

CHRISTIAN HOME IN AN UNCHRISTIAN WORLD

by

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CHAPTER 6

DIFFERENCES AND ADJUSTMENTS

"What Men Know About Women"

In the Greek and Roman world at the time of the writing of the New Testament, the father would make the match for his daughter with the father of the groom. Often there was a go-between used also.

Our first reaction to this is that it would be a terrible state of affairs, particularly is this our reaction if we are teenagers. But I have talked to some who are older who realize that their fathers could not have made more of a blunder than they made, and he just might have done better.

Seriously speaking, a mature father would be able to realize the needs of his daughter or son and would be able to approach the entire situation objectively rather than subjectively as young people do today.

Furthermore, if as in the times of the Old Testament, the first time you saw your wife was on the wedding night because before that time she was veiled, both would realize that it would take some adjustments to have a happy marriage.

Today, young people enter into marriage with the idea that they will not have to surrender anything or make any adjustments at all to make their marriage work. This is just not so. If you see two people that are happily married, it is only because they have continued to work hard at it; and they have made the necessary sacrifices to accomplish harmony in marriage.

Molier has said: "Love is often the fruit of marriage." How true this is. A couple that has become happily married will love each other in a far greater and deeper way after twenty years of married life, then they ever did on their wedding day.

But love is something that you must continually work at, for it is not something that will always be. This is where so many have made a great mistake thinking that because they were in love when they were married, that they would always be in love. This is just not true.

Little foxes come in and spoil the vine, if you don't watch out.

But the problem is that little foxes do not stay little.

They grow and they become big foxes and real problems and issues rather than small irritations.

Now not all of the problems that arise in marriage are because of the marriage itself. Some of the problems are related directly to the marriage, and we will discuss these in the next lesson.

However, some of our problems we bring with us from our past environment or past conditioning. Yet even others go back to the differences in the very intrinsic makeup between the man and the woman that GOD Himself created.

Let us look at both of these last areas.

A. Environment and Conditioning

Either the husband or the wife may never have had any brothers or sisters. This could be a real danger, for if one or both have not known what it is to share and give and take, or if both have had parents who gave them anything they wanted, there will be real conflicts.

In marriage you cannot have everything you want. Having brothers and sisters, then, is a blessing in disguise to children. It will actually make them better husbands and wives as well as fathers and mothers. No wonder GOD said:

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3-5).

If there is a social or cultural difference, this can present grave problems. A couple has to be able to go anywhere together and both feel at ease. If one dresses or acts improperly, the other one will be frustrated to say nothing about being embarrassed. It seems that Moses' wife, Zipporah, was not in oneness with Moses in this area. She was at home with her people, but not with his people. This can cause serious problems.

How a person rates his parents' marriage is also an important factor in the success or failure of the child's marriage.

Usually, happy marriages produce happy marriages and unhappy marriages produce like in kind. This is important for a young person to know and understand. They may feel that they are going to have a happy marriage even though their parents' marriage is very unhappy, and they feel they know the whole place or places where their parents went wrong. Theirs will be different. They will not make the same mistakes.

Now while they will do some things differently from their parents; nevertheless, in the basic areas, they will be the same as they were in the home they were raised in because this is all they

know.

We might go into much more, but here are a few of the many things that may cause conflicts in marriage because of our own immaturity that we bring to the marriage. It comes down once again to the fact that the better person you are, the better mate you will be.

B. Basic Differences

But there is another whole realm that is vitally important for harmony in marriage. Once I was shown a book with the stimulating title: "What Men Know About Women." I grabbed it in an earnest quest to understand our feminine counterpart, only to find that the book contained all blank pages.

We may laugh, but it is pathetic.

Men do not understand women, and women will only too readily agree.

Men and women are not the same, and this by divine design; and only as this is completely understood by both can basic adjustments be made to compensate for the differences.

Men are rational creatures, basically.

Woman are emotional creatures, basically.

Logic governs man's actions;
intuition governs woman's.
The one is objective; the other subjective.
The one is controlled by ideas;
the other by feelings.

Now when we say basically, I trust that we all realize that men have feeling and women have intellect. I am not minimizing the importance of either of these, but seeking to bring out that which is in the dominant place. This is not to say, also, that many women today in our culture have learned to think like men, but again this proves the rule for this had to be acquired because it would not otherwise have come. Perhaps it is clearer to say the one aspect is dominant while the other is subdominant.

A harmonious marriage is actually the wedding together of two distinct personalities into one whole. Man with his dominant reason, Woman with her dominant feeling with GOD's One Will - the true One Intellect and One Emotion.

This is GOD's desire, that we who are united together in marriage be one together in thought, in feeling, and in action. This is the Lord's desire also today for His church that is betrothed to Him. He wants us to be one together with Him in all things. This is a welding of personality together.

This basic difference in men and women is seen very clearly in the Word of GOD. Let us consider a couple of many examples that could be given.

1. John 12:1-8

"Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always"

Here is a supper at the home of Lazarus, but two individuals stand out in prominence besides the Lord JESUS. The one is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus; and the other is Judas Iscariot.

