

# **When God Says, “I Do”**

**God's Mystery in Marriage Revealed**

**by Don Krow**



**This booklet is**

**in memory of**

**My Loving Wife**

**Wendy Jo Krow  
1951-2006**

**And in honor of our eternal lover  
and King  
the Lord Jesus Christ!**



# Foreword

## A note from Wendy J. Krow:

It has been 21 years since I said, "I do." Since this time there has been an unfolding of God's truth in our lives in many areas, but especially in the area of marriage. Don has diligently searched the scriptures to find God's perfect plan for our marriage. Through much study and prayer this message has come forth. A fulfilling marriage is built upon principles from God's Word. Two of the most important relationships in life are discussed in this writing:

- (1) our relationship with the Lord, and
- (2) our relationship with our spouse.



Through God's Word there is a revealing of His plan. As you begin to apply these principles to your marriage, you will begin to experience the fulfillment of God's plan for your marriage, and know God's love for each other in a deeper and richer way. ~ **Wendy J. Krow** (1997)

## **When God Says, “I Do”**

### **God's Mystery in Marriage Revealed**

During the time of Jesus there were several ideas and opinions about divorce just as there are today. Jewish leaders were divided on this issue. Some believed a person could divorce for any reason. Others believed divorce had to involve fornication. It was such a controversial



subject that the Pharisees decided to ask Jesus a question concerning divorce because no matter which side Jesus took, He would be on someone's wrong side.

We read in Matthew 19:3, "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The phrase, "put away", actually means "divorce." These Pharisees were asking Jesus a trick question concerning divorce. We know this because verse 3 tells us they came tempting and testing Him, asking if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every cause.

Notice how Jesus answered the question about divorce. Verse 4 says, "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not



read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?" His answer to the Pharisees was a reminder that marriage was God's idea - not man's.

**Jesus got to the heart of the matter concerning divorce - God's heart for marriage.**

When He told them that in the beginning God made them male and female, he was referring them to God's original design for marriage. It was God who designed marriage and gave it purpose and meaning. Genesis 1:26-27 states, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have 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. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

I believe these scriptures tell us something else about God's original design for marriage:

**The complete likeness of God is found in the combination of male and female together.** God said, "Let us make man in our image," and then He said, "let **them** have dominion." Genesis 5:1-2 says, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he **them**; and blessed them, and called **their name** Adam, in the day when they were created."



Notice what God's divine and original idea concerning this subject of oneness in marriage was. He created the male and the female to be one being together and He called their name Adam. I always assumed that God created Adam, and then later on He created Eve; so first there was Adam, and then there was Eve. But It says in the day - not days - when they were created. And what God did through the creation, when He created male and female, was to create them in His own likeness, and He called them Adam. God named them Adam. Adam was a "them." Adam was not a single-sexed being; in God's eyes he was male and female. This is speaking within the context of the original union of marriage.

Now go back to Matthew 19, verses 4-6, where Jesus is answering this question





concerning divorce. "And he answered and said unto them (the Pharisees), 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 (the two) shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain (or two), but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (or separate)." This is saying that not only is marriage God's idea but God does the joining. Divorce is separating something God has joined, not "undoing" something we've done.

## **Why Did God Create Woman?**

Genesis 1:31 says, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was



very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Then, in Genesis 2, God tells us the very first thing He noticed after creation that was not good. We're talking about a perfect paradise where no sin existed in Genesis 3. God had created all things good (Gen. 1:31), but there was one thing missing in His creation. Adam had a perfect relationship with God, he walked with Him, and apparently did not need anything. But there was one thing that was lacking in Adam's life; it's described in Genesis 2:18, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Once again it's God's idea for man to have a help mate, not man's.)

All of the animal creation had a counterpart, but Adam was by himself. God saw what was



lacking in Adam: he was alone and loneliness was a problem. He was alone even though he had a perfect relationship with God. Some people say, "If I had a perfect relationship with God, I would not have any other needs." While this is essentially true, as a norm God has created man to need a counterpart, a help meet, a woman.

