

CHRISTIAN HOME IN AN UNCHRISTIAN WORLD

by

John Lawrence

No Copyright

edited for 3BSB by Baptist Bible Believer in the spirit of the Colportage Ministry of a century ago

~ out-of-print and in the public domain ~

Chapter 2

THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

"LOVE IN THE THIRD DIMENSION"

Today we are beginning a study in Scripture that is infinite in scope beyond all imagination. I trust by the Spirit of GOD that we will see how man is to live by all the Word of GOD and this Word speaks plainly and emphatically in the area of marriage and its relationships.

In order to deal with the spiritual, social and physical sides of marriage, it is necessary to take time to establish the foundation of what Scriptures says about man himself.

As man was originally created he was a triunity of body, soul and spirit.

His body related him to the earth beneath him.

His soul related him to the world about him.

His spirit related him to the GOD above him.

The body gives sense-consciousness.

The soul gives self-consciousness.

The spirit gives God-consciousness.

Man, being a triunity, was made in the image and likeness of his CREATOR.

All the animals in Geneses 1 are referred to as "living souls"; but man is much more than that because of "the breath of life."

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" = body.

"And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" = spirit.

"And man became a living soul" = soul

The creation of GOD was marred when man fell. A radical change took place in the nature of man from that which was his state as he originally came from the hand of his CREATOR.

Father, we send out this first installment of this series of messages with the prayer that you will strengthen the individual in the home. It may fall upon only one member of the family to carry the Cross of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, but we still have the promise that nothing of faith will fall by the wayside as it is focused upon You. We especially pray for those in a situation where the spouse is critical of the things of the Bible - but we commit them to Your care. Encourage hearts, is our prayer, Lord JESUS, Amen.

The spirit was lost in the soul, and the body of man took the ascendancy. Dr. McGee has this illustrated with a three-story house where the top two stories fell inward and the whole house is turned upside down.

Fallen man is then a soul with or in a body. His soul is eternal, but the spirit or spiritual nature is "dead." Notice that it is not non-existent, but dead showing that it existed once. It is for this reason that GOD can have no fellowship with fallen man for he is "dead" spiritually "in trespasses and sins": **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others"** (Ephesians 2:1-3).

Fallen man is only a duality - body and soul. He is no longer a triunity.

Paul identifies this person in I Corinthians 2:14 as "the natural man." Literally it is the "soulish, or soul-led" man". All this man has as far as life is concerned is an animal nature even though it is by creation an eternal nature.

Jude 19 says: **"These be they who separate themselves, sensual** (the same word as in I Corinthians 2:14, "natural," "soulish"), **having not the Spirit"**

From these and other passages we realize that the unsaved person is only a dichotomy and not a trichotomy. He has a body and an eternal soul, but he does not have the Spirit of GOD and therefore does not have a spirit. If he had "a spirit" he would have "the Spirit," for it is the presence of the HOLY SPIRIT in the man that creates in him the human spirit - or at least regenerates it.

What does GOD do then at the new birth? What happens when the natural man is saved? Scripture is very clear. The HOLY SPIRIT comes into our lives once again.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:9-11).

We who were dead in trespasses and sins are then quickened, or made alive, with a Godward nature and capacity to love and serve Him. Once again man can have fellowship with his CREATOR, but this is because we are a re-creation or a new creation.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration . . ." (Titus 3:5).

Regeneration : "RE" = "again" "once more" and "GENERATION" = "birth," "creation."
Regeneration is then literally, "a once more birth, a creation all over again."

But Paul continues in Titus 3:5, " . . . **and renewing of the HOLY GHOST**" (or HOLY SPIRIT). The breath of GOD that was lost in the fall is renewed in saved man. By the very presence of this Breath, the saved man is different.

The saved man now consists of 1) Body, 2) Soul, and 3) Quickened (or made alive) Spirit.

Such an one, and only such an one, is saved - but he is not in a perfect condition yet. He is a trichotomy, but not a triunity. The body is still very much in the ascendancy (in other words - he is still ruled by the flesh). The spirit is there but not as an equal partner. Saved man has three parts but he is not yet a triunity. Even for the saved man it is hard for him to distinguish between the soul and the spirit. He will, therefore, ask the question over and again: "How do I distinguish between 'my will' and 'GOD's will'?"

