

Divine Principles for a Happy Married Life

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Gen. 1: 26-28; Gen. 2: 18-32; John 12: 1-3, 16-24; Eph. 5:17-33

Marriage is the most sacred relationship ordained by God from the beginning of creation. We find in God's Word that it is always associated with unusual joy and happiness for those who are brought together according to His heavenly plan. For example we see in Isaiah 62:5, "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee". Again in Isaiah 61:10 we read, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels". Similarly, in Jer. 33:11 it is written, "The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth forever". Also we see in Rev. 19:7, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready". Thus it is clear from God's Word that He has ordained this relationship to give full joy to those who are brought together by him according to His Perfect heavenly plan, after much waiting upon Him before taking the final decision for their marriage.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, suffered, died and rose again to make our joy full according to John 15:11. It is sad to see how very few believe and enjoy this happiness in married life which God has purposed to give them through this sacred union. In many cases they ignore the Word of God and do not give proper place to it when they plan for their marriage. That is why we find a spirit of contention and strife in many homes and very little blessing through each other. Everywhere we see many unhappy and broken homes. Some rich people spend much money on their marriage, but after sometime they are separated. Similarly, some highly educated people also find that their marriage is only a failure. They begin their married life with much joy and expectation, but soon they find it difficult to live together in oneness and unity.

Going by the Word of God there are eight fundamental divine principles to be followed to make any marriage a source of much blessing, not only to those who are joined as life-partners, but also to others who come in touch with them. For a healthy body we need fresh air, good water, good food and physical exercise. For a rich harvest, we need good soil, manure, water, removal of weeds and protection from pests. Similarly, for a happy married life there are eight divine principles.

1. God's perfect will

The first principle is that those who are going to get married must make sure of God's perfect will about their union. They should not be governed by outward appearance, physical attraction, earthly possessions or worldly qualifications. Most people have entirely a wrong conception of married life. Some depend upon beauty, riches and education for happiness. That is why they are disappointed in the end. It

is very necessary for those who are going to get married to wait upon the Lord sufficiently in prayer and give Him enough time to make His will perfectly clear and have full evidence of that perfect will. God's Word says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). It is by knowing and doing God's will that we enjoy His favor. In Matt.12:50 the Lord said, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother". The life of the Lord Jesus Christ flows like a river in those who are born again. Those who are not born again do not have eternal life and they can never find God's will. That is why before we solemnize any marriage, we question those who are going to be united, whether they are born again, whether their sins are forgiven and whether they have received the gift of eternal life.

The bridegroom and the bride have to pray much individually, and find out the Lord's perfect will for their union. No one knows what will happen the next day. Our health may fail or our circumstances may change. We do not know how long we will live. Only God knows the end from the beginning. That is why we must know God's perfect will for our lives. In Psa. 143:10 the psalmist says, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me in to the land of uprightness". Those who are joined together must be able to say truthfully and sincerely, "This person is chosen for me by my Lord according to his will". Before they think of gold, silver, job or clothes they must find God's will.

2. Divine Love

Secondly, those who are getting married must ask the Lord to pour into their hearts divine pure and spiritual love for, each other, which does not depend upon physical attraction, earthly, possessions and worldly qualifications. Such a love must be an inward experience and it is a gift of God. In Eph. 5:25 the Lord says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it". This Exhortation is repeated in verses 28 and 33. How did the Lord love us? We had no fortune and no qualification; we had grieved Him and wounded Him, yet He loved each one of us, and gave His body to be broken for us. He loved us so much because He is our Creator.

Even though we did nothing for Him, He died for us. Such a divine love is necessary between husband and wife. They should pray by faith, "Lord Jesus Christ, we are joined by you in your presence. Please pour your love from heaven in our hearts for each other". Furniture, motorcar, jewels, degrees, and other possessions will not make a happy home. It is God's love that will make their home happy. From the beginning of their married life they should ask the Lord for such a love.

The Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matt. 7:7). First of all His life must flow, into them. Then the pure heavenly love will make them both true partners, friends, co-workers and companions. Such a love will increase in trials, hardships and sufferings, and will draw them both together to a most intimate relationship.

3. Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ

Thirdly, from the very beginning of their married life the couple must bring themselves under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in every matter. He is the living Head of the Church, and He should be acknowledged as such in every aspect of married life. The Lord Jesus Christ became the Head of the family in Bethany as we see in John 12:1-3. In the beginning Mary and Martha received the Lord Jesus Christ only as a guest of honor. The Lord allowed death and sorrow in that home so that they might experience the power of resurrection, or power over death. The Lord Jesus Christ is not only a prophet or a great person with great power but He is God Himself. Only God has power over death. No one ever conquered death. When the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Lazarus, come forth," he who was in the grave for four days, came out straightway. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the resurrection and the life as He said in John 11:25. Before that miracle took place they never knew that He was their Creator who became Man for their sake. When they came to know that He was God Himself, then they gave Him complete charge of their lives and their home. In other words the Lord Jesus Christ became the living Head of their home at their request.

