



The Sharon Star

Spiritual Worship

By F.T. Paterson

It is innate within the heart of man to have a desire for worship. It could be to reach out to God almighty in worship or it could also manifest itself in the worship of gods of wood and stone made in the likeness of created things. Even though, in this enlightened age, we may think we have progressed beyond idol worship, mankind still bows down to things like the gods of mammon, pride, sex and even the worship of mankind itself. As the doctrine of humanism tells us, we are gods ourselves. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles" (Rom 1:20-23, NIV). Let me quote from an article in the Sharon Star, Jan 1975. "At the time my wife and I had been traveling in Europe and visited a number of cathedrals and places of worship that were very ornate and beautiful to behold and as I meditated on their beauty I realized that I did not experience that wonderful presence of God that I have experienced many times in grass huts and under the trees in India and the Philippines. I saw works of art by the finest of artists depicting the works of God. I saw and heard tremendous pipe organs which sang forth swelling praise to the God of all creation.

Statues depicting the images of God, adorned with gold, were all around, yet as I meditated the following words came to me; *The abiding place of God is not amid the domes and spires that pierce the sky. Nor is His grandeur amid the gilded arches and gothic domes of cathedrals. His acts cannot be shown by artists' craft upon the canvasses of walls and ceilings. Yet man, in his fruitless search for God, has given way to his feeble wisdom and tried to capture God in vessels such as these.*

Man has often in his search for God missed the way because he tried to enclose God in an object, which at best was only a small part of God's creation. Because he did not heed the urges that surged within his breast, and worshipped the creation instead of the Creator, God caused his base nature to guide his search. Gods of wood and stone became a substitute for Him whose footstool is the earth; for Him whose presence filleth all in all, yet has desired to dwell, not in temples made with hands, but in a structure made with living stones and hearts that beat in harmony with the will of Him who fills the universe'..."

Almost as long as man has been on the earth idol worship has been practised throughout the whole earth. To my knowledge Israel was the only nation which were not to worship false gods. When God gave them the ten commandments, the first commandment was "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). They broke this commandment many times and even though they knew God would bring them into captivity for doing it, they still fell into the pagan practices of the nations around

them. In the earth today there are still nations which worship false gods. Not only do they worship and serve false gods but many false gods are being added every day. One case I am familiar with concerned some men who dug a well and found water. They at once declared it a god and wanted to worship the water well. Let us be ever thankful that in God's mercy we have had the light of the gospel shone into our lives and we have the unspeakable privilege of worshipping the one true God. Isaiah tells us about a man cutting down a tree and making an idol. It has always seemed rather humorous to me, not that he would make an idol, but that he was so spiritually blind he could not see how misguided he was. "It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill, He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships" (Isa 44:15-17, NIV).

There is much that could be said about false worship but we do not want to focus on the negative; rather let us examine what God says about worship in scripture. "Come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (Ps 95:6, KJV). Does this mean that one must kneel before they can worship? What about those who are disabled, are they not able to worship the Lord because they cannot kneel? I am sure that we all know that the position we

worship in is not the important thing, rather it is the position and attitude of the heart. The story is told about the man who was asked what was the best position in which to pray. He thought for a moment and said "The best position I ever was in when I prayed was when I fell head first down the well and I cried out to the Lord for rescue and he delivered me". In scripture they bowed down, knelt, lay on their faces, stood and I am sure there were other ways in which they worshipped God.

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Ps 29:2, KJV). The American College Dictionary gives the meaning of holiness as 'dedicated to the service of God'. Therefore, to worship in holiness would not be tradition or empty form but would mean laying aside everything that would hinder our devotion to God. Holiness is a condition of the heart, not of the natural mind unless the mind is renewed in the Spirit. For some, holiness means to be without fault; however, there is only one who is without sin and that is God Himself. Although we have not reached the point of sinless perfection we can come to the Lord in humbleness and pour out our hearts in repentance for any fault that we may have. We must remember, however, that repentance means to turn away from our faults and go in a different direction. Repentance is a life changing experience.

Reaching out to the Lord in worship is to glorify His name. To glorify God will place Him on a higher plane than anything else in our life. The greatest glory we can give to God is to glorify Him by a life that is centered in Him and a testimony that is without reproach. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10, KJV). Our devotion to God is in the inward and not always evident to those around us. Our testimony, on the other hand, is what we present to the world.

