

Glorifying God in Your Marriage

Mission Bible Fellowship - Marriage Conference
(May 31 - June 1, 2019) Pastor Larry Nelson

SESSION 2 — “*The Biblical Mandates of Marriage*” (Part 1)

Introduction:

1. I hope that you all got some rest last night — and that you have come back this morning with an eagerness to improve your marriage for the glory of God.
2. Clearly — the differences between men and women can be frustrating — but often they are really funny.
3. I particularly enjoy the comic strip called “*Pickles.*”
 - a. Earl — Why did you take all the food out of the fridge?!!!
 - i. I’m looking for the bananas! — You always hide things in the fridge — so I can’t find them!
 - ii. But I don’t keep the bananas in the fridge. — They’re right here on the counter.
 - iii. AHA! — so that’s where you are hiding them now! **OR**
 - b. Look Opal — I’ve installed a new toilet seat especially for you!
 - i. Especially for me?
 - ii. Yes — turn off the light. — See — it sends up a beacon light when the seat is up! — *Guys — just put down the seat already!!!*
 - c. Earl — did you put this can of spray adhesive in the bathroom?
 - i. Yeah — I was planning to fix that loose wallpaper.
 - ii. I thought that it was my hair spray — and I sprayed my hair with it
 - iii. Well then — I guess you won’t have to spray your hair again for a long time — Your welcome!
 - d. One lady wrote: I’m a woman — but in my next life I’d like to come back as a bear. — When you’re a bear you get to hibernate. — You do nothing but sleep for six months. — I could deal with that!
 - i. Before you hibernate — you’re supposed to eat yourself stupid. — I could deal with that too!

- ii. When you're a girl bear — you birth your children — who are the size of walnuts — while you're asleep — and when you wake up — they are partially grown — cute cuddly cubs. — I could definitely deal with that!
 - iii. If you're a bear — your mate expects you to wake up growling. — He expects you to have hairy legs — and excess body fat.
 - iv. Yup — I'd like to come back as a bear!
- e. And here's a bit of trivia for all you hockey fans:
- i. The first testicular guard — the “cup” — was used in hockey in 1874 — but helmets were not introduced until 1974.
 - ii. That means it only took 100 years for men to realize that their brain is also important!
 - iii. Why are you ladies laughing?
4. Alright — let's get down to business!
5. While the unbelieving world has many different models and “*foolosophies*” of marriage — thankfully for the Christian — the Bible has only one.
- a. And therefore — the roles for the husband and wife are not open for either argument or negotiation.
6. Last night we learned from *Genesis 3:16* — that many of our conflicts in marriage come from husbands and wives who are battling over who will be the “*King of the Hill*.”
7. So this morning I want to begin with the Apostle Paul's exhortation from:

Philippians 2:3-4

- 3 *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;*
 - 4 *do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*
8. So many of our marriage conflicts would never happen — if we would only commit ourselves to obeying these commands.
9. Last night we saw in *Genesis 4* — how Cain became angry and depressed — when he did not get what he wanted.
- a. And so it is today — As biblical counselors — we believe that depression is not the result of a “*so-called*” chemical imbalance in the brain.
 - b. Unless there are clearly defined — and measurable medical issues — Depression comes from making one self-loving — self-serving — irresponsible choice after another — where we then become angry and bitter when we don't get to have our own way.

- c. However — when Christians live for the glory of God and the good of others — there is no place for demanding our own way — or holding onto bitterness.

TRANS> With this in mind — I want to examine the biblically defined roles for marriage — where the husband needs to become a lover and spiritual leader — and the wife needs to become a suitable helper and completer.

I. Husbands Need to Become Lovers and Spiritual Leaders

- A. So men — let's start with the example of our Lord and Master — as seen in:

Matt 20:25-28

- 25 *But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.*
 26 *It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,*
 27 *and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;*
 28 *just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

- B. As we saw in *Genesis 3:16* — from the time of the Fall of man — our tendency is to rule over our wives — but God has called us to love and lead them.

1. Brothers — listen carefully to Peter's command to husbands in:

1 Peter 3:7 You husbands ... live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

2. We have all heard frustrated men say things like — "*Women — who can understand them?!!!*"
3. And yet — this text commands us to understand our wives — which means that we have to become students — where we must learn to listen carefully — observe attentively — and ask questions constantly.
4. In this text — Peter gives us a head-start by declaring that our wives are "*weaker*" than we are.
- a. Although pound-for-pound — women do not have the muscle mass of men — I think Peter has something else in mind.
- b. His point is that our wives are emotionally different from men.
- (1) In other words — we can't treat her like one of the guys.
 - (2) Her emotions are not like a cast-iron pot. — She is more like a precious crystal vase — which is easily broken.
 - (3) Our wives can be crushed with just an unkind look — or tone of voice — or a careless word.