While both are invisible in contrast to the body which is visible, the soul and spirit are not the same. Thus we read in Hebrews 4:12, "**For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**"

What man cannot do -- that is saved man -- the Word of GOD can do. The Word can separate the soul and spirit because they are different; and it can minister and speak GOD's message to both.

The final state of saved man is called in Scripture "redemption of the body."

"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:3).

Even though we have the Spirit, we are not in our final state. While GOD has saved our soul and redeemed it by the blood of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, our body has not been redeemed yet. It is still corruptible - not incorruptible. When we see the Lord, we will be like Him! "**Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure**" (I John 3:2-3).

So Paul says in I Thessalonians 5:23, "**And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole Spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" This is our makeup of being or essence right now which, in the future,

will be patterned like the Lord Himself. We will be, once more, a triunity.

Much more could be said if this were our complete study, but with this essential background I want you to observe this. The natural, unsaved man cannot love but in two dimensions because he is spiritually dead. The saved couple, however, can be united not only in body and not only in soul, but also in spirit. Yet this uniting in spirit between two believers can only be when both are walking in the Spirit, when both are "in the light" and in fellowship with the Lord.

It is a sad thing but very few Christians couples even begin to be united in the third dimension. Few of those who begin ever perfect this, yet the very attaining of this establishes perfect unity in the other dimensions.

The Word of GOD holds this spirit unity before us not only as the ideal, but also as that which is attainable. It is not out of reach of any believing couple, and should be the goal of all married believers.

Let us gain go back to GOD's original design for marriage.

Adam was a perfect triunity.

Eve was a perfect triunity.

Yet each was the complement of the other.

GOD's design was for them to be united in spirit, in soul and in body. They were both to walk with the Lord together. Walking with GOD was not just to be the experience and exercise of the man alone, but was for the woman as well. When sin entered in, they both hid themselves from GOD's presence.

Both Adam and Eve were to be united in soul. Though all the animals passed before Adam, yet there was no one the responded in soul to his soul.

GOD's design was also for Adam and Eve to be united in body, and as such they were to be one flesh.

All of this was GOD's doing and it was good and perfect. But sin came and broke this perfect unity that GOD had established and Adam and Eve should have kept.

Eve failed to take what the serpent said to the Lord, and be one with Adam in this. Furthermore, Eve broke unity in soul by failing to go to Adam, her head, and discuss this thing with him. Eve failed on two counts.

What Satan did was to come to one member of the partnership and seek to have this one go her own way without consultation either with the Lord or with Adam, her head.

Notice very carefully that Satan caused the lines of communication to be broken down between the man and the woman, and so caused sin to come in. He hasn't changed his tactics one bit in over 6,000 years in the business. His work is still to employ the same method. He has no idea or plans of changing when what he is doing is working so well.

Eve was deceived, but Adam was not (I Timothy 2:14). She thought she was doing right when in reality she was doing wrong. Adam realized he was doing wrong, but undoubtedly did not fully comprehend the entire consequences of going along with his wife. Adam made a decision to keep fellowship with his wife rather than to keep fellowship with GOD. He did that which his wife wanted him to do rather than what GOD wanted him to do. This caused the man and the woman to fall and the consequences were tremendous in every area.

The man and the woman still could love each other in body and soul, but not in spirit. Their capacity for love was a response to attractiveness and not a love of the will.

It is easy to see how the marriage relationship has become greatly affected by the fall of man, and the consequences continue unto this very hour.

But with salvation, "**all things are become new**" (II Corinthians 5:17). This is not simply an empty, pious statement; it is a spiritual fact.

The saved man and woman have once again the human spirit and the indwelling HOLY SPIRIT by the inbreathing of GOD.

Moreover, the capacity to love with a pure love is once again the capacity of the Christian: "**We love . . . , because he first loved us**" (1 John 4:19) and "**The fruit of the Spirit is love . . .**" (Galatians 5:22).

With this background I want us to look at Ephesians 5:17-33.

Verse 17: "**Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is**" - This is true as individuals, but it is also true as married partners. Don't be like Eve and break the lines of communication either between yourself and GOD or between yourself and your spouse.