We have the unspeakable privilege of blessing the Lord. "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's (Ps 103:2-5, KJV). There

are so many things to praise the Lord for; Forgiveness, healing, redemption, lovingkindness and the good things that He lavishes upon us.

The beloved story about Jesus tells how he stopped to rest at a well in Samaria. He met a woman there and asked her for a drink. Jesus talked to her about the living water which he could give her and revealed her ungodly lifestyle. She tried to justify herself by bringing up the religious argument of where was the proper place to worship, Jerusalem or Samaria. "Sir, the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem" (John 4:19-20, NIV). Jesus answered, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" (John 4:21, NIV). Then continued on, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24, KJV). This brings up an important point. Where is the proper place to worship God? The place of worship is not a certain location, but rather a place in the spirit. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps 91:1, KJV). The place of worship is a place of intimate fellowship with our loving Heavenly Father. We dwell under the shadow of His wings. The things of earth fade away along with the problems, sorrows and trials of this life. This is so wonderfully expressed in the song,

Near to the heart of God

There is a place of quiet rest, Near to the heart of God,

A place where sin cannot molest, Near to the heart of God.

Chorus

O Jesus blest redeemer, Sent from the heart of God,

Hold us, who wait before Thee, Near to the heart of God

There is a place of comfort sweet, Near to the heart of God,

A place where we our Saviour meet, Near to the heart of God.

There is a place of full release, Near to the Heart of God,

A place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God.

Truly there is a place in the Spirit

where we can enter and pour our hearts out in spiritual worship. There are those who have walked so close to God that they were translated into the eternal realm. Men like Enoch and Elijah who, although their feet were on the earth, their hearts and spirits were in the Heavenly realm. All throughout the history of Israel, even though God dwelt in the midst of them in the tabernacle, the high priest could only enter into the Holy of Holies once a year to make sacrifice for the sins of the people. The Holy of Holies was where the Shekinah glory of God dwelt above the mercy seat. Before the mercy seat and the ark of the covenant was the veil which separated the glory of God from the people. When Jesus died on the cross, He cried "It is finished" and the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom (Matt. 27:51). From that time on there has been free access into the presence of God. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16, KJV). The song, 'Oh the glory of your presence' seems to fit in so well as we meditate on the glory that we can enter into.

Oh! the glory of your presence, we your temple give you reverence,

So descend like a dove and unite us in love,

As we glory in your embrace, as your glory now fills this place.

That which holds us back is our earthly nature which is of this earthly realm. We are citizens of Heaven by spiritual birth; still there is a strong attachment by natural birth to this earthly realm. "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" (Eph 2:19, NIV). Our heritage is not earth-bound but Heaven-bound and we are members of God's eternal family.

Jesus said that we would worship in spirit and in truth. To worship in truth is not only an issue of doctrine, although that is important. It is not only doing everything in a right manner, like following the letter of the law. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom 2:28-29, KJV). "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin,

and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt 23:23, KJV). We cannot come to God in worship with bitterness in our hearts. Things like unforgiveness, malice and bitterness will not allow us to enter into the Spirit of worship and truth. They will rob of intimate fellowship with the Lord. God will forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. The hurts and offences of this life will be wiped away as we come to God in truth desiring to lay aside those things that hold us back. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col 3:1, KJV). "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col 3:12-13, KJV).

Spiritual worship is expressed in different ways, praise being the most common. We can praise God with words, song and music, as seen in the One hundred and fiftieth Psalm: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD" (Ps 150, KJV). We can praise the Lord for His mighty acts (that which he does for us), let us also praise Him for who He is and the greatness of His majesty. When we approach the Lord it must be with a sense of awe of His majesty. He spoke creation into being, He is the upholding power of the universe, His power and grace are beyond what we can imagine and His reality beyond words. The scripture gives us some insight into His power and glory, although His presence is beyond what our finite human minds can imagine. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above is stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain

he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa 6:1-3, KJV). In the book of Revelation we see the Lord seated on a throne in Heaven and four creatures crying day and night, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come" (Rev 4:8, NIV). There were also twenty-four elders who cast their crowns before Him saying; "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being" (Rev 4:11, NIV). These are only word pictures but they do give us some idea of the glory of God's presence. Some day the nations of the earth will stand before Him in judgement. He will separate the sheep from the goats. On His right hand the sheep shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them, on His left hand the goats will depart into the judgement prepared for them (Matt 25:31-41). "For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written 'As surely as I live', says the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God." So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. (Rom 14:9-12, NIV). To Him who sits on a throne high above all else let us give glory, honor and worship, humbly bowing in His presence, that we might bow our knee to Him now instead of waiting for sometime in the future.

