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**MARRIAGE BEYOND HIERARCHY:
HOW TO KEEP BUILDING A BETTER PARTNERSHIP MARRIAGE**

by

George Zoebi

May 18, 1994

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ABSTRACT

The debate over the status of women represents a large clash between venerable religious beliefs and social movements that have affected the understanding of what a "true Biblical marriage" should be. This paper explores "Marriage Beyond Hierarchy...How To Keep Building a Partnership Marriage."

Chapter one deals with an exegetical study of Ephesians 6:22-33, I Peter 3:1-7, I Corinthians 7 and looks at the Lutheran Confessions and what they say about marriage, roles, responsibilities, submission and headship. Chapter two examines the "chain of command" model of marriage in comparison with the "equal partnership" model. Finally, chapter three presents a method for making God's original purposes, plans and intentions for marriage work. This method is a four session congregational video workshop.

A summary of the results of this study of the Biblical evidence is that man and wife were created by God to be equal partners in marriage. Conclusion: The principle that is to govern the marriage relationship is to be mutuality and partnership under the lordship of Christ and His will for marriage.

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INTRODUCTION

"Things are not what they seem" is a line poets, playwrights and pastors apply to a wide variety of people and predicaments. From my perspective as a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod pastor for twelve years these words are most fitting when referring to marriage. I have discovered that baffling myths, illusions, misconceptions, false assumptions, and other shaky notions about marriage leave countless husbands and wives in a chronic state of confusion, disappointment and disillusionment. And to my astonishment many of my brothers in the ministry advocate such myths, deeply entrenched in their thinking that it enjoys the status of Holy Writ.

Barbara Russell Chesser expresses this sentiment of false assumptions concerning marriage with the following words:

Although marriage is considered to be one of society's most potentially rewarding and satisfying relationships, it proves also to be one of the most complex and perplexing. Few universal, never-fail rules exist for living happily ever after. What makes for a convivial relationship for one couple may destroy the intimacy for another. What works once for a particular couple fails them at another time or in a different situation. What to one marriage partner is certain to guarantee holy wedlock to the other spells holy deadlock. Even the experts do not agree. What one advocates for marital bliss another says causes marital blahs. (Chesser, ix, 1990)

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." This paper's premise advocates that these words are not limited to only our spiritual life. These timeless words strike

a chord when referring to marriage today. More than ever, marriage cries out for sincerity, genuineness, honesty, integrity, trust and a pastor who will model those attributes in his own marriage.

Perhaps part of the problem of setting a "Christian example" comes from our very own religious culture and the deeply embedded views we have toward each other. In the Concordia Journal (April 1992) Samuel H. Nafzger had an article entitled, "The Doctoral Position of the LCMS on The Service of Woman in the Church." In this article Nafzger quotes from Paul Lindemann, "Women in the Church," Theological Quarterly (1920), p.30

Woman sank lower and lower in the estimation of man. She was a prolific subject of discussion, a large party classifying her army brutes without soul or reason. As early as the sixth century a council at Macon (585), 59 bishops taking part, devoted its time to a discussion of this question, "Does woman possess a soul?" Fortunately the decision allowed Christian women to remain human beings in the eyes of the clergy. Nearly a thousand years after this decision it was still contended that the women of newly discovered America belonged to the brute creation, possessing neither souls nor reason (Dictionnaire Feoda, Paris, 1819). Naturally, ideas like this affected woman's position also in the church. At an early date woman was forbidden to receive the Eucharist with her naked hand on account of her impurity (decree of the Council of Auxerre, 578) or to sing in the church. To such an extent was this opposition carried that the church of the Middle Ages did not hesitate to provide itself the eunuchs in order to supply cathedral choirs with the necessary sopranos. One of the charges against the Huguenots was that they permitted the women to sing in the church, using their voices in praise of God contrary to the express command of St. Paul, Catherine de Medici reproaching them for this great sin.

Lindemann notes the great St. Chrysostom's estimation of women as "a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable

calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill." (Lindemann, p.38, 1920)

In the November 23, 1992, issue of Time, Richard N. Ostling concludes his article "The Second Reformation" with these words:

Given the human-rights preachments that all churches deliver, a good case can be made that accommodation of woman's demands is not only just but also essential for the church's well-being...In order to succeed in the long term, the new Christian feminism must not only claim power and authority for women but also demonstrate that gender equality enhances the church's spiritual and moral strength. (Time, p.68. Nov. 1992)

Several years ago I attended a symposium at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne Indiana. The issue of the "place of women" was on the floor for discussion after a presentation. The discussion was red hot! I heard prejudicial and hateful comments from future Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod pastors toward women; not simply with regard to their "proper" role, but against their personhood. After each unkind pronouncement the majority of the assembly would applaud. These were not just students but pastors in the field as well.

One woman made her way to the microphone. Tears streamed down her eyes. In a half pleading, half fearful voice she spoke the following words. "You must allow us to have a part of the ministry as well. Perhaps not the ordained ministry, but you must see that God has given us gifts and talents to extend his kingdom. Please allow women of this church to share in the ministry...we are with you, not against you." She was shouted down.

At the Ohio District Pastors Conference in 1991, Jean Gartner told the wives in a special workshop that when she was speaking about the need for our church to reexamine the ministry of women, a pastor turned to her and said, "Women are only good for two things: cleaning toilets and we all know what the other one is."

Was this an isolated case or one representative of the opinion of larger group of people? My counseling practice has seen an increase of instances of clergy divorce with this "dictatorial attitude" showing itself as a common thread.

The material of this paper comes out of experience as a pastor, husband and a D.Min. student at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis. Since D.Min. students are not required to do "original" research, this paper will draw upon books, articles and D.Min. class material to supplement personal experience in formulating its findings. This paper will concentrate on exposing the deadly myth of "hierarchy" that has plagued parishioners' marriages, clergy marriages and ultimately the ministry of Christ's bride, the church. This myth promotes the idea that all players of marriage need to know their "role" or "part" in the "performance." As I was instructed before going out on vicarage, "Those of you who are not already married should take this time to date some of the available ladies in your vicarage congregations. Look for someone who will make a "good pastor's wife" to assist you in your future ministry...a helpmate that understands submission."

Does a husband "rule" over his wife or exercise leadership so that they are co-heirs of God's grace and therefore equals? I pray the conclusions of this paper will help shape a new understanding of the word "submission" and the love that is necessary not only for marriage in general but ministry modeling in particular.

Diana and David Garland write the following:

The primary concern of those who marry today is not just how to stay married till death do them part but how they can be happy together. Most Americans (other than statisticians) do not measure the strength of marriage by the ability to ward off divorce...Marriage in the lives of Christians has special challenges that transcend these criteria. Meeting the challenge of marriage issued to Christians entails something more than being able to stick it out, or even to attain happiness. It boils down to a challenge to live Christlike lives through the marital relationship. This is easier said than done, and it means "success" cannot be measured by scales of marital satisfaction or happiness but is dependent on the degree to which partners are enabled to "lose their lives in order to save them." The challenge is not to find personal happiness but to give of one's self to another. The Christian does not marry to be served but to serve, to be fulfilled but to fulfill, to be happy but to make happy. (Garland, p.8. 1986)

This paper is based on the premise that biblical and confessional studies must challenge the social scientific understanding of persons and their culture, religious or social. Both our understanding of our own experiences and our understanding of God's Word are subject to error. By an examination of "Marriage Beyond Hierarchy...How To Keep Building a Better Partnership Marriage" this paper desires that the reader come closer to realizing what God intends for marriage and to model that truth

whether in the "ordained pastoral ministry" or "in the priesthood of all believers."

In Chapter One we will we will do an exegetical study of Ephesians 5:22-33, I Peter 3:1-7 and I Corinthians 7 and draw some conclusions about the biblical understanding of marital roles, responsibilities, submission and headship. We will also look at an overview of the Lutheran Confessions dealing with the general subject of marriage. Chapter Two will devote itself to the issue of marriage as "chain of command" or "equal partnership" in light of the material presented in the first two chapters. Finally, Chapter Three will deal with the "how-to" component in the form of a four session congregational video workshop. How does one move from a "hierarchy" methodology for marriage to a "partnership" ministry in marriage?

To arrive we have to take a journey. Yet arriving is a process rather than an attainment. Our faith in God and its expression in The Lutheran-Church Missouri Synod helps us to take risks in achieving marital growth. In the vulnerability to which such risks expose us we are undergirded by the belief that God is for our marriage. This paper is to help the reader to appreciate and realize the marvelous potentials of marriage as designed by their Creator and prepare for the video workshop in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER ONE

A volatile issue in The Lutheran-Church Missouri Synod today revolves around what the Bible says about the basic relationship between husband and wife. Is it ordained by God that man is to outrank his wife and that her role requires a slavery submission to his authority? Or is the relationship between husband and wife to be one of partnership so that they not only stand together on an equal footing before God (Gal.3:28) but also are related to one another as equals? In an age of choices and a variety of alternative marital blueprints, many Christian spouses have struggled to discern the biblical message about marriage. This chapter is an examination of the key biblical passages that bear on the topic of the husband-wife relationship. However, before looking at the biblical texts, we will survey briefly the current debate about the proper roles for men and women in marriage.

One of the most popular teachings about the relationship between man and woman has alleged that man is the woman's "boss" and that she is forever to submit to his authority. Bill Gothard, a strong proponent of this view, estimated in 1977 that over a million people had attended his seminars (Bayly 1977). Gothard's platform is that the husband is God's hammer and his wife is the chisel; by the action of the hammer on the chisel the children (considered diamonds in the rough) are shaped. The passivity of the chisel, as opposed to the activity of the hammer, makes clear the wife's subordinate role in the home (Mollen.pakott 1977, 107). Using a military analogy, Gothard

contends that the family ought to be ordered by a chain of command in which everyone in the home is under authority, and that God deals with family members through these channels of authority. This authority is not considered domination so much as protection. It is suggested that when persons get out from under the "authoritative umbrella," they expose themselves to unnecessary temptations they are too weak to overcome. In other words, the husband's authority protects the woman from Satan (Howell 1979, 48).

"Before the fall", says Gothard, "Eve had a different relationship. Satan came directly to Eve instead of through Adam. When the woman was beguiled, God put a restriction on her. 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee' (Gen.3:16). But this restriction was for her own protection. Now Satan can no longer get through to her unless he goes through the husband." (Bockelman 1976,74)

Many others in the church, including women, espouse this kind of hierarchical relationship. Maxine Hancock writes that the husband's judgment is the absolute norm for the wife. We do not submit to our husbands because they are gentle and kind, or good, or godly, but because they are our husbands (Hancock 1975,38). Judith Miles has stated that women are "incarnate models of submission and loyalty" (Miles 1975, 151). She argues that it is through the woman's submission that the man learns how to submit himself to God. Even though a man has thoroughly corrupted his potential to be in the image of God, the godly wife is still to submit to him, and her submission to him is to be a model of the kind of relationship that he is to have

with God. In a revealing passage, Miles describes how this view influenced her own marriage:

One day this familiar verse acquired a heightened meaning for me, "Wives be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord"(Eph.5:22). It could not mean that! Not as to the Lord! But here it was. I was to treat my own human husband as though he were the Lord, resident in our own humble home. This was truly revelatory to me. Would I ask Jesus a basically maternal question such as "how are things at the office?" Would I remind the Lord that he was not driving prudently? Would I ever be in judgment over my Lord, over His taste, His opinions, or His actions? I was stunned—stunned into a new kind of submission. (Miles 1975, 44)

This kind of teaching can easily lead to an idolatrous submission to the husband. Marabel Morgan verges on this in her best-seller The Total Woman when she writes, "It is only when a woman surrenders her life to her husband, reveres and worships him, and is willing to serve him, that she becomes really beautiful to him" (Morgan 1975. 96-97). The Total Woman has been taught as gospel in Lutheran churches for a decade and has convinced many. Others, (Foh 1979; Hurley 1981) who view submission of the wife and headship of the husband as divinely ordained, find some of the popularized statements of the position extreme; they make more moderate applications from the same theological presuppositions about the biblical texts (Garland 1986, 26).

The supremacy of the "boss-dictator" husband has been taken for granted by the male-dominated church for centuries (see Fiorenze 1984) and has been expounded by notable theologians such as Aquinas, Calvin and Barth (see Jewett 1975, 61-82). Only because this position has been challenged by radical changes in

our culture and by accompanying changes in attitudes have so many risen to try to defend this traditional hierarchy "boss" pattern of the husband-wife relationship.

One of these changes is the increasing number of theologians who call for equal partnership between husband and wife and argue that submission is a mutual responsibility required of both. Both husband and wife are to submit individually to God as sovereign and to place the needs of their spouse above their own. That men and women are to function as equals does not mean that they are to lose their distinctiveness as male and female; instead, they are to complement each other's strengths and challenge each other to growth and change (Clinebell 1973).

Biblical texts have been bandied about to support each point of view, but simply compiling an arsenal of scripture passages does not clinch the argument. As Hull recognizes:

The dominant fact about this subject is its notorious difficulty. In the fact of bristling controversy among Bible believers, it would be folly to assume that any well-intentioned investigator need only open the pages of Scripture, assemble the pertinent texts, and draw the obvious conclusions which they support. Rather we find ourselves in a situation where students of equal scholarship and of equal piety have appealed to the same ultimate Source in defense of incompatible positions. (Hull 1975, 5)

Some have tried to take a mediating approach to avoid argument over which view is right:

Both (views) have worked well for Christians at different periods of history. So instead of arguing about one being right and the other wrong the best conclusion probably is that a Christian couple may take their choice; but they had better make quite sure, from the beginning, that they are both making the same choice! (Mace and Mace 1976, 30)

Is it, however, simply a matter of a young couple's choosing a pattern of marriage as they would choose a china pattern? If we recognize that a variety of patterns of marriage can be found in the scripture, on what basis do we claim that one pattern is more correct than another? Is scriptural "headship" to imply a male betterment in the eyes of God? Is scriptural "headship" to imply a boss-dictator rule in a marriage? Or does "headship" have to do with a divine "partnership" in marriage that God designed from the beginning? It is this question that this Major Applied Project deals with. We will use the RSV version as we begin our biblical study.

The arguments about the boss and leadership priority of the man totally ignore Genesis 1:26-31. The use of the plural in these verses indicates that God did not design a hierarchical relationship between the male and female when he created them: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them"(Gen.1:27). He created them; he blessed them, and gave them dominion(Gen.1:28); and in Genesis 5:1-2 he also named them. They were created as equals. The man and the woman were intended by God to correspond to each other. The woman was not created simply to be a "help-mate," as the venerable King James Version has it. The term "helper" suggests in English that one is an assistant and subordinate, but it does not connote inferiority; it is also used in the Old Testament for God who created and saved Israel (Trible

1978, 90). The key for understanding the meaning of the woman as "helper" is the phrase "fit for him," literally, "opposite to him," or "corresponding to him"(NEB). What the man needed was a helpmate, not a servant. This is why the animals, although also helpers, failed to pass muster. Adam established his supremacy over the animals but failed to find a helper fit for him. As shown in Chapter One, in the woman, he met his equal, a helper who was not his slave but who corresponded to him.