What is a woman's purpose? It's to be a help, an aid, an assistant to the man. That is her ministry. So much talk today involves trying to make men and women independent of each other. But God created the woman to "help" or assist the man. God said the man needed a helper. In today's language and culture, being a "helper" is not associated with any significant ministry or position of importance. **However, the "role" of helper in the Bible is a vital**

**one. It means you can accomplish something with a helper that you cannot do alone.**

An example of this helper role is found in Romans 8:26-27 where it says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." The word "helpeth" was translated from the Greek word "sunantilambanomai" meaning "to take hold of opposite together, i.e. cooperate (assist)." It's describing a **union** in which the Holy Spirit is not interceding for us but through us. The word "infirmities" is translated as

weakness in five other places and is used here to describe a mental and moral weakness, not sickness. In this passage our weakness is not knowing how we should pray. We need the Spirit's "help" to pray effectively.

## **Marriage: A Model of God's Relationship with His People**

Have you noticed that nearly everything we're seeing about the marriage relationship has a spiritual counterpart? Did you know that God actually talks about three different kinds of marriage in the scriptures? He talks about marriage between a man and a woman, our marriage to Him and our marriage to the Law.

God compares the marriage union between a man and woman to the relationship that He

Himself has with us, His people. In a sense He says, "To help you understand the relationship that I'm calling you to, I'm going to give you a little scale model to show you what I'm talking about." Everything that we can say about a good marriage - one that's all God's designed it to be - is a model of what our relationship with God should be.

## **Oneness in Marriage**

In marriage there is an exclusion of all others. The Bible says, "they two shall be one. . ." (Eph. 5:31). It doesn't say, "they three," "they four," or "they five." It says, "they two shall be one flesh." In the same way there is an exclusion of all others in a marriage, there is to be an exclusivity in our relationship with God.



He alone is our God and we alone are His people.

Concerning marriage, Genesis 2:25 says, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." There is to be an openness and nakedness in marriage that is to be shared between a man and his wife and not shared outside of that marriage bond any other place.

Did you know that any time the Bible talks about nakedness in the scripture, it talks about it in the context of shame? In one instance, while Moses was on the mountain with God, the Children of Israel had Aaron make them an idol of gold, and they ate and played and committed adultery and fornication, to their own shame. They showed their nakedness and

their shame was exposed (Ex. 32:25). There are scriptures in Isaiah that talk about nakedness in the context of shame (Isa. 20:4; 47:3). Nakedness is also mentioned in the Book of Revelation. John was instructed to write to the church in Laodicea and tell them, "You think you're in good shape, but you don't know that you're poor and you're wretched and you're naked" (Rev. 3:17). Revelation 16:15 speaks of being naked in the sense of humiliation and shame. There's only one place where nakedness is not spoken of in the context of shame and that's **within the relationship of marriage.**

Genesis 2:25, doesn't say the man and the woman were naked and were not ashamed, it says the man and his wife were naked unashamed. The word "ashamed" conveys the



idea of guilt, condemnation and humiliation. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled..." The marriage bed, according to the Greek text, is without defilement. The phrase "without defilement" means "pure." There is a nakedness, an openness and an exposure. There is a oneness that's a oneness in body, a oneness in the emotions, a oneness of the deepest level. It's a spiritual oneness ordained by God for the marriage relationship. And it's a model of the relationship He's called us to with Him.

Notice that in 1 Corinthians 6, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 when he's talking about a sexual union. He says in 1 Corinthians 6:16 that if you went into a harlot you'd be one body with her. Then he quotes Genesis 2:24, ". . .for two,

saith he, shall be one flesh." Now notice what he says in verse 17; "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." First He presents a human, earthly illustration of a physical relationship, where two people are one in body. Then he talks about a marriage union to the exclusivity of others, followed by the spiritual counterpart to that physical relationship. It's as if God were saying, "When you come into union with Me we are one to the exclusion of others. We are one in love. We are one in exposure. We are one totally." In the marriage relationship it is a oneness in body. When we come into union with Him we're one in spirit.

I don't have a complete understanding of all these things, but I do know this: when the physical union is being expressed in the marriage relationship, it's an ongoing



expression, not something that only happens once. In the same way, our relationship with Christ needs to be an ongoing expression. That's why the Bible says that if we've sinned, turned away, or gone a different direction, we need to come to our advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous one. If we've sinned let's expose our heart before him. Hebrews 4:13 says that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Let's expose ourselves totally to the Lord. Let's come and intimately love Him. Do you know what happens when that occurs in your relationship with the Lord? You'll find a strength in the relationship.

