***Lights in the World - PH48-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:14-15***

We are studying the book of Philippians. Paul, in Philippians 2:15 spoke of believers, "That you may be blameless and harmless, children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (or generation) among whom you shine as lights in the world." Paul says that Christians are to develop personal spiritual maturity. This maturity has as its goal to be free of, what he calls here, justifiable censure; free of guile; and, free of moral blemish. These qualities, he says, will make believers shine as lights in the midst of a morally dishonest and twisted generation. For Christians to be lights in the world, they must reflect the righteousness of God. One expression of God's righteousness is the code of moral absolutes known as the Ten Commandments, which were issued to the Jewish nation, or the Jewish theocracy.

This is listed for us in Exodus 20, and we have been studying the righteousness of God whereby a Christian can shine as a light in a morally decrepit generation, by studying this particular code. All of these principles listed here in the Ten Commandments, of course, are listed also in the New Testament as applicable to believers in the age of grace--all except the one requiring the observance of Saturday and the Sabbath day factor.

The first four principles, we have seen, covered personal morality in relationship to God. The last six pertain to moral relationships with people. These principles are designed by God to preserve human freedom during the era of the angelic warfare between God and Satan and his demons, a period in which we live today. If it were not for these moral absolutes, we as human beings could not survive because freedom would not survive.

**The Seventh Commandment**

These principles have been taken up one-by-one, and today we come to principle number seven. So we are taking up Exodus 20:14 which says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." This commandment in the Hebrew language consists only of two words. First of all, the expression "commit adultery" is the Hebrew word "naaph." It is a "Qal" active imperfect. As "Qal," it is a statement of principle, of fact. Active means that God is talking about something in which human volition is exercised, negatively or positively. Imperfect implies that it is never to be the case any time in the future.

In Leviticus 20:10, this principle is applied to both men and women where Moses says, "And the man who commits adultery with another man's wife, even he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulterous shall surely be put to death." So it is equally applicable to both parties.

Sometimes the act of adultery is described by another word which is the word "fornication." So we cannot entirely draw a clear distinction between adultery as applying to illicit sex of married people, and fornication to illicit sex of people who are not married. This is because sometimes the Bible speaks about illicit sex of married people by the term fornication. We have this, for example, in Matthew 5:32 and in Matthew 19:9. In both places, illicit married sex is called fornication.

There is a Hebrew word for fornication and that is the word "zanah." We have this used, for example, in 2 Chronicles 21:11. In the Greek, "fornication" is "porneia," for example, in 1 Corinthians 5:1. Fornication, in a restricted sense, does apply to illicit sex of unmarried people, as adultery in a restricted sense only applies to illicit sex between married people. Sometimes the New Testament does distinguish between these two types of sexual immoralities. We have this, for example in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and in Hebrews 13:4. In both cases, we have, for adultery, the Greek word "moichos" used, and for fornicator, "pornos." There they are distinguishing both kinds of illicit sex, and they do use "adulterer" for married illicit sex, and "fornicator" for unmarried illicit sex. But that distinction is not always followed. In general, it is helpful perhaps to speak of it in that term. Actually, adultery does cover the whole concept of illicit sex, whether in the case of married people or in the case of single people.

The other Hebrew word that makes up this commandment is the word not ("lo") which in the Hebrew is the absolute negative. It is the strongest negative meaning "absolutely under no condition." So what these two Hebrew words are saying is that God forbids all illicit sexual relationships, including all relationships outside of the confines of one's own marriage.

The word "adultery" also included the mental attitude sin of lust which precedes the overt act. In Matthew 5:28, the Lord Jesus indicated that adultery was not only an overt action, but all sin begins as a mental attitude. Actually there is the adultery of the mind. This too comes under the seventh moral principle forbidding mental attitude sins. The reason for this is that mental fantasies of illicit sex lay the basis for overt illicit sex when the opportunity presents itself. Many a person who would not have dreamed of participating in illicit sex did not mind participating in fantasies of immorality, only to discover, to his horror, that when the opportunity presented itself, that it was now easy to move and to make real what had once been a daydream. So for this reason, Matthew 5:28 says that adultery is a matter of the mind. This, of course, then covers a much larger group of humanity than just the overt action in itself, which in itself covers a considerable group.