Let the praises of God swell forth in songs of the spirit, songs that have never been heard before, coming forth in the anointing, praising Him in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. May the singers go forth before the army of the Lord, scattering the enemy before them. May the musicians play skillfully the songs of Zion on anointed instruments. Let the congregation of the almighty stand on their feet and march in praise unto the Lord. Let them clap their hands in rhythm to their marching feet. As the shouts of victory give way to a holy hush let everything that has breath stand in silence with their hands lifted in adoration before the Almighty. Hallelujah! I have been in meetings like this, where, in truth, we were standing on holy ground.

The heavens are declaring the glory of God, the earth is showing forth His handiwork. In the days of creation when the morning stars sang great anthems of praise and the sons of God shouted for joy, the very praise of God was im-

printed on the foundations of the earth, so that if mankind will not give God the glory of praise the very rocks will cry out. He does not desire the praise of rocks but the praise of the redeemed. The day will come when the whole cosmos, all of creation, will bow their knee unto the Lord of creation and the praise of God will be sung by every star and every creature in the universe.

On the day of Pentecost praise came forth in foreign languages from the tongues of those who, for the most part, were not able to understand what they were saying. They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance and they were accused of being drunk. Peter stood and defended what was happening, quoting what the prophet Joel said; "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:28-29, KJV). In his sermon after that he told them that this was promised to as many as the Lord would call. Therefore the promise is to us a well. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38-39 KJV).

The evidence of this promise has been demonstrated countless times; many have spoken in tongues since that day. This is not a one time experience but is meant to be used in our prayer life on a regular basis. The apostle Paul exhorts us to use this gift to edify or build ourselves up. "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church" (1 Cor 14:2-4, KJV). Tongues are to be used in our prayer life, for we are speaking to God not unto man. Prophecy is for speaking to men and for building up the church. Prophecy is beyond the scope of this article other than to say it is an inspired utterance by the Spirit of God given in the church service for edifica-

tion, exhortation and comfort. I have heard it said that prophecy is given to build up, stir up and bind up. Tongues are our avenue for praise to God on a personal basis. Sometimes when we pray we feel as if our prayers are only reaching the ceiling and not going any further. When we pray in tongues we know our prayers are heard because we are speaking to God on His personal prayer line. Actually this is rather simplified because God hears us even before we pray. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa 65:24, KJV). It is wonderful to stand in the congregation of the righteous and praise God as a member of the body of Christ. It is equally as wonderful to praise Him in tongues shut away in the secret place with the Lord.

Tithing and giving are avenues that we may not consider as worship. They can become more a tradition than an act of worship. We realize they are something we should do, yet may not place as much reverence on them as on other things. They are acts of worship nevertheless and should be treated as worship. Instead of daydreaming and thinking about what we need to do tomorrow, when the offering is being taken up, let us bring our minds into subjection and realize that this is just as much worship as singing or praise. Sometimes it would be good to take a moment and consider what we are about to do. Let us prepare our hearts for giving, dispensing with everything that would distract and with joy worship the Lord with our gift. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or if necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7, KJV). If we would approach spiritual giving as worship, being led by the Spirit, the need to make elaborate appeals for funds would not be as evident as we often see today.

The Lord's table is another area of worship that is treated more like a form of tradition than an ordinance of worship. We are partaking of the broken body and blood of the Lord and the life that is imparted into it. "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor 10:16-17, NIV). By not

giving proper respect to the body and blood of the Lord we can do harm to the body of Christ and to ourselves. "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor 11:27-30, KJV). To partake unworthily would mean to treat with disrespect the body and blood of the Lord. Please do not misunderstand; we should not worship the elements of the communion, as this would not be consistent with the word of God. "Thou shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God" (Ex 20:3-5, NIV). Partaking of the communion is a time of reflection, of examining ourselves and a time of remembering what Jesus has done for us. The Lord's table is the new testament in His body and blood. The old testament was celebrated in the Passover feast of Israel. It represented Israel's deliverance from Egypt. It was in remembrance of a slain Passover lamb. The new testament was in celebration of a living Passover lamb. We are not to worship the wine and bread of the communion but, our attitude in partaking of them should be an attitude of worship in that we are partaking of the life of Christ.