After the supper was finished, Mary took **"a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."** I am convinced that if you had stopped Mary and asked her why she was doing this, she could not have told you. In fact, Judas asked her why, and Mary never had to answer because CHRIST came to her defense and said, **"Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this."** Our Lord gives the reason why she did it, but I do not feel she ever knew. Mary was acting on the basis of intuition and was governed by emotion.

But Judas Iscariot was not governed by intuition or emotion; he was governed by logic and reason. **"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"** John adds: **"This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."**

Regardless, actually of why Judas acted like he did; the point is still valid as to the way he acted. He reasoned according to logic even as a thief. He acted according to his basic nature; and because Judas was unsaved, it was a sin nature and an evil heart.

2. Mark 15:47-16:3

"And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

"And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

Men consider women's emotional actions and reactions totally illogical and unreasonable. They will argue that this was what led Eve to be deceived in the first place and that it still leads the

woman into trouble.

But the man's arguing doesn't change the woman, and he might as well have saved his logic, and his breath. You see, there he goes reacting to his own nature again.

Women consider that intuition short-cuts long processes of thought, and their conclusions are equally as accurate as men.

What we need is a mediator in this situation.

We need someone that understands both the man and the woman and can be the go-between so that we can settle this issue once and for all. Who is right: the man or the woman?

Do we have such a person?

Yes, we do!

The One Who created both, knows both; and Scripture gives the answer.

The answer is simply this: Both the intellect and the emotion of the old sin nature are equally wrong. It does not make any difference which approach is used -- you end up at the same place, wrong.

However, both the intellect and the emotion of the new nature energized by the HOLY SPIRIT are equally right.

Again it does not make any difference which approach is used -- you end up at the same place, right!

Let us look at some examples

We have already seen that Judas reasoned, but his reasoning was wrong.

Peter, also, reasoned that even though all others shall be offended because of CHRIST, yet he would never be offended. Peter had reasoned this out and come to this conclusion, but he was wrong, completely wrong.

Thus, it is not reason or logic itself that is right, and the man dares not say that his is the only way of approach. Judas was very correct logically, for the cost of the ointment was nearly a year's wages, not to mention how many years' savings were involved.

But we need to warn the women, also, that intuition and emotion not under the control of the HOLY SPIRIT is totally wrong. When the Lord visited Abraham and told him he would have a son, "**Sarah laughed**" within herself (Genesis 18:12). But when confronted with it, she denied that she laughed for she was afraid. Here is a case of her emotions taking over and leading her down a wrong road.

Before this, Sarah had suggested since she could not bear children that Abraham marry her maid,

Hagar, and have a child by this means. Sarah was reacting emotionally to her particular problem, and she was totally wrong. The proof that Sarah's plan was emotional rather than rational is because she did not reason out the consequences which a rational plan would have taken into account.

Many other examples could be given as Moses' sister, Miriam, who was so emotionally upset because her kid brother, Moses, was seeking to have the whole show in Israel. She had a terrific emotional reaction to this. Had it not been for Moses, this would have cost Miriam severely. As it was she only had leprosy seven days (Numbers 12).

So we come to this. It is not man's way that is right, nor is it woman's approach that is right.

Both may be wrong; and if they are wrong, they are equally wrong.

Both may be right; and if they are right, they are equally right.

It is not the way that is used that is the important thing. It is the nature that is behind the reasoning or the feeling. When it is the old sin nature, it is always wrong whether expressed through reason or feelings. When it is the new nature, it is always right, when based upon GOD's eternal Word.

The very fact that women may be used in the Lord's service is a sign that the woman, energized by the HOLY SPIRIT, may be of great service in the Lord's work.

Phoebe had been a great blessing to many and to Paul also (Romans 16:1-2).

Then there were Priscilla and Aquila who worked together as a team (Romans 16:3-4), to mention just a few.

GOD will use men or women. The condition for being used is surrender to Him, and being controlled by Him.

Understanding the differences between the man and the woman perhaps gives you the reason that the woman is never to usurp authority over the man. The GOD Who made both gave this injunction for the well-being of His people.

The reason is because intuition has no check upon it. Reason or logic may be checked. Thus, the woman may be "deceived" by Satan much more easily than the man. She may "feel" she is right, when in truth she is wrong.

This is the reason why a woman will break up a home, and marry a man that was already married and had a lovely family. Reason, logic, Scripture, conscience are all gone to the wind. She is reacting on feeling only.

This in no way lessens her punishment, because she is equally guilty when she is deceived as when the man sins deliberately. Proof of this is that both the man and the woman were judged in Genesis 3.

Now knowing the basic differences between the man and the woman is only the first step. Each must then realize the reason why there are differences. There must be understanding of one for the other.

Reason alone does not make things right, for reason can be very cold and unconcerned. Emotion, on the other hand, is not wrong in itself, for it is the type or source of the emotion that makes it wrong.

Women, who are by nature emotional creatures, are very sensitive.

