But we are blessed to have 20 grandchildren. And every child has been the means of blessing and encouragement to us and enhancing of our own lives.

I don't know what my grandchildren will ever become, but I can always hold out the prospect and expectation that by the grace of God that they will be a lot better person than what their granddad was, especially this granddad.

But it is an opportunity to perpetuate and preserve our own identities by marriage.

I feel sorry for that person who has never had a good marriage. I can... I tell everyone when I speak about my wife and I have been married. We have been married now 51 years. I tell everyone that it has been 51 glorious years and whatever else months and weeks have gone over the August the 8<sup>th</sup> date, it has been a joyous time. Yes, we have had some sorrows. Yes, we have had some difficulties. Yes, we have had some times, stressful times and as brother Bradley says, "Anyone that... any married person that says they never have had a quarrel is a liar." And so, yes, we have had a few quarrels.

But 99 percent of the time I was the one at fault. But it is a means whereby that we are blessed to encourage and comfort each other. Your wife, your spouse is your greatest friend and your spouse is your closest companion through life.

I think about those people who go through life and have to deal with some of the problems of life and they don't have a spouse to comfort them, to encourage them. Tragic it is, really. But when one is blessed to have a godly spouse, a godly mate, they have one who is a help mate to them in all of their trials and all the difficulties of life.

Now there are some rules, then about how we are to go about being married. And number one is we are to be married in the Lord.

Verse 27 Paul says the woman is liberty to marry only in the Lord.

In 2 Corinthians he says, verse 14, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”<sup>23</sup>

He later on says that we should not assume that we can convert the other partner to our marriage. So we should not enter into marriage with an unregenerated person, with an unbeliever expecting that we are going to be able to convince that person that they would come to believe the same things that we do.

My wife and I have been greatly blessed that through life that not only were we both Christians, but as we have matured in understanding of the truth of the God, that we both have matured together. We have come to a mutual understanding about the teachings of the Word of God. What a great encouragement it has been to me as we have studied the Word of God and as we have come to a better understanding about some things that we can ... we are solidified in this and we have the same understanding about these things.

How tragic it is, then, for that or that woman who have a spouse that is an non believer. And rather than being a means of encouraging them in spiritual things, they become a hindrance to them. And certainly I say to all of you young people who are anticipating in having hopes of every being married that one of the first criteria to set before yourself is that you seek a spouse that is a believer and is the very spouse that God would have you to have.

And the more that you are in common belief, the stronger your convictions and the stronger your marriage will be.

I talk to people sometimes who are married from different denominations. I was talking to a man the other day, a few weeks ago, I could call his name, brother Aaron would know who it was out on the job site. He had been reared as a Baptist. His wife was reared as a Methodist and so in order to dissolve the differences, they went to a Presbyterian Church.

Well, it didn't really dissolve any differences. I don't know how that came about, but that is usually what happens when there is two denominations coming into a marriage. I advise people and counsel people that if such is the case that you need to deal with that issue before you ever get married because it is going to become an issue in your marriage.

One of you are going to have to make the decision or be guided, make a concession to go

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<sup>23</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:14.

with the other to that church. It is a hard thing and sad thing to see a man and a wife going to two different churches. You know very well that there is not a harmony in convictions in that home about marriage, about the things of God. And the longer they go in life with that problem the more it becomes a source of agitation.

And so I advise people that they... couples that they seek a spouse that is or the same persuasion, that they are believers together because it is going to become a problem, a stressful problem in their lives.

There are many things to be stressful in a marriage, finances, and other issues. And certainly when there is a differences on spiritual issues that is even going to be even more stressful.

Now these marriages, these couples then that are married, when we are married we are to live together, as I said, according to the laws of... the rules of the Word of God. Paul gives us a very clear statement about these things in the fifth chapter of Ephesians. And I have already made mention of the one, but... and I am not going to go in great details about these things today.

As I said, I hope to have a series of messages on this very... on the subject of marriage and I will go into more detail.

But in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, Paul was talking here about how that we are to live as Christians, how we are to walk. In the first verse of the fifth chapter, “ Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love.”<sup>24</sup>

That is love toward God and love toward each other. And he sets forth some principles and rules in this fifth chapter, how we are to live.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”<sup>25</sup>

Now that is not a matter of wherein that we are to debate this thing whether we are going to be drunk with wine nor not. This is to be the how we are to function, how we are to live dominated by the Holy Spirit of God.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.<sup>26</sup>

So here is a submission, general submission of which Christian people are to be in accord

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<sup>24</sup> Ephesians 5:1-2.

<sup>25</sup> Ephesians 5:18.

<sup>26</sup> Ephesians 5:19-21.

with each other. We are not to be cantankerous. We are not to be always trying to get our own way and our own wills.

Paul talks about that in Philippians the second chapter.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”<sup>27</sup>

There is a common submission of God’s people toward each other. If we are to do anything in harmony, if we are to serve the Lord, if we are to have a church there must be some degree of submission. Everyone can’t have their own ideas and their ways about things.

Then he gets into more details.

Verse 22.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”<sup>28</sup>

Certainly that is the role of the wife in this marriage relationship. She is to be the one who is to serve or assist the husband. He is the head. Nothing can function that has two heads to it in a harmonious way.

The longer you go through life, the more that you will see that nothing can be brought about in a harmonious way that has two heads to it.

I noticed a man on, again, on the news station the other day in which he started off a business which with another man. They were both partners in this business. And he kind of jokingly said, “We came to a parting of ways.” That happens most usually in a partnership. Two heads cannot function in a harmonious way. One has to be responsible for taking the lead. That is to be illustrated in many different areas of life. And so what Paul here is talking about is that the husband is the one that God has put in place as the headship leader and guide, the spiritual guide in that home and the spiritual advisor and the one that is responsible for the affairs of the home and he is the responsible one as the lead in the home. Therefore the wife is to be in submission and cooperation with him.

