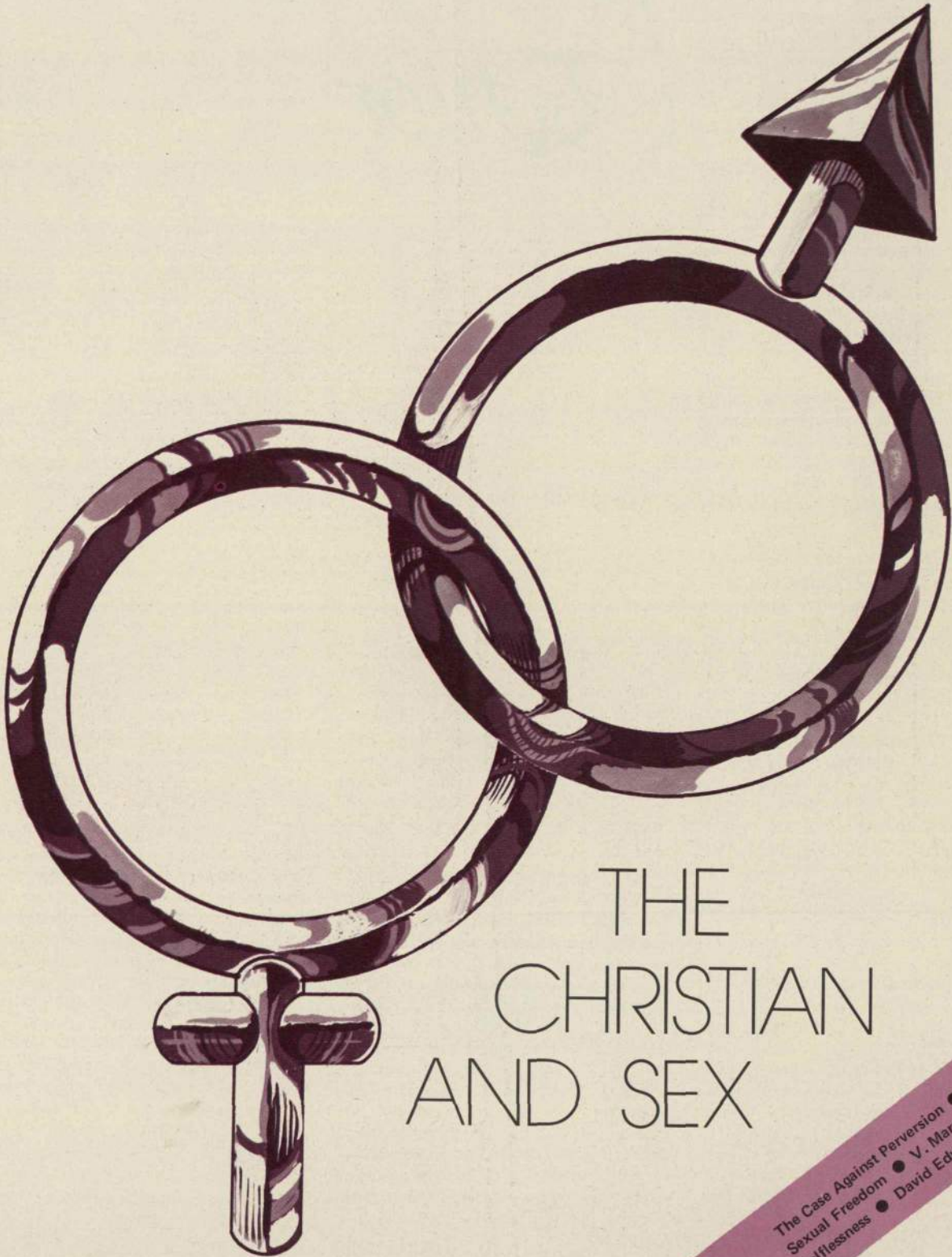




new wine

JUNE 1975

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH



THE CHRISTIAN AND SEX

The Case Against Perversion • Basham • 13
Sexual Freedom • V. Mary Stewart • 19
Selflessness • David Edwards • 23

I thoroughly enjoyed Dean Merrill's article, "Beyond Cheerleading" in the March issue of *New Wine*, and was blessed by the analogy between coaches and cheerleaders and Christian leadership. In my opinion, however, perhaps the greatest differentiation between coaches and cheerleaders was omitted. Coaches can successfully direct their players to victory because they were once players themselves. Cheerleaders never were active participants. Any empathy they may have for the players arises from their role as spectators. Coaches, on the other hand, were once "warriors" battling the "enemy" through all his wiles. Their "battle strategies" therefore work because they know what to expect. They rise up through the ranks of the players and assume the role of leadership because they have proven themselves to be among the best players. They have personal experience in physical contact with the "enemy."

The qualified (and successful) Christian leader therefore must be one who has had the personal experience necessary to make him familiar with the "game plans" of the enemy, so he may prepare his players for the game. Only then will he be able to successfully coach his team into overcoming the adversary and scoring a victory for the Lord.

Mary E. Bradley
Greenwood, Miss.

HOMOSEXUALITY LIVE ISSUE

Homosexuality is to be a very live issue this June as the Pacific Northwest, the Cal-Nevada, and Texas conferences of our denomination hold their sessions.

Bob Sutton's article on this topic seemed to me to be especially commendable. I have my husband-pastor's sanction and a clear go-ahead from the Lord to mail copies to key persons involved. And just think — they'll get the whole magazine!

Thank you for continuing to separate truth from error.

Mrs. Fred A. Rarden
Snohomish, Wa.

CHARISMATIC MONOPOLY?

I especially like it when *New Wine* publishes articles by those outside the charismatic renewal, as it reminds those of us inside that we have no monopoly on the truth. Also, I think your willingness to print critical letters is healthy and should be continued.

Richard Martin
Madison, Wis.

Letters to Editor

The March issue of *New Wine* was just received. I cannot approve it because you obviously are promoting the charismatic movement.

You have an article warning readers about the occult, and I do the same. But you do not recognize the relationship between the occult and the present-day charismatic movement.

Bolton Davidheiser
La Mirada, Cal.

"HOLINESS" CLARIFIED

I really appreciated the March 1975 issue on "Holiness," especially the article by Derek Prince and the Bible Study. These have clarified the subject immensely for me.

Roberta Prowdley
Lansing, Mich.

PRIDEFUL DECEPTION

February's issue concerning deception was very good, but little was said about the deception that springs up in our midst. *Spiritual pride* (in my opinion) is one of the greatest hindrances in Christ's Body today. "Spirituality," or the attempt of acting or making oneself to appear spiritual, has a much greater hold than we care to admit! It affects pastors, elders, teachers, indeed everyone from highest to lowest. The problem is, it's the hardest deception to discern, both in ourselves and in others.

