

# The Christian Home

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### **REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS BLOCK:**

1. **Read all the material** for this block.
2. **Look up and read all the verses** in the material as you read through the material.
3. **Fill in the answers** to your **STUDY QUESTIONS** ahead of time so you will be better prepared for the EXAM during the final hour.
4. **T-H-I-N-K** as you read this material.      **It will be a blessing to you.  
It will also change your life.**

# The Christian Home

**I**N these days and times it is more surprising to find a truly happy marriage, one that works, than the many that are only a pretense at marriage or that end in divorce or separation. Statistics prove that more homes break up than those that last. What makes a true home, how is it accomplished, what are the necessary elements and what is required of those members of the home? The terminology "Christian Home" implies that those within the home must have had a real, personal experience in accepting Christ as personal Saviour. So our study will be based on the premise that the man and woman are born again or are both Christian.

## I. ITS BEGINNING

### A. In Courtship

1. Assurance that this relationship is God's perfect will.
2. Determination to keep the relationship clean until God has joined you as one. (Avoids guilt and insecurity after the marriage.)
3. Make yourself aware of adjustments that will have to be made.
4. Realize neither courtship nor marriage are reforming "agencies"

### B. The Ceremony

1. Practically - it involves two elements:
  - a. Personal - the pledge or vow between the man and woman to each other to live as man and wife.
  - b. Social - because laws require this be done in the presence of others the marriage becomes social. To give the marriage the best start, the ceremony should be given careful religious and spiritual preparation.
2. Biblically - Gen. 2:18-25
  - a. It is an institution of God.
  - b. It is a turning from one kind of life and committing one's self to another kind of life.
  - c. It is a turning from all other people and committing one's self to one person.
  - d. It is a deliberate choice - the choice of committing yourself to another.

## C. The Basic Concepts

1. Its Purpose - to glorify God:
  - a. by being an exhibition of the way God loves the individual.
  - b. by being a picture of the way Jesus Christ loves one who has trusted Him.
  - c. by being a manifestation to the lost world of His love and power.
2. Its Relationships
  - a. Man/Husband - 1 Cor. 14:35; Eph. 5:22-24
    - (1) Is the head - in practical matters; spiritual matters
    - (2) Is the teacher - to wife; to children
  - b. Woman/Wife - Eph. 5:22-23; Gen. 2
    - (1) Is the helpmeet
    - (2) Is the follower
  - c. Children - Psalms 127:3
    - (1) The heritage
    - (2) The fruit
3. Its Guiding Principles
  - a. Love - "Agape" - Eph. 5:25 - "so love" It should be active, involved, unconditional, permanent, committed, giving, constructive, purposeful, consistent, this is the best way for blessing.
  - b. Belonging - "Your Own" - Eph. 5:22 He/She needs to feel that he/she is the king/queen to the person he/she loves. No more need for loneliness.
  - c. Unity - "One Flesh"
    1. Spiritually
    2. Physically

## II. THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS

### A. A Spiritual Leader - The Man

He is to provide direction without being domineering, and to provide and protect without being possessive, he is to be a leader. This is hard and is often accompanied with a feeling of inadequacy and of not being qualified. He must pray and teach the Scriptures to his family and take whatever measures are necessary to keep the home clean spiritually.

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## How Does He Do This?

1. *By being alert to spiritual danger - Prov. 30:17; 1 Peter 5:8*
2. *By being true to God's standards - Dan. 1:8-15; 6:7-12*
3. *By being a man - Joshua 1:8; Psa. 119:97-110; Psa. 1:2-3*
4. *By being strong - 1 Kings 18:21-40; 2 Chron. 16:9*
5. *By being kind and loving in everything - Acts 6:10,15; James 3:17 Isaiah 3:5,12 -*

## B. A Help Meet/Submissive Wife -

Gen. 2; Eph. 5:21-23

Submission is simply obedience; to abide and rest in him, to lean on him, to adhere to him, to abandon herself to him, complete confidence that his will for her is the best thing for her.

Anything that can be applied to our relationship with Christ can be applied in the woman's relationship to her husband and vice versa.

1. *Love must grow - our love for Christ grows as we walk and commune with Him, so it is with our spouse.*
2. *She must seek to know him - Phil. 3:8.*
3. *The loving and willing submission must come from the heart.*
4. *She must allow nothing to come between her and him - "one flesh".*
5. *She must reverence him - "give honor to him", rightful place.*

## C. Disciplined and Loved Children

1. *Love - True love develops maturity and self-esteem*
  - a. Is not overprotective
  - b. Is not possessiveBoth of these are selfish love.
2. *Discipline - Training which corrects, molds, strengthens, perfects.*
  - a. Discipline is needed to manifest love - Heb. 12:6; Prov. 3:11-12.
  - b. Discipline is needed for child's good - Heb. 12:9,10; Job 5:17; Psa. 119:67.
  - c. Discipline is needed to conform the child to God's pattern. Prov. 19:18.

## III. THE HUSBAND/FATHER'S ROLE

### A. As Spiritual Leader - He must have firm convictions in order to protect his wife and children.

1. *Only God is Sovereign, the Bible is God's inspired Word, and is the final authority in his life.*
2. *The purpose of his life is to seek God with his whole heart and order his life according to His priorities.*
3. *His body is God's temple and he must not defile it with worldly lusts.*
4. *The church which he attends must teach the fundamental truths of the Bible, and strengthen his basic convictions.*
5. *His children and grandchildren belong to God and it is his responsibility to teach them Biblical principles, godly character and important convictions.*
6. *His actions and deeds must not weaken the Biblical convictions of another Christian.*
7. *His marriage is a life commitment to God and to his mate.*
8. *His material possessions are a trust from God and must be worked for and used according to Biblical principles.*
9. *How he helps in speech or actions to restore a Christian brother must be according to God's Word.*
10. *His affections (desires. must be in heavenly things, not worldly.*

### B. As Practical Leader

1. *In Financial Matters - Luke 16:11*
  - a. Recognize that true prosperity comes from God - Deut. 8:18
  - b. Recognize that financial freedom comes by our commitment to God's purposes for money - Matt. 6:30
  - c. Recognize that financial freedom comes by recognizing and rejecting false financial concepts - 1 Cor. 7:22
  - d. Recognize that financial freedom comes by acceptance of God's reproof for wrong financial decisions - Haggai 9