A rabbinic legend accords well with this line of interpretation. It imagined that Adam complained, when all the creatures were paraded before him, "Everyone has a partner, yet I have none." According to the story, this lack was not because of God's oversight but because of God's foresight. He knew that the man would bring charges against the woman (see Gen.3:12) and, therefore, did not create her until Adam expressly yearned for her (Cassuto 1961, 128). The text in Genesis makes clear that when God saw it was not good for man to be alone, he created for him a companion with whom he could be intimate, not an assistant whom he could dominate. The woman was formed from him; and immediately he recognized her to be his counterpart: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"(Gen.2:23). In their union the man and woman supplement each other physically, socially,⁵ and spiritually. It is not insignificant that she was taken from man's side, for she was to be his partner. She is, therefore, not a mere appendage to the man; as one flesh, husband and wife are a part of each other's being.

Those who see marriage as a military chain of command have argued that the Tempter approached the woman because she was the weaker and more vulnerable. Eve's encouragement to her husband to partake of the fruit is interpreted as an act of insubordination; her sin of disobedience to God was in part her self-assumed position of leadership above her husband. Adam listened to his wife and, by allowing her to have authority over him, sinned in distorting the natural hierarchy. When God came, he called to the man, not the woman, thus placing primary responsibility on him (Gen.3:9).

David Garland states that if one cares to engage in this kind of psychological exegesis, it is just as logical to argue that the woman was tempted first because she was more sensitive and thoughtful than the man. She, at least, engaged in theological dialogue with the serpent; Adam dumbly accepted the offered fruit ("she gave some to her husband, and with her he ate," Gen.3:6). She was beguiled by a creature "more subtle than any other wild creature" (Gen.3:1, 13); what was Adam's excuse? Was he still groggy from the deep sleep? The order of the temptations does not suggest anything about the vulnerability of the woman or the natural superiority of the man. Both were equally guilty of disobedience to God, and it had nothing to do with violation supposed role assignments (Garland 1986, 29).

The pivotal passages in the New Testament for the argument that God has ordained the relationship between husband and wife to be hierarchal are: Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians

3:18-19, Titus 2:4-5, and I Peter 3:1-7. We will look at these passages in more depth soon.

The first thing to be noted is that each of these injunctions is embedded in larger units that Luther christened "Haustafel," a list of rules for the household. Generally, they consist of a string of admonitions to family members, wives and husbands, children and parents, slaves and masters. Parallels to these lists of duties have been noted in Stoic moral philosophy, Hellenistic Judaism,⁵ and Aristotelian political thought, consequently, competing theories exist about the precise background of the household rules in the New Testament. Nevertheless, studies have shown how the household rules were formulated in conformity with the conventional ideals of the ancient world. Rordorf reflects the consensus of scholarly opinion;

These lists of domestic duties reflect the social structures and the rules of good conduct of their age. The Christian message is not interested in changing them. Rather it teaches the Christian to live "in the Lord" within that ordinary framework of his culture. (Rordorf, 1969, 198)

In the first century, the ordinary framework of culture accorded great and unquestioned power to the father and the husband (Garland 1986, 30). Consequently, "the predominance of the husband was part of the cultural environment of the early Christians, not one of their creations" (Rordorf, 1969, 200).

Often cited is the opinion of Plutarch in his Advice to Bride and

Groom: ⁶

...if they [wives] subordinate themselves to their husbands, they are commended, but if they want to have control, they

cut a sorer figure than the subjects of their control. not as the owner has control of a piece of property, but as the soul controls the body, by entering into her feelings and being knit to her through goodwill. As, therefore, it is possible to exercise care over the body without being a slave to its pleasures and desires, so it is possible to govern a wife, and at the same time delight and gratify her. (142E; see also Martial, Epigrams 8, 12)

In Hellenistic Judaism, this idea was expressed more heavy-handedly by Philo of Alexandria: "Wives must be in servitude to their husbands, a servitude not imposed by violent ill-treatment but promoting obedience in all things" (Hypothetica 7.3). In the same vein, Josephus wrote, "The woman it [the Law] says, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be obedient, not for her humiliation, but that she may be directed; for the authority has been given by God to the man" (Against Apion 2.201).

Although it would seem to be the case that the lists of duties in the New Testament reflect the conventional tried-and-true wisdom about how members of a household are to relate properly to one another, the New Testament writers did not simply siphon off this worldly wisdom without discrimination or purpose. The duties were modified by Christian perceptions and recast to speak to particular needs in the Christian communities. They have been influenced by the Old Testament and have been qualified by a distinctive Christian motivation. These things were to be done in the Lord (Eph.5:22; 6:1,5,6,7; Col.3:18, 20, 22, 23; I Peter 3:4). Nor is it the case in the New Testament that certain

members have rights and others duties. The lists of duties normally occur in pairs and are considered reciprocal. Consequently, when we examine these passages we can expect to find reflections of the way things were between husband and wives in the ancient world from centuries of cultural conditioning. But we can also expect to find flashes of a distinctively Christian vision of the way things ought to be between husbands and wives that transcends cultural conditions (Garland 1986, 31).

Ephesians 5:22-33

The section of household rules in Ephesians begins with instructions to wives and husbands. Many have tended to read this passage as if only the first three verses were important. They are satisfied that the gist of what husband-wife relations are to be is found here — the husband is to be the head and the wife is to be subject in everything. Some readers have concluded from this that the wife is to heed the husband's rebukes, obey his commands, fulfill his desires, and follow his lead in ALL things. But when one reads the text a different picture emerges. The ideal is not masculine rule and feminine blind compliance but mutual surrender in commitment to Christ and to the needs of others.

Instructions to the wife.

In Ephesians 5:22, the wife is instructed to be subject to her husband as to the Lord. Actually, no verb occurs in the Greek text of verse 22. It reads, literally, "Wives to their

own husbands as to the Lord." The verb "be subject" must then be supplied from 5:21: "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." This verb is also found in 5:24, "As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands." A number of things require our attention.

The first is the implication of the fact that the verb "be subject" (*hypotassomai*) is never used specifically with wives as the subject. In 5:22, the reader is consequently required to refer back to 5:21 to supply the verb. Although it is possible grammatically for verse 21 to begin the new section with the domestic code, it is more probable that it completes the thought begun in 5:18b. The readers are challenged to "be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (5:18b-21). Since 5:22 must be read in light of 5:15 and 5:21, the notion of the wives' total bland subjection in all things, is transformed. It is not simply a demand for the wife to assume her divinely ordained role of underling. Her submission to the husband must be viewed as part and parcel of the Christian calling. Mutual submission is evidence of being filled with the Spirit and is expected of everyone regardless of age, station, or gender. All Christians are to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ (see also I Peter 5:5).

This exhortation to be subject to one another reiterates a theme found throughout the teaching of both Paul and Jesus that Christians have been called to serve others and not to assert their own rights (see Rom.12:18b; 15:1-3; I Cor.10:33-11:1; Gal.5:13; Phil.2:3-4; and Matt.23:11-12; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:14-15). What is obligatory for Christians is an unconditional surrender of self that mirrors that of Christ (see Eph.4:32). Personal interests are to be subordinated for the sake of others, but that does not make a person subordinate in the kingdom of God. Others are to be considered better than oneself, but that does not mean that one is inferior to others; it means that those in Christ are to seek first the welfare of others and to do nothing from selfishness (Phil 2:3-4). The call to be submissive to others is, therefore, similar to the call to be humble (Eph.4:1-3). This basic truth must color how one interprets the subjection of the wife in Ephesians 5:22. If all Christians are to be subject to one another, the wife's subjection to her husband is not some responsibility unique only to her in God's scheme of things.

In the continuation of the household rules, children are instructed to obey their parents (6:1), and slaves are told to obey their masters (6:5), but wives are not commanded to blindly obey their husbands in all matters. That leaves us to ponder the role of children and slaves, but those are other issues. What is pertinent is that the wife is not asked to be

servile before her husband or to knuckle under to his total will. She is not the husband's vassal, and marriage is not servitude for the wife.

A third point is that wives are to be subject to their husbands AS TO THE LORD. This does not mean that they are to be subject as if their husbands were their lords, for this would require the plural, "as to their lords." The husband is not the wife's lord or savior (5:23), and she is not to genuflect before him. Nor does this mean that the husband somehow becomes the representative of Christ for her, as the pope becomes the Vicar of Christ for the church. Nor does this mean that her submission to him is an occasion for demonstrating her allegiance to Christ, as is the case with the slaves' submission to their masters (Eph.6:7; Col.3:23; see Barth 1974, 612). "As to the Lord" has to do instead with the motivation of her submission. We are responsible to Christ in all aspects of life, including the intimacy of marriage (Fendrich 1977, 58), and the wife's commitment to Christ is, therefore, to be the ground of her commitment to her husband. What is interesting is that nothing is said about the wife's complying with the natural order of things in the universe, which was an argument appealed to by other writers in the ancient world (see Schweizer 1983, 216).

Instructions to the husband.

Far more is demanded of the husband in Ephesians 5:25-33 as "the head" of his spouse. The headship of the man is mentioned also in I Corinthians 11:23, "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of every woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." The meaning of "head" in this passage is not "chief" or "dictator" but "source" or "origin" (see Bruce 1971, 103; Bedale 1954, 211-212). That Christ is head of every man means that he was the source of every man's existence as the agent of creation (see I Cor.8:6; Col.1:16). By the same token, according to the creation account in Genesis 2 (alluded to in I Cor.11:8, 12), man was the source of woman's existence. She was called "wo-man" because she was made from man. Now, Paul pointed out, men and women are interdependent since "man is now born of woman" (I Cor.11:11-12). Finally, the source of Christ was God, since all things are from God. Paul was not dealing with marriage and the relationship between husband and wife in I Corinthians but with problems that had emerged in the community's worship surrounding issues of the differences between male and female. For this reason, Paul appealed to the creation accounts, which affirm that man was created male and female.

To understand what is meant by the phrase in Ephesians 5:23 that "the head of the wife is as Christ is the head of the church," one must turn to Ephesians itself. The headship of the

husband is carefully qualified. He is the head of the wife IN THE SAME WAY that Christ is the head of the church. The term "head" was used earlier in 1:22 and 4:15 to describe Christ. It was asserted in 1:22 that Christ is head over all things, but he is head over all things for the church. The headship of Christ is a source of life and vitality for the church. The head fills the body with its fullness (1:23). It is the source of the body's development and growth (4:15-16) and in Colossians 2:19 the head is said to nourish the body. In Ephesians 5:23, Christ as head of the church saves his body. This is where the analogy between the husband as head of his wife and Christ as head of His church is limited, since the husband is no more able to save his wife than himself. The husband as head of his wife, however, is able to nurture his wife, his body (5:28). It is precisely this idea that is pursued in verse 29. The husband as head is to nourish and cherish his wife, his body, just as Christ does the church, his body.

Christ does not relate to his church as an Oriental potentate tyrannizing his subjects or a five-star general domineering over "buck privates".¹¹ Instead, he nourishes, cherishes, and loves. In our culture, in which marriage is idealized as the caring for and emotional nurturing of each other, this expectation seems unnecessary. In the cultural context of Ephesians, however, this expectation was revolutionary. Marriage was not viewed as the emotional and spiritual nurturing of each other;

wives were considered by many to be property, inferiors with whom some husbands would rarely even converse.

If the husband was to be the head of his wife as Christ is head of his church, he was to love his wife JUST AS Christ loves his church (see Eph.5:2). It was certainly nothing new to tell the husbands to love their wives, but this love is given a new dimension when the standard is Christ's love for his people. The husband was to learn how he was to love his wife from the concrete example of how Christ expressed his love. Christ gave himself up in behalf of his church (see Gal.2:20; Phil.2:6-11), which was precisely how he became the head of it. He did this, according to Ephesians 5:26-27, that he might sanctify her and present her spotless and glorious before his throne — that she might be holy and blameless. It was a love that aspired to what was best for the beloved. Christ loved through his sacrifice; he was willing to pay the supreme cost and cherish the beloved even when she was unworthy of that love (Rom.5:8). He loved without conditions. This is the kind of love that the husband is expected to have for his wife, and it is an awesome demand without parallel in the ancient world.

The conclusion is reached in 5:28: "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies." Again, the example is Christ. Just as Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, his body (5:29-30), so must the husband nourish and cherish his wife. It is not that the husband is to love his wife as he loves

his own body, but he is to love her AS his body. She IS his body. As one flesh (5:31), the two have become a part of each other. With this statement the dichotomy of superior/inferior, dictator/slave is erased completely. This is not subordination but identification (Caird 1976, 89). The relationship of love regards the spouse as an equal.

Since the emphasis on one flesh is the climax of the argument, it deserves attention in this Major Applied Project. The first thing we should clarify is that becoming one flesh does not imply that in marriage the husband and wife "become an amalgamation in which the identity of the constituents is swallowed up and lost in an undifferentiated unity" (Bailey 1952, 44). Each retains individual identity, but each person is strengthened and enlarged by the new life together.

More significant, however, is the fact that the quotation comes from Genesis 2:24 and, thereby, refers back to the original state of things between man and wife. Jesus quoted this verse to repudiate the evolution of divorce that was permitted by Moses because of man's hardness of heart. Divorce was not God's intention from the beginning, for he had joined the two together into one flesh (Matt.19:4-8). After the fall, however, the relationship between husband and wife was disfigured by their sin. Hardness of heart took root: "Your husband...shall rule over you" (Gen.3:16). Dominance and subservience, and eventually divorce, where the husband had the absolute power to dispose of

his wife whenever he wished, became normative, even though this was not God's desire for marriage in creation. Christ, however, has reversed the consequences of eternal death in the fall (see Rom.5:1-21). Those who were dead in their sin have been made alive in Christ (Eph.2:5). We are new creations, created in Christ Jesus for new works (Eph.2:10). As Christ's death and resurrection made possible the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile, begetting in himself one new humanity and putting to death enmity and effecting peace, so it is also the case between husband and wife (Garland 1986, 38). The relationship between husband and wife is restored in accordance with the intention of the Creator. In Christ, the old tensions are resolved and the marriage relationship acquires a new norm — no longer antagonism and dictator rule but union and equality as God intended from the beginning.

It is clear from these instructions to the husband that he is not authorized to lord it over his wife. It is the pagans who lord it over one another; it is not to be so among you, Jesus warned (Matt.20:25-26). If Christ is the husband's model, he must seek out ways to give himself up for his spouse, not give himself airs as the dictator of the spouse. If the wife's submission is to be likened to that of the church to Christ (Eph.5:24), it is a "submission to redemption and redemptive love" (Quesnell 1968, 354). It is to be freely given and can never be demanded. Ephesians 5, therefore, characterizes mar-

riage as "an experience of surrender without absorption, of service without compulsion, of love without conditions" (Richardson 1958, 258) for both the husband and the wife. The Christian marriage is to be distinguished by partnership not dictatorial rule.

I Peter 3:1-7

Instructions to the wife.