Peter Moothart
Wenatchee, Wash.

May we, as a community of believers, commendably express confirming confidence in *New Wine* ministries and their constructively renouncing, forsaking, and/or omitting old, traditional, speculative, eschatological doctrine. After all, Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." That doesn't sound very future, and it was not.

To us, doctrine — true, new covenant doctrine — is practical and is, in all general terms, for the "now." It is our feeling that those who teach and preach a future kingdom at the expense of the practical, scriptural present blessings, benefits, and duties throw themselves open for many a hurtful and destructive eschatological error. Why live in the speculative when Christ has provided so much that we can take a hold of with both hands now? Hence, our appreciation for *New Wine*.

Harold and Mary Fuqua
Billings, Montana

THE RIGHT EMPHASIS

Keep the balanced approach. I've come out of a legalistic church and the balance you've displayed is refreshing.

Charles R. Cary
Albany, Ga.

I enjoy the emphasis you place on discipleship, as this is bringing about the forming of Christ in us.

WCH

A KICK IN THE PANTS

My wife and I look forward and enjoy *New Wine* as a real source of spiritual food. So many Christian magazines tend to pamper their readers. They don't get down to the readers' problems as a Christian. It's great to feel uplifted and content with ourselves, to talk about other people's failures, weaknesses, etc. — but don't get near me! There are too many "devoted" Christians who are immature and who have hangups. We need to stop pretending that Christians don't have any problems and accept some teaching and constructive criticism. Sometimes what we need is a good kick in the pants. That's why I enjoy *New Wine* — it's a kick in the pants!

Mark B. Malmin
New York, N.Y.

Editorial

This issue of *New Wine* deals with one of the most requested subjects we have ever had. At the same time it is also one of the most controversial. It is a key area of our lives that God's people have too long been hesitant to discuss candidly and freely.

In this issue the authors have expressed their own convictions about proper understanding of sexual relationships. We must be careful as we apply this teaching not to draw up lists of do's and don't's for sexual conduct. Our effort has always been to teach *principles* of the Kingdom of God and leave the responsibility of finding release in God for the proper conduct in the hands of the individual. In our efforts to arrive at "truth" in this matter it is very easy for us to become legalistic and rigid in our understanding, or to put others (including our mates) in bondage with our convictions. In doing so we miss the fact that God is seeking to teach us to lay down our lives for one another.

Sex was designed by God to be an expression of giving one to another, of laying down our wants and desires for our partner's well-being. Too often, however, it becomes a matter of *getting* satisfaction and enjoyment rather than seeking to lay down our lives for the good of our partner. This is a basic perversion of what God intended. Most sexual hang-ups can usually be healed when a man and wife begin to understand this simple principle of laying down their lives and begin to see their role in sex as one of giving and ministering one to the other.

More than mechanics and technique are involved; love, an open flowing relationship, honest communication, gentleness, patience and understanding are the keys to a fulfilling sexual relationship in marriage.



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New Wine is published monthly, except combined July/August issue, by Christian Growth Ministries, 264 S.W. 31st St., Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315. Second class postage paid at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and at additional mailing offices.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: *New Wine* is a non-subscription magazine supported by the contributions of its readers. Single copies and back issues (except December issues): 50 cents each. Bulk prices for regular issues (Minimum order of 6) 6-24, 40 cents each; 25-49, 35 cents each; 50-99, 30 cents each; 100 or more, 25 cents each. Foreign contributions, except Canada, should be made by International Money Order.

Material submitted for publication should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope if return of manuscript is desired. All material becomes the property of *New Wine* when published.

The views expressed in *New Wine* are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Editors or Directors.

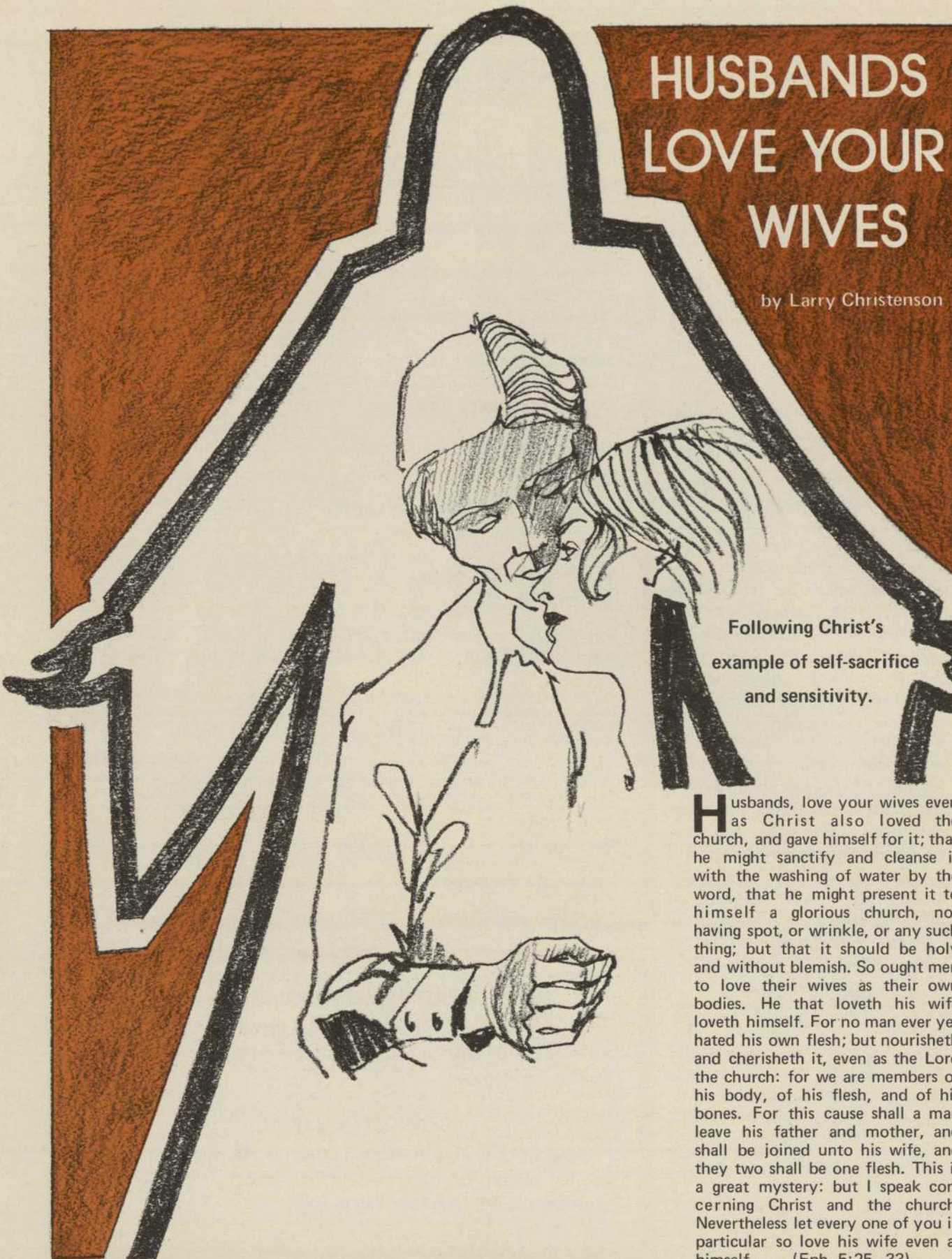
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HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIVES

by Larry Christenson

Following Christ's
example of self-sacrifice
and sensitivity.

Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself. . . (Eph. 5:25-33).

Sitting in my study one day reading this text I suddenly saw something that lifted me right off the chair. "Husbands, love your wives *as Christ loved the church* . . ." That's the taproot of God's order for the family! The key to a family's life is the love that the husband has for his wife, because the husband's love is patterned after the love that Jesus has for His Church. And Christ's love for His Church is its very life!

This led to a very simple question: "How does Christ love His Church?" If I could find the answer to this question then I would also have an answer to the question: "How does a husband love his wife?"

"Love," as we are using it, is not simply a feeling within ourselves, but rather, something that transmits itself into specific action. Thus we must ask, "In what specific way does Christ *manifest* His love and make it concrete and practical?" I believe we will find some answers as we consider the various roles in which Christ relates to His Church and apply these roles to the husband/wife relationship.

THE HUSBAND AS LOVER

The first role in which Christ manifests His love toward His Church is as a *lover* or *bridegroom*. Commitment is the key to this relationship. Jesus doesn't simply love the Church because the Church is so lovable. He loves the Church because He has set His *will* to love the Church.

Paul Venghese, a bishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church, has pointed out that our romantic notion of love by which a man and woman are supposedly attracted, fall in love, and live happily ever after does not come from the Bible, but from the French troubadours of the 11th century. This view of love is inadequate; it goes on feeling instead of commitment. There is nothing wrong with feelings or "falling in love," but when love sinks its root structure down into the subsoil of the will, it gains a strength and stability. There will be emotions, feelings, and desires, but they won't be subject to the mood of the moment.

There are many times when we don't feel like loving, but we can set our will to do so, nevertheless.

Once on a TV talk show, the Italian movie actor, Ricardo Montalban was confronted with the challenge: "We know Latins are great lovers, and you have a reputation as a great screen lover. Now, tell us, what makes a great lover?"

The commentator perhaps expected some ribald comment, but Montalban answered, "A great lover is someone who can satisfy one woman all her life long, and be satisfied by one woman all his life long. A great lover is not someone who goes from woman to woman. Any dog can do that."

That's the love that Christ has for His Church. It is a mystical concept, and yet it is that basic relationship of total, unqualified commitment.

Ephesians 5:28 shows us in a practical way how the husband is to love his wife. The scripture says that a man should love his wife as his own body and that he who loves his wife loves himself. How does a man love his own body? One way is that he is *careful for its needs*. He feeds and clothes his body, and he is sensitive to how his body functions. He wouldn't go outside in below-zero weather with only a T-shirt. Likewise, if a husband is to care for the needs of his wife, as he cares for his own body's needs, he must become sensitive to what those needs are. He must become as sensitive to the feminine mystique as he is to the senses of his own body.

There is the story of an old Norwegian farmer who had been married twenty-five years. In the morning he would go out and do three or four hours of chores before coming in for breakfast. One morning he returned from his chores to discover that his

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wife had not prepared breakfast. When he went to question his wife about the matter, he found her crying.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, I just got to thinking, Hans, you never tell me that you love me. Twenty-five years we've been married, and you never tell me that you love me!"

He responded, "Look woman, I married you twenty-five years ago and I told you then that I loved you, and if anything changes I'll let you know!"

That may have been enough for him, but it wasn't enough for his wife — she needed to be told that he loved her. A man and woman have different needs. (I'll never understand why a woman goes into happy orbit when you bring her flowers! There's just something about flowers and women that go together!)

Secondly, a man is sensitive to the *hurts* of his body, and a husband also needs to be sensitive to his wife's hurts. That means that he doesn't come home from work, flop down in front of the television and tune out the family. He cannot become sensitive to the things that are hurting in his wife's life unless he is willing to listen to her and share in her experiences of the day.

God is aware of the needs of the wife, and he is aware of the needs of the husband. His very purpose in bringing together a man and woman is that they might complement and complete one another. One of the needs of a wife is to realize how she completes her husband and how he completes her. This applies to many different aspects of their relationship.

One aspect is the sexual relationship of marriage. This relationship is meant to be one in which there is the deepest kind of giving between the man and the woman. One of the needs that a woman has is to give herself to him and have him give himself to her. This deep giving of oneself reflects the giving of Christ for His Bride, the Church.

Satan hates sex. He hates sex because he sees that it is something that God has created as a great gift for man and woman to enjoy within the

circle of marriage. That is why he does everything he can to get that gift operating outside the confines of marriage — in adultery, free love, perversion, lust, etc. Whenever a man and woman come together in marriage Satan trembles because it is a symbolic reminder to him of the love that Christ has for His Church, which spells his downfall.

THE HUSBAND AS SAVIOR

The second role in which Christ relates to His Church is that of *Savior*. Ephesians 5:25 says that a husband is to love his wife "as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." He is Savior of the Church and that pattern is repeated in the husband/wife relationship. As savior, the husband demonstrates his love in that he sacrifices for her.

Some of the notions of free love that are abroad in our culture today suggest that this is the love that really liberates: to love with no ties, no commitment to marriage. Actually, that is the most conservative, selfish kind of love one could imagine! It is a love that wants to give nothing. It will not risk a single thing. The most daring kind of love is the love that commits itself totally to marriage.

There are four words in the language of the New Testament for love. There is the word *storgé* which is the affection within a family and is expressed primarily within the family setting. That word is seldom used in the New Testament. Then there is the word *eros* from which we get our word "erotic." That is the kind of love we refer to when we speak of "falling in love." It is strong, passionate feeling between a man and a woman. This word isn't used in the New Testament, but it is in the Greek language. The next word is *phileo* from which we get such words as "philosophy" and "philanthropy," meaning the love of friendship and common interests. It is used sparingly in the New Testament. Finally, we have the word *agape*, which is the love of John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 13, and Ephesians 5:25 — "Husbands, love your wives . . ." It is

the love that causes one to sacrifice himself, to give himself up. All four types of love are demonstrated in the relationship between a husband and wife, but the love that undergirds and supports the others is *agape*.

