
What Has Happened to Our Marriage?

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

We were so happy! Our first love was so sweet! He treated me so tenderly! We never argued! Our wedding was so beautiful! How could this happen to us? What went wrong? I can't believe we are the same two people who were so happily married. What has happened to us? We cannot seem to carry on a decent conversation without ending up in an argument and disagreement. Why does he make fun of my mother and father? Why do I have such resentment toward the man I married? What has happened to the respect we had for each other? Why does he stay away from home so much? I cannot understand why I hate to see him come home when formerly I could hardly wait! Why do we have such disagreements in rearing our children? Why doesn't he tell me he loves me anymore? Why does he act like he doesn't? Why is she so cold when once we had such a warm relationship? Why has she lost her sex appeal? What happened to our tender love making? Why does he demand what is his? Why don't we share things together? Why don't we discuss expenditures anymore? How can he go out and purchase something without consulting me? I wonder who he does talk to. Why can't I tell him exactly how I feel? Why are we both so edgy? Is it possible for our entire personality to change so drastically? Why do I have this dreadful hurt deep in my chest? What is going to happen to the children? Why doesn't he treat me like his wife? He- used to be so proud of me. I believe he has changed in his love toward me. Why has my wife become so critical of me? I cannot do anything that pleases her. Why can't she forget those harsh words I said against her mother?

They surely cannot go on this way much longer. I wonder what happened to the promises they made to each other just before they got married? What about their marriage vows made to God before their friends and relatives? Have they forgotten them? Did they not mean them when they said, "Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him so long as ye both shall live?" "Wilt thou obey him and serve him, love, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him so long as ye both shall live?"

Still Together?

Good! There is far more hope for your marriage if you have not separated. The Bible is very clear about couples living together. Only on one basis are they to separate and that is only for a short time. (Coming later in this message.) There is not to be a separation, let alone a divorce. "And unto the married I command, yet not I but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" I Cor. 7:10,11. The next two verses give the same principle for those who are yoked to unbelievers. There is always hope for two married people to have a new relationship and the restoration of a happy home. It is much easier for those who have not parted. Few people today, including professing Christians, get back together after separation. There is still hope until one or the other marries some one else.

Are you Apart?

The principles from the Word that I shall present to you work for any couple who mean business before the Lord. You must have His divine assistance to possess the necessary change of mind and

heart toward your wife or husband and marriage. God will forgive all sin and so can you, by His enabling grace and power. The Bible says over and over we are to forgive and forget. Not too many people are willing to allow God to bring this reality into their heart and mind. One of the most devastating remarks ever made by a husband or wife is, "I can never forgive him (or her)!"

Love's Manifestation

Genuine love is more evident in marriage than in any other relationship. The moonlight and roses love does not hold up under pressure, nor does physical attraction alone. The depth of genuine love for each other will be manifested within the lives of those exercising it. For instance, the Bible says that love is patient, kind and is not jealous. It is not arrogant and does not act strangely. IT DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN and is not provoked and does not dwell on a wrong suffered. Love rejoices not in unrighteousness and is happy with truth. It bears all things and endures all things. (I Cor. 13).

Why does the wife dwell on the poor treatment by her husband? Why do so many husbands hurl accusations against their wives of not meeting their needs? Since when are we to be so self-centered? Love acts for the benefit of the person loved. To the wife, the most important person in her home is her husband, not the children or herself. The husband is to place his wife on a pedestal and have one passion, to love and care for her. When she became willing to marry him, her future hope of happiness and satisfaction was placed in his hands. The husband answers to God for his treatment of her. The Bible direction of love and submission is very clear. Is it a problem for a wife to be in submission to the one who shows genuine tenderness, love, and affection? If you want your husband's love and attention, please him in EVERYTHING you do and don't do. Has he indicated how he wants you to dress? Has he given you a list of his favorite foods? Has he told you what he likes and dislikes about your activity? If so, then why don't you please him? "Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in EVERYTHING" Eph. 5:24.

Steps for Restoration

1. The first step is to stop the war and wave a white flag of complete surrender. Stop all bickering and arguments. If you cannot say something that edifies, please keep your mouth shut until you can be kind and sweet. Somebody in your family will probably get the silent treatment, but that is better than trying to outdo one another or run competition with the one you are supposed to please. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger" Prov. 15:1.
2. Classify your marriage partner as the most important member of the family. Many a wife is showering love and attention upon her children when her husband should be at the top of her list. The first person in the world to be pleased is the God of the Universe. Your husband or wife is next in line. A smug self-centeredness is devastating to a successful marriage. Stop demanding attention! Keep your priorities in line! Look forward to making the other partner happy and satisfied. You are never the most important person in your household. Your husband or wife is first, children next, and you are the least important. Get your eyes off yourself. If you want to be married to a happy and buoyant mate, make your husband or wife that way by your actions and reactions. If you have an attitude of feeling sorry for yourself, shame on you. Grow up emotionally and intellectually. Since when does the action of another give you the right to react in the same manner?
3. Possess a forgiving spirit. You have been abused and deeply hurt. It is past time for you to forgive one another and forget your past hurt. Present joys and a future bright expectation places past disappointment far behind you. Since it has taken both of you to create such chaos, you must forgive one another. Don't wait for a confession or those most difficult words, "I AM SORRY." Forgive

as God commands. Your prayers will be unanswered until forgiveness is within your heart. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" Mark 11:25,26.