The injunctions to wives in I Peter 3:1-6, need to be understood in light of their context in the epistle as well as the historical context. The passage appears in the midst of a series of exhortations beginning in 2:11. A basic premise of the exhortations is that by "doing right" (see I Peter 2:14-15, 20; 3:6, 13, 17; 4:19) and by enduring suffering quietly (see 2:20; 3:14, 17; 4:16; 19; 5:10), Christians will be able "to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (2:12, 15). The household code beginning in 2:18 was modified in light of this premise and employed to address the problem of how Christians should comport themselves in a situation of persecution (Garland 1986, 38). Slaves and wives, especially those married to non-Christian husbands, are singled out for instruction because, as Senior notes, they "had to endure the most painful conflict between their Christian freedom and their efforts to live a good life in the world" (Senior 1980, 48). The counsel, however, has wider application than just to slaves and wives. Christian slaves and wives married to non-Christians become a model of how Christians of all stations are to behave in the face of verbal abuse, scorn,

and bitter opposition so that they might win over their pagan adversaries.

The meaning of the domestic code in I Peter has been clarified by Elliott, who argues that it has a paradigmatic function (Elliott 1981, 208-233). When compared to other household exhortations in Ephesians, Colossians, and the pastoral epistles, I Peter 2:18-25 has noteworthy features that distinguish it. First: the servants are identified as "household servants" (oiketai, a word used only three times elsewhere in the New Testament) instead of the more frequent term "slaves" (douloi), which appears in the other exhortations to slaves (Eph.6:5; Col.3:22; I Tim.6:1; Titus 2:9). Second: in contrast to all other household codes in the New Testament, the servants' duties are mentioned first. Elsewhere, slaves and masters are considered last. Third: no mention, whatsoever, is made of the masters and their responsibilities: "The focus is directed exclusively to the condition and conduct of household slaves" (Elliott 1981, 206). Fourth: the commands to the servants in verses 18 to 20 are buttressed by a reflection on the suffering of Christ in verses 21 to 25. The exhortation is given a unique and "extensive christological foundation" (Elliott 1981, 206).

The best explanation for these unique features is that I Peter 2:18-25 functions as a paradigm. The household servants are exemplars for all the members of the household of God since "all the members are in a certain sense 'oiketai,' like 'oikonomoi' (4:10), servants of one another" (Elliott 1981, 207). Their

vulnerability typifies the vulnerability of all Christians. Their possible suffering under callous masters squares with the potential suffering of all Christians in a hostile environment (see I Peter 1:6; 3:14, 17; 4:1, 13, 16, 19; 5:9-10). What is required of them — fear (2:18), endurance (2:20), a clear conscience (2:19), and doing right (2:20) — is required of all Christians ("fear," 1:17; 2:17; "endurance," 1:6; 5:10; "a clear conscience," 3:16, 21; "doing right," 2:14-15; 3:13, 17). Can it be that slaves alone are called to suffer and follow in the footsteps of Jesus (2:21)? Surely the writer understands this as the calling of all Christians, and because the slaves serve as models for all Christians, this explains why some mention is made of the owners' responsibilities. Elliott concludes, "The focus is reserved for those alone whose condition and calling most clearly represent the situation and vocation of the entire household of God" (Elliott 1981, 207).

As Lillie has observed, "The New Testament uses the humbler rather than the dominating parties in the house-table as figurative descriptions of true Christian believers" (Lillie 1975, 185). The church is identified as the bride of Christ (Eph.5:23-24; Rev.21:2, 9; 22:17). Jesus instructed his disciples to turn and become as little children (Matt.18:1-4). Paul and others identified themselves as slaves of Christ (Rom.1:1; Gal.1:10; Phil.1:1; II Tim.2:24; Titus 1:1; James 1:1; II Peter 1:1; Jude 1; Rev.1:1; and Mark 10:44)). The effect of using

those who were considered by society to be of the lowest estate as role models for all Christians is to turn any view of gradations of rank or value on its head.

Instructions to the wife.

Recognition of the paradigmatic function of the house rules in I Peter helps clarify the instructions to wives that follow. They were not budding Jezebels (Rev.2:20). They were addressed because their conversions created potentially grievous discord in their families if the husband remained unconverted. Those counseled were wives married to non-Christians, for their husbands are described as not obeying the Word, and consequently they needed to be won (compare I Cor.9:19-22 for the ideal of "winning"). They were not simply unresponsive to the word; the other occurrences of the word "disobey" on I Peter (2:8; 3:20; 4:17) suggest that it refers to active hostility. The husbands were, therefore, antagonistic to Christianity and certainly not amused when their wives became Christians.

The lot of wives in general was not always blissful in the ancient world, as is reflected in Euripides' Medea (244-248):

We women are of all unhappiest, Who, first, must buy, as buys the highest bidder, A husband — nay, we do but win for our lives A master! Deeper depth of wrong is this. Here too is dire risk, — will the lord we gain Be evil or good? Divorce? — tis infamy To us: we may not even reject a suitor Then, coming to new customs, habits new, One need be a seer, to know the thing unlearnt. At home, what manner of man has mate shall be. And if we learn our lesson, if our lord Dwell with us, plunging not against the yoke, Happy our lot is; else — no help but death for the man, when the home-yoke galls his neck, Goes forth, to ease a weary sickened heart by turning to some friend, some kindred soul: We to one heart alone can look for comfort.

The lot of a wife who had, from the husbands's perspective, been ensnared by a suspect Oriental superstition could be doubly perilous. Especially was this the case where it was believed that the wife was supposed to adhere to the religious beliefs of her husband. Plutarch, for example, wrote:

A wife ought not to make friends of her own, but to enjoy her husband's friends in common with him. The gods are the first and most important friends. Wherefore, it is becoming for a wife to worship and to know only the gods that her husband believes in, and to shut the front door tight upon all queer rituals and outlandish superstitions. For with no god to stealthy and secret rites performed by a woman find an favor. (Advice to Bride and Groom 19:141E)

It was not so delicate a matter when the husband became a Christian, since his wife would normally follow suit (see Acts 16:31-34) and since he had unquestioned freedom of action. For wives it was otherwise. Beare sums up the situation well:

Many a husband will have felt that his wife was failing in her proper fidelity to him when she became converted to another religion, especially one which compelled her to refuse to worship his gods or to take part in the ordinary religious rites of the household, let alone the public ceremonies. (Beare 1970, 153)

The strain resulting from a mixed marriage can be detected in I Corinthians 7:12-16 (compare the later situations of Tertullian, To His Wife, 2.4-7; and Justin II Apology 2). Some Christians in Corinth apparently felt obliged to separate from or divorce their pagan partner. I Peter recommended neither course. The Christian wife instead was to live out her commitment to Christ within the marriage relationship and in submission to her husband. This meant that she was to be the best wife she could

possibly be to her husband. For many it must have been like walking on eggs. She had already breached patriarchal domination by becoming a Christian and disowning the gods of her husband and nation. Like the slave addressed in I Peter 2:18-20, she was to accept whatever suffering might come from her situation in the same way Christ did (2:21-25). Living day in and day out in a lion's den with an embittered and all-powerful husband as the lion, could easily evoke terror, but the wife was counseled to do right and let nothing terrify her (3:6). It was advice applicable to all Christian: "But even if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord" (I Peter 3:14-15a).

I Peter 3:1-6 presented both stratagem for evangelizing an unbelieving husband and a model of behavior for all Christians — who also were virtually powerless in their world and surrounded by hostile forces (see 3:8-4:6). As a stratagem, it was not advice on how the wife might win the affection of her husband, or even advice about marriage at all. Instead, it advised how the wife might win the husband for Christ without a word (3:1-2). It is often pointed out how this corresponds to the experience of Augustine's mother, Monica, who "won" her husband toward the end of his life:

When she came to marriageable age, she was bestowed upon a husband and served him as her lord, and she did

all one could to win to Thee, speaking to him of Thee by her deportment, whereby Thou maddest her beautiful and reverently lovable and admirable to her husband... Finally, when her husband was now at the very end of his earthly life, she won him unto Thee. (Augustine, Confessions 9.19,22)

As a model of Christian conduct, what is required of the wife in I Peter 3 is required of all members of the household of God. They too are to be submissive (2:13, 5:5-6). The emphasis on the good conduct or behavior (anastrophe) of the wife that is to be observed by her non-Christian husband ("when they see your reverent and chaste behavior," 3:2) is no different from the appeal made to all Christians: "Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (2:12). The phrase translated "reverent" in 3:2 literally reads "in fear." That does not mean that the wife was to live in fear of her husband (see 3:6). "Fear" was used here, as throughout I Peter, as an abbreviation, a telegram word, that stood for the fear of God required of all Christians (1:17; 2:17; 3:14-15) as the basis of their conduct in the world. The wives were also encouraged to nurture "a gentle and quite spirit" (3:4), but it should not be thought that a quiet demeanor was something befitting only wives. "Gentleness" is the same word used in the third beatitude, "Blessed are the meek" (Matt.5:5), and to describe Jesus (Matt.11:29; 21:5). It, too, was supposed to characterize the response of Christians to pagan adversaries: "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who

calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence" (I Peter 3:15).

The admonition to adopt the attitude of quietness needs to be read in the context of hostility experienced by the wife married to the pagan and by the entire community. Quietness reflects the spirit of Jesus, who, when he was reviled, did not revile back (2:23). This was the ideal for all Christians, who were not to return reviling for reviling but to hold their tongues except to bless (3:8-11). The early church encouraged modesty in outward demeanor as a means of commanding respect from outsiders and because it was believed that a quiet, peaceable life would have evangelistic effects in a predominantly pagan society (see I Thess.4:11-12; II Thess.3:12; I Tim.2:1-4). It should not be surprising that this attitude is commanded to the wife married to an unbeliever.

A brief word should be said about what I Peter 3 has to say about feminine adornment. Fundamental interpretations usually follow the path of early church fathers, who understood verses 3 to 5 (see also I Tim.2:9-10) as a ban on all finery and beautification aids, or "poultices of lust" as Jerome later termed them (see Tertullian, The Apparel of Women; Clement of Alexandria, The Educator, 3.11.66; Cyprian, The Dress of Virgins). The emphasis, however, is on true beauty as something that is spirit deep, not skin deep. Admonitions against outward ornamentation were widespread in the ancient world. According to I Enoch 8.1-2, one of

the fallen angels taught mankind the art of making bracelets, decorations, and cosmetics; as a result, adultery soon became widespread (see Isa.3:18-23). Women were encouraged to cultivate the inner graces if they wished to be genuinely beautiful.

Plutarch contended in his Advise to Bride and Groom:LS1

And so a wedded and lawful wife becomes an irresistible thing if she makes everything, dowry, birth, magic charms and even the magic girdle itself, to be inherent in herself, and by character and virtue succeeds in winning her husband's love. (23.141C) It is not gold or precious stones or scarlet that makes her such (adorned), but whatever invest her with that something that betokens dignity, good behavior and modesty. (26.141E)

An incident recorded by Livy, probably fictional, is an interesting example of one view of the dangers of ostentatious feminine attire but also reflects a prevalent attitude toward women. The matter concerned a debate in the Roman senate over repeal of the Oppian Law (passed in 215 B.C.) that allowed women to possess only half an ounce of gold and banned dyed apparel. Intended to reduce conspicuous consumption in the midst of a war, it had later sparked mutinous demonstrations by annoyed women. Marcus Porcius Cato argued vigorously for keeping the law. "If each of us, citizens, had determined to assert his rights and dignity as a husband with respect to his own spouse, we should have less trouble with the sex as a whole; as it is, our liberty, destroyed at home by female violence, even here in the Forum is crushed and trodden underfoot, and because we have not kept them individually under control, we dread them collectively" (Histories 34.2.1-2). Disturbed by the consequences if the pressure from

the women should succeed, he continued, "If you suffer them to seize these bonds one by one and wrench themselves free and finally be placed on a parity with their husbands, do you think that you will be able to endure them? The moment they begin to be your equals, they will be your superiors" (24.3.2-3). He was also concerned that repeal of the law would spark a green-eyed competitiveness in dress:

Do you wish, citizens, to start a race like this among your wives, so that the rich shall want to win what no other woman can have and the poor, lest they be despised for their poverty, shall spend beyond their means? Once let these women begin to be ashamed of what they should not be ashamed, and they will not be ashamed of what they ought. She who can buy from her purse will buy; she who cannot will beg her husband. Poor wretch that husband, both he who will yield and he who yields not, since what he will not himself give he will see given by another man. (24.4.15-17)

First Peter is by no means so cynical, but in keeping with the contemporary appraisal of true beauty, the wife was encouraged to develop a gentle and quiet spirit. By so doing, she would be numbered among the daughters of Sarah. Sarah herself was counted among the four most beautiful women of the Old Testament (along with Rahab, Abigail, and Esther). But it was her character and supposed submission to her husband that were counted as true beauty in 3:5-6.

This picture of Sarah's submissive obedience to her husband is interesting. At times it was Abraham who was obedient to her. His barren wife had, for example, demanded that he cohabit with her slave Hagar so that she might be able to repro-

duce through her (Gen.16:2) and later gave him an ultimatum, confirmed by none other than God, to cast out the slave with her son (Gen.21:10-12). Nor was she always meekly quiet. She lashed out at her husband after Hagar conceived and began to treat her with contempt: "This outrage against me is your fault!"

(Gen.16:5, translation from Speiser 1964, 116). On the only occasion that she called her husband "lord" — just as well translated "husband" — she was laughing derisively on overhearing the news that she and Abraham were to become parents: "My husband is old" (Gen.18:12). She then lied to God about having laughed (Gen.18:15). That Sarah was presented as a model for Christian wives married to unbelievers is probably attributable to how she was portrayed in later tradition. According to the Rabbis, she was the mother of proselytes. According to Philo (Allegorical Interpretation, 3.244-245), she pointed Abraham on the way to virtue (Balch 1981, 105). Peter believed that by imitating Sarah, the Christian wife might also win her husband to virtue and to Christ.

Instructions to the husband.

A short concluding word was directed to the Christian husband married to a Christian wife (they are "joint heirs of the grace of life") in I Peter 3:7. He was told to live with her, literally "according to knowledge." What is this knowledge? Apparently, it is a distinctively Christian perception that stands over against what we labeled as "the passions of your

former ignorance" in 1:14. The Christian husband has come to know God (see Gal.4:9) and consequently can no longer operate with the value system of his pagan past or surroundings (I Peter 1:18, 4:2-4). One can draw comparisons with I Thessalonians 4:3-5, where Paul asserted it was the will of God "that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God." The Christian husband was expected to relate to his wife in holiness and honor because she is a co-partner in the grace God has bestowed on all humanity.