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- e. Recognize that financial freedom comes by choosing to serve God rather than money - Matt. 6:24
- f. Recognize that financial freedom comes by tithing and giving offerings - Prov. 3:9-10
- g. Recognize that financial freedom comes by not incurring debts - Prov. 27:1
- h. Recognize that financial freedom comes by learning to be content in abundance and in need - Phil. 4:12
- i. Recognize that financial freedom comes by resistance to sales talk - 1 John 2:6
- j. Recognize that financial freedom comes by recognizing and rejecting swindlers - Prov. 2:12,16
- k. Recognize that financial freedom comes by getting the most for your money - 1 Tim. 6:6
- l. Recognize that financial freedom comes by keeping accurate/profitable records - 1 Cor. 4:2
- m. Recognize that financial freedom comes by refusing to lend or consign - Prov. 6:1-3
- n. Recognize that financial freedom comes by developing the full potential of the home - Prov. 31:10
- o. Recognize that financial freedom comes by choosing a good name rather than riches - Mal. 3:10
- p. Recognize that financial freedom comes by knowing how to accept God's provision through prayer - Eph. 3:20
- q. Recognize that financial freedom comes by resisting the temptations to be a part of unscriptural partnerships - Dan. 1:8
- r. Recognize that financial freedom comes by recognizing victory over laziness - 2 Thess. 3:10; Luke 12:19
- s. Recognize that financial freedom comes by listening to inward convictions - Prov. 1:5
- t. Recognize that financial freedom comes by knowledge of how to build and pass on a godly inheritance - Prov. 13:22; Prov. 20:21

## 2. In Husband/Wife Relationship

*The Bible in 1 Peter 3:7 warns the husband to live with his wife "according to knowledge". Therefore the major part of the responsibility of maintaining the right spirit in the marriage rests on the man.*

### a. Things That Man Does That Damage The Spirit Of Oneness And Love In The Marriage:

- (1) Does not love, honor and cherish her more than any other woman, job or hobby in his life.
- (2) Does not provide spiritual leadership.
- (3) Does not tell her about changes or moves in adequate time to adjust mentally and otherwise.
- (4) Compares her unfavorably with other woman. - Prov. 5:18; 20:22.
- (5) His self discipline is insufficient to control anger/impure thoughts - Col. 3:19
- (6) Does not recognize and praise attempts to please him.
- (7) Corrects and criticizes her in public.
- (8) Does not accept her opinion as important - Matt. 27:19.
- (9) Disciplines the children in anger or is inconsistent in the discipline - Prov. 6:20
- (10) Does not admit failure nor ask forgiveness for wrong doing.



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## b. Things The Man Does That Weakens Her Emotionally:

### ACTION

1. Husband fails to be the spiritual leader.
2. Husband disregards problems and permits them to get worse.
3. Husband does not support her in the discipline of the children.
4. Husband spends the extra money for the things he alone enjoys.
5. Husband does not accept himself.
6. Husband shows admiration for and praises other women.
7. Husband only expresses his love verbally when he want a physical relationship.
8. Husband does not remember anniversaries, important and special occasions.
9. Husband does not express praise for things she does.
10. Husband does not spend time in conversing with her.
11. Husband pays no attention to extra special things she does just for him.
12. Husband misjudges things and is not wise in business decisions.
13. Husband has no alertness to danger she faces.
14. Husband disregards repairs needed at home.
15. Husband has bad manners.
16. Husband has desire, for other women.
17. Husband loses his temper but does not ask to be forgiven.

### REACTION

1. She feels insecure. leader.
2. She develops a feeling of helplessness and takes matters into her own hand.
3. She blames him when the children rebel.
4. She resents the pressure of their living under limited finances.
5. She feels rejected by him also.
6. She feels inferior and jealous.
7. She finds it difficult to love him.
8. She feels she is not loved or cherished by him.
9. She develops frustration in not knowing how she can please him.
10. She seeks others that will listen to how she really feels.
11. She becomes uncreative toward him and the home and seeks interests outside.
12. She develops resistance to his will in the future.
13. She does not feel protected.
14. She becomes resentful and impatient.
15. She feels she is not special.
16. She develops a feeling of inadequacy in meeting his physical needs.
17. She rebels against his pride.

## c. Things The Man Can Do To Make Her "Radiant":

- (1) Be sure she is "cleaned" by the Word - John 15:3; 17:17
- (2) Praise her consistently for godly character - Prov. 31:30 Praise not flattery - Prov. 29:5
- (3) Help her remove secret fears - Job. 3:25; 2 Tim. 1:7 Examples: Insecurity if you should die, growing old, becoming unattractive, ill health because of sin, failure as wife/mother, loss of your job, mental problems, social adjustments, educational lack, physical safety, future of children being replaced.
- (4) Communicate your love by consistent good manners, Example: Seating her at

the table, opening doors, lifting heavy objects, ordering at a restaurant, practicing good table manners, picking up your things at home, punctuality, properly introducing her, informing her of your schedule, not using crude language, not criticizing her publicly or using improper topics for your conversation, using personal cleanliness and neatness.

- (5) Build her trust by being a one-woman man - 1 Tim. 3:2
- (6) Encourage her to find satisfaction in God-given responsibilities - Gen. 1:28; Duet. 4:9; 1 Tim. 5:10

### 3. In Father/Children Relationships

- a. Spiritually - guarding them against temptations.

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- (1) Make sure you are overcoming temptations - Rom 6-8
  - (2) Consecrate them individually to God - Psa 127:3
  - (3) Instill in them the fear of God - Prov. 16:6
  - (4) Lead each one to a personal acceptance of Christ- 2 Tim. 3:15
  - (5) Challenge them to total dedication - Rom. 12
  - (6) Train them to recognize and resist Satan - James 1:13-14; Prov. 1; James 4:6-11; 2 Tim. 2:22
  - (7) Train them to recognize your authority as God's protection for them - 1 Sam. 15:23
  - (8) Teach/train them to cry to God when attacked physically/spiritually - Deut. 22:24-27
  - (9) Establish regular sessions for checking personal devotions.
  - (10) Teach them to stand alone against evil.
  - (11) Pray a "hedge" of protection around each one - Job 10; 2 Cor. 10:4
- b. Disciplinary
- (1) Depend on God for wisdom
  - (2) Expect obedience
  - (3) Expect what is reasonable
  - (4) Have necessary rules
  - (5) Do not nag
  - (6) Insist on courtesy
  - (7) Teach them their liberty ends where another person's begins - Rom. 13:10
  - (8) Teach them to respect authority
  - (9) Be consistent
  - (10) Teach them to endure hardness - 2 Tim. 2:31; 1 Cor. 9:27
  - (11) Help them face faults and failures
  - (12) Do not allow yourself to be persuaded into unjust punishment.