- (4) And so Peter commands each of us to treat our wife with “... honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life ...”
- (5) Sinners that we are — it is easy to say things to our wife — that we would never think of saying to our boss or someone at church.
- (6) And just because you may get away with it at home — that does not make it OK!
- (7) And Peter goes on to say — that if we do not treat her with honor — it will damage not only our marriage — but our spiritual life as well — because our prayers will be “hindered.”
- (8) King David declared in:

Psalm 66:18 “If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear.”

- c. As I said before — if we are going to understand our wives — then we must be willing to learn — and learning involves asking questions — and listening carefully.
 - (1) When it comes to biblical teaching — “Revelation” is all about God revealing truths about Himself — His creation — and things to come — which we could never know unless He chose to reveal them to us — through His written Word.
 - (2) And so it is when it comes to understanding our wife.
 - (3) There are things that you will never know — unless she is reveals them to you.
 - (4) Now when it comes to asking thoughtful questions — most of us men are as dumb as a box of hammers — so — I have provided a sheet on the back table — which is entitled:
“50 Questions to Ask Your Wife.”
 - (5) Now all of us guys tend to be conquer oriented.
 - (a) Conquer the grass — “*git-er done*” — “*bbbbbbb*”
 - (b) Conquer the road — “*bbbbbbb*”
 - i) “*Dad — can we stop to use the bathroom?*”
 - ii) Oops — we are in Canada.
 - iii) “*Dad — can we stop to use the washroom?*”
 - iv) “*Can’t you hold it for awhile longer?*” — “*We need to get 500 miles done today!*” — “*And besides that — I don’t want to have to pass all those slow trucks again!*”

- (c) So brothers — please don't approach these **"50 Questions"** as just another project that needs to be conquered — "bbbbbb — OK — got that done"
- (6) Here's a simply truth: Most men spell love — **"S-T-U-F-F"** — but most wives spell love — **"T-I-M-E"**
- (a) Men — it takes time to learn how to understand your wife.
- (b) So I want to make a couple of practical suggestions — which will help you provide the necessary TIME to study and love your wife.
- (c) First of all — I have all my counseling couples establish a nightly — 15 minute — *"Couch Time."*
- i) And if you want the most benefit from your *"Couch Time"* — then do it in front of your kids.
- ii) Tell them — *"Mommy and Daddy are going to have our 'Couch Time' now — and we don't want to be disturbed — unless there is blood!"*
- iii) Please trust me in this. — You will be amazed by the benefits that will take place in your children — when they see you having regular *"Couch Time"* together.
- (d) Second — establish a weekly *"Date Night."*
- i) Now Guys — we are not talking about the Prom.
- ii) *"Date Night"* doesn't have to cost a bunch of money.
- iii) Although there is nothing wrong with going to a nice restaurant now and then — if you can afford it — this is not the purpose of *"Date Night."*
- iv) Back in our poverty days — Marian and I had a weekly date where I could buy a bottomless pot of coffee for her — and a piece ala-mode pie for me — for just a buck and a quarter!
- v) I define *"Date Night"* as two or more hours spent together — doing something that you **both** enjoy — with no calls or texts — unless there is an emergency — where you can have extended — uninterrupted conversation together — and — (drum roll please) — no kids.
- (e) *"Date Night"* and *"Couch Time"* are all about giving yourselves TIME to nurture your **"one flesh"** relationship.

- (f) Brothers — let's take a few lessons from "Pickles" about what not to do during "Date Night" and "Couch Times."
- i) So Opal — you'd like to have more stimulating conversations?
- a) Yes I would!
- b) OK — so how's the garbage disposal working?
- c) Its fine.
- d) Good — Are we about done here?" — or
- ii) Opal — are you talking to the dog?
- a) Maybe.
- b) Instead of me — your husband?
- c) He's a better listener — and he seems to be more interested in what I am saying — and he doesn't roll His eyes and look at his watch while I'm talking. — or
- iii) Earl — the nice thing about you is that I can tell you anything — I know that all my secrets are safe with you — and you will never tell anyone the things I tell you — will you Earl? — Earl?
- a) Because you weren't listening in the first place!
- b) Eh? — Did you say something Opal?
- (g) Guys — Earl didn't have these "**50 Questions**" — but you do — so don't be an Earl!
- (7) Now at this point — men usually ask — "So can we go to the movies for 'Date Night'?"
- (a) To which I say — "Sure — as long as you can have two hours of uninterrupted conversation together — which means that they will either kick you out of the theater — or you need to plan for a longer Date Night."