This means that the husband's attitude toward his wife (and women in general) must be influenced by the Christian vision that in Christ all have dignity in God's eyes. A notorious saying attributed to Demosthenes (Against Neaera 122) declared, "We keep courtesans for our pleasure, concubines for the regular physical needs of the body, and wives to bear us legitimate children and look after household affairs." The Christian husband, however, was not to regard his wife as a combination brood mare and housemaid. She is not a possession or a toy for one's sexual amusement; she is a person who is precious and consequently to be honored (see I Peter 2:7). Beare astutely comments:

The relationship to God determines the nature of the marriage relationship; through the knowledge of God, the husband learns to set a new value on the wife, not merely as the mother of his children (which in even so exceptional a person as Plato is virtually the only consideration), but as the partner in his eternal hope and in his prayers. (Beare 1970, 157)

The husband and wife were therefore to "cohabit as coheirs" (Elliott 1981, 201). Treating the wife as a coheir destroys any hierarchical concept of their relationship. To treat her as anything less than an equal in God's eyes directly impinges on the husband's relationship to God. The phrase "lest your prayers be hindered" implies that if the husband should mistreat or debase his wife, he will soon begin to pray like a noisy gong (see I Cor.13:1). The Christian wife may have to endure ill will from her non-Christian husband, but the Christian husband is never to aggrieve his wife if he wishes to bear the name "Christian."

One last word should be said about the description of the wife as a weaker vessel, sometimes translated "weaker sex." It was not uncommon in Greco-Roman society to describe woman in a derogatory sense as weaker (see Selwyn 1947, 187). For example, in the Letter of Aristeas 250, King Ptolemy asked one of the Jewish wise men how he could live amicably with his wife. The answer;

By recognizing that womankind are by nature headstrong and energetic in the pursuit of their own desires, and subject to sudden changes of opinion through fallacious reasoning, and their nature is essentially weak. It is necessary to deal wisely with them and not to provoke strife.

This is not the connotation of "weaker vessel" in I Peter (the husband, it implies, is also a "vessel"; see Acts 9:15). In what way, then, did I Peter consider the wife to be

weaker? It could not refer to a psychological weakness, because she was expected to be able to bear up under intense pressure (3:6). She was not spiritually weaker, since she was designated a co-heir of the grace of life. Perhaps the phrase referred to her physical weakness in comparison to (most) men — she cannot throw a softball as far. It is more meaningful, however, to consider this as a reference to the subjugation of women by the male-dominated culture. Although they were co-heirs in God's kingdom, women were disenfranchised from the male kingdoms of this world. They were vulnerable, powerless, and considered by some to be expendable. This powerlessness, or political "weakness," was not a characteristic inherent in being female but a role prescribed for her by a male-oriented society. She was not weaker because of any personal shortcoming but because she was a woman — a lesser class of persons — in a man's world. Best suggests that we might have here a practical application of I Corinthians 12:22. The wife was not one of the mighty of the world, and therefore the husband was to bestow honor on her (Best 1971, 128). He was not to regard her or treat her as his world did, and Christian marriage was not to be governed by the law of the strongest.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

The instructions to wives found in the pastoral epistles can be understood only when the problems they were meant to address are clarified. A careful reading reveals that problems

concerning marriage have surfaced in the churches.

Marriage and sexual intercourse, even for the purpose of procreation, have incurred dishonor among the heretics. First Timothy 4:1-3 was a response to this attitude:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods.

According to the Gospels, commitment to Christ can cause estrangement from the natural family (see Mark 3:1-35; Matt. 10:37-39), but some early Christians seem to have gone out of their way to create tension. They had set their minds on the things above to the exclusion of nearly all the things below, particularly family responsibilities. Some rejected their family ties and encouraged others to do so as a sign of devotion to Christ. They left houses, wives or husbands, and children, assuming that they were supposed to do this (see Luke 18:29). Marriage was viewed by them as a hindrance that could exclude one from the kingdom (see Luke 14:20). If the various apocryphal acts of apostles are any indication, this disdain of marriage gained a greater foothold in the second century. One gets the impression from them that the Luke's central message protested against defilement caused by sexual relationships even within marriage, and they created no small outcry from aggrieved husbands and fiances.

The Acts of Paul and Thecla (New Testament Apocrypha) provides something interesting. According to this work, Paul proclaimed blessed are those who keep the flesh chaste for they shall become the temple of God (2.5). He was said to preach that one has no resurrection unless one continues to be chaste and not defile the flesh (2.12). One Thecla, a virgin affianced to Thamyris, was quite captured by this teaching. She wanted to be counted worthy to stand before Paul along with other virgins, and as a consequence she refused to marry. This naturally provoked Thamyris as well as Thecla's mother. Charges were brought against Paul for alienation of affections because of this new doctrine of The Christian (2.14). An attempt, encouraged by her mother, was made to burn Thecla for rebelling against the law of the Iconians. One might think that the canonical advice of Paul, "It is better to marry than to burn" (I Cor.7:9, KJV), would apply, but Thecla was miraculously saved by rain and continued to the end of her life preaching the gospel of sexual abstinence. A similar pattern where a woman, incited by the preaching of an apostle, withdraws from a marriage relationship to live an ascetic life is repeated in the Acts of Thomas 12-13, the Acts of Peter 33-34, and the Acts of Andrew (see also Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 1.24.2). This negative attitude toward marriage and sexuality must also have infected the church at the time the pastoral epistles were written (see also I Cor.7). When a marriage partner became caught up in this enthusiastic asceticism,

serious problems ensued not only for the marriage but also for the Christians' reputation in the community (see Balch 1981, 66-80, for Greco-Roman criticism of Eastern religions).

It can be detected from II Timothy 3:1-9 that the heretics had made particular headway among impressionable women.

Verses 6-7 read:

For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

The instructions to wives in the pastoral epistles must be understood as a response to these problems. Sexuality and marriage were affirmed as creations of God and therefore good. They were not to be rejected but "to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and KNOW THE TRUTH" (I Tim.4:3, emphasis added). Hebrews 13:4, "Let marriage be held in honor among all," was a similar response to the negative appraisal of marriage. The difficult passage in I Timothy 2:15 should be seen in this light. To say that women will be saved through childbearing was to affirm childbearing. It was not to suggest that the path of salvation was different for men and women. This council reappears in I Timothy 5:14: "I would have younger widows marry, bear children, (and) rule their households." One of the qualifications of the "real" widow was that she had brought up children (I Tim.5:10). In Titus 2:4-5, the elder women were asked to train

younger women "to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands." It would seem clear that these instructions were given because there were those who were influencing wives to do otherwise in the name of God. Wives were being dissuaded from living out any marital role, because marriage and bearing and rearing children were seen as impediments to salvation.

An overriding concern in the pastorals is "that the word of God may not be discredited" (Titus 2:5). The pastor wished to avoid giving the enemy any opportunity to revile the Christian community for outlandish anti-social behavior, particularly when it came to obligations to family and marriage conventions (I Tim.5:14). It was a concern of Paul in writing to the Corinthians that "all things should be done decently and in order" (I Cor.14:40). Judge points out:

It could be disastrous if enthusiastic members failed to contain their principles within the privacy of the association, and were led into political indiscretions or offenses against the hierarchy of the household. Hence the growing stress on good order and regular leadership within the associations themselves.
(Judge 1960, 76)

The stress in the pastoral epistles on the wife's subordination to her husband and her role of domesticity was intended to counter the heretics who encouraged wives to repudiate their marriage ties and roles to pursue some higher calling. It is this understanding that helps to underscore how a wife voluntarily puts herself under the leadership of her husband

without becoming a slave with no choice, or worse, a being outside the transformational grace of Christ. Hierarchy and leadership are two entirely different approaches to the "roles" of husband and wife.

I CORINTHIANS 7

I Corinthians 7 provides an opportunity to glimpse how Paul viewed the relationship between man and wife operating in the everyday matters of hearth and home. In dealing with the problems that were emerging in Corinth between husbands and wives, not once did Paul call for, or even hint of, the wife's forced submission under the authority of the husband. Quite the contrary. Marriage, as it was portrayed here by Paul, was to operate according to the principle of mutuality and equality in the eyes of God. Everything said of the husband was said also of the wife (I Cor.7:2,3-4,12-13,14-16,33-34). She did not need to be instructed on these matters by the husband (see I Cor.14:35) but was addressed directly as an equally responsible party.

The first section (7:1-5) deals with the sticky subject of conjugal relations between husband and wife. Some couples in Corinth were abstaining from sexual intercourse in a misguided attempt to attain a fancied spiritual perfection. Paul opposed asceticism for marriage partners as deluded. Marriage was to be a fully sexual relationship. The husband and wife owed each other sexual intimacy (7:2-3); it was neither defiling nor optional. The explanation that Paul gave for this opinion was that

the wife does not rule (have authority) over her own body, but the husband does. This would have met with their husbands' hearty assent in the first-century world where women soon discovered, according to Epictetus, that they had little else to do but to be the bedfellows of men (Manual 40). Paul, however, continued with a statement most atypical in the Greco-Roman world (Carlidge 1975, 231): the husband does not rule over his own body but the wife does (7:4). The wife's body is not her own but something she freely shares with her husband, and likewise the husband's body is not his own but something he freely shares with his wife. There is not a trace of any idea about the husband's rights and the wife's duties (Bailey 1952, 66). In sexual matters, the wife is not expected to submit passively as a docile bed partner. She is an equal partner. Both husband and wife were to recognize that their spouse has a greater claim on them than they have on themselves. The consequence for Paul, as it applied to the Corinthian situation, was that one partner may not unilaterally decide to abstain from sex to pursue some private spiritual discipline, no matter how heavenly minded it might be (7:5). The Commission on Theology and Church Relation's third principle in Women in the Church spells out the nature of the distinction between male and female. It reads:

Subordinate, when applied to the relationship of women and men in the church, expresses a divinely established relationship in which one looks to the other, but not in a domineering sense. Subordinate is for the sake of orderliness and unity p.31.

Neither headship nor subordination, says the Commission, implies superiority or inferiority. To interpret them as implying that man is intrinsically of more value or of greater worth because he is in a "leadership role" in the family or that woman is inferior because she voluntarily "respects and complies" with the husband's leadership role, would contradict all that the Scriptures teach about man and woman having each been created in the image of God.

Significantly, the Commission points out, the Apostle uses the very same term "head" — "The head of Christ is God" (I Cor.11:3) — to refer to the relationship which exists between the co-equal Persons of the Father and the Son in the Holy Trinity. Both of these concepts are used not to designate value but rather order and structure.

Back to the text at hand we see something new. When compared with Judaism, for example, the withdrawal from each other for spiritual purposes must be a mutual decision. In Judaism, the husband had an inalienable right to remove himself from his wife for study or prayer because of his greater value in the eyes of God (see Testament of Naphtali 8.8, Jubilees 1.8). The wife need not be consulted, only informed. Paul argued, however, that one may abstain only by mutual consent. Regardless of what kind of head the husband may be, he may not "head off" on spiritual retreat without consulting his wife. What is also new from a Jewish perspective is that Paul implied that a wife may also wish

to retreat for prayer. She may take the initiative in spiritual matters.

Another striking passage is found in 7:12-14. Paul contended that Christians yoked to unbelievers need not feel defiled in some way by this union, as if they were joining a member of Christ to a demon, as some may have believed (see I Cor.6:16, II Cor.6:14-7:1). The Christian was never to initiate a divorce simply because the spouse was an unbeliever; and if the unbelieving spouse wished to continue the marriage, the Christian could rest assured that the spouse had been "sanctified" by the Christian wife or husband.

What Paul meant here by "sanctify" is most difficult to unravel. Surely he was not referring to some kind of vicarious sanctification by proxy. It was not an argument about sanctification but an argument against divorce. In I Corinthians 7:16, Paul recognized that the spouse has not yet been saved and may never be converted: "wife (husband), how do you know whether you will save your husband (wife)?" Neither can it refer to the Christian witness and influence of the believing spouse on the unbelieving, since the perfect tense of the verb is used rather than the present or future. The perfect tense would refer to some action completed in the past with continuing results: the spouse has been sanctified. The answer to what Paul meant by "sanctify" is to be found in the vocabulary of Jewish marriage laws. The verb "sanctify" means "to set apart" or "to conse-

crate." In the Mishnah, Qiddushin is the title of a tractate that discusses betrothals. To betroth a wife is to sanctify her; she is set apart from all men by her husband-to-be through money, document, or intercourse. The husband thereby renders the wife a consecrated object. It is only husbands who can do this. In fact, in all areas of life, women can be sanctified only through the deeds of men (Neusner 1979, 100). What is unique in I Corinthians 7:14 is that Paul maintained that the wife also sanctified her husband, set him apart from all men. Both a husband and a wife have the same sanctifying power.

The last passage in I Corinthians 7 that underscores the mutuality of marriage is found in verses 32 to 34. Paul assumed that the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, or how to please his wife, and the married woman is also anxious about worldly affairs, or how to please her husband. Paul did not scorn this anxiety. He recognized that marriage brings in its wake anxieties and troubles in the flesh (7:28) and would prefer that men and women be free from this to give undivided devotion to the Lord (7:35). One who has a wife and children to support and care for would not be as free to travel hither and yon across the Mediterranean world as Paul did in his missionary travels. Paul could focus his anxiety on his churches (II Cor.11:28); the married man must also be anxious for the welfare of his family. Paul assumed that being married involved being concerned with pleasing the spouse. It would have been taken for

granted, of course, that this was the task of a wife; but according to Paul, the husband has the same goal. He was not to be anxious about how to rule his wife or how to make her submit to his authority, but how to please her. Marriage for Paul entailed mutual dedication.

We conclude from our study of the biblical evidence that man and wife were created by God, male and female to be equal partners in marriage. But scripture clearly teaches that "equal partners — equality" does not mean "sameness." A hierarchical relationship in which the husband enslaves his wife is not the will of God but a distortion of the relationship between man and woman. Although the forced repression of wives into submissive roles in marriage became an almost universal custom and was the normative view in the first century, we find in the New Testament the winds of change. Husbands are to love their wives in the same way Christ demonstrated His love for His people. They are not to put themselves first but their wives first. This is true leadership, subordination to the will of God and His design for marriage. Wives are to be honored by their husbands as co-heirs of God's grace and therefore equals in God's eyes. Wives and husbands mutually rule over each other's bodies. The husband loves with leadership in the family, the wife loves by respect for that leadership. The principles that are to govern a marriage relationship are therefore to be mutuality and partnership under the lordship of Christ.

From the examination of the following texts, we see that the husband's role is that of a servant-leader. How does headship and leadership of the husband look in a partnership marriage?

There's a story of a man who died and arrived at heaven to find two signs above two different lines. At the head of one line the sign said: "All Those Men Who Have Been Dominated by Their Wives, Stand Here." That line of men seemed to stretch off through the clouds into infinity.

Off to the side he saw a second sign that read: "All Those Who Have Never Been Dominated by Their Wives, Stand Here." Underneath that sign stood only one man.

He went over to the man, grabbed his arm, and asked, "What's the secret? How did you do it? That other line has millions of men and you're the only one standing in this line"

The man looked around with a puzzled expression and said, "Why I'm not sure I know. My wife just told me to stand here."