Yet they need to be filled with the Spirit so that their feelings one to another are right: "**I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord**" (Philippians 4:2),

and that their feelings toward their husbands are right:

"That they may teach the young women

**to be sober,
to love their husbands,
to love their children,
To be discreet,
chaste,
keepers at home,
good,
obedient to their own husbands,**

that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5).

Men, who are by nature rational creatures, are very calculative and cold.

They need to have the mind of CHRIST so as to be right as well as to think right. To be right and think right is to consider the emotional needs of the wife. This is "**dwelling with them according to knowledge**" (I Peter 5:7)

The very basis of all adjustments is realization of the basic needs of the other, and seeking by the grace of GOD to meet those needs. Adjustments must be made because there are differences, and some of these differences relate to the very basic makeup of the person. They can no more change this than they can change their skin.

However, a woman that allows herself to become supersensitive over every little thing her husband does or what someone else does, is wrong. She must seek to have her emotions under the Spirit's control.

Furthermore, a man that allows himself to become insensitive to his wife's needs and who reduces everything to cold logic, is equally wrong.

He must seek to respond to her emotional needs.
Tell her you love her.
Bring her little things.
Do little things that show your love.

On the negative side, do not find fault with everything your wife says. You may be superior in reasoning and logic, but your wife cannot be always wrong!

Neither the husband nor the wife should ever take their love for each other for granted. Love is not something static. It will either grow or it will die. When a woman loses respect for her husband, she no longer has any love for him. Therefore, "a husband should court his wife all his life." The marriage ceremony is not the end of courting but the promise of continual courting for life.

When love has grown cold, the only thing that can be done is go back and do the first works of courting that won the respect and love of your wife, and for the wife that won the admiration and love of the husband.

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast lost thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

For the Christian couple that has grown cold toward each other, if they will not do a complete about face, it will be the same for them as for this church at Ephesus.

Their light of Christian testimony will be removed, and no longer will they be an instrument to point men and women to JESUS CHRIST. I have known Christian couples who have left their first love for each other, and their light has been put out.

So serious is this thing that Peter tells us if we are not right in our relationship between husband and wife, we are not right between ourselves and the Lord, and our prayers are meaningless: **"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered"** (I Peter 3:7).

GOD's desire for us in the spiritual realm is that the love we have for JESUS CHRIST might continue to grow and grow. We should be able to sing: "Still Sweeter Every Day."

GOD's love has four dimensions.

It has breadth,
and length,
and depth,
and height.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the

whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:14-19)

So should our love as believer for the one we love have these four dimensions.

1. Its breadth reaches out and includes all

He loves me as a total person.

He loves me even with all of my failures and shortcomings.

He loves me for what I am, not for what He wants me to be. He may not like all I do, but He loves me in spite of it.

How can I help but respond to love Him in the same way. I love Him, not for what I would want Him to be, but for what He is. In doing this, a strange thing is taking place; gradually we are becoming more like each other.

Our love for each other has no boundaries. We do not stop loving one another because one or the other has gone beyond our narrow rule. No so; our love has a breadth that is without limit. It is all inclusive.

This breadth of love being inclusive is not exclusive and selfish. Our love is open to include others. Others are not a threat to our love whatever, but are a blessing.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it"
(Ephesians 5:25).

2. Its length reaches on and on

Our love has no fear of ever terminating through all of life regardless of the problems, testings or difficulties that we may experience; for we have come to learn together that **"many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it"** Bring the storms and the testings; they will only draw us closer and nearer to each other.

Since our love has no fear for the unknown of tomorrow, it is perfect love. **"Perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love"** (I John 4:18). We are concerned for this one day that GOD has given us together that we be perfected in love this day, and we have no fear for the tomorrow. The tomorrow is in GOD's hands; and we, as GOD's children, are in His hands as well as in each others.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it"
(Ephesians 5:25).

3. Its depth continues to grow deeper and deeper

We do not love our children only when they are nice. We love them regardless. This is the same for GOD's love to us, and should we not practice it in the closest and dearest relationship on earth? We do, and it gives that extra dimension to our life.

We thought we loved each other when we were married, but we have found that our love today for each other is far deeper and greater than we ever knew possible, and it shall continue in this way to grow more and more for each other and together for GOD.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it"
(Ephesians 5:25).

4. Its height has no measure

You say the honeymoon is for a short time. Not so, my friend. We still dwell on Cloud 9. Our love has a height to it that is without measure. The love of my beloved satisfies my heart, and I satisfy my love.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it"
(Ephesians 5:25).

Truly our love has no lack. It is complete in breadth, length, depth, and height.

This kind of love is GOD's desire for every Christian couple. But, you say, our marriage is not there. It is not this way. How can we get to this place? You must work together to increase the dimensions of breadth and length, depth and height.

Now the only way that these dimensions can be expanded out to infinity is for you both to include GOD in your total life together. He alone can give the infinite to our finite state. The Lord has come that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

~ end of chapter 6 ~