In the physical relationship of marriage, there is a oneness and a closeness that brings you back together and keeps strengthening

that covenant. There is a spiritual counterpart to that in our relationship with Christ and our exposure, oneness and openness to Him. You see, He wants us to be His and He wants to be ours to the exclusion of all others. That's why, if you do a word study on the word "fornication" in the Bible and you trace it back far enough, the root word of "fornication" is "idolatry." It's "idolatry" - not "adultery."

Do you know what idolatry is? Colossians 3:5 says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:" I believe that God gave this definition of idolatry because our relationship to Him is just like a marriage relationship. When a person has been untrue in his marriage



relationship, it causes the spouse to experience the deepest depths of pain. When someone has been unfaithful to the covenant - the exclusion that should have been there, the oneness in love and exposure that was not to be shared with anyone else is devastated. God says that is a small illustration of what it's like when His people are unfaithful to Him. When you do a study on idolatry, you can't escape the spiritual context of how God uses it. He says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?" (Jas. 4:4-5). What is He saying here? He's saying that He's jealous over you. He wants you to exclusion of all others.



1 Peter 3:7 says this, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them (your wives) according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." In this union, God has called both the male and the female to be heirs together of the gracious gift of life.

Have you ever taken the attitude of, "I don't care what my husband (or wife) does, I'm going to do this or that," or, "I'm going to follow God"? That's fine, but God doesn't see it that way. The way God sees it is that you're heirs together of the gracious gift of life. If you don't understand that principle and you try to be independent and do your own thing, your prayers will be hindered.



The counterpart to this truth is that when God has called us into union with Him, into what He even calls a marriage relationship, we become heirs together with Him of the gracious gift of life. Just as I'm not to do anything independently of my wife because of our relationship, so it is with my relationship in the Lord - I'm not to do anything independently of Him.

### **Married to the Law**

The Bible tells me in Romans 7:1-6 that at one time I had a relationship with the law. What was that relationship with the law? Romans 7 describes it in terms of a bad marriage relationship. The Bible is referring to the spiritual counterpart of being married to the

law. It says that I'm bound by the relationship of marriage until death...

What was the law? It was my marriage at one time to a really hard taskmaster. Nothing I did in my marriage pleased my husband. The law was such a perfectionist that no matter how hard I tried, and no matter what I tried to do, it was never good enough in my marriage. I was married to this critical person who never, ever lifted me up, admonished me or told me I was doing something right. All he told me were the things that I did wrong. Romans 3:20 says, ". . .by the law is the knowledge of sin." I was always under a sense of guilt and condemnation when I was married to the law.

The Bible says that there was only one way that I could be free from that marriage



relationship. I had to die or he had to die. Do you know what? He wouldn't die, so I died, and thus ended my "marriage relationship" to the law. How did this happen? Let's look at Romans 7:1-3, "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? 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. 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."

Paul is really talking about a spiritual truth here. I don't want you to fall under

condemnation if you've ever been in the situation described in these verses. God does recognize marriage, he does recognize divorce and he recognizes remarriage. We can make that statement based on Deuteronomy 24:1-4, under the old covenant, which says, "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to

be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

We can also say that God recognizes divorce and remarriage based on Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well. When Jesus said to her, "Go get your husband," she said, "I don't have a husband." Jesus said, "That's right. You've had five husbands, but the guy that you're with right now is not your husband. It's just a live-in relationship. He's not your husband, but I recognize every one of those previous marriages you've had. I recognize the divorces you've had. But the one that you're living with now is not your husband." She said, "I perceive that you're a prophet" (Jn. 4:16-19). God does recognize

divorce and remarriage, but when He is talking about the institution of marriage, He always takes man back to the original idea - the original design - which should be a permanent relationship because it's a spiritual counterpart to our relationship with the Lord. Even though those other standards are recognized in God's eyes, He's saying, "I'm talking about a relationship with Me, and I'm bringing it to the highest level because I want you to see it in as a spiritual counterpart to a relationship with Me."

Now let's look at Romans 7:4. It says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law. . . ." What is he talking about? He's saying that in order to break that old marriage relationship to the law there has to be a death - ". . .by the [crucified] body of Christ."