What does it mean to "give oneself up for something?" Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Luke 9:23). This is the principle of discipleship. A husband must sacrifice his rights as an individual in order to be a disciple to Christ. He says, "I have no rights, I give myself up the way Jesus gave himself up." Jesus had a right as a Jew living in that society to a fair trial, but He gave that right up. He had a right to call legions of angels to His defense, but He gave up His right. He gave up His rights and it was out of that surrender, that deep way of the cross, that God was able to establish His authority.

After the crucifixion Jesus said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth" (Matt. 28:18). After the cross Jesus was given authority, and after a husband has entered into the way of the cross, God can entrust him with the authority to rule over his family. It is only after he has learned something of the way God deals with the ego, the self, that he is able to help his wife and family into the ways of God.

There is a beautiful type of this in the Old Testament in the prophecy of Hosea. Hosea married a woman who was an adulteress. In the third chapter, the word of God comes to Hosea, "Go . . . love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress" (v. 1). He went down and found her being sold in the slave market for about the price of a common slave; he bought her back for fifteen shekels and a homer and a half of barley. And he brought her back home. Can you see the neighbors there in Samaria? "Here's that son of a priest, Hosea, coming home in the middle of the day from the slave market with that adulterous wife!"

"Why doesn't he have her stoned as the Law of Moses says!"

"Look at him, he's taking her back.

She'll just run off again; that's what she'll do!"

Hosea had to suffer humiliation; he had to give up his pride. And when he did that he was able to speak with authority: "Now you must live as many days and not play the harlot." And so far as the record shows, Gomer never left him again.

That is the husband in the role of savior, loving his wife, going the way of the cross, allowing God to deal with his own self-life so that he can bring to his family the help, the strength and the authority which it needs.

THE HUSBAND AS SANCTIFIER

The third role in which Christ relates to His Church is that of *Sanctifier*. When I first compared this aspect of Christ's relationship with the Church to the husband/wife relationship, I hesitated because I had always thought that sanctification was the job of the Holy Spirit alone. Then I read the scripture again: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it, *that he might sanctify it*. . ." The parallel runs straight through the verse. It means that the husband helps his wife to become what God wants her to become.

First, he helps her to become *holy*. He has a concern for her spiritual welfare. He is fundamentally concerned that his wife have opportunities to grow and develop in faith so that she becomes all that God wants her to become. He intercedes for her, blesses her, and provides time for her to be alone with God.

Secondly, a husband is concerned that his wife becomes *wholly* the Lord's; that is, that she becomes a fully-developed person. I don't want my wife to become like some other wife; I want her to become the woman that God created her to be — intellectually, emotionally, culturally, sexually, domestically, and in every other way. When we realize that God has entrusted our wives to our care that they might become all that He wants them to become, we have discovered our calling as husbands.

THE HUSBAND AS LORD

The word "lord" comes from a feudal setting in which there existed a relationship between the lord and the people who worked his land. The people committed themselves to him in return for his protection. Whenever invaders attacked, the people would come inside the lord's castle walls for protection.

As Lord, Christ guards His Church from attack. Likewise, a husband is responsible to guard and protect his wife. One of the basic things he protects her from is economic want. He is responsible to see that she, in committing herself to him, is set free from basic anxieties in this area.

In our culture this raises the question of working wives. Without going into all the "ins and outs" of this question, we can establish a basic principle. In considering this question, the husband and wife should ask themselves, "Is the job that the wife might take something which would fundamentally build up the *quality* of the family life (not simply raise the standard of living)? Is it going to minister to the well-being of our family and to our calling under God?" Sometimes we may have to lower our standard of living in order to raise our standard of life. Whether the wife works or not, the fundamental responsibility in providing for the family still rests upon the husband.

Another area in which a husband protects his wife is very obviously the physical realm. He guards her against physical attack. Every culture has written into its folkways protection for its womenfolk.

He also protects his wife from emotional attack. A wife is meant to live behind the protective shield of her husband in relationships outward to the community and also within the family. Especially where a child would mount an emotional attack against the mother, the father has to deal with it decisively. A mother should never have to battle for the respect of her children.

This came home vividly to me once when I was six or seven years old. I

was arguing with my mother about something, and as she went out of the dining room towards the kitchen I yelled after her, "You're a big dummy." In the meantime, my father had entered the dining room from the other door. I don't think I ever saw him move so fast! He came across to where I was standing, took me by the shirt front and lifted me right off the floor. "Who's a dummy?" he asked. "I'm a dummy, I'm a dummy, I'm a dummy!" I blubbered. I learned something that day: I learned that I could not abuse my mother without incurring the wrath of my father. He taught me more respect for womanhood in those three minutes than I could have learned through dozens of books and lectures. He protected my mother in that he constantly gave us children the impression of a relationship of total respect, regard and esteem.

One day I was talking with my wife about the protection that a husband provides, and I asked her what she considered to be some of the ways in which a husband protects his wife. She came up with something I never would have thought of, but which is right on target. She said that a husband protects his wife in that sometimes he says "No" to her. He recognizes when she is extending herself too far, getting involved in more things than she ought to be for her own well-being. He says, "No, you can't do that." That is a protection that a wife needs because by nature she is one who wants to give.

Finally, a husband protects his wife from spiritual attack. It is because of a woman's openness to spiritual attack that God has given the whole gift of covering so that she will not have her unique gifts subject to misuse, to deception, etc. We have, in our congregation, for instance, had many words of prophecy come through women. Also, some of the really creative thrusts that God has given us have come from the women. These have brought the greatest blessing when the woman has submitted it to her husband, and the husband has submitted it to the council of elders who in turn have submitted it to the

entire congregation. In this way the woman is protected from defending what the Lord has shown her. Her husband provides the spiritual covering.

THE HUSBAND AS HEAD

Let's look finally at the husband's role as *head*. As Christ is head of the Church, so the husband is head of his wife and family. As head he directs his wife by giving her intelligent leadership. Whenever the word "headship" is mentioned, our natural reason associates it with such words as "authority," "rule," "boss," "laying-down-the-law," etc. However, the first word for the head of the house is not authority, but submission — submission to his head, who is Christ. "The head of every man is Christ" (1 Cor. 11:3). One who is not under authority himself is not able to be a head to his wife. In other words, you can't be a man as far as God is concerned unless you are under the headship of Christ. Only as a husband lives under the headship of Christ is he able to channel into the family the mind and authority of Christ.

I once coached a football team and early in the season I noticed something happening out on the field. There seemed to be a confusion that was taking place as the men would walk up to the line and run their plays. The word began to drift back to me in practice that everybody was offering his opinion in the huddle as to what play they should run. At that point I established headship: I told them that there was to be only one voice in the huddle — the voice of the quarterback. He was the man I was working with and he was to call the plays. If anyone else talked in the huddle the quarterback had authority to send him out of the game. The next game we ran the kickoff back to about the 20-yard-line. In the huddle the quarterback called the play, and it was the right play. He looked around and said, "Any objections?" No one said a word and they went for a touchdown.