Male leadership in the home is under attack from all quarters in our culture, even from the government. A sign of the times recently made its way known in a newspaper article headed, "STATE HOUSE REPEALS LAW APPOINTING HUSBANDS AS HEAD OF HOUSE-
HOLD." Describing the actions of lawmakers in Oklahoma, the story read, in part:

After a debate punctuated with Scripture references, the house passed a bill Thursday refuting the law dating back to territorial days that recognized the husband as the head of the household. "I'm asking you to bring Oklahoma from the nineteenth century into the twentieth century before the twenty-first century gets here," said Representative Freddy E. Williams, Democrat from Oklahoma City who has pushed for the law's repeal for years. (The Tulsa World, February 26, 1988)

According to the scriptural model we just looked at, God's organizational structure for the family begins not with the husband, but with Christ. The apostle Paul spelled this out when he wrote: "...the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (I Cor.11:3). Again Paul says, "...the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body..." (Eph.5:23). There has been much debate, in and out of the church, on what the word "head" means. In his commentary of Ephesians, William Hendriksen points out that God "...placed ultimate responsibility with respect to the household on the shoulders of the husband..." The Lord has assigned the wife the duty of obeying her husband yet "...this obedience must be a voluntary submission on her part, and that only to her own husband, not to every man."

But Hendriksen cautions against putting undue stress on husband's authority over his wife. The apostle Paul compares the husband as head of his wife to Christ, who is head of the Church, "...his body, of which he is the savior" (Eph.5:23). This comparison of the husband with Christ, who is the head of the Church reveals in what sense a man should be his wife's "head". William Hendriksen writes: "He is her head as being

vitally interested in her welfare. He is her protector. His pattern is Christ who, as head of the Church, is its Savior!"

(Hendriksen 1967, 248)

When husbands — particularly Christian husbands — don't uplift their wives, they create a hunger within them that demands that they search for a way to find significance and value as persons. As a husband seeks to fulfill his God-given title of "head of his family," he faces three key responsibilities that outline his job description: to lead, to love and to serve.

A husband's first responsibility to his family is to lead. The dictionary defines a leader as "someone who commands authority or influence, who shows the way, who guides or conducts, who directs and governs." God has placed the husband in a position of responsibility. God designed this position of responsibility and the mantle of leadership comes along with it, whether the husband feels capable of wearing that mantle or not. Husbands are accountable to God for the leadership of guiding the spiritual nurturing of the members of the family.

There is a story about a kite that was soaring high in the sky and saw a beautiful green field of flowers some distance away. The little kite thought to itself, "You know, it would be fun to fly over there and get a closer look at all those beautiful flowers — they are much prettier than all those rocks I'm flying over right now."

But there was one problem. The string holding the kite didn't seem long enough to let it fly where it wanted to, so it pulled and tugged and finally broke loose. Happily, the kite soared for a few moments toward the field of flowers, but then came crashing down. What had seemed to be holding the kite down was actually holding it up.

The wife is the kite and the string is composed of two cords: the scriptural principles of a man's responsibility to lead, and the woman's responsibility to submit to his headship. The husband's love is the wind that enables the kite to soar into the sky. Without the wind — the secure, encouraging environment the husband creates through his leadership — the wife will feel tied down, but not uplifted. The string was not intended to be a hindrance. Along with the wind, it's actually what is holding the kite up.

To be a servant-leader takes strength, courage, patience and the willingness to adapt and modify your own preferences in order to love your wife. In Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives, James Dodson includes a description of servant-leadership by a surgeon who saw it with his own eyes:

I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face post-operative, her mouth twisted in palsy, clownish. A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed. She will be thus from now on. The surgeon had followed with religious fervor the curve of the flesh; I promise you that. Nevertheless, to remove the tumor in her cheek, I had to cut the little nerve. Her young husband is in the room. He stands on the opposite side of the bed, and together they seem to dwell in the

evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. Who are they, I ask myself, he and this wry-mouth I have made, who gaze at and touch each other so generously, greedily? The young woman speaks. "Will my mouth always be like this?" she asks. "Yes," I say, "it will. It is because the nerve was cut." She nods, and is silent. But the young man smiles. "I like it," he says, "It is kind of cute." All at once I know who he is. I understand, and I lower my gaze. Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crooked mouth, and I so close I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate to hers, to show that their kiss still works. (Selzer 1976, 45)

THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

The reformers, in their controversy with the Roman Catholic view of marriage, regarded marriage as "a worldly estate" (Luther's Works 53, 112). The Roman Catholic Church considers marriage as one of the sacraments and regards it, according to Eph.5:32 as an image of Christ's intimate relationship with His bride, the church. When Luther calls marriage "a worldly estate," he means, negatively, a repudiation of its sacramental character, without, however, assuming a modern, secularized view.

The Bible declares first and foremost that marriage, despite its temporal character, is a "divine estate" which man and woman enter into such an intimate union as to become "one flesh and blood" (Large Catechism I 200). The purpose of marriage is that husband and wife shall "be true to each other, be fruitful, beget children, and mutually support and bring them up to the glory of God" (Large Catechism I 207). In Luther's Small Catechism, Luther says in the Table of Duties to husbands, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your

wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker PARTNER (My emphasis) and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." (I Peter 3:7) And then he says to wives, "They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear." (I Peter 3:5-6) The Confessions place special stress on unity by equality in marriage. Since the two partners in marriage, according to the language of the Bible, have become one flesh, marriage cannot be dissolved. In the New Testament divorce is forbidden (Large Catechism I 305) and experience shows that those who have broken their marriage vow "will not escape punishment...Nothing he does will in the end succeed; everything he may gain by the false oath (not loving wife as Christ loves the church) will slip through his fingers and will never be enjoyed." (Large Catechism I 67) The Confessions regard harmonious partnership relationships in marriage as one of the fruits of the Christian life.

CHAPTER TWO

CHAIN OF COMMAND OR EQUAL PARTNERSHIP?

We reached the conclusion from our biblical and confessional analysis that Christians are to relate to each other in marriage as equals and in so doing provide unity. The relationship is to be based on self-sacrifice rather than self-interest, self-giving love rather than arrogant power, partnership rather than one-sided subordination in a slavery style. This is not an either/or choice for Christians who wish to relate to their spouses according to God's intention.

Unlike traditional patterns that are consciously modeled on hierarchical principles, companionship marriage patterns in our culture do not pretend to correspond to a model of partnership derived from the scripture. Companionship marriage is an outgrowth of modern humanism and the belief in the potential of person for growth. It reflects changes in secular society, not an attempt to live out biblical principles. Nevertheless, the changes that have led to companionship marriage have provided a supportive cultural context for Christians who want to have marriages based on equality and partnership.

Companionship marriage refers to marriage based on equality of the partners; spouses are companions to each other and share both power and responsibility. Gender-based role specialization is absent both inside and outside the marriage (Peplau 1983). Young and Willmott (1973) call this phenomenon

"symmetrical" marriage, because partners match each other rather than complement each other. Division of labor is accomplished according to the situation and the spouses' needs and abilities rather than according to gender. How this works itself out varies with each couple. Both may be employed or only one; they may share a job or both have part-time careers. They may do housekeeping chores together, take turns, or divide tasks according to skill and interest. No matter who does what, the critical issues are that partners consider themselves equals, that specific expectations are worked out together rather than assumed because of gender, and that both grow as individuals, whatever that growth may mean for each.

But each couple must work out its own patterns. This model requires a great deal of interpersonal skill in expressing needs and wishes, in understanding the partner, and in negotiating differences. Mace defines three essential elements for a successful companionship marriage: commitment to growth, an effectively functioning communication system, and the ability to make creative use of conflict (Mace 1982). This last element relies on the most emphasis, because "the closer couples try to move to each other, the more conflict they tend to develop" (Mace 1982, 30). Issues that are not issues in traditional hierarchy marriages have to be dealt with, such as: Who gets up with the baby at 3:00 am? Who stays home from work to greet the plumber? Who addresses the Christmas cards? And so on. Mace defines this

model of marriage as a two-vote system. Marriages with only one vote are largely conflict free; but in a two-vote system, the possibility of endless discussion and disagreement always lurks. (Mace 1982).

It is virtually impossible, however, to keep things in perfect balance, to keep things "equal." A favorite Sesame Street episode has Bert eyeing Ernie's piece of pie. Bert complains that his piece is smaller than Ernie's, so Ernie eats part of his to make them equal. Then Bert's is larger, so Ernie takes a bite of Bert's to even things up. On it goes, until two empty plates and Bert's empty stomach remain. It is hard enough to cut equivalent pieces of pie, but to divide a constantly changing list of household responsibilities and such concepts as power, dominance, or even time, into equal units is virtually impossible. (Bernard 1982)

The major obstacle to the success of companionship marriage is often identified as a lack of interpersonal skills (Mace 1982). It is through our interpersonal relating, after all, that intimacy develops. As important as interpersonal skills are, however, they do not guarantee "success" in marriage. Skillful communication cannot give meaning to life or provide fulfillment. It is here that companionship marriage and partnership marriage are most clearly different. The goal of marriage based on partnership is not the relationship in and of itself, but pursuit of the purposes of the marriage as the couple has

identified them in the will of God. Partnership marriage does not focus on itself, and earthly institution, but strives to transcend itself by focusing on a joint task of expressing the unity and equality Christ gives in their marriage and witnessing such truths to others.

Despite the advantages of companionship marriage, it is not the vision of partnership described in the Bible. This vision transcends any particular cultural pattern in a given time and context. How do we bring our interpretation of the Bible into making decisions about everyday life that must be made in our marriages? In our culture, someone must wash dishes, someone must go to work and bring home a paycheck, and someone must diaper the baby. Characteristics of our own cultural context influence the living out of the vision of partnership marriage for our time and place. Partnership can only develop from a base of equality between persons. Until the advent of companionship marriage, this was difficult for Christians because of the constraints of gender-based hierarchical roles for spouses. Partnership is not possible when one partner has experienced submission as a given and not as a choice. It is for this reason that the companionship pattern is often linked with a partnership model.

Companionship marriage is structured by negotiated role assignments based on fairness: "If you do this, I'll do that." This bargaining approach to marriage is fostered by the promi-

nence of social exchange theory in describing marital relating (Nye 1979) and by quid pro quo as a basis of some intervention strategies for marital difficulties. Clinebell's book title Meet Me in the Middle summarizes this kind of thinking; it is a fifty-fifty approach. Although it does not achieve partnership, it does provide an alternative to hierarchical relating from which partnership can develop. Only from equality can persons move beyond the issues of order and fairness to a different level of relating based on partnership.

Equality must be the basis from which partnership can grow. It should not be disdained, but neither should it be mistaken as the goal. Many wives agonize over how they can be submissive when they are so angry about being made to feel like a slave all in the name of scriptural truth. A Christian wife finds herself trying to act on her faith by being lovingly submissive and serving — doing the dishes or laundry or whatever else has been the expectation — but she wants to do these tasks as an act of love, not simply because it is her job. All the while, however, she is seething inside, or depressed, because her service is taken for granted, as something expected of her as a wife. Occasionally she may erupt anger at her partner for what appears to be his complacency in the face of her self-giving service. She may then regard her anger as a further sign of how far she is from achieving the will of God, which deepens her frustration as she attempts once again to be more loving. It is

only when the couple can break out of the old role expectations that she can choose submission. One cannot CHOOSE to submit when no other choice is available.

Let's clarify the concept of task in a scriptural based partnership marriage before moving on to the congregational workshop phase. Marriage is a unity, an "organism" made by God's creative hand when he makes two "one flesh." Such a marriage has a task and a purpose of its own beyond the mere summation of the tasks and purposes of the individual spouses. In recent years, family theorists have embraced systemic definitions of the family in which the family is defined as larger than the sum of the individuals that form it. Minuchin (1984) has dubbed the family a "multibodies organism". The same concept is vividly expressed in the biblical concept of "one flesh". The image of God is the relationship between persons, the two becoming one (Gen.1:27). Human life from its very beginning is described as the relationship between man and woman. To be human is to be a partner, and from the very beginning we were given a task. Immediately after creation, "God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it'"(Gen.1:28). As Newbigin states, "Human life from its beginning is a life of shared relationship in the context of a task — a task which is continuous with God's as much as creative work in the natural world" (Newbigin 1978, 77).

In the New Testament, the marriage of Prisca (diminutive, Priscilla) and Aquila characterized this kind of marriage. Prisca was certainly not the junior partner in this relationship. Of the six times this couple is mentioned (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom.16:3-5a; I Cor.16:19; II Tim.4:19), her name appears first in four of them. Once, Paul included greetings to the Corinthian church from both of them (I Cor.16:19). This is noteworthy; it was not customary to include the wife's name in sending greetings inasmuch as the husband's name alone would normally suffice (Fiorenze 1984, 178). Yet Prisca's name stands with her husband's and indicates her importance both to Paul and to the community. Paul had come to know this couple in Corinth after they, along with other Jews, had been banished from Rome by the Emperor Claudius. Paul stayed with them and worked with them in their common trade as "tentmakers" or leather workers (Acts 18:3). When they later moved to Ephesus, Prisca and Aquila heard the eloquent Apollos preaching in the synagogues, and they TOGETHER took him and expounded the way of God more accurately for him (Acts 18:26).

From these brief references to this couple, it is clear that their relationship was based on equality; they were "partners" together as well as "fellow workers" of Paul (Rom.16:3). This is not an argument for women exercising the office of public ministry, but concerns discipleship in the priesthood of all believers. The CTCR's Women in the Church final principle reads

as follows: "The creational pattern of male headship [not "betterment" but "leadership"] requires that woman not hold the formal position of the authoritative PUBLIC teaching office in the church, that is, the office of pastor" But marriage has a purpose beyond itself. When Paul writes in I Cor.14:34 that women should keep silent in the church and to be subordinate he is speaking about public ministry, not marriage. Subordinate never meant for Paul blind slavery or reducing all women into something less human than what God created them as. But in a Christian marriage, the couple dedicate themselves to a greater calling than making tents or making themselves happy. They open the doors of their home to the Christian family, taking in Paul (Acts 18:3) and later hosting a house church in Ephesus that became a missionary center (I Cor.16:19) and perhaps also one in Rome (Rom.16:5). Paul said that in all the churches of the Gentiles he gave thanks for them and their work, and he especially, since they risked their necks for his life (Rom.16:4). What incident Paul had in mind is impossible to know (perhaps Acts 19:23). His catalog of travails in II Corinthians 11:23 suggests that there were many times when his own neck was in peril and needed saving. Prisca and Aquila, then, functioned as partners together; their marriage was more than mutual need-meeting. No doubt they had individual gifts, but the linking of their names together in the New Testament indicates the importance of their partnership in ministry beyond their individual contributions.

Their marriage had a purpose beyond the promotion of Prisca's and Aquila's individual growth; they worked together as a team, as partners in a joint task that transcended their relationship.

In creation, woman is not called to the subordination of a slave to a tyrant. It is the subordination of a queen to a king. In creation Adam and Eve are given dominion over the earth. Together as God's deputy monarchs, they rule over the earth.

Eve was created to be a queen, not a slave. Her role was that of helpmate to her husband. Throughout the narrative of creation, we hear the refrain of God's benediction — God creates and then says, "That's good!" But finally the malediction comes as God observes something that is not good. The very first negative judgment we find in Holy Writ is a judgment on loneliness. God says, "It is not good for the man to be alone." So God responded to the situation of loneliness by saying, "I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Gen.2:18). So God created woman and brought her to Adam. What did Adam say? Did he say, "A slave! Just what I always wanted?" Did he say, "Thank you, God, for this object that I can exploit at my pleasure?" God forbid. Adam was elated with this new and vital creation, exclaiming, "This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man" (Gen.2:23).

