

Glorifying God in Your Marriage

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

SESSION 3 — “*The Biblical Mandates of Marriage*” (Part 2)

Introduction:

1. Earlier this morning — I gave the first — of a two-part teaching — which I have called — “***The Biblical Mandates of Marriage***”
2. And in that session — I focused on — how: **Husbands Need to Become Lovers and Spiritual Leaders** in the home.
3. In keeping with *1 Peter 3:7* — all of my counselees know that I tend to be far tougher on the men than I am with their precious “*weaker vessel*” counter-parts.
 - a. ☺☺☺ So ladies — please relax. — You don’t need to brace for impact.
4. I want to begin our final session together — where I started the last one:

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.*
 - a. Most marriage conflicts would never happen — if we would commit ourselves to the present tense obedience of these commands.

TRANS> Please open your Bibles to *Ephesians 5:22-24* — where I want focus on how:

I. Wives Need to Become Suitable Helpers and Completers.

A. This takes us back to *Genesis 2:18* — where:

Genesis 2:18 “... the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”

1. Years ago — as I was just starting the 1st premarital counseling session with a couple — I asked “*Susie*” (*not her real name*) — “*Why do you want to marry “Bob”?* (*not his real name*)
2. And without any hesitation — “*Susie*” grinned a huge smile — and declared — “*Because it is not good for “Bob” to be alone!*”
3. Although she loved him — “*Susie*” understood that God had called her to be “*Bob’s*” “Helper” and “Completer” — not a dominating competitor.

Ephesians 5:22-23

22 *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

- 23 *For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.*
- 24 *But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*

- B. I believe that the reason why so many women verily cringe — when they read this passage — is because they don't understand what it actually means — and what it does not mean.
1. It does not mean that women are inferior to men — or that they just have to keep silent — or that they must blindly obey their husbands — no matter what!
 2. So before I unpack this passage — let's look at the context of the text again — which begins in verse 18 — where every Christian — is commanded to deliberately live under the moment-by-moment control of the Holy Spirit — as we submit our will over to God's will.
 3. And only then — do we read what the result of this moment-by-moment — commitment and control will look like — and how it will enable us to obey God's mandated roles for the husband and wife in marriage.

Ephesians 5:18-21

- 18 *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,*
 19 *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;*
 20 *always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;*
 21 *and be subject to **one another** in the fear of Christ.*

4. Does this sound like a dictatorship — where husbands are given the freedom to dominate and abuse their wives? — NOT AT ALL!
 5. Among other things — normal Christlike living is supposed to reflect this passage — where believers are putting the needs of others before ourselves.
 6. Clearly — this text should remind us of *Philippians 2:3-4*.
- C. So when God commands wives to *be subject — (or to submit) to your own husbands ...* — (depending on your translation) — the Greek word here is <hoop-o-tas'-so> — which is a military word — meaning to “*line up under*.”
1. Just as there is a chain-of-command in the military — so too God has established an order of authority in the home.
 2. And to use a different metaphor — airliners only have one pilot.
 - a. Thankfully — the pilot has a co-pilot to assist and advise him — but the final decisions and the responsibility for those decisions rest solely on the pilot's shoulders.
 3. But please remember the context of this passage — where you have a husband and wife — who are both seeking to submit their will over to God's will.

- a. And when this is the case — 99.9% of the time — they are going to be in agreement — so for the most part — the wife needing to submit to her husband — becomes a non-issue.
 - b. Therefore — (and please listen very carefully) — when I say that the command requiring the wife to submit — which is being spoken of here — assumes that there has been disagreement.
 - c. But if you are both seeking to submit to God and His Word — disagreements should be extremely rare.
 - d. There have only been less than a handful of times — in almost 50 years — (and I can't remember the specifics of a single one of them) — where I've had to say — *“Marian — I love you — and I have listened to your concerns — but there is no more time to pray — or to get wise counsel in this matter. I know that we disagree — but a decision has to be made — and I am going to have to ask you to submit to me.”*
4. There are two verses that usually get overlooked in the midst of Paul's admonitions about whether to marry — or to stay single.