## IV. THE WIFE/MOTHER'S ROLE

The Wife/Mother sets the general atmosphere of the home. She, therefore, needs an even (stable) disposition.

### A. Principles To Help:

1. *If submitted to Jesus Christ the role as follower will not be a burden. How submissive a woman is to Jesus Christ will determine the degree of her willingness to follow her husband.*
2. *A woman will find her true identity and fulfillment when she fulfills the purpose for which God created her - Gen. 3:16*

### B. Things To Do - Concerning Her Husband:

1. *Develop a right attitude within.*
  - a. God intended for her to be beautiful - so she should maintain her physical beauty - it's what attracts her husband.
  - b. God made her so that the inner being effects the outward - so she should maintain inner beauty for it affects her face.
  - c. God made her to follow and compliment her husband:
    - (1) So she needs to realize that her obedience to him is a result of her obedience to God.
    - (2) So she must see that she needs the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Word.
    - (3) So she needs to have a humble spirit in seeking wisdom and direction from the Lord.
    - (4) So she needs to spend time in prayer.
2. *Develop Right Actions Without.*
  - a. Respect him as a man:
    - (1) By helping him learn how to protect her.
    - (2) By relying on him financially.
    - (3) By being loyal to his leadership.
    - (4) By accepting his decisions.
    - (5) By accepting his physical affection.
    - (6) By giving him time to act.
  - b. Encourage and accept him as the Spiritual Leader.

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- (1) How to Encourage:
  - (a) Lift him to the position of leader by being a follower.
  - (b) Respect him.
  - (c) Be willing to learn from him.
  - (d) Come to him with your questions and problems.
- (2) How to Show Acceptance of Him:
  - (a) Reassure him that his authority is from God.
  - (b) Help him to see the benefit even in wrong decisions.
  - (c) Get his approval before asking advice/counsel of someone else.
  - (d) Admire and praise his leadership qualities.
  - (e) Encourage him not to give up.
  - (f) Don't pressure him in time of difficulty.
  - (g) Show enthusiasm about his achievements.
  - (h) Be attentive when he is talking.

## C. Do your part in maintaining the oneness of Spirit in the marriage.

1. *Respect your husband as a man (Eph. 5:33. - When you do not respect him it causes him to doubt himself and become attracted to women who respect him.*
2. *Accept him as the Spiritual Leader - when you do not he will shift the responsibility to you.*
3. *Make your appeals or requests wisely and lovingly (Prov. 27:17) - If you do not he will become harsh or frustrated.*
4. *Develop inward beauty (1 Peter 3:4) - If you do not, he will lose respect for you and he will be attracted to other women.*
  - a. Meek and quiet Spirit
  - b. Personal neatness - appearance and dress.
  - c. Draw attention to your countenance (happy face. - wear colors that suit you.)
5. *Show genuine gratefulness to your husband.*
6. *Accept and respect his need for time alone with God. (2 Chron. 26:5)*

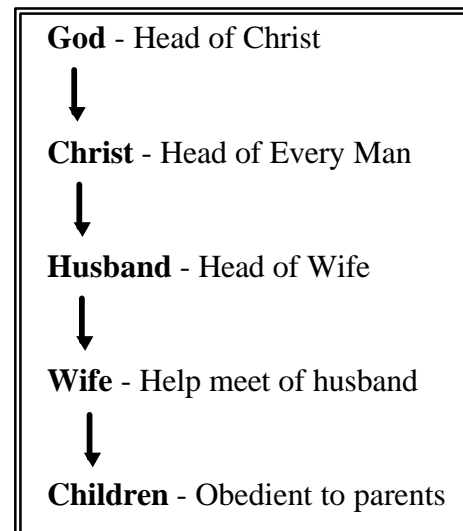
## D. Things To Do - Concerning Children

### 1. Develop Them

- a. Make sure they have available good books to read and good music to listen to.
- b. Teach them to recognize the consequences of sin.
- c. Make time for Scripture memorization and family altar.
- d. Teach them to enjoy work.
- e. Help them to learn something that will give confidence.
- f. Make the home happy.
- g. Praise them, listen to them, allow them to express their feelings.
- h. Help them to develop family pride and loyalty.
- i. Teach them independence and self-reliance.
- j. Welcome their friends.
- k. Help them handle disappointments.
- l. Make your marriage a model for them.
- m. Help them to build happy memories.
- n. Teach them that privilege brings responsibility.
- o. Teach them respect for everyone.
- p. Win them to the Lord, and teach devotion to God, and His Word.

### 2. Set an Example

- a. In authority and discipline **Divine Order** in the home - 1 Cor. 11:3; Col. 3:20



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- b. In Faith
- c. In purity
  - (1) Actions
  - (2) Speech
  - (3) Dress

## V. PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE

### A. Maintaining Right Measure Of Love

#### 1. Five ways to love:

- a. Eupithumia - a strong desire, to long for, to set the heart on.
- b. Eros - the romantic love, passionate, sentimental, feeling that desires to unite with and possess the one loved.
- c. Stergo - natural affection accompanied with a sense of belonging.
- d. Phileo - cherishes, tender affection expecting a response, initiates companionship and closeness.
- e. Agape - a love of action, is not dependent on feelings, focuses on what you do and say. All Five are necessary.

#### 2. Four ways to keep LOVE "burning"

- a. Touch physically - non-sexual such as holding hands, kiss before leaving, etc.
- b. Touch emotionally - have times of sharing interests, thoughts, feelings, goals, ideals.
- c. Touch mentally - making intelligent plans for your life together and for your well being.
- d. Touch spiritually - have Bible study and prayer together.

### B. Communicating

#### 1. Areas of miscommunication or no communication:

- a. Money
- b. Sexual relationship
- c. Temperamental incompatibility
- d. Rearing of children
- e. Relatives
- f. Religion
- g. Sickness

These fall into four areas in which a couple needs to communicate: (James 5:16; Matthew 18:19.)

**Spiritual    Intellectual**  
**Emotional    Physical**

#### 2. Hindrances to communications:

- a. Differences in male/female
- b. Fear:
  - (1) of being hurt
  - (2) of being rebuffed
  - (3) of the other knowing what I really think or feel
- c. Misreading each other
- d. Self-centeredness
- e. Faulty patterns of response
- f. Unrealistic expectations
- g. Wrong attitudes
- h. Lack of time
- i. Lack of good communication with the Lord.