**The Doctrine of Adultery**

So let's look at the doctrine of adultery now in certain specific points.

1. First of all, we must say that adultery (and we use this in the broad sense of illicit sex, sex outside of marriage) is prohibited under all conditions (Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:20, Deuteronomy 5:18, 1 Corinthians 7:2). All of those verses make it very clear that illicit sex is condemned by God.
2. Under the Jewish theocracy, the penalty for adultery was death of both partners (Leviticus 20:10, John 8:5). There were some exceptions to this, including under conditions where people were not voluntarily involved. In that case, the death penalty was not applied. But as per the Word of God, under the theocracy (This is not true today under the age of grace.), where God ruled the Jewish nation, adultery was a capital crime, and it was punishable by death.
3. Adultery is an attack on the divine institution of marriage. One of the ways that God protects humanity and freedom during the age of the conflict between God and the satanic hosts is through the four basic divine institutions. Adultery is an attack upon the institution of marriage and, of course, also upon that of the family.
4. Adultery affects the soul (Proverbs 6:32). The reason for this is that adultery, like all other sins, builds calluses on the facets of the soul. It makes you hard in your thinking so that you do not think God's thoughts. It makes you hard toward God in your feelings so that you do not have His emotions. It makes you hard in your will so that you do not respond with God's choices. The result is that it leads a person to a frantic search for happiness in the wrong direction. It leads to frustrated desires in the soul so that you produce neuroses and psychoses within your soul. It leads to where the emotions are able to dominate your soul. Thus, whenever emotions dominate a person, that person is on a self-destructive course. So adultery very definitely affects the soul.
5. Adultery, however, also affects the body (1 Corinthians 6:13-18). It may lead in some cases, and often does, on the part of males, to impotence, and on the part of females, to frigidity. It may lead to nymphomania, an insatiable search for sexual satisfaction which is never achieved. Adultery often triggers that problem. It results in frustrations in satisfactions which then lead to sublimations in the form of the use of drugs, alcohol, or a mad pursuit of the details of life to try to make it that way. It leads to various kinds of physical slavery, consequently. And, of course, not the least of the hazards are the venereal diseases which are inherent in the promiscuity involved in adultery, and the subsequent damage, not only to the physical body in general, but the brain in particular.
6. Adultery is a mental attitude toward a woman as well as an overt act (Matthew 5:27-28). In mental adultery, only the soul is affected. In overt adultery, it is both the soul and the body that come under destruction.
7. Adultery is a basis for divorce. Such a move is not required, nor is it generally desirable, but it is a condition that the Bible lays out justifying divorce. It is one of the two justifiable conditions (Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9, Luke 16:18). Divorce is allowed in this case because persistent adultery destroys the compatibility of souls between a man and a woman because of the build-up of the spiritual calluses. Consequently, the relationship ends up being dead on the soul basis.
8. Marriage sanctified the sexual relations of a man and woman as genuine love. Outside of marriage, it may be called love, but the truth of the matter is that the Bible views it as it is, which is lust (Hebrews 13:4). It is marriage that takes the same feelings outside of marriage and brings them into marriage. Those same drives; those same passions; and, those same feelings now become sanctified as love, where outside, the same thing is condemned as lust.
9. Adultery destroys the spiritual maturity structure of the soul (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4). Those who are spiritually mature are as susceptible as anybody else because they have an old sin nature to the sin of mental and overt adultery. Persistent mental and overt adultery will lead to the destruction of spiritual maturity in the soul.
10. Adultery is used to describe apostasy and negative volition toward doctrine. Apostasy is called spiritual adultery. Being negative to the Word of God is to be negative to God, and thus to be guilty of adultery toward Him. We have this taught in Jeremiah 3:8-10, Ezekiel 16:23-43, James 4:4, and Revelation 17:1-5.
11. The principle of adultery applies to unmarried people, as forbidding sex outside of marriage (1 Corinthians 6:18). The word is used in this broader sense to include any sex outside of marriage.
12. The godly use of sex is governed by the storage of Bible doctrine in one's human spirit. It is doctrine that gives us divine viewpoint in our human spirits to guide our souls in order to direct our souls and how we will use our bodies. Bible doctrine inhaled will remove the spiritual calluses from the soul that have developed from immorality on the sexual level. So godly use of sex is governed by Bible doctrine in the human spirit. This is the first line of defense for a young person. If parents want their children to grow up chaste and moral, the way to do it is not by giving them lectures about the subject, but by giving them an opportunity to inhale doctrine into their souls. If they are negative toward that opportunity of taking in doctrine, they can nevertheless get into a lot of trouble on the physical level. But if they are positive, and they have opportunity to do so, this is the stabilizing factor, and only this will stabilize and make a young person moral.
13. Adultery destroys the freedom and security of the family. That should be certainly self-evident.
14. Adultery in the church age is handled on the part of a believer by repenting, ceasing, and confession of sin to God the Father.
15. The extent to which sexual sin is justified and is practiced in a society is an indication of the degree of the degeneration, weakness, and disorientation to divine viewpoint of that society. Studies which have been made on groups relative to what their views were toward sex were then correlated to the cultural level; to the intellectual level; and, to the civilization level of those societies. There is a direct relationship between the two. To the extent that a society tolerates what the Bible condemns in this moral principle, that society begins to go downward in its productivity; in its strength; in its moral fiber; and, in its capacities to resist evil and aggression against itself.