In this context we see that headship functions simply to get a job done. No

(Continued on page 12)



The last in a series of three articles on "Personal Relationships."

RECEIVING AND GIVING CORRECTION

by John Poole

God's method
of adjusting and
strengthening
relationships in the Body.

As God demonstrates His power throughout the earth in renewal and revival, we see a central part of His purpose emerging in the term "relationship." God is gathering together a people who are not only rooted and established in relationship to Him, but properly related to each other in the Body of Christ.

In order to clearly understand God's purpose in relationship and the role it plays in bringing us to maturity in

Christ, we want to retrace the progression of teaching through our first two articles as it leads into our eventual goal — *being adjusted by one another*.

In Galatians 1:3 we saw that in the purpose of God, Jesus died to save us from our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil age. In Colossians 1:13, we saw that God has accomplished this, delivering us out of the domain of darkness and transferring us into the Kingdom of His dear Son. But the problem that faces us in Romans 12:1,2 is that even though we have been delivered, we must not allow the influence of that from which we have been delivered to press us into its mold, but rather be conformed to the image of Christ. Now, the point to be emphasized is that God has designed us as new creation people to be incapable of escaping the influences of this present world *alone*. That is why God has called forth a many-membered Body, not just a group of individuals gathered in the same place at the same time, but rather, *a people* who are being knit together by the Holy Spirit.

In recognizing our need for a body of people who can help us to grow up in the Lord, we must face the fact that we have overestimated the power of the will of a regenerate person. First of all, we have taken for granted that a regenerate man possesses in some intuitive sense, all the knowledge that he needs to grow up and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. But we are discovering that just because you are born again does not mean that you automatically know what you are to do as a Christian.

Our second mistake in overestimating the power of the will of a regenerate person is taking for granted that because a person *knows* he will *do*; that because a person has knowledge, he will act on it. Over and over again, I discover in my life as an individual Christian, that no matter how much I know and how badly I may want to walk in all that I know, I cannot trust myself to actually do it. This is the basis for our need for the Body and for relationship. We need to

be related to people who will help us, either by encouragement or adjustment, to face up to the fact that we only possess what we actually walk in day by day.

Today we are very much in danger of becoming the most overinformed, underactivated generation of Christians that has ever been. Because of the available means of communication — books, tapes, television series, radio programs — there is more information available to people than ever before in history. The subtle danger is to think that because we have the knowledge, that we possess the truth, when we really don't.

What we eventually realize is that in order to start to *walk* in what we know, we have to somehow be related to people who will confront us with the gap between our information and our walk. God wants to bring us into this realm of fellowship. It is essential and necessary for each of us. We need to be in a relationship with people where we can receive the specific encouragement and adjustment we need to continue on as believers. That only comes in a relationship where you truly know people, and you know how to encourage them when they are weak or downhearted or depressed.

THE NEED FOR ADJUSTMENT

Now, the specific area that we want to deal with in this article is a rather touchy and difficult area, yet an essential one for each of us in the fulfillment of God's purpose for the Body. It is the whole matter of learning how to admonish or adjust one another in the Lord. It is a hard thing to admit that I need the Holy Spirit working through other people to help me arrive at what God wants me to be. Deep inside, I really want to think that "me and Jesus" can really make it on our own, and that given enough time, I could grow spiritually by myself. But sooner or later, each of us must come to the end of ourselves. Norman Grubb says that you really don't start to make spiritual progress until you have become more miserable as a Christian than you were as an

unbeliever. That kind of pressure causes us to examine ourselves and admit our need for help and correction.

Some time ago, I read a little article published in *World Vision Magazine* about a renewal of the Holy Spirit that has been going on in East Africa for some thirty-seven years, and what struck me was the permanence and staying power of this particular move of God. In this article, eight reasons were outlined as to why the writer felt that this visitation of the Spirit had been so powerful and so long-lasting. Two of those reasons were especially interesting to me, and I want to share them as an introduction to what I want to give from the Scriptures. According to the writer, who has observed the renewal first hand, one of the first reasons the renewal has gone on for thirty-seven years is that "... there has been a *self-imposed* ruthlessness with any attitudes, habits, and actions that are not thoroughly Christian." But the follow-up to that point is: "There is a tremendous honesty linked with love between each person and his neighbor." Here are the two things: (1) an honesty and a ruthlessness with yourself: "I'm going to stop babying myself and start dealing honestly with myself," and (2) a relationship of honesty linked with love between people and their neighbor. With that background, let's turn to the book of Proverbs and see what the Scriptures say about the life that comes from a relationship with *other Christians in which there is the giving and receiving of admonishment, reproof, correction, and adjustment*.

Proverbs 10:17: "He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth." Before we go any further, let's settle one primary issue. The Word of God is accurate and trustworthy. What it says will happen. When God says, "He who forsakes reproof goes astray," that is exactly what it means — not just sometimes, but *all* the time. When anyone forsakes reproof, he will go astray!

Proverbs 12:1: "Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish

[stupid].” Now, I didn’t say that — Solomon did. He who hates reproof is stupid. Proverbs 13:10: “Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.” In other words, presuming that I don’t need reproof only causes me to start striving with people. But if I accept reproof, then I get wisdom. Proverbs 13:18: “. . . he that regardeth reproof shall be honored”; Proverbs 15:5: “. . . he that regardeth reproof is prudent”; 15:10: “. . . he that hateth reproof shall die”; 15:31 (NAS): “he whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise”; 15:32 (NAS) “he who listens to reproof acquires understanding”; Proverbs 19:20 (NAS): “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.”

Now I haven’t extracted one questionable scripture and given it some questionable interpretation. It is obvious that the Scriptures give abundant evidence that receiving correction and reproof is essential to our maturing in Jesus Christ. The matter of allowing ourselves to be adjusted by fellow believers and to have the truth spoken in love to us becomes essential for our growth and development. If you forsake it, you go astray; if you hate it, you are stupid; if you presume you don’t need it, you will end up in strife; if you hate it, you will die. But if you receive it, there will be wisdom and honor; you will be prudent, you will come into knowledge, and you will be on the path of life. That is the kind of choice we face.