Verse 18: "**And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit**" -- Wine and marriage do not mix, only eternity will reveal the total harm, grief, and misery that it has done in the home and in the marriage.

GOD's desire is for each person to be filled with the Spirit, and so to be led, or controlled by the Spirit. This is true for us individually. It is true for us collectively also in the church. But it is also for us in the home. GOD wants our homes to be united in the third dimension. This is to be our continual life. This is not to be the exception, it is to be the norm.

Verses 19-21: "**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**" -- In these verses we are given the four-fold results of the leadership of the HOLY SPIRIT through the use of four clauses: "**Speaking . . . singing . . . giving thanks . . . submitting . . .**"

1. Speaking among yourselves the good things of GOD.
2. Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord - there is nothing so glorious as a happy

home with a wife moving from room to room singing as she goes.

3. Giving thanks always for all things.

4. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear or awe of CHRIST.

These verses give the general overall principles of operation for the believer. These are principles that are not just for the church, but for the home. In fact, they are for the life regardless of where the person is -- for if they are not at work for the Lord in the home, they will never be at work for Him in the church. The home is the sanctuary of praise and fellowship, of song and rejoicing, and of submission to one another according to the Word and Will of GOD. It is to be a picture in miniature of Heaven itself. How many of you are living in the atmosphere of Heaven in your home?

Here are the specifics.

:22-24 "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: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" -- Wives, there are three verses for you, but nine for the husband to follow. Well, actually four, if you count "reverence your husbands" in verse 33 -- but that will be easy to do if he does what he is supposed to do in his nine verses. Furthermore, the husband has by far the harder task because of his headship position. You wives are to be subject in everything that is proper to the marriage relationship. Your very subjections acts our spiritual and eternal truths.

:25-33 "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband"

Men, keep on loving your wives! It say, just as CHRIST loved the church.

How did CHRIST win our hearts? He won them through love. How is it today that He continues to bring us to be in subjection to Him, to His headship and His will? He does it by love. Just so we who are husbands are to WIN the submission of our wives through love even as CHRIST loved us before we submitted to Him -- even unto death.

This whole thing is a mystery: a hitherto unknown and unknowable truth which is now revealed. It is love in the third dimension which is nor merely the ideal for every Christian couple, but which is to be the standard or norm. It concerns CHRIST and the church which illustrates truth for the Christian wife and husband.

Let me approach it from a different way and see if it doesn't become clear to us.

JESUS CHRIST never married during His life here on earth. GOD's will for Him was a different kind of a bride -- one selected by the HOLY SPIRIT that will some day be presented to Him in glorious white linen.

But ladies, let us say for sake of illustration that JESUS CHRIST did marry and that you were His bride. You have married a perfect man who loves you in spite of all of your faults and unloveliness. What kind of response would you have to such love? Would it be hard for you to submit to this One? It most certainly not.

That husband of yours stands in the stead of JESUS CHRIST. You as his wife, stand in the place of the church. Even as the church is to be submissive to the head in all things, so are you to be submissive to your husband. And you husbands are to love your wives even as CHRIST loved the church. You cannot have any greater love than that.

How is it possible to accomplish either? It is only possible through being continually filled, led, directed and controlled by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. What we are unable to do in the natural, He does for, in and through us. This is why He has been sent into the hearts of both the husband and the wife so that their very home will be a foretaste of Heaven itself.

We have a law that states: "Objects close to the same object are close to each other." When the husband and wife are both close to the Lord, they are of necessity close to each other. Both cannot be walking with the Lord without walking with each other.

This is GOD's injunction for every Christian couple.

This is marriage in the third dimension!

Father, I do pray for our homes in this non-Christian world. There was a time when even though the majority of people in this country were unsaved - yet there was a morality which governed the nation. Families were intact and families watched over other families with concern, rather than with lust and covetousness. Help us to know that Your purpose for couples is to be a union with You in the middle, a trinity of purpose. As we walk alone, we are unable to be what we need to be to our spouse - and it is only as we see the other as a half of our ourselves that we are reminded that everything we do affects the other. Lord, help us to understand that, as you intend for us, we are to intend for the other. Make us one in spirit, in purpose, and in faith we pray in JESUS name. Amen.

~ end of chapter 2 ~