Societies which violate the principles of scriptural sexual morality are societies that reflect a weakness that permeates throughout. This moral absolute will serve to make a nation strong and great. Its violation will make it weak and infamous.

For decades, Americans have been plunging headlong into sexual immorality as never before, including a toleration and a justification of sexual immorality. It's conveyed to us constantly through various media, and it's justified as an acceptable practice. It is interesting to note that during the past decades, a blanket of darkness has descended upon the thinking capacity of Americans both as citizens, and certainly upon American leadership in government. This mental disorientation is causing us to reject and to be offended by the things that made this nation great. There is a blanket of darkness upon the directive side of the mind as the result of being negative to this moral principle.

Our political leaders have little moral influence. That's quite obvious to everybody. Our political leaders are fantastically weak today. When someone does stand up who reflects some strength because he has some moral integrity, and because he understands the principles of government established in the Word of God, principles which would cause it to resist movements such as socialism and communism, the people will not elect that person to office. The blanket of darkness has so blinded the American public that they are against the very things that have been the source of our blessing and the source of our strength. They elect leaders who reflect that resistance.

Of course, the events in the Vietnam War are all that we need to illustrate the moral weakness at a time when America is practicing the most widespread violation of the seventh commandment that it ever has in its history, and doing it with full public approval. The national leaders have brought a dishonor upon this country during the past years by a series of moves which were systematically in violation of biblical principles. And this at a time when moral violations were rising and going rampant in the nation. I think there's a relationship between the two.

The systematic steps which were taken that resulted in the Vietnam dishonor are related to our moral breakdown through this principle, the Seventh Commandment. Do you realize that you live in a nation now where the president of the United States would fear to resist communist aggression anywhere in the world; and where Congress would fear to stand up to communism any place in the world?

You just watch the world today as communism now has a full green light to take anything it wants any place in the world. It knows for a certainty that the United States has now fallen into such moral weakness, such degeneracy, that it can no longer see that to resist the aggression of communism is to preserve its own freedom and blessing. The two no longer are connected.

I hope you can feel comfortable about whistling, and saying, "It's all going to come out well. It's not all that bad." I hope you're right, and I'm wrong, but I'm afraid that that is not the way it's going to prove to be.

In order to understand why this commandment is so important, it's necessary for us to take a look at the background of societies as they existed in the ancient world. To begin with, among the people of Israel, no sin was regarded with greater horror than the violation of sexual morality. The land of Canaan, into which God led the Jewish people, was a land that was morally debased with the most loathsome kind of people. It was the people of Canaan who deified the reproductive forces of nature, especially the reproductive forces of human sex. Consequently, it was the practice to have the high places in the groves for worship.