#### 3. Necessity of good communications:

- a. Provides release from tension
- b. Encourages mutual solutions-thinking together
- c. Encourages "Two heads are better than one".
- d. Clarifies the point of view.

#### 4. Principles for effective communications:

- a. Biblical
  - (1) Know and accept God's plan for your marriage - Eph. 5:22-32
  - (2) Know and accept yourself as God does - 1 Peter 4:8; Prov. 10:12
  - (3) Know and accept your spouse as he/she is.
  - (4) Know and accept the fact that you must take the initiative if the marriage is to change - Prov. 14:1
- b. Practical
  - (1) Express your love daily
  - (2) Never criticize in public
  - (3) Share feelings
  - (4) Listen
  - (5) Have a loving touch
  - (6) Maintain a cheerful and optimistic attitude toward your marriage



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(7) Draw him/her out gently

## 5. Rules for listening:

- a. Don't interrupt
- b. Don't defend yourself
- c. Don't criticize
- d. Understand how he/she feels and what he/she is saying.

## 6. Discussion with your spouse:

- a. Chose appropriate time/place
- b. Make sure there will be no disturbances
- c. Decide basic problems
- d. Have a loving attitude
- e. Don't talk non-stop
- f. Avoid explosive words/phrases
- g. Don't attack
- h. Don't cop-out (coward, escape)
- i. Use concrete illustrations
- j. Know when to stop
- k. Be patient
- l. The rule for a good ending is not "I Agree".

## C. Money - The wrong attitude or the misuse of money often causes problems in a marriage.

These wrong attitudes and misuses are manifested in several ways:

1. *Insecurity - is the result of the person's life being built around things that can be taken away.*
2. *Fear - is the result of thinking about ways our possessions could be lost.*
3. *Anxiety and Loss of Sleep - is the result of always thinking about financial problems.*
4. *Ungratefulness and Enslavement - is the result of always thinking about financial problems and what you could have instead of enjoying what you do have.*
5. *Envy - is the result of desiring what someone else has and comparing what you have with what someone else has.*
6. *Disillusionment - is the result of trying to fulfill your dreams and be happy with money.*

## D. Rebellious Children - When a child rebels there is always a reason, much of this can be avoided and can be corrected if we know and

can recognize the reasons and symptoms of rebellion.

1. *When promises are broken - their spirits are wounded.*
2. *When wrongs are not admitted - their confidence in you is lost.*
3. *When forgiveness is not sought - they react negatively to your pride.*
4. *When you have wrong priorities - they feel you are too busy.*
5. *When you are too strict in discipline - their spirits are broken.*
6. *When too much freedom is given - they feel rejected.*
7. *When you neglect your parents - they do not honor their grandparents and reject elder people.*
8. *When the husband/wife is not loved - they will develop offenses in favor of the unloved parent.*
9. *When the Word of God is neglected - they will reject God and the Bible's authority.*
10. *When the family is sacrificed for a better life - they adopt a system of temporal values.*
11. *When discipline is done in anger - they become bitter.*
12. *When education is delegated to others - they lose respect for you as a teacher.*
13. *When they are not taught how to please you - they feel frustrated and rejected.*



# Study Questions on the Christian Home

## I. ITS BEGINNING

1. Neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_ are reforming "agencies".
2. Marriage is an \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
3. The purpose of marriage is to \_\_\_\_\_
4. The 3 guiding principles are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

## II. THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS

1. List 3 things a man can do to be a spiritual leader:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Give as complete a definition of submission as you can (p.2).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. List 3 things the wife must do to be a submissive wife.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Love for one's children is not a) \_\_\_\_\_ b) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Discipline is \_\_\_\_\_

6. List 3 ways discipline is needed for the child

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

## III. THE HUSBAND/FATHER'S ROLE

1. As spiritual leader he must have \_\_\_\_\_ in order to protect his wife and children.

2. The church he attends must \_\_\_\_\_

3. His \_\_\_\_\_ belongs to God.

4. His marriage is a \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

5. He is not be the practical leader in financial matters. True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_

6. The major part of the responsibility of maintaining the right spirit in marriage rests on the \_\_\_\_\_ according to \_\_\_\_\_.(Scripture)

7. Can the man do anything that will damage the spirit of oneness and love in marriage?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (give one example): \_\_\_\_\_

8. The father should \_\_\_\_\_ a "hedge" of \_\_\_\_\_ around each child.

## IV. THE WIFE/MOTHER'S ROLE

1. The role as follower will not be a burden if the wife is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The wife's inward attitude towards her husband affects \_\_\_\_\_.

# Study Questions on the Christian Home

3. List the 3 things the wife can do to develop right actions without:
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
4. With her children the wife must:
- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. \_\_\_\_\_

## V. PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE

1. List 5 ways to love and one sentence to explain each:
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_
2. To keep love "burning" the pair must touch \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
3. List 3 of the problem areas of communicating that you feel could be problems in your marriage:
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
4. What are 3 of the hindrances to communication?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
5. What are the 4 rules for listening?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Another Problem area is wrong attitudes or misuse of \_\_\_\_\_. This can be manifested by:
- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. \_\_\_\_\_
7. In money problems remember that \_\_\_\_\_ always take precedence over \_\_\_\_\_
8. The last problem area listed is \_\_\_\_\_
9. List the 4 reasons you think are most important for rebellion in children:
- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. \_\_\_\_\_

# Exam Questions on the Christian Home

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: / /

## I. ITS BEGINNING

1. Neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_ are reforming "agencies".
2. Marriage is an \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
3. The purpose of marriage is to \_\_\_\_\_
4. The 3 guiding principles are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

## II. THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS

1. List 3 things a man can do to be a spiritual leader:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Give as complete a definition of submission as you can (p.2).  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. List 3 things the wife must do to be a submissive wife.
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Love for one's children is not a) \_\_\_\_\_ b) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Discipline is \_\_\_\_\_
6. List 3 ways discipline is needed for the child
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

## III. THE HUSBAND/FATHER'S ROLE

1. As spiritual leader he must have \_\_\_\_\_ in order to protect his wife and children.
2. The church he attends must \_\_\_\_\_
3. His \_\_\_\_\_ belongs to God.
4. His marriage is a \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
5. He is not be the practical leader in financial matters. True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
6. The major part of the responsibility of maintaining the right spirit in marriage rests on the \_\_\_\_\_ according to \_\_\_\_\_.(Scripture)
7. Can the man do anything that will damage the spirit of oneness and love in marriage?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (give one example): \_\_\_\_\_
8. The father should \_\_\_\_\_ a "hedge" of \_\_\_\_\_ around each child.