There are many other scriptures on this topic, and here is one that takes a lot of faith to believe. Proverbs 27:5,6: “Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” I thank the Lord from the depths of my heart for friends who are faithful enough to wound me when I need it. I’m not saying that it’s easy or that I like it; it’s a hard thing to realize that the wounds of a friend are faithful. It is hard to realize that the people you need the most are not the ones that continually smother you with kisses, but the ones that tell you

the truth. Now, you don’t need a whole lot of friends like that, but you do need some. There are some people that God puts in the Body to relate you to that are there for encouragement. Others God relates you to are there to wound you faithfully, and God knows exactly who to pick to do it. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

SHARPENING EACH OTHER

Look also at Proverbs 27:17 (NAS): “Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” That is a beautiful scripture. It is God’s intent that in our relationships with each other, we sharpen each other. There is a prophecy that says, “Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument . . .” (Is. 41:15). God’s desire is for people to sharpen each other. Unfortunately, instead of iron sharpening iron, our relationships for the most part have been more like jello sharpening jello. “Thank you for your message, brother. Oh, your prophecy was just wonderful. It’s so nice to love each other.” Loving relationships are nice, but we aren’t sharpened by them until we move into a measure of honesty in our relationships.

I’ll tell you, it was a scary thing the first time I sat down with my brethren in Philadelphia and said, “Listen — when we come together, I expect there to be enough liberty and freedom among us that when a brother or elder gives a prophetic word that is off, or a guy gets to preaching, and misses the mark, that he should hear about it. I expect us to be able to minister to one another in such a way that we will sharpen one another, that there will be a freedom in the communication of what is essential to the sharpening of our ministries and our lives.” God’s purpose is that we be like iron sharpening iron.

Psalms 141:3,4 (NAS) is one of David’s prayers: “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice deeds of wickedness with men who do iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies.” He is praying that God

would help him with his mouth and with his heart. Then comes verse 5: “Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me.” How many of *you* have ever prayed that? This must have been one of David’s really spiritual times — he must have really been deep on this occasion. “Let the righteous smite me in kindness [the margin says ‘lovingly’]. It is oil upon the head; do not let my head refuse it . . .” David knew that our trouble in accepting or rejecting reproof is right here in the head. We can almost hear David reasoning with himself: “If I will accept reproof, it is like oil upon my head. Now Lord, don’t let my head refuse it. Don’t let me start thinking, ‘I wonder if this brother really loves me or if he is walking in what he’s telling me about.’” Once we start thinking about it, we can find some reason to reject reproof. “His family’s not in order; his kids are rascals; I’m not sure he pays his tithes.” We can find some excuse for not submitting to it. David was saying, “Lord, don’t let me start thinking about it; don’t let my head refuse it.”

The statement in Proverbs 17:10 (NAS) is: “A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.” God says that if you can come to a place of understanding, you can learn more with one rebuke than with one hundred blows of chastening, and I want to be a candidate for that. Even though it is often painful and uncomfortable to be reproved, it is even more painful to be chastened. I think we all want to reach that point of understanding where we willingly accept correction, receiving it as God’s method of sharpening us for His purposes.

I want to tell you something: the eyes of all the religious world are now on the Charismatic Movement, and they are not just looking for a recovery of signs and wonders. They are looking to see if there can be produced in this company, a disciplined, mature people who walk day by day in the light of the Lord, loving one another, rebuking and reproving one another in order to grow up into

full knowledge of the Son of God. And they have every right to expect this to come, if we truly have what we say we have. They will not be impressed forever with the spontaneity of our joy or our enthusiasm. Even though it is impressive, they need to know that balancing the enthusiasm are deep commitments of individuals to individuals. They need to see communities and fellowships growing in such a way as to produce, by the power of the Holy Spirit, solid, grounded, established men and women who are ready to face whatever world situation confronts them.

GIVING REPROOF: SIX SUGGESTIONS

I have tried to show you scriptural reasons why you should be open to receiving reproof. Now I would like to close by giving some counsel and advice on how to *give* reproof, because frequently this whole matter has previously been shut off to many because people have not known how to give reproof. A man came up to me after I had given a message similar to this and said, "I've been waiting to hear a message like that for ten years. There are a few people in this church that I've had on my heart for ten years, and I thank you, brother, that you have just released me to straighten them out!" (And usually the first one on the list is the pastor.)

First of all, if Christians are to be involved in giving reproof, *you must not give until you are willing to receive!* If you are not willing to receive, you are not a qualified person to give. Now, *don't take that lightly.* Before you start giving, do some receiving to see if you can take it. Have a few trial runs. Let the Lord turn some folks loose on you to reprove *you* for awhile. He will! See if you can be a receiver. Then, if you find you can receive, you are ready to do some giving.

The second thing about giving reproof is that very often you will see in others things that are a reflection of yourself. Before you go to take the speck out of your brother's eye, make

sure you have dealt with the log in your own eye. People ask, "Did Jesus have a sense of humor?" If ever there was a passage filled with humor it is this one: the ridiculousness of a guy going over to help his brother with a tiny little speck, while a board is sticking out of his own eye. Remember that very often you are sensitive to what you see in other people simply because it is right there in you. Before you do anything, make sure you have dealt with your own problem in that area.

One of the ways God uses other people is to help us to see in *them* the things that He wants to deal with in *us*. I have heard David Edwards, one of our dear friends, say over and over again, that there was a reason why Jacob went down to Laban's house. There was only one person in the world, David says, that could out-Jacob Jacob, and that was Laban. Jacob, a deceiver and a crook, ran into a character who out-crooked him all the way around. Jacob *met* Jacob in Laban, and he saw himself for what he was.

Third, Proverbs 26:17 is a scripture that merits our consideration, but I want to preface it with this statement: Only deal in the area of reproof with people to whom God has related you. It is not some kind of general ministry where you walk through the entire Body of Christ reproving people.

"What's your ministry, brother?"

"Oh, I'm a reprover. Anybody around here need help? Your dress is too short. You there, your hair is too long . . . just functioning in my ministry."

Proverbs 26:17 (NAS) says: "Like one who takes the dog by the ears is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him." In other words, keep your nose out of what isn't your business. One of the things that is going to make people hungry to be related is when they see that in relationship, you are sharpened in a way that you are not sharpened when you are not related. If you are not related and joined by God to other members of the Body of Christ in some specific way, then you miss the

opportunity of being sharpened.

Number four is in Ephesians 4:15: ". . . speaking the truth in love." *All reproof must be in love.* Nothing is accomplished without it. Reproof will never produce what it is intended to unless it is in love. Let me also emphasize that the heavier the area of reproof, the more certain you must be that its intensity is matched by the depth of your love for that individual. Don't try to put a heavy reproof on someone that you have not proven that you love. I know without question that I could go to certain brothers in our assembly and lay on them whatever was necessary, no matter how heavy. They know that I love them by my response to them when they were in trouble, because when they needed me I was there, even if it was three or four in the morning. Because they know that I love them, I can lay a word on them. But if you try that with someone that you haven't demonstrated your love for, you will probably get a smack in the nose. At best, it won't profit. Make sure that the scale is balanced: speak the truth in love. That is why David said, "Let the righteous reprove me lovingly." Reproof is hard enough to take — it will never be received if it's not in love.