One of the things that was included in the worship on the groves was the phallus, the human male reproductive organ, which was actually used in the rights of worship in the performance of immoral acts in the groves. The reproductive powers, in other words, among the Canaanites were used in the worship of their gods. This was carried out extensively in the temple areas where the priestesses were in truth simply prostitutes, as were the priests also. It was an act of worship to go to these temples, and to engage in sexual immorality in the process of worshiping the gods.

This was widespread throughout the land of Canaan; it was commonly accepted; and, it was into this kind of a climate that God led the Jewish people. Such worship and such practices, obviously, we're going to be a great temptation to the Jews. So God strictly forbad any participation on their part in these practices. In Deuteronomy 23:17-18, Moses said, "There shall be no harlot of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel." This is what the heathen practiced in the process of worshiping their gods. "Thou shalt not bring the hire of an harlot or the price of a dog (bestiality, sex with animals) into the house of the Lord your God for any vow, for even both these are an abomination unto the Lord your God."

This sexual immorality at times extended even to those who were considered the respected citizens. There were certain times of the year among Canaanites when the women were required to give themselves as prostitutes to a stranger as an act of worship on some high feast day to the God. The Jews, in spite of the warnings that God gave them; in spite of this commandment; and, in spite of the fact that the death penalty under the theocracy was applied to it, the Jews drifted off constantly into imitating the practices of the Canaanites round about them. This principle was necessary because the Jews were constantly under temptation, and they regularly responded. It was one of the fantastic things that regularly among the Jewish people, a good king had to come along and he had to destroy this practice. Sometimes they even brought it right into the area of the temple itself, in the height of the abominations that they would be performing.

**Women**

Part of the reason for this was because women were looked upon as mere property in the ancient world. Women, even among the Jews, were viewed as being inferior creatures. One of the Jewish prayers that a Jewish man would often repeat was, "I thank You that You have not made me a gentile, a slave, or a woman." The reason for the prayer was because a woman was viewed in such an inferior position that she was not encouraged (and in part, almost, not allowed) to learn the law. So what the prayer meant was, "I thank God that I was not made a gentile who would not have access to learning the Word of God; I was not made a slave who would not have access to learning the Word of God; nor, was I made a woman who would not have access to learning the Word of God. The Jews viewed educating women as a horrible idea, and they assiduously avoided it.

They avoided, as a matter of fact, talking with women publicly. That's why when the disciples found Jesus talking with a woman from Samaria at the well, it surprised them because you did not speak publicly with a woman. She was so looked down upon. Yet this is not the scriptural position. When you look in the Word of God, Proverbs 31:10-31, of course, pays a fantastically marvelous tribute to a good wife. You will notice as you read those Scriptures that she is no dummy. She is a woman of education. She is a woman who is capable of running business. As a matter of fact, when her husband is not there, she runs the business. She is a woman who enters her husband's life, in other words, in that realm, and participates with him publicly as well as privately.

The Mosaic Law ensured certain rights for women, as we have in Exodus 21:10. A man who took a wife had to provide for her, and he had to care for her. The divorce concept was completely against the law of God, but because of the old sin nature and the demand of the Jews, Moses made a provision in order to try to control even this evil. Matthew 19:7-9 points out to us that divorce is contrary to the plan of God. What was provided for in the Old Testament was because of the old sin nature.

**Greece**

The Greeks in their civilization were in some respects even worse than the Jews in the early period. The wives did have a real share with the work and life of their husbands. But by 750 B.C., women had degenerated in the Hellenistic cultures into being a thing. The Greeks actually were very bitter against women. One of the philosophers said that the happiest day with a wife is the day that you marry her, and the day that you bury her. So bitter were they in their attitudes and in their view of women.