# Exam Questions on the Christian Home

## IV. THE WIFE/MOTHER'S ROLE

1. The role as follower will not be a burden if the wife is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The wife's inward attitude towards her husband affects \_\_\_\_\_.
3. List the 3 things the wife can do to develop right actions without:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
4. With her children the wife must:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_

## V. PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE

1. List 5 ways to love and one sentence to explain each:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_
2. To keep love "burning" the pair must touch \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. List 3 of the problem areas of communicating that you feel could be problems in your marriage:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
4. What are 3 of the hindrances to communication?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
5. What are the 4 rules for listening?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Another Problem area is wrong attitudes or misuse of \_\_\_\_\_. This can be manifested by:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
7. In money problems remember that \_\_\_\_\_ always take precedence over \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The last problem area listed is \_\_\_\_\_.
9. List the 4 reasons you think are most important for rebellion in children:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I have read \_\_\_\_\_% of the printed notes on The Christian Home.
11. I have looked up \_\_\_\_\_% of the Scripture references.

# *the Christian Home*

COMPILED BY  
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B. A. M. A. Bible Institutes, Inc.  
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Civil Marriages?

Christian Weddings?

Private Ceremonies?

Which is right  
for you?



## WHAT ABOUT SECRET MARRIAGES?

What is the best thing to do?

### I. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE "SECRET (CIVIL) MARRIAGE"?

- 1. The date is not publicly known, so it does not "avoid the appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). This is especially true if the bride becomes pregnant before the "secret is out".*
- 2. The pastor and parents do not know. (Heb. 13:7, 17)*
- 3. The relationship with the parents is stressed or broken and the salvation of lost parents is hindered.*
- 4. A civil ceremony satisfies ONLY the laws of the state.*
  - a) The ceremony is not Christian. (1 Cor. 10:31, 32)*
  - b) The officer is not Christian.*
  - c) Family and pastor are not present.*
  - d) Vows are not made to God, but promises to the state.*
- 5. The state does not "join you together", God does. (Matt. 19:5,6)*
- 6. There is no Christian marital counseling.*
- 7. Marriage for the Christian is to be a picture of Christ and the Church. (2 Cor. 11:2,3; Eph. 5:21-33) Bringing the lost world into it, destroys the picture.*

### II. REASONS WHY COUPLES HAVE A "SECRET MARRIAGE".

#### A. Sex has already taken place.

-- Solution:

- 1. Repent and ask forgiveness of God. (If marriage has not taken place - abstain)*
- 2. Ask the pastor for counseling (as regards to the sin).*
- 3. Ask forgiveness of parents.*
- 4. Ask forgiveness of the church.*
- 5. Pray about whether this person is really God's will (unless already married).*
- 6. Ask pastor for marital counseling.*

7. Ask pastor for a private wedding in the church.

**B. Parents do not approve.**

---Solution:

1. Pray earnestly about God's will and parental approval.
2. Discuss with parents (saved or lost) the whole issue. Do NOT argue or fight, but show respect at all times.
3. Listen seriously to their objections. Even lost parents have experience and wisdom, and God can speak to you through them.
4. Let parents know their blessing is important to you and that you are willing to wait while they get to know your intended better and all parties pray for God's guidance.
5. Ask your parents to pray about the matter, and tell them you are also praying.
6. Strive to develop a better, more mature relationship with both parents while you wait and pray.
7. Delay the wedding date, and pray, pray, PRAY.

(EXAMPLE) When a girl became a Christian her parents were so mad they boxed her eyes and locked her in her room for days. When Pastors Brown and Estipona tried to visit the parents they were driven away from the door with an umbrella. Months later when the girl became engaged to a young pastor her parents were very angry and said they would not attend the wedding. The couple waited another year, praying and talking with her parents. When they were married in the church a year later than they had first planned, her parents attended the wedding and gave their blessing. The father walked his daughter down the aisle and gave her away. Her parents are still lost, but their relationship is much better. The couple felt it was worth the wait to have her parents present at their wedding.

**C. Lack of finances.**

-- Solution: A Private Wedding Ceremony

1. Vows are made before God, and family in the church with the pastor officiating.
2. The ceremony is Christian. The date is NOT announced publicly beforehand.

3. The ceremony is private to the IMMEDIATE family and VERY best friends (10-15 people).

4. All are dressed in their "Sunday Best" and no spectators are allowed.

5. Flowers, music, wedding clothes or reception are not required. (a honeymoon is optional)

6. The wedding is announced in the church at the NEXT public service.

(EXAMPLE) "Joe Nye and Mary Hart were married last night in the church in a private ceremony. The church extends its best wishes and prayers for a long and blessed life together. I'm sure you will want to congratulate them personally."

7. The couple should send out announcements to their extended family and friends afterwards. Hand-written notes are O.K. if it is neat. Printed announcements are O.K. also.

8. There is no shame or secrecy in a private wedding ceremony in the church. It is open and above-board and lets the world know that the couple have nothing to hide or be ashamed of. They simply do not have the finances for a public church wedding and do not feel it is God's will that they wait until they do.

9. Variations of the above are, of course, possible.

(EXAMPLE) The bride may carry flowers, or a friend could sing one song during the ceremony. The small group could eat together afterwards at a restaurant or home.

10. If the party and pastor decide to have the ceremony after the Wednesday service, the bride and groom could walk down the aisle together to music. The witnesses would stand with them in front during the ceremony. (The "unity" candle and extensive music would not be appropriate in the absence of the other usual "trappings"). A small merienda for the larger group afterwards is possible, but not necessary.

11. Make sure someone has at least a snapshot camera. Every bride needs a few pictures to remember the event.



# Why You Shouldn't Marry Or Date An Unbeliever

*"Be Ye Not Unequally Yoked  
Together With Unbelievers. . ."*  
II Cor. 6:14



## The "Fellowship" Of Darkness and Light

By Melody Green

### Introduction

**A**t first glance, it may seem that an article such as this is unnecessary - that anyone who loves God could not possibly consider spending their whole life married to someone who doesn't. This, unfortunately, is not the case. I receive letters daily from women who are desperately trying to serve God in a full and complete way, but are unable to do so because their husband loves and serves the world.