As we have seen, worship is many faceted. It comes from a longing within ourselves for fellowship with God, reaching out to Him in sincerity and in truth. It is a deep longing within that cries out to know more fully the majesty and glory of the Almighty. Our earthly language can never fully explain the meaning of true worship. It cannot be told but we can experience the communion of worship with the Father. It is a deep spiritual experience. As we are caught away in the spirit of worship, the revelation of the majesty and glory

of God can break upon us as the awe and reverence of that moment is imprinted on our being.

Of prime importance in worship is reverence for the Almighty. "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments his praise endureth for ever" (Ps 111:9-10, KJV). The very name of the Lord is reverend. In modern times, names are not as important as they were in biblical times. In those days a name described the person. Abram, as an example, was changed to Abraham. It meant father of nations. God blessed Abraham and through him all the nations of the earth have been blessed. "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen 22:17-18, KJV). Because of Abraham's faithfulness all the nations of the earth have been blessed even to this day. Reverence is the essential nature and character of God. He is therefore worthy of our reverence and worship.

One could innumerate the many instances of irreverence in the age we live in and the lack of respect for law and order and for all things in general. However, I believe we are all aware of these things and it is not edifying to keep bringing them up. The point being, that we as children of God should not be guilty of such behavior. This is especially true in the area of reverence and respect for one another. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and if we are disrespectful to a member of the body of Christ we are being disrespectful to Christ who He dwells within us.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,

Worship the Lord in spirit and truth,

Give from your heart in love to adore Him,

In worship and reverence, to glorify God.

Marriage Counselling and Enrichment

By Andy Snoke

The purpose of this writing is to give some general guidelines to assist those involved in marriage counseling, and for couples who are contemplating marriage to read together.

This article is written much like a recipe for a cake!! I have used several "lists" or recipe items, if you will. If you were preparing a cake, you would first examine the list of recipe ingredients. You would then rummage through your pantry to see if you had the necessary ingredients. You would then go to the market to purchase the missing ingredients. After that, you would follow the recipe to make that delicious cake.

In this article, the recipe for a good marriage comes from the Word of God. You will have to examine carefully the list of ingredients to see what you have, and what is missing.

You will not be able to go to the market for the missing ingredients. Instead, God will provide those missing items as an answer to your prayers.

God will help you. The Lord is very interested in good marriages. It is the foundation of the home, and the Church.

I encourage the reader to carefully and thoughtfully read each point, and ask God to search your heart for those things that must be a part of your life, for a good marriage.

Marriage was created by God

Gen. 2:20: "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him."

Adam spoke out loud the names of all the animals in God's creation, but none were able to answer him or to have fellowship with him.

In all of the magnificent creation of God, there was no equal with whom Adam could fellowship. In essence, Adam was incomplete. God filled this emptiness with the gift of the woman named Eve.

Gen. 2:21-25: "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of

Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

God had created Adam from the dust. But the woman was made from his rib. The Greek says that she was "skillfully" made. The man was refined from the earth. Yet the woman was doubly refined. Not taken from the dust but from the side of her husband.

It has been said that the woman was not taken out of man's head to lord over him, nor from his feet to be trampled on by him, but from his side to be equal with him, from under his arm to be protected by him, and from near his heart to be loved by him.

The Hebrew word "woman" (Ish shah) literally means a man with a womb.

Let's look closer at what we have just read in Gen 2:20-25 to see what the scriptures speak about marriage. Read these carefully with one another and contemplate the significance of each statement.

1. Marriage was created by God Himself.

2. The man was created (by Divine purpose) from the dust of the ground, as a man.

3. The woman was created from the side of the man, to be loved by him and held close to the man.

4. The woman was presented to the man by God Himself, as a special treasure above all of God's creation.

5. The woman was presented to the man as a helper.

6. The woman has a special place of "oneness" with her husband. She is as close as "bone of my bones" and "flesh of my flesh."

7. There is a separation from previous family relationships (such as mother and father) when one becomes married.

8. A man is to cleave (literally to hold in one's bosom) to his wife. To physically love, cherish and protect her.

9. A husband and wife are to be "one." This can mean "one" physically, by way of the intimate union between husband and wife, one spiritually, one financially, and a complete blending of one another's lives.