Number five: Learn how to reprove in wisdom. Proverbs 25:12 (NAS) says, "Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear." A person can hear the same thing from two different people and be open to receive it from one and not from the other, because a wise reprover will know how to correct. Paul was a wise reprover. Did you ever notice how Paul set people up to be reprov'd? He was a master at it. When he wrote his letter to reprove the Corinthians, he didn't say: "Dear Corinthians, it has been reported to me that you are in a backslidden state. You are lukewarm, and Revelation says that lukewarm Christians will be spewed out of God's mouth." Instead, Paul wrote: "Oh Corinthians, there's no church like you. You don't come behind in any gift. All the gifts are functioning in

your church. Every time I think of you, I get blessed . . ." And *then* he let them have it.

The goal of a wise reprover should be to counsel in a way that brings strength and help. The combination of a wise reprover and a listening ear produces growth. Proverbs 12:18 (NAS) says, "There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Have you ever been reproved by a sword carrier? "You ought to get your life straightened out!" Learn how to be a wise reprover, because the tongue of the wise brings healing, but rash words are like the thrust of a sword.

Number six: One last thing — *be patient!* Proverbs 28:23 (NAS) says this: "He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue." Now the key word in that whole sentence is "afterward." Be ready for the fact that what you have to say may not be immediately received and welcomed. But an honest approach to individuals will afterward be more appreciated than flattery with the tongue.

HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIVES

(continued from page 7)

coach would say that the quarterback is better than the end or more important than the halfback. All eleven men on the team are important. The quarterback simply has the *function* of headship in order that the team can move as a single unit.

One of the problems with the average family today is that there are too many captains! Everybody is pointing in a different direction. The wife has her idea, the kids have theirs, the husband has his idea, and they are all trying to run the ship in their own power and authority.

Christ chose to accomplish His will in the family through the principle of headship. He could have done it with a celestial loud speaker. "All right down there at 1603 W. 7th Street. Time for morning devotions! Get up! Everybody on the ball!" But He has chosen to do it through headship. At 7:00 a.m. the husband rings the gong. "Time for morning devotions." That is just as much the mind and the will of

God's purpose and desire is not just to have a people who enjoy themselves (though that is also important to Him), but to have a people who together are growing up into the fullness of Christ. I submit to you, as I close this series, that God wants to join you to people who can be His means of helping you come to maturity. I know that many of you shy away from that because of prior hurts and wounds. But I have discovered that God has so constructed us spiritually, that in spite of all that we may have experienced in times past, there is still something within us that cries out for the kind of relationship in which we can be specifically encouraged and specifically adjusted. On several occasions, in our own experience of fellowship, as we have muddled our way through some relationships, tremendous hurts were placed on members of my own family, sometimes to the extent that I have said to myself, "Well, I doubt if my wife will ever again open herself up to anybody." Yet invariably, after a time of healing, she begins again, because all

God for that family as if it came from the heavenly loud speaker. God has simply chosen to channel it through this principle of headship.

The world's idea of submission equates headship with superiority and submission with inferiority. That may be true in the world. Jesus said that the Gentiles lord it over those that are under them, but He also said that it should not be so among Christians. As a matter of fact, among Christians it is going to be almost the other way around. "He who is great among you shall be the servant of all." That is the stance that the husband must take — not one of lording his authority over his family, but one of meekness and service.

The purpose of headship is to discover and express the will of God. It is not to inflict the will of the husband upon the family. If a husband is to speak for God, he first has to give up his own will. If he does that then the spirit in which he approaches his wife is altogether different. He approaches her not as someone he has

of us are created spiritually to live together in fellowship.

No matter what wound may be there, that cry in your heart to be related in this way is from God. He has made you to live together with the Body. More than just sharing some kind of superficial social relationship, God wants to bring us into a place where we are sharing our lives — a place where we are not just talking about the Bible or about what God is doing in the world today, but about what God is doing right here in our everyday lives. Unless we, as a corporate people, reach that point, we will never have attained to what God has destined us to be.

But it is my deep feeling that we are on the way. The bones are coming together. It doesn't take a large group of people to experience this type of fellowship. As a matter of fact, if you are a couple, all it takes to begin is just one other couple. And God can cause you to come into an encouraging, admonishing relationship where you grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. ♥

to convince or steamroll over in order to get his way. Instead, he realizes that if he is responsible to get the mind of God, then he needs to listen carefully to his wife, because God may use her as a channel of revelation.

Some people think that headship means the husband has the last word. The husband, however, doesn't *have* the last word; he simply *speaks* the last word. As head of the family, he is responsible before God to discern the will of God for the family, and when he has discerned it as best he is able (having listened carefully to his wife weighing her counsel, her fears and misgivings, her insight and judgment) then he *speaks* the last word. But it is *Christ* who *has* the last word, if that family is living in divine order. And a family in which Christ has the last word is a family in which there is a contented wife, blessed children, and a godly husband. ♥

This article is adapted from the author's forthcoming book, *Husbands, Love Your Wives*, to be published by Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

OUR PERMISSIVE SOCIETY

After watching a recent television talk show where leading motion picture personalities were describing the satisfactions to be derived from "living together without marriage," an elderly Christian sighed and observed, "At least in my day when people chose to live immoral lives, they didn't parade it before the world!"

To say we live in a society which is increasingly sexually permissive is about as controversial as saying that when the sun goes down it gets dark. Unrelenting demonic pressure to destroy the moral fabric of our society is obvious on every hand. The final goal of that trend would appear to be the eradication of all traditional standards of morality in favor of a blatant hedonism where "that which is right" shall be determined solely by "that which gives pleasure."

In the last decade sexual restraints which have protected our society for generations have been torn apart and tossed aside. Those of us regularly involved in ministering to troubled Christians listen to repeated confessions of marital infidelity, sadism, incest, voyeurism, and other perverted sexual activities that provide tragic testimony to the truth that the Body of Christ has not escaped the storm of satanic influences designed to obliterate every standard of personal holiness or purity. Here are some pertinent public examples of the trend:

— A leading denomination now ordains men into the ministry who are admittedly practicing homosexuals.