*I am addressing this article to Christian women in particular, because in my counseling experience, they seem to make this mistake much more frequently than men do. However, the problems and the principles I will be talking about can obviously be applied to any Christian thinking of marrying (or for that matter even dating) someone who doesn't love Jesus with all of their heart. (This article is not for those of you who were first married and then became a Christian at a later date. Even though, as a result, you may now be married to someone who is not following Jesus, it was not a choice you made since becoming a Christian. This article is for single Christians who still have the "dating" and marriage question ahead of them.)*1

### Missionary Dating

I'm not exactly sure who came up with the term "missionary dating," but I love it because it so appropriately paints the picture. Imagine this—a young girl, full of zeal for God, goes to a remote tribe of natives somewhere to evangelize the lost. She ends up having a special burden for the chief's handsome young son. He seems interested in God, and so she starts spending quite a bit of time with him in hopes of winning him to the Lord. Then, before you know it, her friends at the Missionary Society receive a postcard saying that she is getting married and won't be coming back. Was he converted? Well, not really—but she has full confidence that he will be shortly. Meanwhile, she's happily getting ready to set up housekeeping in his hut full of idols (which, of course, she wouldn't think of worshipping), and dreaming of the wonderful future they will have together. If you heard of a situation like this, what would you think about this girl's chances for real happiness—or her professed love for the Lord? Her actions certainly seem to contradict the very things she says she believes in.

I think it's safe to say that every marriage starts out with a simple date. Many Christians are deceived when it comes to this. They feel all right about dating an unbeliever, just as long as it doesn't "get too serious." They may think, "Well, one or two dates can't hurt anyone. Besides, maybe I can lead him to the Lord. I just want to have some fun right now, but when it comes to settling down, I will definitely marry a Christian." Then lo and behold, the next thing they know they have "fallen in love," and are desperately trying to rationalize their relationship and their upcoming marriage—to themselves, to their friends, and to God. I say this—any Christian foolish enough to date an unbeliever is foolish enough to marry one!

### IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Marriage is the biggest and most important decision you will make after your decision to follow Jesus. And as I said before, all marriages start out with a "first date." One of the main problems is that too many Christians approach the idea of dating with far too casual of an attitude. They have adopted the world's view on this, instead of God's. There is no such

thing as "playing the field" when it comes to Christianity.

Sure it gets lonesome sometimes, but remember, every date has the potential of becoming a lifelong relationship. Spending time with the wrong person is opening yourself up to becoming emotionally involved to a point where it is not always so easy to turn and walk away. Once you have given your heart and your emotions to someone, you will be surprised at how difficult it is to have the desire to take them back-even if you know you should. Here is part of a typical letter I have recently received from a young Christian girl. She has already been counseled and encouraged to do the right thing, but I wanted to share her predicament with you:

"I'm 16 and the daughter of missionaries here in the Middle East. I've had a really close walk with the Lord, and He has been good to me in so many ways. But I met a guy at school.

He's not a Christian, and we've been going out for over three months. At the time, I believed it was fine, unless we married, which ofcourse I have no intention of doing because he isn't a Christian. But lately I've spoken with someone who told me it was wrong, and that I should never have gone out with him in the beginning.

"This evening he came over while I was listening to the new tape of Keith's. Afterwards we were talking, and he laughed at all the weird Jesus, and dumb Christian songs' that I listen to. I let him know I was hurt by the way he laughed about the name of Jesus, and now I really feel bad inside because of it, and I feel we should end our relationship. But it's very hard because we really like each other a lot, and I'm afraid my witness will all go down the drain if we break up. I'm really asking the Lord for wisdom now. If you have a few spare minutes you could remember me in prayer."  
-Kept Anonymous

Don't wait until it's too late. The time to ask Jesus for wisdom is before you start a relationship-not after. It is much easier than you think for your heart to overrule your conscience. Once your own desires are demanding priority, your zeal to put God first starts to quickly fade away. Your emotions are a powerful thing, and if you don't control them, they will control you! (Jer. 17:9)

## UNEQUALLY YOKED

*"Do not be bound together with unbelievers" 2 Cor. 6:14*

In the Bible, Jesus (and here, Paul) gave many illustrations using agriculture and animals as examples, since these were common things to everyone in that day. So what does it mean to be unequally yoked? Picture if you will, two oxen tied together at the neck by a wooden crosspiece so they can pull a plow. They are two animals of the same species who have been joined together to do a specific job. They have been carefully trained to respond to the same commands, and once they are united, they are considered to be a team. A wise farmer picks two animals of similar size, strength, and temperament because he knows they will work the best together. If one of them needed to be whipped before he would move, and the other one was terrified at even the sight of a whip, it would seem unwise to tie them together and expect them to work as a team. One "teammate" would frantically try to run away, while the other one would stubbornly refuse to budge. In fact, if two like this were joined together, it seems that disaster might be at hand-with possible damage to the equipment, hurt and confusion to the "teammates," and of course, the work would never get done.

Our beloved Jesus is the wisest and most loving "Farmer" in all the universe. He knows that we would never be happy if we were bound to someone who was pulling us in the opposite direction from where we wanted to go. Our life would be one continual tug of war, and we would never be able to get on with the work that we were called to do. That is why He commanded us to marry "only in the Lord." (I Cor. 7:39) If we are going to serve God in our marriage, then both partners must be in agreement about the job that needs to get done, how it's going to be accomplished, and who they are going to be taking their orders from. It is really very simple. I guess that's why it constantly amazes me that so many choose to ignore God's wisdom, thinking in vain that "it will all work out fine in the end."

## THE DATING GAME

I think it should be becoming increasingly clear to you that dating is not to be done lightly-nor without God's approval! This doesn't mean that you have to

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feel called to marriage with someone before you can spend any time together-but you must be able to see the qualities of a sincere lover of God in this person, and the fruit of their faith should be evident for all to see. If they pass this most crucial test, you still must seek God to see if it's all right to take the time to get to know this person better. You should seek the Lord privately on this-that is, not with the person you are interested. That way, if God says "No," no one will be hurt. I am assuming you have already spent time with this person in group situations-but a deeper relationship should only be entered into if and when the Lord gives you His express permission. If you are afraid to hear a possible "No" from God, then you are not seeking His will, but your own. This should be an immediate danger signal that something is wrong, and you shouldn't make a move until you get your heart right with the Lord.