10. The sexual union is blessed, and there is nothing about which to be ashamed.

Head of the home

As a result of the fall of man in the garden, the changed state of the woman now required the headship of a man. The concept of "headship" in all of God's creation will remain true right up into the coming Kingdom of God.

The scriptures teach that the man is the head of the wife. And this is true. In our society today, the idea of "headship" is often misunderstood. As the spiritual head of the home, the husband is held accountable to God for providing for the home in many ways, which includes: financially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, and in many other aspects.

This is not to imply the wife is not to contribute to the same areas. In fact, there are times when, due to a disability, the wife becomes the major contributor of finances, etc., and God honours this. But God has set the man as the head of that home.

1 Cor. 11:7-12: "For a man indeed ought not to cover (*his*) head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on (*her*) head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman (*is*) of the man, even so (*is*) the man also by the woman; but all things of God."

It does not mean that a husband as head of the home is to ignore the wisdom, the intuition, the advice, and wishes of his wife. A wise husband will listen closely to the thoughts, advice, and ministry of his wife, but ultimately, God requires the man to make that final decision and holds him accountable.

When Adam and Eve sinned by partaking of the forbidden fruit, they hid themselves in shame when they heard God walking in the garden. God already knew who it was that first partook of the fruit, but he did not call out for Eve. He called out, "Adam, where are you?" since Adam was the head, God called him to answer for the actions of both of them.

It is an awesome responsibility to be the head of the home. I suggest the following commands for men be read prayerfully to see if these qualities have

blossomed and have become a part of your very nature. If they have not, ask God for the help of the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians 5:23-33, the Lord gives the following (8) commands to the husband regarding his wife:

1. Be head of the wife (not a boss, or tyrant, but a loving head).
2. Love his wife as Christ loved the church. (This is a sacrificial love, displaying a willingness to give one's own life for his wife.)
3. Love his wife as his own body.
4. Nourish his wife (bring up, care for, protect).
5. Cherish his wife (to foster, to warm in one's bosom).
6. Be joined as one flesh
7. Leave parents for his wife.
8. Cleave to his wife (to hold tightly, closely).

By reading the qualifications of elders in 1 Tim 3:2, we can extrapolate other requirements for men, for truly all men are elders of their homes. These qualifications include:

1. Blameless in conduct.
2. Husband of one wife. No polygamist.
3. Vigilant (In this instance, in the Greek, it means to drink no wine.)
4. Sober (meaning: sound mind, discreet, prudent, moderate, self controlled).
5. Of good behavior.
6. Given to hospitality.
7. Apt to teach (including teaching his family the ways of the Lord).
8. Not given to wine (not given to any alcohol).
9. No striker (not quarrelsome; not quick tempered).
10. Not greedy of filthy lucre (not desirous of dishonest gain).
11. Patient (meek and gentle).
12. Not a brawler (not a trouble maker).
13. Not covetous.
14. Ruler of his own household.
15. Not a novice.
16. Of good report from outsiders.

These qualifications for men reveal how important the role of headship really is. It is a ministry that requires the daily assistance of the Holy Spirit to fulfill.

Requirements for women

When Eve was created, she was created as a helper to the man, and yet as an equal. After the sin of disobedience, the "state" of both mankind and womankind was changed. The changed state of the woman included (3) specifics:

1. I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception (this may also indicate

the more delicate emotional make up of the woman);

2. in sorrow (labor pain) thou shalt bring forth children;

3. and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Sin's disorder makes necessary a headship, which is vested in man. Keep in mind, that throughout God's economy, all have a "head" to submit to.

1 Cor. 11:3: "But I would have you know,

1. that the head of every man is Christ;
2. and the head of the woman is the man;

3. and the head of Christ is God."

By combining several scriptures, I will list the qualities that should be in women, along with requirements for women. Once again, I suggest that these be prayerfully read and ask that the Holy Spirit help these qualities to be a part of your life.

1. Submit to husbands (Eph. 5:22).
2. Recognize headship of husbands (Eph. 5:23).
3. Be subject to husbands (Eph. 5:33).
4. To be grave (meaning honest). (1 Tim. 3:11).
5. Not slanderers. Careful about speaking about others in a negative manner (1 Tim. 3:11).
6. Not drinkers of wine (or any alcohol). (1 Tim. 3:11).
7. Faithful in all things (1 Tim. 3:11).
8. Adorning themselves in modest apparel. Not being extravagant in dress (1 Tim. 2:9).
9. Adorning themselves with the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (1 Pet. 3:4).
10. Not to usurp authority over the man (1 Tim. 2:12).
11. Not false accusers (Titus 2:3).
12. Older women to teach the younger women to love their husbands and children (Titus 2:4).