1 Corinthians 7:33-34

33 *One who is married is concerned about how ... he may please his wife,*

34 *One who is married is concerned about ... how she may please her husband.*

- a. So thinking back to *Philippians 2:2-3* — if you are married — it is a good thing — and it is admirable — to be more interested in pleasing your spouse — than pleasing yourself!
- b. In point of fact — between doctors' appointments and ministry opportunities — we have to eat out on the fly — a lot.
 - (1) And often — by the time we are finally able to grab a bite to eat — we are both hungry enough to eat the south end of a dead rhino.
 - (2) And so here's an example of how our conversations usually go.
 - (a) *“Honey where would you like to eat?”*
 - (b) *“Oh I don't care — where do you want to eat?”*
 - (c) *“Sweetie — I really want to please you — and besides that — I picked last time.”*
 - (d) *“Oh — I don't know — where do you want to eat?”*
 - (3) Folks — when we are both into *“dead rhino time”* — this can be rather irritating — but since we are both committed to loving and pleasing each other — I endure!

5. Now — lest think that we never have problems — think again.
- a. Both of us married sinners — and most of the hurts that we inflict upon one another do not come from disagreements over what we should or should not do.
 - b. Most of our hurts come from careless words and thoughtless actions.
 - (1) And so here is another page from the “*Nelson Hall of Shame*.”
 - (2) We had talked about getting some chairs for our back porch.
 - (a) So “*Conquer the Chairs Nelson*” went into investigation mode.
 - (b) I went online. — I looked at Lowes — Home Depot — and at least a half dozen other stores — and I finally determined that the best chairs for the best price were at Costco.
 - (c) So I bought them — all the while thinking that Marian would be pleased — because not only had I done my homework — I got them for a bargain price!
 - (d) Well — to put it simply — she wasn’t pleased at all!
 - (e) Why are you women glaring at me?
 - (f) And some of you men are thinking: — “*What’s the big deal? — He wasn’t buying livingroom furniture!*”
 - (g) Marian wasn’t disagreeing with my biblical right to make the final decision.
 - (h) She was hurt — because it never occurred to me that just maybe I should have honored her — by encouraging her to be part of the process — and asking for her opinion.
 - (i) Once I realized what I had done — (and I’ve got to tell you that my pride did not make it easy for me to get there) — I expressed sincere sorrow over my sin — and I asked forgiveness for my neglectful dishonor.
 - (j) And then I suggested that I take the chairs back — so we could start over on this project together.
 - (k) But now that the barrier between us was gone — Marian agreed that this was in fact a good choice — so we decided to keep them.
6. *Nelson 1:1* says “*Thou shalt have balance.*”
- a. Again — I am not talking about balancing truth with error.

- b. I am talking about balancing truth with truth.
 - c. On the one hand — the husband has the biblical right to make final decisions — but on the other hand — any husband who refuses to listen to the opinions and counsel of his wife is an utter fool!
 - d. One day I heard one of my young daughters crying — and I automatically assumed that my son had hurt her.
 - (1) So as we were going off to the bedroom — to apply the board of education to the seat of knowledge — my wife very respectfully got my attention.
 - (2) I sent my son on ahead — and Marian whispered to me — *“I don’t want to correct you in front of the kids — but Larry — you are planning to spank the wrong kid. — I saw the whole thing — and Laura set him up.”*
 - (3) That was just one of many times where I was really glad that I listened to my wife!
- D. So far — these sessions have all been about the biblically defined roles of Holy Spirit-controlled husbands and wives — but what do we say to the woman who is married to a disobedient husband or to an unbeliever who makes no profession of faith in Christ?
1. Please turn over to — *1 Peter 3:1-6*.
 - a. Because of time constraints — I will leave it to you to read and study this entire text — but for this morning — I want to focus on just the first two verses.