What does it mean to be "Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh?" This is a graphic, concrete Hebrew way of expressing the notion of essential unity. Man and woman are one in essence, a partnership, one flesh. That is to say, Adam and Eve are equal in dignity, value, and glory. In essential unity there is absolutely no room for inferiority of person.

When the New Testament calls wives to be in subjection to their own husbands, there is no hint of female inferiority. What is called for is a division of labor in the economy of marriage.

How is the mutual submission to be carried out? According to Paul it is to be done "as to the Lord". Not only is the man commanded to love his wife, but he is commanded to love her as Christ loved the Church. "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her."

On the surface it seems the Apostle is giving some naive counsel. Picture a man telling a marriage counselor he doesn't love his wife anymore. In fact, he says he can't stand her. She has become ugly and sloppy and is always nagging. Finally the marriage counselor turns to the man and says, "What you need to repair your marriage is to love your wife." Some advice! What is the man supposed to do? Push the button and bingo, he's in love again? Certainly not. The way the word "love" is normally used in our society, it is impossible to create it by an act of the will. He can't decide to be in love.

When we talk about love, we usually do so by speaking of it in the passive voice: "I fell in love," or "Zing went the strings of my heart." Love in the world's view is something that happens to me, not something I can conjure by shutting my eyes, taking a deep breath, and making a decision.

But in the New Testament, love is more of a verb than a noun. It has more to do with acting than with feeling. The call to love is not so much a call to a certain state of feeling as it is to a quality of action. When Paul says, "Love your wives," he is saying, "Be loving toward your wife—treat her as lovely." Do the things that are truly loving things. If the husband doesn't feel romantic toward his wife, that does not mean he can't be loving. To be sure, romance makes it a lot easier to be loving, but it is not a necessary prerequisite for fulfilling the biblical mandate.

How are husbands to love their wives? One of the most important dimensions of the analogy between Christ and the Church and a husband and his wife is the importance given to the wife. Christ never regards his bride with a casual interest or considers her of secondary importance. That's no small thing. Consider the responsibilities that belong to Christ as King of the cosmos. He is not a do-nothing king with only titular importance. He is an extremely busy king. His is the responsibility for maintaining the entire universe. He must see to it that the

sun burns at just the right temperature and the stars remain in their courses. But with this schedule, he still has time for his bride. If ever a husband has a right to neglect his wife, it is Christ. Yet the petitions from the Church are not relegated to the attention of minor angels in a heavenly bureaucracy. Christ intercedes for His people daily. He is never "away on business" and never "too busy" for his bride. He gives himself without reservation. What woman would mind submitting herself to that kind of love?

Paul elaborates further on the analogy of Christ and the Church by calling attention to the purpose of Christ's sacrificial self-giving. "That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."

Christ's goal is to present his bride in "all her glory" and the gospel is the power for a husband to do the very same. Christ has intrinsic glory—the glory of the only begotten Son of God. He certainly doesn't need any more glory. The Church has no intrinsic glory. Any glory the Church has is derived. It gains its glorying exclusively from Christ. Christ doesn't need the Church, yet his passionate concern is that his bride possess the fullness of glory. (R.C. Sproul, p.44. 1988)

When the New Testament speaks of Christ's glory, it is speaking of its dignity. By analogy, the husband is called to

give himself to the purpose of establishing his wife in the fullness of dignity.

In the New Testament, God's blessing and marital success are linked to something besides role keeping. When Peter warns that a couple's prayers can be hindered, he doesn't link it to the failure to lead, but the failure to love. "Husbands in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers" (I Peter 3:7). Lack of consideration or understanding and lack of respect are what damage spiritual and marital life. Our pride, selfishness, and unkindness lead us to misuse our roles and hurt the relationship. Roles must be coupled with love to make them effective. (Sell, p.169. 1982)

Here's an interesting question to answer before beginning the video workshop. Why did you get married? For sex? For romance? For companionship? For security? To have children? There are good reasons for marriage, and there are childish ones. The following comments, all by boys and girls ten years old and under, reveal their humorous and simple perceptions of marriage.

Gwen, age nine: "When I get married I want to marry someone who is tall and handsome and rich and hates spinach as much as me".

Arnold, age six: "I want to get married, but not right away yet because I can't cross the street by myself yet".

Steve, age ten: "I want to marry somebody just like my mother except I hope she don't make me clean up my room".

Bobby, age nine: "I don't have to marry someone who is rich, just someone who gets a bigger allowance than me".

Raymond, age nine: "First she has to like pizza, then she has to like cheesecake, after that she has to like fudge candy, then I know our marriage will last forever". (Bill Adler, p.107. June 1979)

We chuckle at these childish impressions, yet I have counseled couples whose purpose for getting married wasn't much more profound. Seneca, the Roman philosopher, wrote, "You must know for which harbor you are headed if you are to catch the right wind to take you there".

One problem in so many marriages today is that partners have so many and varied purposes for getting married. The result is that husband and wife sign on for a lifetime voyage, but set sail for different harbors. It's no wonder that eventually they end up in different ports, their ships in two pieces — isolated and alone.

What many couples lack are God's blueprints for marriage — a plan that leads to oneness. You can read dozens of books about what man thinks, but since God created marriage we have been finding out what He has to say. In summary, this paper has looked at five foundational bases for a Christian partnership

marriage. They include:

- 1) To mirror God's image.
- 2) To multiply a godly heritage.
- 3) To manage God's realm.
- 4) To mutually complete one another.
- 5) To model Christ's relationship to the church

By developing these five purposes in the video workshop one will have to bring to a marriage a sense of direction, internal stability and the stamp of God's design.

Sharon and Max has been married for six years and both had been pursuing their own careers when they had their first child. Sharon chose to work only part-time while their son was an infant. Their daughter was born two years later. During the years they were both working, Max and Sharon had fairly evenly divided the housework and other home responsibilities since she was there to do it. During the six years that she worked part-time, this pattern worked well; but Sharon began to feel rising resentment, as months turned into years. Jobs they had shared became her responsibility; even parenting the children seemed to be more her responsibility than Max's. He was always eager to help out, and she appreciated his pitching in on the dishes or giving the children baths or reading stories. Why was she always saying thank you when he did things he ought to be doing anyway? She was firm in her desire to be Christlike in her relationship with her family; she wanted to be loving and to

place the needs of her husband and family foremost, as she believed was important. Nevertheless, her husband undervalued her efforts as the mere fulfillment of her responsibilities rather than as the sacrifice of her own interests and time as she saw them, and she found herself often controlling rage by slamming pots and pans around and even by exclaiming to Max on more than one exasperating evening, "I am your wife, not your servant!"

It was only as they sorted through their expectations that Max and Sharon began to understand what was happening to them. Sharon could not change her feelings about caring for her family simply by chiding herself that she needed to do what she was doing in love. Nor could Max communicate his appreciation of her by "helping out." It took a major reordering of responsibilities to establish a mutually felt equality from which they could serve each other and work together in their mutual parenting task. They had to work out in their own lives the understanding that love means acceptance of the other — and one's self — as an equal, with neither partner being more important. At times that meant challenging gender-role stereotypes which did not reflect their individuality.

What characterized the process of change for this young couple was not necessarily a division of chores on a more equitable basis so that all was equal, or even a modification of this ideal. Instead, it was the recognition that they were not simply roommates who loved each other while each pursued independent

goals and dreams. They committed themselves to a joint task—parenting—and worked toward a relationship that furthered their work on that task and other tasks together. They became partners; mutual respect and equality were implicit in their decisions and in the approaches to change that they chose. The basis of partnership marriage is the mutual respect, equality and intimacy found in a joint calling from God.

Marriage between Christians is to be more than a way to order our lives, more than companionship between persons who have agreed to be intimate with each other over a lifetime. It is to be a partnership in a joint task that is larger than either partner can accomplish alone. It is a partnership that is ordered around the meaning and purpose of our relatedness. That does not mean that our lives do not need order—~~they do~~—or that intimacy is not important—it is. Both of these are essential to partnership. But in and of themselves they do not comprise the version of marriage that is to be partnership with each other and with God. Neither order nor intimacy is a goal that should determine what a marriage is to be like. Mace quotes a radio talk show of Lord Beveridge:

Our fathers had a saying about marriage, that if two people ride on a horse, one of the two must ride behind. Today marriage is more like two people riding abreast on the same horse, doing a rather difficult balancing feat and each holding one rein. It's more companionable than the old way, but it's more complicated, and must at times be rather confusing to the horse. (Quoted in Mace 1973, 60)

In a partnership marriage, the focus has shifted; it is no longer how are we going to organize ourselves to ride this

horse, but where are we going? The destination then helps determine the means for getting there. What is our role in the will of God; what is our work together? Does it lead over hurdles, or is it a long journey over desert? Deciding which it is will help determine whether we sit the old way or take turns sitting in front, whether we try Lord Beveridge's delicate balancing or walk and let the horse carry provisions for our trek. Too many are letting how they ride the horse determine where they are going, rather than allowing where they are going to determine the use of the horse! In short, the pattern of a couple's relationship needs to reflect the meaning of their life together and its purpose in the will of God.

The Bible makes clear that marriage is part of God's created order (Gen.1:27-28). It has existed from the beginning, when God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). Persons have a deep-seated need for relationships with others. Many feel an essential incompleteness as solitary beings (see I Cor.11:11-12), and so they seek out another who, they hope, will become a source of wholeness, tranquility, and joy. When the Bible speaks of the two becoming one flesh, it might be suggested that "only the two together can be thought of as fully one" (see Hoskyns and Davey 1981, 241). So it was that man was given a companion with whom he could become intimate. But in the creation narrative, God never told Adam and Eve to sit down, knee to knee, and look meaningfully into each other's eyes.

He gave them—us—work to do. This keeps the marriage relationship from becoming an end unto itself.

If we can use Christ's relationship with the church as an example of the marriage relationship (Eph.5:32), we find that Christ did not love the church and give himself up for her only to have intimate fellowship and forever to stroll together through the garden while the dew is still on the roses. Christ nourishes and cherishes the church in order that, through it and its mission, "the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Eph.3:10).

Similarly, Jesus did not say, "Come sit down with me and rest under a shade tree." Instead, he offered us a share of his work load. He offered a yoke, not a chaise lounge on which to repose (Matt.11:28). In the same way, marriage is not a retreat into intimacy with another away from the rest of the world. Instead, partners have committed themselves to work together in a joint task set before them by God.

One might compare a marriage that is concerned only with itself to a church that ministers only to its own members, neglecting others outside and concentrating on building bigger and better barnlike sanctuaries with recreational facilities that rival the YMCA. Both a church and a marriage that place all the emphasis on "us" have misconceived and strayed from their purpose. When the marriage relationship becomes turned in on it-

self, it is unable to gain a clarity of purpose that comes from moving outside its own system. Even though the spouses are involved in their work and friendships outside the marriage, they may have difficulty using these experiences to expand the marital relationship itself. If the relationship becomes closed to outside involvement, it will die from starvation of purpose.

It is impossible to separate what comes first, the overemphasis, on the couple or the downward spiral of alienation from each other. Often couples experiencing difficulty seem caught in a pattern in which every mood, every comment, every stray look is personalized and taken as a commentary on the marital relationship. When the wife comes home after her carefully prepared proposal was rejected by the boss, and after being stopped for speeding, to find that the neighbor's dog has torn up the front flower bed, she may well slam through the door muttering to herself. Her husband reacts, "What are you mad at me for?" She yells, "Nothing! Just leave me alone!" Not reassured, he responds with anger, "Sure, you bet! Who could get near you? No matter what I do, it's wrong." She snaps back, "All you can think about is yourself. If you could just care about me for a change." She has not told him why or how she needs care. He has not attempted to find out why she is upset. Both have focused only on their relationship: if you are angry, it must be at me; if I am hurting, it is because you have not done anything to make me feel better. They only see themselves

and the marital relationship. They do not recognize the influence of other relationships on their marriage.

The emphasis on individualism affects marriage negatively; it removes some of the significant functions of marriage, and it weakens the ties and support of family and friends. What is often not recognized is that in the so-called "good old days" when divorce was almost unheard of, marriages were stable because they were multi-functional. Marriage was necessary for economic, religious, and social well-being. Affection and intimacy were not the glue that held husband and wife together; they were held together by external forces, and many interpersonal needs were met by kinfolk. Now marriage is held together almost exclusively by the internal interpersonal relationship.

Does this mean, then, that we must accept greater and greater instability in marital relationships as a result of these irreversible changes? Can anyone reasonably expect to make a lifetime commitment and stick with it? Joint consumerism is hardly a sufficient basis for Christian marriage. Jesus contended that a person's life does not consist of the abundance of possessions (Luke 12:25) and warned against laying up treasures for oneself while not being "rich toward God" (Luke 12:21). Likewise, Marriage does not consist of the abundance of possessions. Mammon (material wealth) always fails (Luke 16:9)—in this life and in the life to come. In the same way, married partners devoted only to nurturing themselves on separate paths of indi-

vidual growth are poor risks for marital survival. Is there a stronger basis for marital commitment?

For Christians, an answer to this question can be found in the somewhat puzzling paradigm of mutual submission on which the model for partnership marriage is based for this paper and workshop. A caricature of mutual submission is the picture of a man and a woman standing before a doorway, each forever bowing and saying to the other, "arter you, dear." "No, dear, after you." No doubt, concern for each other's needs and support and care for each other are part of the meaning of mutual submission. Marriage extends far beyond this, however. It is not only concerned with the well-being of the other but also with the calling and task of the marital relationship. Spouses become partners in a calling or a task that transcends the relationship itself. if the union of Christ and the church is to be compared to the union of husband and wife, as it is in Ephesians 5, it would follow that the marriage relationship has a transcendent purpose in God's scheme of things. According to McLain and Weigert, transcendence is "the quality of experiences that take on meaning of treater strength and scope than that which is available in the everyday lifeworld" (McLain and Weigert 1979, 189). It is not only a good in transient life but, according to Leonard, "reaches beyond itself toward participation in the creative/redemptive work of God" (Leonard 1984. 9).

One premise for understanding partnership marriage is that the task or purpose of each marriage is unique and cannot be imposed by a standard definition of the function of marriage. No one can define the purpose of a couple's marriage, just as no one can define the purpose of life for another individual. Finding one's task, the purpose and meaningfulness of marriage, is not like choosing a career or planning a project together; it is an individual and lifelong endeavor just as it is for the individual Christian.

Some couples experience purpose thrust upon them; others may go through a process of searching together. Some find their tasks in the opportunities for service together in family and community life. It may be as varied as mutual involvement in service to church (see Rom.12:6-13) or issues of social concern, or spending a lifetime together serving as missionaries with a different people in a faraway place. It may be caring for one's own children together, or widening one's family circle to include persons who lack a family. It may be vocation or avocation, family-focused on neighborhood or world community. It is in the process of mutual submitting themselves to God's will that the couple defines that which is meaningful and purposeful for their relationship.