TRANS> I remember back almost 50 years ago — when I was a new Christian and a new husband — and I would hear the pastor say that men are supposed to be the "*spiritual leaders*" in their homes.

And although this seemed to be a really good thing — I had no idea what he was talking about — and there was no one who cared enough to teach me.

So let's try to demystify this whole "*spiritual leadership*" thing — by turning over to:

Ephesians 5:25-32

- 25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,*
 26 *so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*
 27 *that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*
 28 *So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;*
 29 *for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,*
 30 *because we are members of His body.*
 31 **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.**
 32 *This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.*

C. Spiritual Leadership — begins with husbands loving our wives in the same way that Christ loved His church and gave Himself up for her.

1. But because of the *Genesis 3:16* curse — husbands typically want to dominate their wives — rather than love them.
2. It is vital for all of us to recognize that this command for husbands to love our wives comes in the context of *Ephesians 5:18* — where previously Paul commands every Christian to live under the moment-by-moment control of the Holy Spirit.

a. Remember Jesus' words in *John 15:5* — where He declared:

John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do – nothing.

b. And Paul would later describe this Spirit-empowered “fruit” in:

Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control ...”

c. Brothers — loving our wives as Christ loved the church is only possible as we are deliberately living under the moment-by-moment control of the Holy Spirit.

3. Now you are probably aware that the Bible uses two different Greek words — which we translate as “love.”

a. PHILEO — is a reciprocating kind of love — which depends on getting love back in return.

b. But AGAPE love gives — and it keeps on giving — without any expectation of getting anything back — ever.

c. This is the “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son*” — kind of love.

- d. While PHILEO love runs out — as soon as one or both people stop loving — but AGAPE love never gives up — It never runs dry — It keeps loving and giving no matter what.
4. Let's consider: *1 John 4:19 "We love, because He first loved us."*
- a. For Christian husbands — Holy Spirit empowered — loving leadership means that:
- (1) We love first — we love most — and we love generously!
 - (2) We are not called to be dictators over our wife.
 - (3) We are not called to dominate our wife.
 - (4) And we are not called to make demands of our wife.
- D. Spiritual leadership is largely about setting an example for our wife and children to follow.
1. It is no secret that from time-to-time — all of us fail and fall short of the standards that God gives to us — in His Word.
 - a. All of us have sinned against our wife and children — and when we fail — this is one of the crucial areas where we need to lead by example.
 - b. Brothers — when you sin against your wife or children — do you take ownership of what you did — or failed to do?
 - c. Do you just say something like "Oops my bad" **or** "I'm sorry"?
 - d. Or worse still — do you say nothing at all — expecting them to just — get over it?
 2. In order for us to reconcile with others — so our sin can be put into the past — then we must follow the biblical pattern for reconciliation.

1 John 1:8-10

- 8 *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*
- 9 ***If** we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- 10 *If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*
- a. In order for biblically defined reconciliation to take place — we must first "confess" what we did.
 - (1) In the Greek — this word "confess" literally means "*to say the same thing*" **or** "*to tell it like it is*" **or** even more specifically — "*call it what God calls it*" — which means that we must use biblically defined language.
 - (2) In other words — if we were harsh and angry — we don't say — "Sorry — I blew it" — **or** "I lost my temper."

- (a) We need to say something like — *“I have no excuse for speaking to you with unkindness and anger — I am so very sorry.” — “Will you please forgive me?”*
- (3) Clearly — we are all infected with pride — even on our best days — so none of us likes to confess anything.
- (a) We verily choke on the words!
- (b) Its much easier to say things like — *“I was stupid” or “I goofed up.” or “Well nobody is perfect.” or worse yet — “If you hadn’t made me so mad — I would not have done or said what I did!!!”*
- i) Dear ones — In point of fact — no one can make us mad — no one can make us sin.
- ii) Sinful anger is a choice — so if we are speaking unkindly — then we are sinning. — PERIOD!
- (c) We are all born ready to blame others for our sins — and to change the words to lessen the shame of it.
- i) When I was about 5 years old — I don’t remember what Stevey Patton did — but he needed to be pounded upon — and I was the guy for the job.
- ii) But as I came in the front door my mom greeted me with — *“Larry — what did you do to Stevey?”*
- iii) To which I said — *“Mom — Stevey — He ...”*
- iv) My mom rudely cut me off saying — *“Larry — I don’t care what Stevey did — What did you do?”*
- v) *Mom — you don’t understand — Stevey — He ...”*
- vi) And with the tone that strikes terror in the heart of any little boy — she said — *“Larry — I am only going to ask you one more time — **What – did – you – do – to – Stevey?**”*
- vii) So with all the creativity of a motorist trying to talk his way out of a ticket — I said — *“I — I — I hit him back first!”*
- (d) Men — as the spiritual leader in our home — when we sin — we need to **“man-up”** — confess what we did — using biblical terms — express genuine sorrow — and then seek forgiveness — from God and the one we sinned against.
- (e) And so here’s another page from the *“Nelson Hall of Shame.”*