For a happy home those who are brought together by the Lord must accept the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. They must say by faith, "Lord Jesus Christ, You are our Creator, You have all power. You became Man for us, died in our stead and rose again to live in us. We give complete charge of our hearts, lives and plans. We will not do anything without your permission". That is how they should begin their married life. The husband should say, "Lord Jesus Christ, this is your home. We are your children. I do not want my will or my wife's will to be done in this home, but only your will". In the same way the wife also should acknowledge the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and say, "Yes Lord, this is not my home. It is your home. You have given us this home. Let not my will or my husband's will be done in this home, but only your will". Otherwise the husband will say to the wife, "You are my wife, you must listen to me. If you do not obey me I will make you to obey. See what I will do". Then the wife will say, "I know more than you. I will not listen to you". That is how the quarrel starts. In the beginning they quarrel with doors and windows closed, after some time they quarrel openly, even in the streets. For a happy home they must acknowledge the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, before going anywhere and doing anything. This should be their daily practice, through out their married life. His will is the best for us, because He loves us much more than we can think or imagine.

4. The Power Of Resurrection

Fourthly, they must appropriate the power of resurrection for all their trials and difficulties, which they may have to go through in their married life. Lazarus was in the grave for four days and was stinking, but at the Lord's command he came out of the grave. He is the symbol of the power of resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. For every trial, temptation, hardship and difficulty that power is sufficient. Whosoever you may be, rich or poor, high or low, educated or uneducated, as human beings you have to face some problem, weakness, limitation, temptation or hardship common to all people. The secret of conquering them is to claim the power of resurrection. They should say by faith, "Lord Jesus Christ. We are facing this difficulty. We have no capacity to face it. Please give us your power of resurrection

to conquer it". By that power they can overcome all situations. They should not depend upon their own strength, but depend upon the power of resurrection. The apostle Paul says in Phil. 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me". He refers to the power of His resurrection. In Phil. 3:10, he says, "I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection". It is by that power that they will be able to conquer all these afflictions.

5. True Fellowship

Fifthly, they must be able to have true fellowship between themselves. After the Lord raised Lazarus from the dead, they had food together. "There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him" (John 12:2). Food on the table speaks of spiritual food. Just as physical food is necessary for good health, we require spiritual food for our souls. That food can be received by having fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. For that purpose they should begin their day upon their knees with the Word of God before having breakfast, and pray, "Lord, we long for spiritual and heavenly food. We want to hear your voice. Please speak to both of us". With such a desire they should read their Bible systematically and regularly from Genesis to Revelation. Then God's Word becomes their daily spiritual food. When we have food with our friends, we enjoy it more because it becomes tastier in fellowship. Thus by reading the Word of God regularly both morning and evening and asking the Lord for His guidance, they will receive spiritual food.

These days we find very few Christian homes having regular family prayers. As a result there are quarrels in many homes. In the beginning they quarrel once a week and that too secretly, but afterwards they quarrel everyday and even before other people. Their children also become stubborn, rebellious and wayward because they do not have family prayers in their homes. So they should not neglect family prayers. They should share their spiritual experiences whenever possible and try to help each other to overcome any human weakness and short coming with love and longsuffering.

6. Joyful Service

Sixthly, they must endeavor as far as possible to show love to all in need and render service to others joyfully, regarding it as a great privilege. "Whatever they do they should do it as unto the Lord according to Col. 3:23.

When the Lord Jesus Christ and Lazarus had food together Martha served joyfully. In Luke 10:40, we find that she was full of murmuring, complaints, anger and jealousy. But afterwards she was changed. Some husbands talk about their wives like this. "My wife is very hardworking, clean, clever and very active, but she has a very bad temper. When she gets angry everyone in the house trembles". For a happy married life both the husband and wife should serve others joyfully, cheerfully and willingly. The hearts must be free from jealousy, hatred, anger and murmuring. A Christian home is a home of service for poor, needy and sick, people. It is a home of love, where all are served equally.

7. Worship unto the Lord

Seventhly, like Mary they must be grateful to the Lord for His grace and compassion. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment" (John 12:3). Mary anointed the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ by pouring the precious ointment for two reasons. Her heart was full of gratitude because her brother who was in the grave for four days was raised from the dead, Secondly, she recognized that the Lord Jesus Christ was not just an ordinary person, but God Himself Who became Man for the salvation of mankind. So with a heart full of devotion, she poured the ointment upon His feet. For a happy home the couple must have devotion for the Lord and must praise honor and worship Him. They should begin their day by singing worship songs and also end their day in the same way with a true and humble devotion to the Lord for His grace, compassion, love and faithfulness. Their faith will be strengthened and they will be enabled to love the Lord more and more. They should also take full share in the worship meetings. Such a home is a foretaste of heaven upon the earth.