1 Peter 3:1-2

- 1 *In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,*
 - 2 *as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.*
- b. It is important to point out here that Peter used the same Greek word for “*submit*” — *<hoop-o-tas'-so>* — that Paul used in *Ephesians 5:22*.
 - c. But Peter commands wives to submit to their husbands — even if they are being “disobedient” to God and His Word.
 - d. A balancing truth — which must be stated here comes from — *Acts 5:28-29* — where the Apostles were being commanded again to stop preaching about Jesus Christ.
 - (1) But their simple answer was: — *“... We must obey God rather than men.”*
 - e. So to sum up — a wife must submit to her husband in all areas — unless to do so would cause her to either violate her conscience — or the clear teaching of scripture.

- (1) And furthermore — a mother must immediately take action to protect her children — if a disobedient husband touches one of them inappropriately.
 - (2) Such men must be reported to the police immediately — and that with no second chances.
- f. But in the normal stuff of everyday life — each wife needs to remember that you are not your husband's Holy Spirit.
- (1) Like Queen Esther — you can certainly make a gracious appeal — but there will be times when you must just take a step back and let him experience the consequences of his foolish choices — even when those choices may negatively affect you and the children.
 - (2) Hard as it is — you must to give him room to fail — and when he does — the Holy Spirit-controlled wife — does not respond — *“Well — I told you so! — You should have listened to me!”*
- g. *Proverbs 14:1* says — *“The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.”*
- (1) Over the years — I have observed many such women — tearing down their own house — with their mouth.
 - (2) According to *1 Peter 3:1* — if there is any hope for a foolish and disobedient husband — he will not be won over by your words — but by your respectful behavior.
- E. Now let's take a moment and head back to *Ephesians 5:33* — where Paul makes one final summary statement — as it pertains to the non-negotiable — biblically-mandated roles of the husband and wife.

Ephesians 5:33 *“Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”*

- F. When my sweet Marian is speaking to women — she always quotes the wife's responsibility to respect her husband — from the *Amplified Bible* — which provides all the English equivalents — to the Greek word <fo-beh'-o>.

Ephesians 5:33 *“... and the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband — that she notices him — regards him — honors him — and that she defers to him — praises him — and loves and admires him exceedingly.”*

- G. Now I wish I could say that salvation in Christ cures the curse upon Adam and Eve — and by extension — all of us — but it doesn't.
1. Wives will battle the temptation to control their husbands — and husbands will battle the temptation to rule over their wives until the day we go home to Heaven.

2. But the wonder of Christian marriage — is that in those moments where we are deliberately seeking to submit to God and His Word — by the power Holy Spirit’s control in our lives — that curse is lifted.
3. We all know that when we go up in an airplane — the Law of Gravity does not cease to exist — but it is overcome by two greater laws — the Law of Aerodynamics (the airplane wing) — and the Law of Horsepower (the engines).
 - a. Just wack off a wing — or lose your engines — and you will discover that the Law of Gravity is working just fine.
4. And so it is in marriage — the Law of Sin — that wants to knock us down — and keep us down in defeat.
 - a. But there are two greater Laws — which are the power of the Word of God — and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - b. And so — to the degree that we seek to obey Paul’s commands to submit to the Word of God by — be — being controlled by the Holy Spirit — we will experience the law and curse of sin being lifted.
 - c. And furthermore — God will be glorified in and through our marriages — as the “*fruit of the Spirit*” is manifested: — “*love — joy — peace — patience — kindness — goodness — faithfulness — gentleness — and self-control.*”

TRANS> As we consider “***The Biblical Mandates of Marriage***” I would like to spend the rest of this hour — focusing on:

II. Our Intimacy in Marriage

- A. In case you haven’t figured it out by now — successful love-making is about 95% relationship and only 5% technique.
 1. Just imagine trying to have meaningful intimacy — if your bed is piled up with stinking garbage.
 2. But as you give serious attention to all that we have covered during these last 3 hours together — it will be like cleaning out the trash — so there won’t be any unnecessary distractions in sharing your intimacy together.
- B. In these next few minutes — I am going to focus on 11 words — starting with:

1. GLORIFICATION

- a. Let’s remember where we started last evening.

1 Corinthians 10:31 “*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*”

- b. Marital intimacy is part of the “... *whatever you do* ...”