- i) Have you ever had one of those Sunday mornings — where it is like trying to herd cats?!!!
 - ii) Well certainly did.
 - iii) I had spent the morning grumping at the kids to hurry up and get ready — but as we pulled into the parking lot — I breathed a sigh of relief.
 - iv) And there was my friend Jerry — who I greeted warmly as we were heading inside.
 - v) But then there was this pull on my coat — and a very sad little girl was looking up at me — who said — “Daddy — why are you all grumpy at home — and happy when we come to church?”
 - vi) That morning — God used the innocence of my seven-year-old daughter to stab me in the heart!
 - vii) Right then and there — I got down on one knee and said — “I am so sorry Laura — Daddy sinned by being angry with you this morning — would you please forgive me?”
 - viii) Her sadness was replaced with a smile — as she said — “Yes Daddy — I forgive you.”
- (f) Men — we to lead by example — and that includes not excusing our sin by blaming others for their’s.

E. And while I’m on the subject of “*forgiveness*” — let’s take a look at:

Ephesians 4:30-32

- 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.
- 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

1. I don’t have time this morning to fully unpack this passage — but suffice it to say — that our forgiveness of others is supposed to look like God’s forgiveness of us.
2. “... *forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*”
3. As a biblical counselor — I often refer to “*The Three Promises of Forgiveness*” — and you would all do well to memorize them.
 - a. When we say “*I forgive you*” — we are actually saying:
 - (1) *I promise that I will never bring this sin up again to use it against you.*

- (2) *I promise that I will never speak to others about your sin without your permission. — and finally:*
- (3) *I promise that I will not allow my mind to dwell on your sin.*

Conclusion:

1. Now — let's turn over to *John 10:27* — where Jesus said:

John 10:27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me”

2. Please allow me to take a moment — to go from teaching to meddling.
- Brothers — are you the kind — loving — spiritual leader who sets a godly example — who makes it easy for your wife and children to follow?
 - Are you the kind of husband that causes your wife and children to look forward to you coming home at night?
 - Are you the kind of husband who is a joy to live with — or are you a pain?
 - Are you the kind of husband who gives careful attention — and who really listens to your wife and children?
 - Are you the kind of husband who puts the needs of your wife before your own?
 - Are you the kind of husband who makes it easy for your wife and children to come to — when they need help with a problem?
3. Simply put — Brothers — when we lovingly focus on the needs and well-being of our wife — it makes it so much easier for her to follow our leadership.
4. Dear ones — please know that I am not pontificating to you — from some ivory tower of self-righteousness.
- In spite of my own personal weakness and failures — by the grace of God — and the power of the Holy Spirit — I have spent a half century trying to become this kind of husband — father — and grandfather.
 - And so — I want to encourage all of you to remember — that our heavenly Master is not finished with any of us yet.
5. Allow me to read the paraphrase of *Proverbs 19:14* from the Living Bible

Proverbs 19:14 A father can give his sons homes and riches, but only the Lord can give them understanding wives.

- Before I placed Marian's wedding ring on her finger — I had the inside engraved with this Bible reference — *Proverbs 31:29* — reading again from the Living Bible.

Proverbs 31:29 There are many fine women in the world, but you are the best of them all!

- b. If we believe in the sovereignty of God — and we do — then every Christian husband should say this to — and about — his wife — “*There are many fine women in the world, but you are the best of them all!*”
 - c. And as such — we are called to spend the rest of our lives learning how to unselfishly love and lead her — the way our Master loves and leads His church.
6. Over these many years — it has been one of my greatest joys to come along side men — and encourage them — as we endeavor to become men of God — together.
- a. You may remember me saying last night — that as a pastor and biblical counselor — it is my privilege to put good tools into men’s hands — and then teach them how to use them.
 - b. In my personal — humble — and unbiased opinion — I believe the best book on this subject is called “*The Complete Husband — A Practical Guide for Improved Biblical Husbanding*” — by Lou Priolo.
 - i. Over the years — I have taught through this book many times — with married men — and those who would like to be married.
 - ii. I only have one copy with me today — however — I am planning to be back here — to fill in for Pastor Brian on Sunday — July 7th — And I will be happy to bring more copies with me then.
 - iii. Just sign up on this clip board — which will be on the back table.

TRANS> Now we have a few minutes before brunch for some questions.