That viewpoint has not entirely gone out of fashion today in some quarters, I must admit. But the view of female inferiority was even shared by men like Plato and Aristotle, who in their philosophical views, felt that there should be a place made for women, and a provision for their fulfillment. But as far as looking at women per se, both Plato and Aristotle viewed them as inferior creatures. They saw them as beings of the lowest order, fit only for propagating the race and for gratifying the male sex urges.

So such views naturally had a very adverse effect upon the institution of marriage in the Greek culture. A Greek life, for one thing, was a minor all her life, which meant that she never had any legal rights. She always had to act through a guardian or through her husband. The Greek wife was given no formal education. Consequently, she had no ground to be an intellectual companion or an assistance to her husband. The Greek wife of the higher class was required to live in absolute seclusion. She lived in the women's quarters, a special section of the house, and she was never allowed to move out in public. She shared meals with her husband only if there was no one else present. There was no public life whatsoever. She was kept indoors always in order to ensure chastity.

Marriage had to be arranged in that culture, as was the practice in the ancient world, by parents or guardians. This was simply done not as an attractive desirable thing, but as something to produce children. It was a duty. There was little ground in Greek culture for companionship in marriage. Greek husbands, therefore, were regularly guilty of violating the seventh moral principle, because in a marriage brought about under these conditions and for this purpose, they sought their sexual satisfaction outside of marriage as a matter of course.

So the basic attitude forming the background of Christianity and of the early believers was something quite contrary to the Word of God. This is what makes a book like 1 Corinthians meaningful. When you understand what the practice of Greek culture was relative to sex, then you see why Paul had to write 1 Corinthians 7, for example: to explain certain very specific factors in order that people who had just become believers would know that they were coming to a radically different relationship in matters of sex than they had been used to all their lives.

The Greek temples were frequented by husbands where the priestesses were paid for sexual relations as an act of worship, just as they were among the Canaanitic people. The most notorious example of this was the Temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, in Corinth, the very city and the very group of people to which Paul had to write the book of Corinthians. The temple there had 1,000 sacred prostitutes, and they were on duty day and night seeking worshipers. It was said that a man had to be very rich to visit Corinth because of the constant propositioning to him as he walked up and down the street by the temple priestesses. It was considered an act of great worship to give girls to the temple for the service as priestess prostitutes.

The Greek world was also filled, of course, with available women of the street and with government sponsored brothels. Hellenistic culture had degenerated to the extent where the government sponsored the houses of prostitution. Some prostitutes or courtesans, to use a better word, were actually educated and trained. It was these women that men of intellect; men of culture; the philosophers; and, the leaders of Greek society would seek out, because they could have companionship with them on a cultural and intellectual level, which they could never have with the wives that they kept in seclusion.

All of this, the background of Greek culture, was a fantastic danger to marriage and to morality. Divorce was simply a matter of telling your wife that you were through with her in the presence of a couple of witnesses, and to get lost. That was it. She had no legal right. She was a minor. If she wanted a divorce, she had to try to get her guardian to appeal for one.

**The Roman Empire**

By New Testament times, Greek marriage and sexual morality was near total collapse. It was a horrendous situation. Interestingly enough, there was considerable variation when you came to Roman society. Remember that the New Testament world was Hellenistic. It was Greek in its culture. So all this that was true about Greek society permeated the New Testament world where the first believers came from. But that New Testament world was dominated by the Roman government. Legal practices of Rome came to bear upon this situation. Marriage among the Romans had more of a religious character than a civil character. Among the Greeks, it was purely a civil matter.

Roman women, in contrast to Greek women, shared in the public life of their husbands. Roman women were not restricted to the women's quarters in the home. They were free to walk the streets of Rome if they wanted to. In their homes, they were in full charge. She was the mistress of the home. She had the keys to the storeroom and to the wealth; she directed the servants; and, she accompanied her husband to public banquets, public games, and other public events. She had legal rights, and she could go to court to get legal satisfaction. But again, marriages were arranged by parents or guardians. However, they had the stipulation that after the marriage was arranged under the judgment of parents, the couple had the right to say "yes" or "no" to the arrangement.