Most couples do not go through a conscious process of determining what their mutual task is or even identifying specifically what it is that gives meaning to their life together. It

is most often identified in retrospect or by the ways others know them. The task or purpose of a marriage is often not explicitly defined but can be found in the structure of relationship rules and values that define a couple's life together. The concept of a marriage's task or purpose is foreign to most couples. That does not mean, however, that an implicit purpose around which their relationship centers does not exist. How do they spend their resources of energy, time, and material goods? What is it that beckons them to struggle on when they are weary or their relationship is at a ebb? What are the effects of their relationship for themselves and for others? Answering such questions as these may identify the relative emptiness of some marriages, but for others it may provide impetus to greater commitment to that purpose which before was only unconsciously felt.

The task or purpose of a marriage varies over time. The best example of this is the task or parenting, which may be all-consuming for parents of preschoolers but—as the children grow to young adulthood—diminishes as the steering purpose of their life together. Tasks therefore develop new dimensions and may end, and the couple must then search for a new task or purpose. Such changes result both in upheaval and in the excitement of new possibilities.

Finally, a significant source of meaning in marriage comes from the partners' roles as co-creators. Whether they bring children into the world or are a creative influence on the

lives of others, spouses create. It is only in the process of co-creation that partners grow spiritually and are strengthened in their own calling as well as in their relationship. The process of marriage is therefore a process of creation. David and Diana Garland state that almost every couple is creative in three ways.

First, couples create a shared physical environment. They build their nest together and may conceive and give birth to children.

Second, couples create an emotional world of ideas and patterns of relating. They develop relationship norms and processes of communication that are a reality, whether blessing or burden, for their children and others who share their world. For example, children learn the meaning of marriage and the role of a spouse primarily from the model parents provide. Adults evaluate their own relationships by observing the marital experiences of others they know—how they work out differences, communicate respect and appreciation, set priorities, and so on. In addition to the influence on others, a couple's relationship world nourishes or dampens the dreams and possibilities of the individual partners and makes possible collaboration in present and future activities not possible for either alone.

Third, couples create yesterday together. The couple shares a past, and that past, including even their individual pasts that were not initially shared experiences, is reweaved as

it is discussed. From their ~~two~~ separate memories one cloth is woven. McLain and Weigert call this process "Biographical fusion." We have all listened to a couple telling the story of some past event and, in the retelling of it, correcting each other and making it a common tale. This story belongs not to the past but to the present, for it communicates to themselves and to others who they are, what they are like, what their weaknesses and strengths are, what is important to them, and what is not important enough to be remembered. These stories are passed on to children and give subtle shape to their lives, providing more significant roots than a genealogical tree that only lists names on a paper. The past lives on in the future not only through stories of the past but also through their rehearsal and the reaffirmation of values the couple wishes to shape their future. But, sharing their definition of the past and its meaning, marital partners have a basis for collaboration in the future, for working through conflict, and for sifting out the chaff from the wheat in their lives (Garland 1986, 86). Their future together is based on a mutual foundation. It gives direction to their task together.

Partnership marriage is marriage based on submission of partners to each other in the calling and task of their relationship. This calling, the purpose of their relationship, transcends their relationship through mutual creative involvement in the past as well as in the present and future according to

their understanding God's intention for their lives and the world. This model of marriage assumes that a couple's work together, their mutual calling, is intrinsic to their fulfillment as partners. It contrasts with the popular view that partners must first find meaning and fulfillment in shared intimacy before they can share themselves with others.

"My wife and I have a good arrangement. I make the big decisions and she makes the small ones. It works well; we've been married for twenty years and have had no arguments. Actually, we haven't had any big decisions either." Apparently people throughout history have laughed about this marital power and the ploys devised to relieve the pressure that builds up inside marriages. The struggle for power is so out of place between two people who are in love with each other. Partnership marriage resists being forced into a sort of business arrangement between a ruler and his subject, since it is really a relationship between lovers in Christ that gives the marriage itself a purpose and a goal.

One fundamentalist minister counsels the women of his church to allow their husbands to beat them in checkers to help bolster the male ego. And one speaker gives this advice to wives: "How do you overcome the fear of your husband driving too fast? Recognize that God is in control and whatever happens is within His will, so pray for a policeman." A biblical position of submission does not condemn the wife to endless losses of

checker games or helpless silence beside some maniac at the steering wheel. Submitting is not equivalent to servitude because headship is not equal to dictatorship (Sell 1982, 160).

The emphasis on individual need-meeting cannot result in a fulfilling relationship, because it is sterile. Something has to matter beyond our own development for us to experience our own life as meaningful. Wallach and Wallach conclude that what matters is for couples to be committed to share values and working together toward the same ends. The emphasis on fulfillment and on what individuals want and feel runs counter to what we know gives meaning to their lives.

Jeremiah was a man who discovered that we are not to get our needs met first and then proceed to that task before us; rather, we find our needs met, our meaning and purposefulness, in the task itself. Jeremiah complained that his work for God was causing him great suffering. God's response was that he would be renewed and strengthened, saved, and delivered, when he returned to his work, through his work (Jer.15:19-21). It was a matter not of being restored and then going out to the task but of finding his salvation, his life, his purpose and fulfillment, in the task before him.

Jesus based discipleship on the paradox, "Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt.16:25, see Matt.10:39; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; John 12:25). A life wholly absorbed in its own selfish

ends is self-defeating. Fulfillment occurs only when one empties oneself of self-concern and becomes devoted to higher claims (see II Cor.5:15). The contention of this paper is that the same is true of a marriage relationship. A marriage relationship that is devoted only to self-fulfillment of the individual partners—much less to consumerism—is destined to be emotionally and spiritually barren. Fulfillment comes, only when the couple is able together, as partners, to turn outward in self-giving. This power comes from the self-giving agape love of Christ.

How does partnership marriage look? In the companionship only model, authority and responsibility are to be divided; in partnership they may take many different shapes depending on the context and tasks of the couple. Structure, decision-making processes, and prominence of careers cannot be prescribed by the partnership model. It proposes no particular way of doing things but instead focuses on a vision and a purpose that go beyond the marriage itself. The companionship pattern and the ideal of partnership are not comparable, since they operate at different levels. Companionship marriage is like Robert's Rules of Order; the concern is how to do things so that each is treated fairly and equally. It coordinates the partners' activity but says nothing about the purpose of the activity. The purpose of relating is central to partnership marriage, not the details of process beyond the assumption of equality. It transcends rules and

patterns of working together, yet it guides behavior and interpersonal relationships through the vision it gives to all of life. In summary, companionship marriage addresses power distribution; partnership marriage is concerned with the relationship's purpose. Companionship marriage is primarily a focus on structure and process; partnership marriage is primarily a focus on content and intention.

Your marriage is far more important than you may have ever imagined. Did you realize that your marriage affects God's reputation on this planet? As someone said, "You cannot kill time without injuring eternity." In the same way, you can't have a mediocre marriage without poorly reflecting on God's character.

Why did you get married? And where will you go from here? Whose purposes will you fulfill? God does have a plan to make it work. That plan is now presented in the video workshop which follows.

TIPS FOR THE LEADER

Create a comfortable setting for learning. Arrange chairs informally with a good view of the video monitor. Practice using the video equipment and be sure it is placed well for comfortable viewing. Be sure the monitor is raised so all can see directly. Most people are used to watching TV at medium to close range. If they must strain to see or hear, their learning efficiency will suffer. Be alert to any glare from windows or lights that may interfere with viewing. You may want to dim the lights. Have name tags and bold pens available, and extra pencils or pens for note-taking. Provide light refreshments as people arrive or at the end of the four sessions. Something to eat or drink helps people relax and encourages friendly interaction.

Prepare yourself for each session. Pray for a productive and meaningful session. Read the paper, "Marriage Beyond Hierarchy", and watch each video lesson ahead of time and be familiar with the Session Plan in the Leader's Guide at the back of the paper. Focus your attention on the discussion questions and activities, and make any changes to fit your participants most effectively.

Follow the suggested time allotment of not more than two hours for each session. It's better to stop something with people wishing it would continue than to let it drag on and have them wishing it would end! Avoid making references to time

limitations. People will only feel hurried if you keep mentioning it. Avoid spending time on something that applies only to some of the participants present. Offer to deal with specialized questions at the end of the session.

Show personal interest in the participants. Be in the room early and greet people warmly as they arrive. Call people by their names and help them get acquainted with each other. Listen attentively and take notes during the video presentation.

Help everyone participate, but put no one on the spot. Call on someone by name only if you are certain the answer is not difficult for him or her. Encourage participants to apply information learned. Stress that their success in building a partnership marriage hinges on their being willing to work at the process. The rewards in the long run will make all the effort worthwhile. As a leader of the "Partnership Marriage" workshop, you have an extraordinary opportunity to guide people into Biblical truths that will change marriages forever. And there's no greater privilege on earth. May God bless you!

HOW TO BUILD A BIBLICAL PARTNERSHIP MARRIAGE

In recent years, marriage seems to have gotten a lot of "bad press." As divorce rates climb, many people in and out of the church are growing increasingly pessimistic about marriage. Even for seemingly happy couples, "till death to us part" isn't a sure thing anymore.

But, don't throw up your hands in despair...and don't just "watch" this tape series. Instead, really examine this tape with real people, real Bethany members, and apply it to your life, and talk about it with your spouse.

Whether you are single, divorced, or happily married and wanting to improve your relationship, this first workshop can help; because today's session will focus on the principles that every marriage needs to build on...a partnership foundation. And we will learn what we need to become as individuals, in order to become an indispensable marriage partner.

SHOW VIDEO #1 NOW

What were your feelings when you decided to get married — why did you get married? (I fell in love, I wanted out of the single life, I wanted to be loved, I wanted to have a partner, for companionship and security.)

Did you have any unrealistic ideas about how your own marriage would be? (The romance is not there. I thought he/she would fulfill every need I have, but he/she can't. I thought everything would go more smoothly.)

DISCUSSION

Three Principles For Building a Partnership Foundation

READ: Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

Principle 1: Marriage begins by leaving all other relationships that would compete with commitment to the marriage.

What are some of the problems you have had in trying to refocus your life from ties to parents to ties to your spouse? (I called my parents about every little thing, I felt like spouse's parents were more important than I. My parents had trouble letting go).

What are some activities you are involved in that your spouses may feel take a higher priority than your marriage? (Partying with friends, consumed with church activities or work, time spent with hobbies.)

Principle 1 means that you must adjust any relationship and activities which might interfere with your commitment to your spouse.

Principle 2: Partnership Marriage Means a Lifetime of Cleaving

What does cleaving mean? Why is it important in a marriage? (To unite, to be joined together, to cling to or stick fast. It is important because it develops trust, mutual dependence, and commitment.)

Share an experience or activity that enhances "cleaving" in your marriage. (We set up our own identity away from our parents, so we can only rely on each other. Experiencing a "crisis" drew us closer.)

Principle 3: Partnership Marriage is the Process of Becoming "One Flesh"

Other than physical bonding, what are some ways that a couple becomes one flesh? (Emotional bonding: sharing fears and joys; developing emotional commitment and total trust.)

Becoming one flesh is more than just physical bonding, or sex...it involves emotional bonding. It is a process of two totally separate individuals sharing their deepest feelings without fear of rejection. Over time, those two personalities meld into a unique, new identity -- a distinct, new family unit. When a couple leaves, cleaves and becomes one flesh, they begin building the solid partnership foundation outlined in Genesis.

II. How To Be An Indispensable Marriage Partner

A. The Role of the Wife

The role of the wife is what she is, in addition to something specific that she does.

READ: Genesis 2:18: "The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

This verse states that the role of a woman is to be a helper for her husband. In your home, what does it mean to be a helper? (To be a teammate, encourager, a complement to him — not just a cheerleader, but down in the trenches with him. To contribute to the accomplishment of your common purpose or goal.)

B. The Responsibility of the Wife

READ: Ephesians 5:22 "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord."

This verse says that the responsibility of the wife — what she is to do — is to submit by CHOICE to her husband. What does that mean? (To yield her own rights, and CHOOSE to put herself under the direction of her husband.)

This "yielding of rights" is NOT done because the husband demands it, but because Jesus Christ directs her to submit to form a marriage in His word, out of love and respect for her husband and his leadership.

How does this make you feel? Is submitting by CHOICE easy to do? (I struggle with it, because I don't want to feel inferior to my husband. But it feels better now that I understand that I am submitting out of love for and obedience to Christ, but it's still not easy! And I still need to accept my responsibility to make decisions in a partnership marriage.)

C. The Role of the Husband

READ Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church,..."

What could happen if a husband fails to take on his role as leader (head) of the wife, or uses his authority as a bludgeon?" (The family will suffer if the husband leaves a vacuum in this area of leadership. No partnership can take place with a partner who cares so little to love the other with authority. It will make it difficult for the wife to respect him.)

D. The Responsibility of the Husband

READ: Ephesians 5:28-29: "In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

Christ is the head of the church, yet He chooses to serve and meet the needs of those He rules. What does this suggest to husbands? (In their role as leader, husbands are responsible to serve their wives and consider their needs for love and service first and foremost.)

Most men know about the concept of headship, but many never understand that fulfilling their responsibilities as head, requires them to love and serve their wives. Men, how do you love and serve your wives? Who should you? (Listen; respect her opinions, thoughts, ideas and feelings; treat her better than myself; consider her needs before my own, take responsibility for the spiritual growth for the family and the marriage)

Understanding and fulfilling your own role and responsibility is very important. For a marriage to work, you cannot focus on what your spouse is supposed to be doing.

How can focusing on your spouse's responsibilities create a problem? (Trying to change your spouse distracts you from focusing on what you can control — your own role and responsibilities.)

It's pointless to try to control or direct your spouse's behavior. The only person you have any real control over is yourself, so begin by fulfilling your own responsibilities: Men — love and serve; women: choose to submit to your husband. The power to do this comes from the Gospel. Because Christ chose to die for us, we choose to die to self and life for him as the Holy Spirit directs us.

CONCLUSION

Wedding ceremonies are performed every day. And they come in all shapes and sizes...an elaborate staged production, or a spontaneous elopement...a traditional church ceremony, or exchanging vows while parachuting from an airplane. But in every case — once the ceremony ends...the marriage begins.

Society has not provided a way to a truly happy marriage, but God has. God has given a definite pattern for marriage. If a man and woman will follow His pattern, they will find a partnership foundation on which to build a happy, enjoyable, and fulfilling marriage.

HOW TO MAKE A HIERARCHY MARRIAGE INTO A PARTNERSHIP MARRIAGE

Have you ever felt that maybe there was something missing in your marriage...but you couldn't figure out what it was? Today, you'll learn just how to revitalize love in your marriage. Once you understand what love is, you'll have the tools for making a hierarchy marriage into a partnership one. This can change your marriage!

SHOW VIDEO 2 NOW

Some of the difficulty in describing love comes from having only one word in the English language to describe such a complex emotion. What were the Greek words that describe different types of love?

EROS (eer-ahs)
STORGE (store-gay)
PHILEO (fil-lay-oh)
EPITHUMIA (ep-eh-thoom-ee-ah)
AGAPE (uh-gah-pay)

(Note: Agape love will be covered in Video 3)

In order for your expressed love to be experienced by your spouse in a partnership marriage, you must transform the four types of love (covered by the video) into everyday actions. By loving your spouse with each of these types of love, your spouse will feel and experience your complete love.