What does that mean? It means that I once had a union to a husband - the law but I could never please that man. All he ever did was point out my wrongdoings. That was the function of the law. Romans 3:20 says that by the law came the knowledge of sin. I really wanted to be free from that husband, but the only way I could be free was for one of us to die. Then I died and I was free. How did I die? Romans 7:4 says that I became dead to the law through the crucified body of Christ. You see, when Jesus went to the cross and I went to the cross with Him, He didn't just die for sins, but He also died to break my relationship with the law.

What was a relationship with the law like? Along with all the criticism, it never gave me a helping hand either. It's like the husband who

tells his wife, "I want you to do this and I want you to do that," while he sits down and watches television. Not only does he put demands on her, but he doesn't even lift a finger to help with any of those demands.

What else happened in the marriage relationship with the law? The result of being under the law was falling under a curse. Galatians 3:10 says, " ... Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." I was wretched and miserable under the law. Not only did I have a standard that was spiritual - Romans 7:12 says that the law was spiritual; holy, just, and good - but the law gave me no power to perform those things. I had to struggle in the resources of my own flesh and my own

abilities to do those spiritual things that were demanded of me. I had no helping hand.

So what happened next? Verse 4 of Romans 7 says, "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." The demands really haven't changed, but I've been remarried to a wonderful husband now. And every demand that's ever been placed upon me, He Himself is the ability to fulfill that demand. Everything that was ever required of me or will ever be required of me by God, my new husband, the One who was raised from the dead so I could be married to Him, is my ability to please my heavenly Father.

## Changed Names

Did you know that in a true marriage relationship the names are changed? My wife, Wendy, used to be "Sellon" and now she's "Krow." She used to have her own bank account and now she has mine. I go to work and when I get my paycheck, I don't know where it goes because it goes into her hands. God has said that the women are to guide the house. Wendy's ability to function in guiding the house, buying the groceries, driving the car and putting gas in really comes through my ability. She's doing what God has called her to do through my resources and strength, when she signs my name on those checks because we're no longer two, we're one.





We're no longer separate entities going separate ways, but we are one and the expression of our oneness is found in our children. Our son has some of me in him, but he also has some of her. He looks like me, and he looks like her. He has my qualities in him, but he also has her qualities. We've born fruit from our union of oneness.

What does the Bible say here in Romans 7:4? It says that we're dead to the law. We're married to a new husband, Jesus Christ Himself, that we should bear fruit unto God. There's going to be an expression of bearing fruit unto God. There's going to be an expression of Christ on this earth. But it's not me alone, and it's not Jesus Christ by Himself in spirit form walking upon the earth. He uses me as a vessel and we're in union together.



The Bible says we are co-laborers together with Him (1 Cor. 3:9). We're bearing fruit unto God and it's an expression of something that's sweet and something that's pleasing in the Father's eyes. I'm married to another so I should bring forth fruit unto God. Under the law I had no ability to bring forth fruit. I was impotent, so to speak, under the law, because my strength was limited by my own ability to do things.

Do you know what the real root of sin is? It's independence. It's being self-sufficient. It's self. The original temptation in Genesis was not to be like the devil, it was to be like God. The temptation was to eat of the tree and be like God. Didn't God say tell us to be like Him? The trouble is, God doesn't want us to be like Him independently of Him. I'm in a marriage



relationship, and the only way that I can be like Him is by being joined in this union of divine oneness. Now I've taken on His name - "**Christian.**" I've become one in spirit, according to 1 Corinthians 6:17. "**But he that is joined unto the Lord is** [not become one in flesh, but] one spirit." My spirit and God's spirit have been united into one through Jesus Christ. The fruit I bear has to be produced through His strength and ability.

### **First Ruling Principle in Marriage: Joining**

There are two ruling principles in this marriage relationship between me and Christ. These same principles exist in my physical marriage on this earth as well. The first principle is that marriage in scripture means a joining, a oneness, a uniting, "What God has

joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mt. 19:6). "The two shall become one flesh" (Eph. 5:31). "The two shall cleave and become one flesh" (Mt. 19:5). What does the word "cleave" mean? In Hebrew it means "to stick to; to adhere to." It also means "to pursue." The command was given to the man to pursue, cleave and stick to like glue. Why? Because man is the lover in this relationship and woman is the responder. The woman will respond to the way the man loves. Submission is not blind obedience. Submission is won through the love of the man, just as Jesus became the head of the church and gave Himself for the church, and won the right to have our submission.