13. Be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands (Titus 2:5).

Now that we have covered the basic qualities and attributes that should be in the human fabric as defined in the Word of God, we will turn to some general guidelines that should prove helpful in a marriage.

One man, one woman

First, let us understand that marriage is a union of one man and one woman, for life. God does not condone or recognize same-sex marriages, or a marriage with multiple wives, as in polygamy. We must follow the pattern of God's design.

The unequal yoke

2 Cor. 6:14-15: "Be ye not unequally

yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial (Idols)? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel (unbeliever)?"

The home must have a solid foundation before building upon it. It is essential that the man and woman be equally yoked in faith before they even think of marriage. The common foundation of faith in God will help the home weather the many storms that come in life.

If an nonchristian couple marries, and then later either the husband or wife becomes a Christian, he or she is not to try to get out of the marriage. In fact, his or her conduct in the Christian faith can become a witness to the unbelieving member.

1 Pe. 3:1-2 (LITV): "Likewise, wives, submitting yourselves to *your* own husbands, that even if any disobey the Word, through the behavior of the wives, without a word they will be won, observing your pure behavior in fear (respect)."

1 Cor. 7:10-14 (LITV): "But I command the ones being married (not I, but the Lord), *that* a woman *is* not to be separated from her husband; but if indeed she is separated, remain unmarried, or be reconciled to the husband; and a husband not to leave *his* wife.

But to the rest I say, not the Lord, if any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she consents to live with him, let him not leave her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the husband; else, then, your children are unclean, but now they are holy."

Marriage is built on love

Marriage begins with love. The scriptures teach the attributes and conduct of love in 1 Cor. Chapter 13.

1 Cor. 13:4-8

1. Love has patience,
2. is kind;
3. love is not envious;
4. love is not vain (conceited),
5. is not puffed up (arrogant),
6. does not behave indecently (it has manners),
7. does not pursue its own things (is not self centered),
8. is not easily provoked,
9. thinks no evil;
10. does not rejoice in unrighteousness,

11. but rejoices in the truth.
12. *Love* quietly covers all things
(it forgives and forgets),
13. believes all things,
14. hopes all things,
15. endures all things,
16. Love never fails.

Marriage is built on a promise

Love is the beginning of our attraction to one another, and is the glue that holds and blesses the marriage. But a happy, successful marriage is built on a promise; a vow made to God before many witnesses.

Do you know what a wedding ceremony is really all about? Many have forgotten the purpose for a wedding ceremony in the first place. A wedding ceremony is a public ceremony in which a man and woman promise faithfulness to each other, before God and many witnesses. It is a solemn promise. It is a solemn vow before God and the public.

A good marriage is simply a matter of keeping a promise!

A tremendous amount of good can come from simply reading the wedding vow together thoughtfully. Many vows go something like this:

Do you promise to love him;/her:

1. In sickness and health.
2. For richer or poorer.
3. For better or for worse,
4. Forsaking all others,
5. Until death do us part?

Once a vow is made, the couple should spend their lives keeping that promise. This is important to think about. Your marriage and your love are no longer only built on a "tingly" emotional feeling, but on a solemn promise.

There will be times that a person may feel he or she is no longer in love, or that things are not what he or she had expected. Emotional feelings can be deceiving, and have their highs and lows. It is in these unemotional times that the couple must remember that the marriage "vow" before God supersedes any emotional feelings.

Becoming One!

Marriage is a life-long process of two becoming one. When Eve was presented to her husband Adam, Adam was inspired to say that his new wife was "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." You can't be more one than that!

However, a happy couple has the privilege of spending a lifetime together, becoming one. The new husband and wife bring to the marriage their understanding and expectations that quite often come from their own upbringing. This is often good, but remember, your marriage is the establishment of a new

home. You have left "mother and father" and are now charged with setting up your own home. Strive to become one in all things!

Sexual intimacy

Heb. 13:4: "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but God will judge fornicators and adulterers."