Now that does not exempt men from their responsibility. You will note what Paul moves right on to say. Not only is the wife to be in submission to the husband, but you will also see in verse 25 that, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.”<sup>29</sup>

A husband, then is to take the role of being a lover of the whole... in the whole marriage. And that doesn’t mean the wife is exempted from loving. That means that his role as the head in that house is to be one that is dominated by love. There are things to be learned by

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<sup>27</sup> Philippians 2:5.

<sup>28</sup> Ephesians 5:22.

<sup>29</sup> Ephesians 5:25.

us men. You don't come into marriage knowing everything about marriage and knowing everything about women.

I said I have been married 51 years and I am still being amazed that I am learning things about women that I did not understand in days past. That is not said in a critical way. That is said in a loving way. My wife is a great asset to me and a great help mate to me. And the husband is to take the role of leading in the home, but he is to do so in a most loving fashion. And what Paul here gives us an illustration. He says, "Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."<sup>30</sup>

Now in both of these cases he talks... he uses Christ as a role model. In verse 21 where he talks about, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church,"<sup>31</sup> now what is the relationship between Christ and his Church?

First of all it is a love relationship and, secondly, it is a relationship whereby the Church wants to glorify and exalt Christ and serve him and see to it that his will is done and carried out. And she comes under his headship, the Church does. Each and every church is under the headship of Christ and each and every church seeks to glorify Christ in how it lives and its doctrine and its teachings.

So a wife to her husband as unto the Lord.

Then the husband is to love his wife even as Christ has also loved the Church and gave himself for it. What a great example, what better example and there is no more supreme example of love than that of Christ whose love undeserving people, hell deserving sinners that we are and has loved us with an everlasting love and has loved us with a perpetual love, has loved us with a perfect love and has loved us in such a way that he has died a most shameful, painful death that he might redeem us from our sins.

How then can men claim that they love their wives when they live for themselves and they seek their own pleasures out of a marriage and their own wills and they see the wife as simply nothing but a servant, a slave?

You see, the Word of God places both the husband and the wife in a role in the marriage in which they glorify God.

The fact of the matter is marriage is a way in which we show forth the grace of God in our lives in a very unique way. The very backbone of our society, this is why it is so critical and so important, the backbone and bedrock of any society is the home. And it is here that children learn how to live. It is here how we learn how even we as adults are to live with each other and how we are to deal with our fellow man. People who don't have good marriages, don't make good employees. They have emotional problems. They have

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ephesians 5:22-23.

personality problems has they cannot adjust and cannot conform and cannot be compatible with others.

Years ago I used to live in Johnson City, New York. That is where I went to seminary. Nearby was the town that was the hometown for IBM. IBM, of course, as you know is International Business Machines which was founded by a man by the name of Watson.

Mr. Watson was a very godly man. I believe he was either a Presbyterian or a Methodist. I don't remember which one. But Mr. Watson had some very strict rules about all of his employees. You could not do it today, but if an employee was seen in the vicinity of a place that sold alcoholic beverages he was to be dismissed from his job. But if a man was known—of course he didn't have any women working for him at that time—but if a man as known to have any marital problems, if he was unfaithful to his wife he was having any marital problems, he would be dismissed from his job.

Well, I think that that is one of the reasons why God blessed that business to become the great business that it has. Now, of course, it is not that now because Mr. Watson died, has been dead for many years and those rules and regulations are not in place. But he understood that if a man—and I understand that this was also Mr. Penney's rules about when he began his business—that if a person was unfaithful to their marriage vows, that that person was an employee that was untrustworthy. And if they could not get along with their spouse that they had said that they loved and had entered into a marriage with, they would not be a good employee.

You see, God has designed marriage and the home as a place wherein that we learn how to live in society and how to get along with each other. And when that home and that marriage is being destroyed, we are destroying the society around about us.

I am thankful for the good marriages we have in our church with families and the good children. And I know the things that I am saying to you today that you here are in agreement with and endorse. But as Peter said, "I say these things to you by which to stir up your pure minds."

And I want you to understand what I hope to do in this series on marriage. I hope to stir up your pure minds not that you are ignorant of some of these issues, but that you might be more guarded and more careful and see the more critical issue of your marriage.

I have decided to title these sermons, "Needed: A Man to Stand in the Gap." And I take that from the book of Ezekiel, 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter and verse 30 in which the Lord said, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."<sup>32</sup>

I like Adam Clarke's commentary on that verse of Scripture. What he quotes, paraphrases God as saying, "I saw that there was a grievous breach made in the moral state and

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<sup>32</sup> Ezekiel 22:30.

feeling of the people. And I sought for a man that would stand in the gap, that would faithfully exhort, reprove and counsel with all long suffering and doctrine, but none was found.”

Now, what I am saying to us then is this is our responsibility individually as adults and as married people to make the kind of stand in our society that we can show forth to the world that we live in the ungodly heathenistic, Humanistic, Atheistic society that we are now living in that we can show forth to the world that we now live in what it means to live together in a marriage relationship that glorifies God, that glorifies God.

I don't feel like that I have been a perfect husband. I don't feel like I have been a perfect father. I feel like that there are many areas that I have failed in as a husband and as a father because of my ignorance and because I didn't get to teaching and training that I should have gotten.

And that is the responsibility of every parent and every father in his home and in the Church. And I hope to expound upon those responsibilities of both the wife and the husband in the days ahead of us. And I ask for you to be prayerful for me and for us collectively as a church that we can learn and that we will as a church and as individuals that we would be the individuals who would stand in the gap in defense of marriage and home in our society today.

And may God give us grace that we might.