If I love my wife, I'll give her tokens of my affection and love. They may be gifts or flowers, or ways of meeting her needs by

giving her spending money, providing for her, giving her the security of a home, or expressions of affection that are not necessarily of a sexual nature. Women just need affection. When I do that for my wife, she doesn't get upset with me and say, "I want a divorce." You know why? My wife doesn't want a divorce when I provide for her, give her security and affection, verbally express my love for her and all of these things. She wants to respond in kind to those acts of love. God made her as a woman to be a responder. God says that this kind of relationship where one responds to acts of love is just a model of His real, eternal relationship with us as responders!

Do you know what I think eternity will be? Eternity will be an endless unfolding of divine love. I believe that the relationship I have right



now with the Lord is truly an engagement relationship. In the New Testament, when Mary and Joseph were espoused, it meant that in the eyes of the law they were married, even though it was not consummated. The engagement period was called marriage, and it took a divorce even to break an engagement. Paul said to the church, "I want to present you as a pure virgin unto Christ (2 Cor. 11:2), wholly and exclusively unto Him." This marriage relationship is going to be consummated, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, I suppose, and all throughout eternity there's going to be an unfolding of love. God designed a little, physical, scale model here on earth with the man as the lover and the woman as the responder. And just as she'll respond back with love if she's given love, God has said, "I want you to know that you loved Me

because I first loved you." (1 Jn. 4:19) The Bible doesn't say that we just started loving God on our own. The Bible says that we love Him because He first loved us. In Ezekiel 16:8 God says, "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine." He gave us a picture of marriage in this verse, but He likened it to bringing us unto our relationship with Him.

So this is the first principle in marriage: anywhere in scripture that it talks about marriage, it's talking about joining together as one. But marriage is more than that. If a man went into a prostitute, the Bible says he'd



become one body with her, but that doesn't mean he's married to her. He would be sinning against this principle of marriage. He'd be sinning against his mate or future mate, and also against the design and definition of marriage. Marriage is a joining together in the fullest sense - in a sense of spirit to spirit, soul to soul, and body to body - especially for a believer. That's why God says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14). In a Christian marriage, you have the potential of bringing Christ not only into the marriage but into the union of spirit to spirit, soul to soul, and body to body. That's why it's so powerful for Christian couples in this relationship. The Bible says that if I go out and join myself to a harlot, I



actually join Christ to the harlot because I've become a member of Christ's body (2 Cor. 6:15). However, if I consider this same dynamic in a positive light, in my marriage relationship I'm bringing Christ, and inviting Christ, and joining Christ into my union and into my marriage. That potential is the strongest potential in the world!

## **Joining Involves a Covenant**

Marriage is more than just a joining together, because its joining together involves a covenant. Sexual intercourse is not marriage. Sexual intercourse is a consummation of marriage, and marriage is a joining together and becoming one in the fullest possible way, but it's only done in covenant. The Hebrew word for this covenant is BERIYTH (ber-eeth)

and it's the most binding contract that is possible. It's even used with the shedding of blood or cutting an animal into pieces. It involves blood. It involves the two becoming one. The closest concept we have is two becoming blood brothers and marriage is it. It's becoming one under a covenant and a vow. It's the vow and the covenant that keep me moving in the area of love toward my wife.

## **Love is Not a Feeling**

The Bible never teaches you to love only when you feel like loving. The problem is that we don't feel like it often enough. The world isn't full of love, is it? The Bible doesn't say to feel like loving and then love. The Bible commands me to love and my feelings will follow. Husbands love your wives as Christ

loved the church - that's the commandment (Eph. 5:25).

If I thought that love was just a feeling or an emotion I might say, "I want to be with you because I feel good when I'm with you." What if that was my only concept of love? It is a form of love, but it's not the kind of love that God commands us to have. God says, "I'm telling you to love your enemies. Bless those that curse you, do good to those that hate you, pray for those that despitefully use you" (Mt. 5:44).

If I thought love was just a warm feeling I'd be saying, "God, do you mean I have to have a warm feeling of love and affection for somebody who slaps me in the face, persecutes me, hates me, and slanders me?"

That's impossible." But the Bible didn't say to love when you feel love.