- c. This is a wonderful gift — and our Lord wants us all to honor Him in and through it.
- d. And so *Philippians 2:3-4* applies here too — as you “... regard one another as more important than yourselves — not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of ...” your sweetheart.
- e. Pray for wisdom — that God will love your spouse through you — and as you do — He will be glorified!

2. Word #2 is: **INFORMATION**

- a. Since every cell in your spouses body is different than yours — I provide every one of my pre-marital counseling couples with these two books — which provide some basic information to give couples a start in this journey together.
- b. *Intended for Pleasure* is written by a Christian medical doctor — and it provides any couple with helpful information — that spans from newlyweds to old folks.
- c. *The Act of Marriage* is written by a pastor and his wife — and it deals with more of the relational side of intimacy.
- d. And I should mention here that my pre-marital counseling couples don’t receive these books until two weeks before the wedding — so they can both have a week with each book.
- e. I don’t provide them sooner — because it would be like wagging a steak in front of a hungry dog.

3. Word #3 is: **ANTICIPATION**

- a. It is important to remember that God invented marital intimacy — and so like all of the rest of the His will — love-making — it is good — and therefore we should look forward to it.
- b. In the beginning — I compare my soon-to-be newlyweds to a child learning to play “Chopsticks” on the piano with just two fingers.
 - i. But with patience and practice — one day couples can be playing symphonies.
- c. And just a quick word to men: — The best love-making does not begin in the bedroom — It begins in the living room and kitchen — with kind and attentive — meaningful conversation.
 - i. After ignoring your wife all evening — don’t expect a sweet response when you cuddle up and say — “Well Honey — what do you think?”
 - ii. “What do I think?!!!!”
- d. In point of fact — women need massive amounts of non-sexual mush — and its up to you to figure out what that means to her — because without this — your physical relationship will not be true intimacy. — It will just be very unsatisfying mechanics.

4. So **ANTICIPATION** leads to Word #4: **COMMUNICATION**
- a. When it comes to intimacy — many couples — even after being married for decades — can still struggle with communication.
 - b. It can be very difficult to express your desires — so here's a non-verbal idea that worked well for us.
 - i. If either one of us was feeling the need for some attention — we would put these stuffed hugging monkeys on our spouses pillow.
5. And a big part of **COMMUNICATION** is Word #5: **REVELATION**
- a. Just like biblical revelation is the unveiling of information that we could never know unless God revealed it — there are going to be many things about the desires of your sweetheart that you will never know unless they reveal it to you.
 - b. Please remember — that kind — trusting communication during the day — is what makes intimate communication and trusting revelation possible.
6. Word #6 is: **PREPARATION**
- a. Along with all the obvious things that you do to prepare for intimacy — you need to have a lock on your bedroom door.
 - b. And If you still have kids at home — they need to be instructed that when the door is closed — they don't bother you unless there is an emergency.
 - c. For the record — men are simple — but women are immeasurably complicated!
 - i. This is probably the greatest understatement since God declared to Noah that it was going to rain.
 - ii. For most guys — all we have to do is think about our wife — and we are prepared.
 - iii. But a wife's preparation can involve the temperature of the room — privacy — warm feet — lighting — her over-all feelings about herself — the well-being of the children — whether or not the dryer is still running — is the cat out — so he won't claw at your door — and at least 500 other things that I am still learning about.
 - iv. Therefore — if our wives are going to feel prepared for satisfying intimacy — then loving husbands — need to be kind and sensitive and patient — as they attend to their preparations.
7. This brings us to Word #7 — which is: **CONCENTRATION**
- a. It is normal for all of us to have many bats flying around in our belfry — but successful love-making requires focus — where we are paying attention.

b. This means that we must not allow our mind wander.

8. Word #8 is: **PROHIBITION**

a. Christian couples often ask — “*Are there any areas of intimacy that are biblically prohibited?*”

b. The simple answer to this question is — “*YES & NO*” — so we need to focus on two important biblical principles that will of necessity clarify this answer.

i. First of all — and obviously — any form of Sodomy is forbidden — because it is physically dangerous.

ii. And secondly — love-making is first-and-foremost all about giving not getting.