8. Threefold Union

Eighthly, their union should be a threefold one of the spirit, soul and body. Our whole personality is composed of three parts according to I Thess. 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". In Eccl. 4:12, we read, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken". In villages when people require a strong rope to pull a very heavy load, they take three cords and weave them together. Then it becomes quite strong. To understand the significance of the threefold union we must know how God created us as a threefold personality, having spirit, soul and body. We see in Gen. 2:7 "And the LORD GOD formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul".

Now let us see what makes the body, the soul, and the spirit. Bones, muscles and blood make the body. The three components of the soul are intellect to think, learn, and understand; emotion to love someone like parents, brothers, sisters, husband or wife, friends and relations; and will power to make decisions. God has given every human being a free will by which he can say 'yes' or 'no'. He will not force anyone. The spirit is also made of three components. The first one is conscience or the inward voice which is before we commit any sin by thought, word and deed. We have to kill our conscience before committing any sin. Supposing I want to tell a lie; my conscience warns me saying, "be careful, do not tell a lie". But I tell my conscience, "You keep quiet". This means that by bringing death we commit sin. The second component is the inward longing to know the unseen. Every human being has a desire to know God and his Creator, where He is and How to find Him. Thirdly, we have institution by which a thought comes suddenly to go somewhere, or to buy something, or to do something without knowing the reason.

When God made man He made him in His own image and in his likeness (Gen 1:26), so that he could have unbroken fellowship and communion with the loving and Holy God. When sin entered, it cut off his true fellowship with the Holy God, because God's word says, "Follow....Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb.12:14). Also we read in I Peter.1: 16, "Be ye Holy, for I am Holy". Again

in Matt.5: 8 we see, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God". Thus it is quite obvious that without holiness we cannot see God. Because of sin, death has entered into our spirits. As sinners we have undergone a threefold downward change. Our spirit is dead, our soul is darkened and our body, even though it was intended to be the temple of the Holy Spirit, is defiled. That is why as long as we live in sin we cannot feel God's presence, cannot enjoy His power, cannot hear His voice, cannot understand His mind. We are unable to enjoy His true peace, as our spirit is dead. We misuse our intellect and emotions because our soul is darkened. We are very selfish and proud, and entertain thoughts of hatred, anger, bitterness, jealousy, suspicion and self-will. We bring defilement to our body by misusing its members.

In John 4:24 we read, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth". Unless we are inwardly purified we cannot have unbroken fellowship with the Holy and Living God. Only the blood of Jesus Christ has power to cleanse us and purge our conscience from all the stains of sin according to I John 1:7 and Heb 9:14. When the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and helps us to confess them with a truly repentant heart, and when we believe from the heart that the Lord Jesus Christ died in our stead, was buried to bury our sins and rose again to live in us to be our life and righteousness. We are forgiven straightway. All our sins are washed away by His precious blood and we begin to feel God's presence in a very strong way.

When our guilty conscience is washed by the precious blood of the Lord we undergo a threefold upward change. Our dead spirit becomes a quicken spirit, because the Holy Spirit comes and abides in our cleansed spirit. This is called new birth. After this experience we are able to understand the hidden mysteries in the Word of God, talk with Him more freely in prayer and long to do His perfect will. Our darkened soul becomes enlightened and we begin to make the right use of our emotions by loving the unlovely, by setting our affection on things above and by doing His perfect will in all things. Our body also becomes a cleansed body. We long to keep it as the temple of the Holy Spirit and not misuse any of its members.

Those who try to follow this fundamental and divine principle of a threefold union can have a happy and fruitful married life. They should first of all long for spiritual union. That means they must begin their day upon their knees with the word of God and in the same way end their day upon their knees with the word of God. They must seek His will together upon their knees for every matter, worship the Lord together and go to the House of God together as far as possible. Many husbands say, " Let my wife pray, because I am very busy with my job or business". But praying together is very necessary. For the soul union, they must make sure that their love does not depend upon human attraction, worldly possession, education, or wealth, but they should love each other without any selfish motive. They should have common thoughts, common friends, common affections, common desires, common interests and common secret. Thirdly, their physical union must be kept very sacred. They must have great regard and respect for each other and take special care to understand mutual needs. They should live their married life by prayer and remember that they are brought together to bring forth Godly seed. " And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed" (Mal. 2:15). They should ask God for Godly children. Otherwise their children will become stubborn and rebellious.

Thus by understanding the true nature of our personality we can easily discern between flesh and the spirit. Many people say that they are led by the spirit

of God, but actually they are only led by their flesh, and are easily deceived. The devil tries to weaken our faith and rob us of our true love and peace by many subtle devices. By praying in the spirit according to His perfect will and doing all things under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will enjoy God's favor and be kept in His heavenly plan.

These are the simple divine principles by which any couple in any part of the world can have a happy married life. Our prayer is that our Lord may write these laws upon the hearts of all those who are brought together by Him. If they follow these principles their home will be a very happy and a blessed one; a home of peace, a home of joy, a home of love, a home of service, a home of divine presence, a home of faith, a home of fellowship, a home where God's name is honored. Through such a home many will be blessed. Such a real Christian home is a foretaste of Heaven upon the earth.