Let's say two singles want to be united in matrimony. We ask the man, "Do you solemnly promise and vow that you will love this woman, you'll take her as your wife, cherish her and honor her?" And the man vows, "Yes, I do." Then she says her vows. So we pronounce them man and wife and they go on their way. Suppose a few years later, or maybe after only one year, they come back and they're having problems in their marriage. She says, "He doesn't love me. He doesn't show me any affection or kindness. He just doesn't love me." We ask him, "Is this true?" And he replies, "Yeah, that's right." Why does this happen?

I used to think that if I taught my children enough Bible verses, when they got older they would "not depart from the Lord" and everything would be fine. Then one day I discovered that it wasn't going to be some Bible verse that I made my son memorize that would carry him through life. It's those things he experiences in my home that he's going to take out into his life. I know because what I experienced in my home is what I took out into my life.

If you come from a dysfunctional home and you've never seen love or you've never seen expressions of kindness and affection, if you never heard your father or mother ever say, "I love you" to each other, then it won't matter if you come to marriage and vow to love your spouse for the rest of your life. If you've never

seen your parents hug or kiss, or you never saw your father give a gift to your mother just because he wanted to, you have no concept of what I'm talking about. You have no concept at all about what I mean by love or how to be loving to someone. Even if you vow to do it, in just a matter of months your marriage will break down and start falling to pieces. You see, my son is going to take out of my home what he's seen in my home, what he's felt in my home and what he's experienced in my home. If he never experienced it, then he can't take it with him.

## **Second Ruling Principle in Marriage: Love**

We've seen the principle of marriage that is a uniting together which first involves a covenant. This small scale model of the



relationship here on earth between a husband and wife is the same kind of relationship that is to be found eternally in the heavens. It's a joining, an unfolding of a love for all eternity. And it's a joining process of God's covenant to be one with me forever. He says, "This is the covenant that I'll make with you - your sin and iniquity I'll remember no more. I'll put myself on the inside of you, I'll be merciful to you in your unrighteousness, and your sin and iniquity I'll remember no more. I'll be your God and you will be My people. I swear to you, this is what I will do" (Heb. 8:10, 12).

A covenant is a binding and solemn promise, agreement or vow. It's binding because God is not a man that He should lie (Num. 23:19). I can violate all of these principles of oneness that God is trying to show



me about Himself. I can violate them on earth but I'm talking about something that He is trying to get across to me in an eternal way. Marriage is a joining and a oneness that involves a covenant. That covenant is a covenant with the ruling principle of love. It's a covenant of love, because love is the ruling principle of this covenant. What's the ruling principle of my covenant with this woman in marriage? It's love. What is the ruling principle of her submission to me? It's love. What's the ruling principle of me providing for her, nourishing her, and cherishing her as my own body? It's the principle of love.

The Bible says, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church ... This is a great mystery (the relationship of marriage): but I



speaking concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:29, 32). Have you ever thought about that? No man ever hated his own flesh. I used to think people who had poor self images and committed suicide did, but the Bible says that no man ever hated his own flesh. He nourishes and cherishes it even as Christ cherished the church. Husbands are to love their wives in the same way.

Do you know what that phrase, "nourished and cherished" means? Let's say it's getting chilly in the room you're sitting in now. You'll probably put a jacket on, and when you do you'll nourish your body. You don't just say, "I love being cold. I'm going to go outside and stand in the snow because it feels so good." In a few hours you are most likely going to nourish and cherish your body with a meal

because it's the natural thing to do. You're not going to starve yourself. Do you know that's the kind of love God called me to in my marriage relationship? I'll be saying, "Are you cold, Honey? Here's your coat. Do you need food? Here it is."

While it's natural for me to nourish and cherish my body, it's not natural for me to nourish and cherish my wife. Why? Because the principle of sin came into the first marriage. It didn't come into the first church, it came into the first marriage. In Genesis 3, when sin entered into creation and into the marriage, all of a sudden what was natural was no longer natural. Why? Because the root of sin in my life caused me to go astray and turn to my own way. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. . ." (Isa.

53:6). So now I'm independent. Now I want to do things my way.

You see, it's not natural to love. Someone might disagree, "I beg your pardon," they'll say, "I want to be with her. I just want to be around her." Well, wait until they've been married for a little while, because there's this principle of sin that causes independence in people; they want to go their own way and do their own thing. They don't care if they hurt someone else. There's some type of dysfunction in every family like this. Perhaps you never saw affection, or expressions of kindness and love in your home. There's only one way to love with that kind of love because it's not natural; it has to be learned. It's going to have to come from God's Word.