Does all that sound a little strict to you? Well, just ask someone who has chosen the wrong mate due to a lack of patience, counsel, and prayer. They will tell you that they wish someone would have told them the same things I am now telling you. So many are bound in miserable, unhappy marriages because they ignored Jesus and let their own desires drown out the voice of God. They have learned their lesson the hard way, and now it is too late for them to turn back and start over. Marriage is forever. Once a mistake is made, you can't turn around and say, "We got married out of God's will, so now we'll just get a divorce!" It doesn't work that way. The Bible tells us that if our unbelieving mates consent to remain with us, then we must not send them away. (I Cor. 7:12-13)

Why even put yourself into the position of possibly making the wrong decision? Since God's Word commands us not to be "unequally yoked," it is foolish and openly rebellious to even consider it. You will be headed towards almost certain disaster if you lean to your own understanding instead of trusting God and taking Him at His word.

### **VALUES, GOALS, AND MOTIVATIONS**

When I became a Christian, my whole life was turned upside-down. I could no longer deal with things in the same way that I had before, because God's way was different. Everything changed. I made an abrupt "about-face" and had to sit down and re-evaluate every

aspect of my life. One of the first things I noticed was that my reasons for doing things had changed. I was motivated by a love for God and a desire to please Him, instead of my own selfish desires. As I drew closer to God, He revealed his heart to me, and I found that some of the things that had meant a lot to me were no longer important. And other things, on which I had put little or no value, began to sparkle and shine like jewels. My eyes looked towards eternity, instead of focusing on the temporary things of this world. I truly think my heart would have been broken if I had not been able to share my excitement, joy, and love of God with my most beloved here on earth-my husband.

### **LACK OF TRUE INTIMACY**

"...For what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness or what fellowship has light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6.14)

When it comes right down to it, someone who loves Jesus just doesn't have that much in common with someone who doesn't. Sure, you may enjoy the same hobbies, or be engaged in the same type of work-but when it comes to the things that really matter, you will be miles apart. In a marriage, when that first rush of excitement wears off, you will find yourself yearning for the true intimacy and oneness that can only be experienced with someone of "like mind." You will be unfulfilled and strangely lonesome in this closest of all partnerships if, due to different beliefs, you cannot experience true intimacy. Neither of you would be able to share the deepest longings of your heart with each other, because your whole basis of looking at life-your very reasons for living-would be totally different. Your hearts and lives could never be truly united because there would be no common bond to draw you together and keep you together.

When I speak of marriage, I am speaking of a lifelong commitment to love, honor, cherish, and obey-till death do you part! How could you even consider making such a deep and binding commitment to someone who doesn't love Jesus? As a Christian, you have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to govern your life. But the Bible tells us that those without Jesus have the world, the flesh, and the devil to direct theirs. These are the very things we as Christians are told to overcome. (I John 2:14-17) How

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can you hope to overcome that which you have married, committed, and submitted your life to?

### **MARRY NOW-REFORM LATER**

Many Christian girls seem to be pacified by the fact that their unbelieving boyfriend doesn't seem to object to their Christianity. Even though he doesn't believe like she does, he seems extremely tolerant and even goes to church with her sometimes. He really is a very nice guy, and his biggest vice is drinking a few beers with the boys while watching football. She figures if she marries him, they will have a lot more time together, and then she can really "work on him" and get him saved. Sadly enough, she will find that it's not as easy as she thought it would be. Eventually, her husband's acceptance of her Bible Studies and Christian friends starts to wear thin, and the tension between them begins to take its toll on their marriage. Most girls don't realize that if they are not strong enough to resist the temptation of marrying an unbeliever, they probably aren't strong enough to ever win him to the Lord!

### **"CONVERSIONS" OF CONVENIENCE**

Sometimes in order to marry a Christian girl, a fellow will "make a commitment" to Jesus because he knows he has to. He'll start going to church just to make her happy. In fact, he may even be sincerely trying to "get into it." But if it is not a decision arising from seeing his own need for God, then it is meaningless and will be short-lived. His "commitment" usually starts to fade some time after they get married-when it's no longer necessary for him to put his best foot forward.

I never trust a "conversion" of this type, and I consistently tell all those I counsel to let this fellow prove his commitment on his own. That is, to follow Jesus not by his girlfriend's side, but to get to church or Bible Study on his own steam, not on a date. If he proves to be sincere, growing, and firmly planted in Jesus, then after several months, she can start to pray and seek the Lord about the possibility of entering into a deeper relationship. The problem is, most girls don't have the patience to test the fruit. As soon as "Mr. Right" even looks like he's about to utter a sinner's prayer, she's off picking out towels, dishes, and bridesmaid dresses.

## **THE SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS**

In science, the Second Law of Thermodynamics essentially states that as time passes, anything that's left on its own will deteriorate. Things left on their own will not be built up, but they will eventually break down. In other words, as time goes by, things get worse, not better-and a life, left on its own without God, will get worse. You never know what's around the corner. People who have married "occasional drinkers" have later found themselves married to alcoholics a couple of years down the road. You can't judge the future by the present circumstances when you are dealing with someone who has chosen to go his own way in life. If you have the Lord, you should be able to expect growth and maturity. If you don't have the Lord, you won't know what to expect. This isn't the old "marijuana leads to heroin" story of a few years back-but sin does lead to more sin-and a life that is not willingly yielded to Jesus and guided by His loving hand could end up anywhere... doing anything!

### **COMPETITION**

I think one of the hardest aspects of a marriage where the partners are unequally yoked is the feeling of competition between them. However subtle or unspoken it may be, the competition is felt. As a believer, your values and ideals will constantly be challenged as you live out your day-to-day life. The unbeliever will always be trying to prove (consciously or unconsciously) that he is just as happy as you are, without having any so-called "religious experience". . . and you will, of course, want to show him that actually you possess the greater peace and fulfillment through knowing God. You will have no spiritual leadership or support during times of trials, and your faith will be undermined, not encouraged. And eventually, as the competition grows stronger, your mate will probably get tired of competing with your friends, your church, and your God for your attention and your love.



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## COMPROMISE

A believer, when put in this position, is many times tempted to compromise her faith in order to maintain a peaceful marriage. She can no longer serve the Lord in an open and free way, because if she does, her marriage may fall apart. What a terrible spot to be in! When you start to compromise, your walk with God becomes weak and undernourished. You will be guilty for your lack of obedience to God, which will tend to push you even further away from Him than you already are.