I. To Love Your Spouse Completely, You Must Demonstrate All Five Aspects of Love.

1. Romantic Love — Eros

Can anyone describe what romantic love is? (Romantic love is the love that is thrilling — an emotional attraction that makes you feel as if you were on top of the world. It is an adoring, passionate kind of love.)

Why do you think that romance in marriage loses its sizzle? (Daily pressures, unresolved conflicts, stress, lack of time or energy, lack of sleep, no sharing of responsibilities as partners, not knowing what makes your spouse feel romantic.)

How do you keep the fires of romance alive in your marriage? (Thinking about your partner during the day — really focusing on your husband/wife as a person. Scheduling time for romantic "events" because they rarely just "happen". Talking to each other about just us. Leaving little notes or sending cards to remind spouse that I'm thinking about him/her.)

Both partners should be looking for imaginative ways to keep the adventure, the spice, and the romance alive in their marriage. Men especially need to take the lead in romance (not sex). Don't just let it happen...make it happen by planning ahead! Your romantic moments are only limited by your own imagination.

2. Belonging/Security Love — Storge

(Storge is the love that gives us a sense of belonging to one another, such as the security found in being part of a family. Storge is a dependable, comfortable form of love; it provides an

atmosphere of trust and complete freedom to be yourself, because you feel secure in the relationship.)

Why is storge love so important for your marriage? (It allows you to feel a complete secure freedom to be yourself. It allows trust and total honesty because you know that your spouse will not hurt or abandon you.)

There are many insecure people in the world. So, husbands, what can you do to help your wife feel more secure? Wives, what can you do to make your husband feel more secure in your love? (Listen without interrupting, respect their opinion, stop criticizing their actions, be thoughtful of their time, never threaten or use ultimatums to get my way, be considerate of spouse's physical desires/feelings, never embarrass or put them down in public.)

Why are the two ACTIONS mentioned in the video (don't criticize, and be thoughtful, so critical for building the security of storge love? (They show that you are supportive, loyal, reliable, and can be trusted totally.)

3. Unique Closeness of Friendship -- Phileo

(Phileo is the love we have for our siblings, a tender affection for another, in general -- friendship. This love springs from shared interests.)

What is the key to building a friendship and sharing close companionship (phileo) with your spouse? (Spending time together.)

Does being in the same house, doing separate things build friendship love and companionship? Why or why not? (No. It doesn't encourage the communication and interaction so critical to phileo. Phileo requires the sharing of mutual interests, visions, common ground, and learning to know one another.)

What are some ways you and your spouse build phileo — your friendship with one another? (Spending time together talking — really communicating, walking, discussing a great book or movie, just being together pursuing interests: fishing, shopping, exercising, concerts, etc.)

4. Lovemaking, Sex — Epithumia

(Epithumia is the desire to fulfill the needs of the flesh, the "cravings of the flesh," eager desire, a longing.)

Sex should be a wonderfully exciting part of your marriage. Let's review the three suggestions from the video to improve/enhance your sexual enjoyment:

1. Realize that God created us as sexual beings.
2. Get the facts on sex.
3. Become a 12-hour lover

Why is it important to understand that God created us as sexual beings? (It allows us to express our sexual love to our spouse (epithumia) freely and without inhibition or fear. So that we understand that sex within marriage is not vulgar or sinful.)

What do you think was meant in the video when Pastor Zoebi said: "Become a 12-hour lover?" What effect would this have on you or your spouse? (It builds anticipation and adds consideration. It involves the mind and not just the body, it adds excitement, and encourages intimacy.)

What is it that prevents us from being "12-hour lovers?" (The stress of our jobs, being insecure about how we look, the kids, unresolved conflicts with one another, etc.)

CONCLUSION

The only way to help your spouse feel your complete love is for you to demonstrate romance, friendship, a sense of acceptance through belonging/security, and sexual love. Make a commitment right now to ignite your relationship with your spouse by practicing these four types of love in your marriage. Once you commit to loving your spouse completely and as a partner, you will see how dynamic, exciting, and thrilling the love of a marriage relationship can be. Take action that demonstrates your complete love...it will change your marriage!

HOW TO LOVE YOUR SPOUSE IN PARTNERSHIP MARRIAGE

In the last video session we learned how our actions demonstrating the four types of love can put sizzle into our marriages. If you worked on expressing your love for your spouse this past week, you may have found that it was more difficult than you expected. That's understandable, because there is one missing piece — the key that ties together the concept of love in partnership marriage.

Now, this key could be the most important principle you ever study regarding marriage. It has the power to strengthen and support marriages through good times and bad. It is literally the foundational love on which you can build your marriage relationship.

The stories you are about to see show real people from Bethany Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio talking about circumstances that rocked the very foundation of their marriages.

SHOW VIDEO 3 NOW

What are some examples of conditional clauses in a marriage "contract?" (Prenuptial agreements, promising to love and honor but not serve or obey, saying "I'll love you as long as you love me.")

Conditional clauses in a marriage relationship create uncertainty and undermine commitment. Loving your spouse without condition (unconditional love) is the foundation on which you can build a lasting, loving partnership marriage.

I. The Four Keys to Unconditional (Agape) Love

Each of the couples in our video began their marriages with high expectations and a commitment to love their spouses unconditionally — never dreaming that their commitment would be so severely tested. But in each situation, the foundation of unconditional love strengthened and supported their marriages.

1. Agape Love is a Choice

Agape love is an action that you make happen — a love you determine to give by an act of your will. It is not fueled by emotions or based on the other person's performance — agape love is a choice. Agape love is the determination of the mind and will to do God's good for another person whether or not that person deserves it, without thought of return and even through it requires sacrifice.

READ: Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

What choice did God make to show His agape love for us? (God's unconditional love for us took action; He chose to send Christ to die for us.)

If God's love was based on the "condition" of our performance, would He have sent Christ? Why? (We are unlovable based on our performance.)

God's love is the perfect example of unconditional love. But how about those of us who are less than perfect; what does unconditional love mean in a marriage setting?

Should your spouse ever feel as if they have to earn your love? Explain. (No, Agape love is not based on the spouse's earning that love, it is based on your choice to give love — no matter what conditions exist.)

Has there been an instance in your marriage when, despite his/her feelings, your spouse loved you with a "no matter what" love? Explain. (Allow response.)

What were some of the choices the individuals in the video made that reflected their agape love? (Allow response.)

2. Agape Love Continues Even When the Other Person Becomes Unlovable.

Your spouse's security comes from being totally accepted — just as they are — even if the things they do make them seem, at times, unlovable. Agape love continues through those situations to nurture a secure marriage relationship.

What are some things that could make a spouse seem "unlovable?" (Inconsiderate behavior, infidelity, non-communication, abuse, irresponsibility, substance abuse.)

If something like this has ever happened to you, how have you reacted? (It was easiest to close up, pull back or generally withdraw my love and support.)

Have you ever justified an unloving behavior or harsh reactions to your spouse because of how they've treated or responded to you? (I found it convenient to justify unloving behav-

ior when I was feeling hurt. I had to decide to overcome those feelings and with God's help choose to love my spouse.)

3. Agape Love Requires Understanding.

What do you do to communicate love to your spouse?
(help and support my spouse, touch my spouse, verbalize my love, spend time together, listen and share in their feelings, fulfill my role and responsibilities.)

Are you sure that your action/behavior communicates love to them — or is it just something you wish they would do for you? (Allow response.)

Have you ever asked your spouse for ideas on ways you could better communicate your love to him/her? What did he/she say?

(Allow response.)

In order for your spouse to experience your love, you must first find out what actions communicate that love...is it by how much time you spend together? Is it physical affection?...or is it verbal reassurance of your love and loyalty? Agape love puts other's needs first. Find out what your spouse needs to feel in your love, then meet those needs through actions.

4. Agape Love Expects Nothing in Return

Have you ever taken action, expecting something from your spouse in return? What happened? (Since my spouse is not perfect, I was disappointed because he/she didn't react the way I expected. I was hurt and wanted to withdraw my loving actions.)

What have you done that helps you act without expecting love in return? (Take actions with absolutely no expectations. If I act assuming that I will receive nothing in return, I will not be disappointed and can love with a proper attitude — loving because I choose to, not because of what I'll get or fulfilling some role placed upon me.)

Agape love expects nothing in return. Each of the other types of love (phileo, storge, epithumia, eros) require a response from your spouse, but agape love is a gift.

CONCLUSION

The world tells us to be selfish — to love ourselves first and look out for our own needs. But selfish love makes no commitment and will not hold a marriage together during those times when our needs are not met. Unconditional love is a powerful foundation that supports and strengthens our complete love for our spouse in a partnership marriage.

But it is not enough to just say, "I love you unconditionally." To help your spouse really feel your unselfish, unconditional love; your actions and behavior must show it every day. Right now the choice is yours...you can choose to love without conditions...without rewards...and without expectations. And if you demonstrate that unconditional love through your actions, you will build a secure, loving partnership marriage relationship.

HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS IN PARTNERSHIP MARRIAGE

We've talked a lot about the importance of love in the first three video sessions. But what about conflict in a marriage? Even a "partnership marriage" will at times have conflict. Is it necessary, avoidable, or just part of living with someone? And when there is conflict, are there ways to keep it from causing irreparable damage? These are good questions...ones that we'll learn about today in our fourth and final session: "How to Resolve Conflicts in Partnership Marriage."

Looking back on past fights or conflicts with your spouse, what do you fight about? Are there 1 or 2 things that keep coming up? (Allow response.)

Having a good partnership marriage doesn't mean you never have differences or conflicts. But, it does mean that you and your spouse are able to communicate...talk about the problems and come to an understanding of each other's views.

But how do you get through the inevitable conflict without doing serious damage to your marriage? The key is communication and a slave/master marriage does not provide this arena. Only a biblical partnership marriage will. Let's look at six practical suggestions.

SHOW VIDEO 4 NOW

SIX KEYS TO COMMUNICATE DURING CONFLICT

1. Control Your Anger

Can you think of a time when you didn't control your anger in an argument? What happened? (I said or did things that

hurt my spouse, I said things I didn't mean to say or didn't really believe just to hurt or get back at my spouse.)

Uncontrolled anger is dangerous, because it creates animosity and distance between couples. But how do you keep from being controlled by your anger? Try following these two steps:

A. Identify the real cause of your anger.

Real or imagined, what has your spouse done or said that has made you angry in the past? (When my spouse does not don't seem to be doing his/her fair share of chores at home; it wasn't what he/she said — it was the way he/she said it — the tone of his/her voice; when I feel hurt or ignored by him/her.)

Once you have identified the cause of your anger, you must do something about it — that's step 2.

B. Confess those thoughts and feelings to your spouse in a non-threatening manner.

During an argument, have you ever expressed to your spouse exactly how you felt and why? How did this help your communication? (It let my spouse know why I was really angry; it brought control and rational thought to the situation; once the true feelings were expressed, we were able to deal with them and start working things out.)

Controlling your anger will help open the lines of communication so that you can calmly attack the problem as partners instead of your partner.

2. Listen With Your Mouth Shut

READ" Proverbs 18:13: "He who gives an answer before he hears all the facts, to him is folly and shame."

Why is it so difficult sometimes to listen to all the facts before responding? (We usually prefer to be the one talking...expressing our ideas and getting our point across. Sometimes I think I already know what my spouse is trying to say and I'm saving time by interrupting and moving one.)

How does it make you feel when your spouse listens with her/his mouth open. How about with it shut — listening intently? (Open: I feel like he/she doesn't really want to hear what I have to say, like my spouse is not really listening and trying to understand or even care about my feelings. Mouth shut: like he/she really care about me and my feelings — trying to understand my point of view.)

3. Listen With Your Mind Open

Can anyone share an example from your own marriage when your spouse was listening with his/her mouth closed but also with his/her mind shut? (When I'm talking, and I can tell he/she is thinking about what to say next — not interrupting — but not listening with the intention of understanding either; when he/she has already made up their mind and I can see in their eyes that no matter what I say — they've already decided.)

How does talking to a closed mind make you feel? (Like he/she is just trying to win a debate, like he/she does not care about my thoughts and feelings in the matter.)

4. Be Careful What You Say

Can you recall something unkind your spouse said to you in the past year? Why do you still remember that? (Things that are unkind cause deep wounds that leave lasting scars. Unkind attacks cause me to dwell on the comment and try to determine if it has merit — it causes me to question myself.)

Has this comment ever come up in an argument again? How did this make you feel? (It made me feel as if he/she didn't care enough not to ever say it again, or that he/she really believe it was true.)

READ Proverbs 29:20: "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him."

Words are like high-speed bullets...once you pull the trigger they hit the target before you can even think about taking them back. Remember, everything you say either helps or hinders; heals or wounds; builds up or tears down. Be careful what you say. Only YOU can control the trigger on your words.

5. Be willing to Apologize

Suggestion number five is: be willing to apologize. In every conflict there is at least one person (and many times it's both of you) who needs to ask for forgiveness.

Is it easier for you or for your spouse to say "I'm sorry?" Why? (Allow response.)

When would it be appropriate for both of you to say I'm sorry? (When we have both been unkind or unfair in the argument.)

Both people apologizing eliminates any second guessing about whose fault the argument was and provides a new beginning.)

Has there ever been a time when you felt your spouse should have apologized but didn't? What did that do to your relationship? (I stayed angry and harbored resentment. It put distance between us and broke down communication.)

6. Be Willing to Forgive

When your spouse forgives you, how do you feel? (I feel like we can start new — without the shadow of past problems, I feel released from my spouse's resentment and free from the guilt of hurting him/her.)

Forgiveness means that in your heart, you no longer hold the offense against them. Once you forgive your spouse, your partner, is that the last time that you think about that injury? (No. Forgiveness may be immediate but the healing of your feelings takes time. The process of trust building after forgiving takes time.)

To forgive is to put away what has happened. You can no longer use the past against your husband or wife, by bringing it up...or dwelling on it in your own thoughts. Instead, show by your behavior that they are truly forgiven.

CONCLUSION

Conflict causes tension and puts distance between spouses; and if left unresolved, it can significantly damage your marriage relationship. Once you can get your emotions under

control, you can then attack problems instead of your spouse.

Ultimately, it's the listening, talking, sharing, and understanding that helps you resolve the conflict. The final steps of the process — apologizing and forgiving — can actually bring you closer to your spouse.

Having a good partnership marriage doesn't mean that you won't have conflicts. It just means that when you do, you are committed and willing to communicate through that conflict without pulling rank. "I'm the head...God said so...case closed." By applying what we have learned today, you can come to an understanding through conflict without any deep and lasting wounds.

Marriage, partnership marriage, was designed by God to be a "till death do us part" relationship. And it can be!

If we choose to love our spouses unconditionally, we will build a solid foundation for our marriage relationships.

If we determine to communicate through conflict, our moments of crises can also be ones of growth.

And if we choose to demonstrate the five types of love through our behavior, actions, and words, our spouse will feel our complete love.

By taking these actions, you can, with God's help, develop an exciting, fulfilling partnership marriage that is indeed "till death do us part" that is filled with life and joy!

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