## What is Love?

First John 5:3 says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. . ."  
Second John 6 says, "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. . ." If I were to ask someone to describe love he might say, "Love is a warm feeling, it's tender affection, it gives me goose bumps." But God says, "Brothers and Sisters, this is love. You live and you walk in My principles and My commandments." Then you have to learn the principles. Romans 13 says those principles of love will never harm anyone - "for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8). Therefore love is a fulfilling of the law. When you walk in these principles, you'll be walking in love. Love is kind - that means generous, that means giving, that means being

unselfish, that means seeking the best for someone else. God says, "This is love. Walk after these principles."

Someone might say, "I've never seen it in my home. I don't know what God's talking about." Well, I'll show it to you right here. Matthew 7:12 says, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. . ." Here it is in written form. When Jesus said, "It is written," in the Greek it meant, "Say it again." God's telling us, "I'm saying it to you again. And this is what I'm saying, **Whatever you want someone to do for you, that's what you do for them.**"

Why can't we love? Because we're caught in this principle of sin, and this principle of sin is selfish. It's someone sitting there saying,



"They don't love me. If they love me why don't they come over here and visit me? Don't they know I'm hurting? Why don't they come over here and pray for me? They're a bunch of hypocrites down at that church. Why don't they do something? Don't they know I'm hurting? I'm hurting so bad, why doesn't anybody care?"

What has God said? God said, "This is the way it works. Get up out of your pity party and think about what you would want done to you. Would you want someone to be kind to you? Would you want someone to give a gift to you? Would you want someone to be loving and say kind words to you - not jokes that put you down, but words that say, "This is what I like about you?"

Put those principles into action, and do you know what will happen? The love you've been desiring will be generated in those people you've been ministering to, and it will come back to you in good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over (Lk. 6:38). To have friends, you have to be friendly (Prov. 18:24). To have love, you have to give love. God so loved He gave (Jn. 3:16). Love is a verb. Love is an action word. Love can only be seen by what it does, not by the words that are said. First John 3:18 says, ". . .let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." It's good to say that I love you. But if I say, "I love you" yet do things opposite of love in deed, then I'm lying. Love is an action, it has to be seen. There never come a time in my marriage when I say to my son, "Now Steven, you're 16 years old now, and I want you to

know that I love your mother, Wendy." He already knows whether or not I love his mother because love is an action. It's the example he sees in my home.

## **Love Can be Taught**

Titus 2:4-5 (NIV) says, "Then they can train (or teach) the younger women to love their husbands ... to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind..." This says that love is not a feeling, but it's a principle to be taught by the older women to the younger women in the church. Love is something that's taught.

Even though you've been given these principles, do you know what it's going to take to be able to walk in them? It's going to take





getting down on your knees and saying, "Hey God, I can't do it in my own strength or ability." It goes against the grain of my flesh to honor someone else above myself. It goes against the grain of my flesh to give to another person rather than meeting my own selfish needs. It takes God, who is the source of love, the author of love, and the One who's saying, "Brothers, I wrote it down because I wanted to show you that if you're walking in these principles you're on the right path. Keep looking to Me; I'll give you divine ideas. I'll give you creative ideas on how to love others, how to be in love, and how to stay in love, even when you don't feel like it."

Jesus didn't feel like it when He went to the cross. He said, "God, I don't want to do this. Nevertheless not my will, but Yours be done"



(Lk. 22:42). Romans 5:8 (NIV) says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." He demonstrated love. The love that He demonstrated in going to the cross even went against His feelings. He didn't feel like it. But He chose to operate in the principles of divine love that God gave in the scriptures. He gave Himself without feeling like it, and as He gave, many of us have given back to Him the feeling of love and appreciation. We generated that love back to Christ when He took a step to love us without feelings.

It can happen in your marriage too. You can rekindle the flame of love. It can happen in your friendships. It can happen in your job situation. It can happen if you make it your goal. You make operating in the principles of

divine love the most important thing in your life. The next time you come to a decision, just stop and think, "Am I making this decision based on selfishness and what I want, or am I considering others in this decision?" As you continue loving this way, you'll find that the love you've been desiring will be multiplied back to you. Your life will become a demonstration of God's love to the world, and your marriage relationship a fulfillment of God's mystery revealed, an expression of His love for us and ours for Him.

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