God created the act of sex as a means of procreation, as well as a blessed, intimate act of love between a husband and a wife. Sex was created for and only for marriage between one husband and one wife, and the sexual union is blessed and encouraged.

God purposely designed the anatomy of the human body to provide great "pleasure" during sex between married lovers. The act of intimacy is designed and blessed by God within, and only within, the confines of marriage.

1 Cor. 7:2-5 (ISV): "But because sexual immorality is so rampant, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband. A husband should fulfill his obligation (sexually) to his wife, and a wife should do the same for her husband. A wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband doesn't have authority over his own body, but his wife does. Do not withhold yourselves from each other unless you agree to do so for a set time in order to devote yourselves to prayer. Then you should come together again so that Satan does not tempt you through your lack of self-control."

A couple may struggle with different levels of desire through the years, but should work together to provide a mutually satisfactory level of sexual enjoyment with one another.

Children

Children are a blessing from the Lord, and become one of our greatest joys, or sometimes one of our greatest tests. It is an awesome responsibility to raise children for the Lord. It requires a great amount of love, commitment, discipline, and sacrifice.

A couple considering marriage should discuss their thoughts regarding children and their attitudes towards their upbringing (such as who disciplines, etc.). For instance, if a young lady has always wanted a dozen children, and the young man came from an "only child" home and desires only one child, there may be some friction!! The time to discuss these concepts is before the engagement, not after marriage.

Generally speaking, when children do arrive (as they most often do!), it is best for the mother to invest her time,

love, emotions, and talents into her babies. We have many wonderful day care centers in the USA and Canada, but none can take the place of a mother at home.

Being a full time mother is an honorable profession. There have been many extremely talented, educated, professional women, who have elected to withdraw from the workforce and become full time mothers. Mothers have helped shape the world by their care and upbringing of their children.

There are some cases where mothers continue working when children are born, for a variety of legitimate reasons, and I mean no dishonor to them. But as much as is possible, it is best for mothers to make their best investment in the loving, raising and shaping of their children.

Finances

It is important to have a good grip on finances. We live in an age where it is very easy to go into great debt. Many money lenders are more than happy to loan you too much money, which brings profitable interest money to the bank.

It is common for a young couple to instantly want the luxuries that their parents have, forgetting that their parents' luxuries came only after a lifetime of work and sacrifice.

Money experts offer much advice on money management. I am going to simplify the formula for good financial management.

1. From your gross amount, pay your tithe (10% of the total) to the Lord immediately.

2. Set up a method of systematically putting money away (on a weekly or monthly basis) for the future. (In the US there are many programs, i.e. IRA's, 401K, Mutual Fund markets, in Canada, RRSP's or even just savings).

3. Spend less than you make.

4. Never own or used credit cards unless you have the finances and the discipline to pay each month's bill in full.

Mal 3: 8-11 (LITV) Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, In what have we robbed You? In the tithe and the offering! You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the nation, all of it. Bring all the tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house. And test Me now with this, says the Lord of Hosts, whether I will not open the windows of the heavens for you and pour out a blessing until there is no sufficiency of room to store it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for you, and he shall not destroy the fruit of your ground against you; nor shall your vine miscarry against you in the field, says the Lord of Hosts.

The couple should have a mutually agreed budget to work with that stays within their financial boundaries.

Romance

A young couple spends much time in their early relationship trying to make a good romantic impression on each other. However, after marriage they often forget all that they learned in courtship.

A couple should consciously (with great purpose of mind!) set time aside and invest in romance!! Great romance does not necessarily mean you have to spend large amounts of money. Romance is redefined within your marriage boundaries.

There are hundreds of suggestions

for romance that I could list at this point, but romance in your marriage may be quite different than what it is in mine. Through intimate communication with one another, and with the test of time, romance will be defined in your home, on your terms, in your way. Make the most of it!

God loves solid marriages. The storms of life will still come. But if the home is built on the foundation and teachings of Christ, it will stand. A marriage is not built on emotional feelings, it is built on a promise; a vow before God. It is built on love. It is a foretaste of the relationship of Christ and the Church. And it is to be blessed.

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The Sharon Star is a monthly paper, published and mailed out on the free-will offering plan, as a medium of information for all who are interested in the unfolding revelation of the Word of God.

Published by Sharon Children's Homes and Schools, Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3.

Sharon Star on line www.thesharonstar.org
Office (306) 445-2733.

Publications Mail Agreement 40012206