After awhile, frustration sets in for both of you because neither one is really free to do the things that make you happy. You don't have someone to love Jesus with, and he doesn't have someone to love the world with. He doesn't enjoy your friends and activities, and you don't really enjoy his. You are longing for someone to share your joy in Christ-and he is getting different types of longings. He may even start to think that if you won't go out and have his kind of fun, maybe he'll find someone else who will! As you can imagine, in a situation like this, the pressure really starts to build.

Because you are both being held back from the things you want to do, bitterness and resentment enter into the picture, putting an even bigger distance between the two of you and causing more problems. In many situations, once the resentment does set in, the unbelieving mate just may have learned enough Scripture from you to hurl it like tiny bullets of truth to pierce your heart. After all, the Bible is true. And even though he may not believe it, he knows that you do-and he may love to see you crumble under conviction, condemnation, or confusion from his attacks upon you and your faith. The Word of God is a powerful tool ... even in the hands of the unrighteous.

You may think I have painted an unrealistic picture of the ruin of a marriage, but I have read hundreds of letters-all full of the "same story." It's almost impossible for a marriage like this to survive (and they usually don't) unless the believer compromises his or her faith almost to the point of having none. So it's not only the probable death of a marriage I am talking about, but a possible spiritual death as well. I believe that's why the Bible gives us such a strong warning against a union of this kind.

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## THE PROPER BALANCE

Usually, those who want to hang onto their "right" to continue on in the same way with their old friends and their old lifestyle say, "But, I'm not supposed to isolate myself and associate only with Christians!" Well of course you're not. We are the "salt of the earth," seasoning the world with the love of Jesus. (Matt. 5:13,16) The world and the people in it need Christians. How else will they ever find out about the only True Love that exists?

But you mustn't ever forget that although we are in the world, we are never to be a part of it. We must always be careful to keep our eyes on the Lord and immediately flee any situation that may cause us to stumble and fall away from our heavenly calling. (II Tim. 2:22)

Too many Christians use the excuse of "winning their friends to the Lord" to keep one foot in the world, and so themselves remain partakers of worldly pleasures. God knows our hearts. If your friends or associates are causing your love for God to "cool off," it is far better to sacrifice that friendship, than to sacrifice your relationship with Jesus. No relationship on earth is more important than your relationship with your Father in heaven. If you are not strong enough to resist temptation, then admit it and stay away from it. Don't worry about "your witness." If you fall away after knowing and preaching the truth, your only witness will be a bad one anyway!

## CHILDREN

One thing people don't usually think about when they first get married is having children. Usually it's the furthest thing from your mind as you're walking down the aisle. But somewhere down the line, you will probably want to start a family. But what is "a family"? Is it the mere presence of children that qualifies you as a family, or is it something else? A family unit as I see it consists of a group of people bound together by love, a sense of loyalty, and a sincere desire to see each other reach their fullest possible potential and purpose in God. Most traditionally, it consists of Mom, Dad, and some kids, although it can be larger or smaller according to circumstance or the leading of the Lord.

One thing for sure, where there is no unity, there can be no "family." Sure you can all live under one

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roof, but a common dwelling place does not a family make. In an unequally yoked marriage, there will only be confusion and chaos in the home. Without the common bond of love for Jesus, there can be no unity. If the parents do not agree on how to raise their children, the children will raise themselves. If the parents have different standards for their children in the areas of discipline, responsibility, and acceptable behavior and attitudes, then the children will play one parent against the other to get their own way-and the parents will end up arguing over the results. Of course, the children are the real losers in these battles, although they may not realize it at the time. A home like this will be in constant turmoil, and will be a very unhappy place for all who live there, parents and children alike.

If there is no agreement in the home about who God is, and what our response to Him should be, then it is very difficult for children to learn how to know and love Him. If our children are getting a different message from each parent, they will constantly be confused and forced to "take sides."

The greatest factor in our children learning about God is through the example we set for them. Children usually transfer their feelings and impressions of their earthly father over to their idea of who God is. If their father is a righteous man and exercises godly judgement balanced with love and encouragement, then their image and understanding of God will most likely be good. (Eph. 6:4; Col 3:21) If he is unfair in his judgements or antagonistic or indifferent to God, then they will have a hard time (even as an adult) seeing God's true nature and character.

What an unfair burden to put on a tiny child. It will not only Fost him his memories of a happy and peaceful childhood-but in the end, it may cost him his very soul. Let's not even think of putting ourselves, not to mention our innocent children, through such pain and unhappiness as to bring them up in a household of strife and confusion.

If you are thinking of marrying an unbeliever, do you have the unrealistic expectation of raising your children for God when you can't even submit something as important as your marriage to Him? I would say that the prospect is highly unlikely, at best.

## CONCLUSION

I hose Christians who enter into marriage with an unbeliever will never experience the fullness and richness of marriage as God intended it to be. They will never enjoy true intimacy or the blessing of a family united by the common bond of Jesus' love. In fact, instead of experiencing that common bond (or "bonding") of love, they will experience the "common bondage" of frustration and. discontent that may lead to separation or divorce. For True Love is only possible when you know God, and when you can have His unselfish, uncompromising love for others, putting them above yourself. All else pales in comparison to the real thing. Don't be foolish. Don't settle for anything less than God's very best for you. If you are called to marriage, God has a perfect partner for you. But beware, the enemy is a matchmaker too.

Trust the Lord, walk in obedience, and He will meet your needs in His way and in His timing. Lean to your own understanding and insist on your own way and watch out-you just may get what you are looking for! You may also live to regret it. Trust God. He will never lead you astray.

In closing, I want to say that if you are now in a relationship with an unbeliever, or if you have been in the past (while professing to be a Christian), I think you'd better examine your heart before the Lord. If you can find peace and contentment in a relationship with someone who doesn't love God, then you must ask yourself how much you really love Him. After all, if you find you have more in common with those who walk in darkness ... it may be because you are both walking down the same path! (I John 1:6-7; John 3:21)

Don't deceive yourself. A sincere lover of God would never knowingly be joined to a lover of the world. Don't even think about submitting your life in marriage to a godless partner-that is, unless it won't bother you to live a godless life. Please pray about all that we have talked about and be quick to respond to the things God has spoken to your heart. I love you very much, and I pray that you will reach the highest potential possible in Christ Jesus as you obey Him in all things. May God bless you as you seek Him.

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