(1) Therefore — neither spouse should ever seek to engage in activity that would cause the other to be emotionally or physically uncomfortable.

iii. But if the kids are gone — and you both want to snuggle on the rug in front of the fireplace — then that’s just fine.

iv. As you grow in your relationship with Christ and with each other — this will be reflected in your ability to enjoy variety in your intimacy.

v. But as years turn into decades — there will be physical limitations that will hinder you.

(1) For us — snuggling on the rug in front of the fireplace would produce a 911 situation.

(2) We might be able to get down there — but then what?!!!

9. Word #9 is: **RECREATION**

a. Love making is supposed to mutually fulfilling — and yes — fun.

b. Starting with our honeymoon — most of us have warm memories of goofs — and foibles that were really funny — most of which we can’t share with others.

c. One wife — (who will remain nameless — in order to protect the guilty) — had this quirky thing that she would do to her husband that was akin to our monkeys on the pillow.

i. Without any warning — she would pull down his zipper — and run away — expecting him to chase her.

ii. Well one Saturday — he was out in the driveway — working underneath the car — with just his legs sticking out — and you guessed it — she just couldn’t resist.

iii. So she quietly snuck up on him — as she looked this way and that — to make sure none of the neighbors were watching — and zippppp.

- iv. And as she dashed for the house — you can only imagine her shock when she ran straight into her husband — who was just coming out the front door.
 - v. They had to call 911 — because the neighbor hit his head and was unconscious under the car.
 - vi. He was OK — but I can only imagine how that must have looked on their homeowner's insurance claim.
10. Then there is Word #10 which is: **SATISFACTION**
- a. I am going to camp here for awhile — because it is very important!
 - b. In all these years of counseling — I have never heard of a couple who shared the same needs for intimacy.
 - i. One spouse wants to make love every day — and the other would be quite satisfied once or twice a month.
 - ii. I'll let you figure out — *"Which gender fits where?"*
 - iii. But you might be surprised to know — that sometimes men are the ones who have the least amount of drive.
 - iv. So what should a couple do with this disparity of physical need?
 - v. As I present this question to all my premarital counseling couples — without exception — they always say something like — *"Well — I guess we need to meet somewhere in the middle."*
 - vi. But that is a wrong answer!
 - vii. Think back to *Philippians 2:3-4*.
 - viii. Since you are the only person who can righteously satisfy the physical hunger of your sweetheart — then every Christ-honoring spouse needs to make sure that your other half never has to go hungry!
 - c. In fact — I want to take this a step further by asking — *"Is God stingy in rationing out His love to us — or does He love lavishly?"*
 - i. According to *Ephesians 3:20* — He does the *"... exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think ..."*
 - ii. This is the essence of *<agape>* love — and it should be foundational to your love-making.
 - d. Most of us can remember Thanksgiving at Gramma's — where she kept wanting to pile food on your plate.

- i. And there was a point where — you were so stuffed — you protested saying — *“Gramma — are you trying to kill me off here?!!! — I can’t hold another bite!!!”*
- ii. I absolutely believe that this is the lavish spirit of generosity — by which every loving Christian spouse — should make sure that their sweetheart is never hungry.
- iii. *“Are you kidding me? — Are you trying to kill me off here ...?”*

11. And finally this brings us to our last Word: **APPRECIATION**

- a. When it comes to intimacy — there will be times of fireworks — and there will be other times when nothing seems to work.
- b. But regardless — we need to express appreciation to God and to our spouse for the generous loving efforts that have been given to us.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. So as I bring this time to a close — I want to express what a joy it has been — getting to spend this time together.
 - a. Thank you so much for making Marian and me feel so welcome!
- 2. It has been a huge challenge — trying to whittle down months of marriage counseling — into just a few hours!
- 3. With that said — I have often been told that sitting under my teaching — is like trying to drink from a fire hydrant under full pressure.
- 4. So assuming that all the recording technology has worked — these three audio sessions — along with full written transcripts — will soon be posted on my web page — which is: www.kootenaichurch.org/nelson
- 5. Pastor Brian — would you please come and lead us in a closing prayer.