They had an engagement ceremony after the arrangement was made. They would settle on what the dowry was going to be that the girl was going to bring to the new husband. Then they would sign a contract, and they would have what was called an "engagement." This engagement was not binding, nor was it legally enforceable, and a person could get out of it. The only thing that was required was that once an engagement was established, chastity was expected of the woman. They gave an engagement ring to the woman. The early Greek philosophers who acted as doctors in their dissecting of human anatomy found that there was a small vein that went from the third finger of the left hand all the way up directly to the heart. So the custom arose that the engagement ring was put on the third finger of the woman's left hand.

**Marriage**

The marriage came subsequently, and this was of two types. A daughter was under the complete control, direction, and authority of her father. When she came to marriage, her marriage could be of two kinds. One kind was where she came under the complete authority of her husband. That meant that her life and her possessions all passed into the power of her husband, and he could actually put her to death for certain crimes like adultery. But another type of marriage was where the woman was not put under the power of her husband. She retained her wealth and she managed her own affairs.

May was considered a bad month in which to get married. Perhaps it was because in that month they had the observation of the Feast of the Dead. But they considered, therefore, that April was a good month, and June was a good--a very propitious time to get married, so they tried to squeeze the weddings into April and June.

The ceremony began with the bride, dressed in a white tunic with a flaming orange veil on her head, walking down the street with her party from her home to the home of the bridegroom. When she got to the home of the bridegroom, she was always carried across the threshold by the bridegroom. The reason for that is lost in antiquity, but it was a practice in Roman society.

Then there was a religious ritual which was performed by the Pontifical Maximus, with the couple eating a sacred cake. Their hands were joined by the priest to bless them. Then they brought two chairs together and they sat side-by-side. The priest made his pronouncement over them, and put the fleece of a sheep over the shoulders of both of them, which had been killed in sacrifice. That finished the religious aspect of the marriage ceremony. This marriage, made under this condition, was binding forever. It was viewed as a union of the gods, never to be dissolved.

Some ceremonies were purely civil, and they simply amounted to the fact that a man paid a certain amount to the father, and he purchased the bride. Actually the purchase type of marriage was mainly used in New Testament times, because the fine ideals toward marriage, that had once existed among the Romans, also rapidly degenerated so that by the time they came to New Testament times, Roman marriage had considerably less significance.

There was a third type of marriage, and that was, of course, the same kind we have today with that which is known as common law marriage. Anybody who lived together for a year was considered married. The high ideals fell into disrepute by New Testament times, so infidelity and divorce were commonplace, and I mean commonplace. In Roman society, it was not unusual to have been married 20 or 25 times, and divorced a comparable number of times. Rome had conquered Greece, but the Greek morals had conquered Rome. There was actually, in New Testament times in Roman society, a revulsion against marriage. The New Testament era was, consequently, one of universal prostitution as an accepted social institution. Marriages were made and unmade unashamedly for material gain. This was done even among the big-name philosophers. They would marry, divorce, and remarry strictly for the basis of financial gain.

**Christian Marriage**

Well, along came Christianity into this scene, from the Jews to the Greeks to the Romans societies. Christianity had a totally different picture. Christianity came along into this scene and demanded an uncompromising sexual purity before marriage; fidelity within the marriage; and, the marriage to continue until death of one of the partners. The Christians respected the human body as the temple of God the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). The Roman and the Greek world viewed the body as evil, and they acted accordingly. They treated it as an evil thing. The Christian view of the body; of marriage; and, of divorce was going to revolutionize the thinking of the Greco Roman world. Marriage became a sacred state under Christianity, and it became the norm for a good life (1 Corinthians 7:2).

Sex was limited to within the marriage bond. That meant no premarital and no extramarital sex. Divorce was strictly forbidden under Christianity, except for two reasons. One was for adultery of a persistent nature; or, for desertion (1 Corinthians 7:10-15, 39, Matthew 19:9). This, of course, was quite a blow in a world of a high divorce rate such as Roman society. For the first 500 years of Roman history, we're told there wasn't one single case of divorce on record. By New Testament times, it was the common practice. Christianity came along and said there were only two reasons why you can get a divorce: persistent adultery; or, you're a Christian who is married to an unbeliever, and that unbeliever deserts you. Otherwise there is no such thing in the eyes of God as divorce.