4. Depend upon God to make you the husband or wife He desires you to be. Know His plain Scriptural directions. Read the passages in the Bible about your proper relationship with one another. There are many. Start with Ephesians, chapter five. You can, with God's enabling power walk in obedience to His commands. You can do and be what God says you should. Everything you ought to do, by the resurrection power of Christ, you can do it. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" Phil. 4:13.

A good practice for you would be to repeat this verse ten times when you rise in the morning and at the end of the day before you retire. I CAN DO!!! If just one person of your marriage begins to put Biblical direction into practice, God will hear the prayer of that one person and turn your marriage completely around. Just one! Will you be that one? "The effectual fervent prayer of A RIGHTEOUS MAN availeth much" James 5:16.

5. Your children deserve a happy and contented home. Did they choose you as parents? Is it right for them to live without a father or mother in their home from now on? When the children are considered, a husband and wife can make complete turn-a-rounds for their sake. The lie of Stan says it would be better for them to live elsewhere than in the home of such bitterness. Why not let God change your relationship as husband and wife rather than leave your children into a sad situation they do not deserve? How important are your children? Please don't try to tell me there is no hope for your home. Who has laid out the blueprints for it? Did you do it? Who said you should live together till death do you part? God has provided the outline for your home in His love letter, the Bible. He has said that only death dissolves a marriage. Are you going to listen to Him and allow His power to work within your life or will your children some day realize their plight in life was due to your mismanagement? They will awaken to it someday and probably reproduce in their home what you provided for them in yours.

Twisted Attitudes

But she is not the same woman I married! How can she be after bearing you two or three children? Why do you conclude she has changed as if you haven't? Age alone brings on tremendous changes and challenges. Why are you trying to regather something in the past that is gone forever? The present is what you make it! You have tremendous control over the future by present attitudes and convictions.

Sex is one of the most distorted concepts of our day. As Christians our bodies belong only to two persons. One is the Holy Spirit and the other is our husband or wife. The other partner is to be satisfied in this precious relationship. "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife" I Cor. 7:3, 4.

There is only one reason for a lack of this sex relationship and warning is given as to the amount of time apart. "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give

yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" I Cor. 7:5.

Sexual relationship is not for personal satisfaction according to the Bible. It is a part of the total relationship of a husband and wife. If you doubt that last sentence, have a devastating argument at the evening meal and see what it does to your sex life that night. Sex is only for married couples. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" Heb. 13:4.

Wake Up! If you are still together, there is real hope! Let the Lord get hold of your heart. In answer to your prayers He can change your partner as well as you. If you are apart, get together and start having fellowship. Do not live together until you are ready, but changes can be evident as you communicate with one another. A lack of communication is one of the most destroying factors in marriage. You talk to your relatives about your husband. ((Do you ever!!!) Talk direct to him. Do you still love him? Tell him so. If not, find a place of prayer and admit you have broken your marriage vow, and ask God to restore a real love for him within your heart. If God wants you living together happily, and He does, then all Heaven is at your disposal to assist you. Stop listening to many voices around you. Most divorced people are not sad at all to see others follow their example. But what does God say about it?

Is there hope for our marriage? Yes there is! If you will let God make you the one person He desires you to be, then can His will be accomplished in your marriage. Will you follow Biblical direction? Will you bend your knees to God in prayer and believe Him to accomplish what need to be done? Will you admit your personal failures and trust in His forgiveness and strength to do according to all His instructions? Will you demonstrate love instead of hate? Graciousness instead of hostility? Kindness in the place of resentment? Forgiveness instead of constant accusations? Peace instead of bickering? Appreciation in the place of nagging? Hope instead of despair?

Who makes the difference? The Holy Spirit places His fruit within our character, personality and intellect. He controls our thinking process and emotional responses. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Gal. 5:22-25.

God is willing to stand with you! He is for you. The assurance of His help means real encouragement. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." I John 4:4.

You will have His assistance only if you are in His family. If you have ignored His provision, find a place of prayer and name your sins to God. Turn to Him in repentance and receive by faith Jesus Christ into your heart and life. Place yourself under the direction of His Word. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name." John 1:12.

If I can be of further assistance to you, do not hesitate to get in touch with me. Do you know a friend or relative who would appreciate reading this message? Why not pass it on to them.

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