The couple in marriage were to leave their parents and to cleave to each other (Matthew 19:5, Genesis 2:24). They were to have a new focus of loyalties, and parents were to assist the young people in making that new focus of loyalty to one another rather than hindering it. There was a chain of authority recognized within the Christian relationship of marriage, which went from God to the husband, to the wife, to the children (1 Corinthians 11:3). Consequently, in Christian marriage, a wife was to be in subjection to her husband (Ephesians 5:22), and the husband was the final authority in the family (1 Timothy 2:11-13). This relationship in Christian marriage was one of mutual dependence and fulfillment. The requirement was that a husband had to love his wife, and a wife had to respect her husband (Ephesians 5:33). The relationship was not to be one of a tension of fighting for your rights.

The wife, in Christian marriage, was to obey her husband. He, on the other hand, was to be kind and considerate of her as the weaker vessel (Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:7). I remind you that in all of these observations concerning Christian marriage, that these are things that God has told us. God, who invented marriage and sex, we may conclude would know best how it should be handled. So these are principles which the ancient world had completely lost, and they were oblivious to. Along came Christianity and said, "We're going to straighten this thing out the way it once was, back in the Garden of Eden."

The right man has the right woman. By divine provision and divine timing, they will be brought together for maximum happiness as one flesh. The husband and wife were told that in Christian marriage, they are not to deny to each other sexual relations (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). Any party within a Christian marriage who says "no" to the other party in sexual relations has been guilty of sin, and it needs to be confessed. Many people within Christian marriage go constantly out of fellowship on this issue alone because they never confess it. The Word of God strictly forbids that. The reason for it is because it's an invitation to immorality, and to a violation of the seventh moral principle. Husbands and wives are not to deny to each other their sexual rights. They do not belong to themselves. Once they are in marriage, the bodies of each belong to the other. Therefore, the Christian principle of marriage is reciprocity. There is a duty and a privilege on both sides. It's a partnership. It's not an exploitation.

What is the permanence of Christian marriage based on? Here's where a lot of Christian thinking is poisoned and perverted. The permanence of Christian marriage--the fact that there is no divorce--is based upon only one thing, and never forget that. That is the law of God: the stipulation; the direction; the commandment; and, the authority of God. It is not based on love. Just because you no longer love the person that you're married to has no bearing upon the marriage whatsoever. It's just as binding as when you were in the depths of passion. The fact that you no longer think you're compatible with this person has no bearing upon the permanence of the marriage. Whether you are compatible with the person or not is only important before you marry. After you marry, it has no relevance to whether the marriage continues or not. It doesn't matter whether you find fulfillment in that marriage. That has no relationship. You find nothing in the Word of God that tells you that the permanence of marriage is structured upon fulfillment. Nor is it upon your happiness. Whether you're happy in your marriage or not has no bearing upon the continuance and permanence of the marriage.

If you think it does, it's because you are taking human viewpoint from the world. This is not something that comes out of the Word of God. I don't care what you think. Please understand that. I think all of you know me well enough that I don't give a fig newton what you think (to use a ministerial expression). You can think what you please. I'm just conveying to you the information of this book. I'm just trying to show you that when you think in a certain way, just say, "Okay, I'm taking these ideas of the world, and I'm trying to dignify them and make them sacred." Just lay it out on the line. I don't care what you think. Beyond that, you can go on your own. But get it straight that these are concepts that are not based upon the Word of God.

Nor is permanence dependent upon peace. Just because you don't have any peace in a marriage does not mean that you have the option of terminating the marriage. In other words, you can multiply these things with all the reasons; all the excuses; and, all the idiotic things that are brought up before a court of law and a judge. It's only because human viewpoint has cut itself off from God's viewpoint. The permanence of Christian marriage is based upon the law; the authority; and, the regulation of God.

One thing more is that Christian marriage is monogamous. You're married to one man at a time or to one woman at a time (Genesis 2:23-24, 1 Corinthians 7:2).

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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