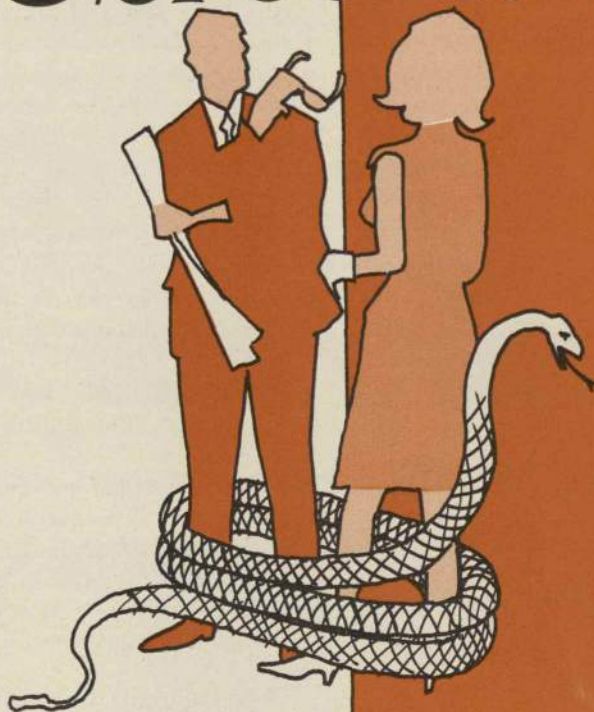
— A university class on "Marriage and Family Life" uses as one of its texts a book which describes "Eight Ways Adultery Can Enhance A Marriage."

— Homosexuals are now forming their own churches, pressing their claims for recognition through literature such as the book, *The Lord Is My Shepherd And He Knows I'm Gay*.

— It was recently made public that a pastor of a particular congregation had forced four of his female members to go to bed with him. According to the

NEW WINE

The Case Against Perversion



by Don Basham

An examination of sexual perversion in light of the Christian faith.

pastor, it was not adultery; they were "serving a prophet of God."

— Some "enlightened" pastors regularly counsel troubled couples in their parishes to experiment with group sex and wife swapping as valid forms of marital therapy.

It is in this context that we turn to the unpleasant task of this article; the examination of sexual perversion in light of the Christian faith. It may be helpful to begin by taking a look at the solid, wholesome attitude of Scripture in regard to sex.

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THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF SEX IN MARRIAGE

Sex was God's idea.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, *Be fruitful, and multiply*. . . (Gen. 1:27-28).

God made us sexual creatures and ordained that the earth should be populated through the sexual union of husband and wife. Therefore, it follows that He is pleased with His creation, pleased with the principle of sexual union in marriage and never intended His children to regard sex except in a wholesome way.

But what a far cry God's intentions are from our present reality! Most youngsters' initial sex information comes either from embarrassed parents who transmit feelings of guilt, or the crude, vulgar obscenities drawn or written on the walls of public rest-rooms.

A major problem then, in understanding that sex is a God-given, wholesome activity between husband and wife, has been the perverted picture most of us have gained through a social osmosis which leaves us feeling that sex is basically degenerate and unholy.

The Bible puts forth no such negative view. As Kenneth Taylor states in his Living Bible's introduction to the Song of Solomon:

If you ever had any doubts that God favored romantic (sexual) love, leave them here. Solomon's song is a joyful, passionate celebration of married bliss . . . a bit too explicit for some western readers perhaps . . . but a beautiful dialogue between two jubilant Asian lovers.

In addition to the passionate thralldom of the Song of Solomon is the practical, yet wise, discussion of the sexual relationship in marriage as outlined by Paul in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7.

2) Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

3) Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4) 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.

5) 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 (1 Cor. 7:2-5).

The subject of sex obviously occupies a vastly greater slice of

attention in our society today than is given to it in the Bible. Does this imply the Scriptures are "anti-sex"? Of course not.

As sparse as explicit sexual information seems to be in the Scriptures, the principles revealed in them form the basis of a well-adjusted sexual life in marriage. Paul's brief practical instructions in 1 Corinthians 7 (the only chapter in the entire New Testament explicitly dealing with sexual relationships in marriage) seem understated only in the light of today's superheated, overdrawn preoccupation with the whole subject.

Let us move on now to the more specific subject of this article.

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF SEX PERVERSION

The problem of sex perversion appears early in Scripture. In Genesis 13 we read how Lot separated himself from Abraham to dwell in Sodom. One verse in that chapter describes the wickedness of Sodom's inhabitants.

But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly (Gen. 13:13).

The nature of that wickedness is not spelled out until chapter 18. There God reveals his determination to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah "because their sin is very great" (18:20). The events which follow reveal the nature of Sodom's wickedness.

1) And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

2) And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

3) And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread and they did eat.

4) But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

5) And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, *Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.*

6) And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

7) And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

8) Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

9) And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.

10) But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

11) And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

12) And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

13) For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it (Gen. 19:1-13).

While undoubtedly the men of Sodom were wicked in many ways, it is significant that *the most graphic illustration the Lord could choose to show the extremity of their wickedness was sexual perversion.*

Even Lot recognized the abominable nature of the request of the homosexuals who besieged his house, seeking to rape the two angels God had sent to deliver him. In desperation he offered two of his own daughters to the men of Sodom, realizing that sexual immorality

between man and woman would be less offensive in the eyes of God than homosexuality.

The New Testament references to Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:1-8, Jude 7) confirm God's utter condemnation of this extreme form of wickedness. The very word "sodomy" was coined for the purpose of describing unnatural sex. Webster's dictionary defines sodomy as "carnal copulation with a member of the same sex or an animal: noncoital carnal copulation with a member of the opposite sex."

In addition to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah there are other scriptural denunciations of sexual perversion. In Romans 1 Paul states that even those outside the Christian faith are responsible to obey God's will as revealed in nature. The teaching is absolutely clear that there is a "divine law of naturalness" by which all men are to be judged regarding their sexual behavior.

18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19) Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20) For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

21) Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22) Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23) And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26) For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27) And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

28) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29) Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30) Backbiters, haters of God, despightful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31) Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32) Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (Rom. 1:18-32)

Verses 22-25 strongly suggest that perverted worship (idolatry) leads to sexual perversion, thus sexual perversion is seen as an expression of rebellion against God. According to Paul, that "truth of God" includes His divine purpose in maintaining the sanctity of both sexual identity and function. Thus, to replace natural sexual activity with unnatural is to "change the truth of God into a lie" (vs.25). The "unnatural" sexual activities identified in the passage include homosexuality (vs. 26) and sodomy (vs. 27). Verses 28 and 29 imply other, perhaps even more debased forms of perversion that unrestrained and sadistic imaginations might conjure up. God judges persons guilty of such practices as worthy of death (vs. 32).

The New Testament continues to pile up evidence against sexual perversion in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. There Paul condemns the incestuous relation-

ship between a man and his father's wife as a kind of immorality "not so much as named among the Gentiles."

Again in chapter 6 Paul warns that sexual deviates including "effeminate [homosexuals]" and "abusers of themselves with mankind [sodomites]" would be excluded from the Kingdom of God.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

In his second epistle, Peter, in warning the Church against false teachers, recounts the judgment of God against Sodom and Gomorrah, then forecasts His impending punishment of those that "walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise government," predicting that such persons "shall utterly perish in their own corruption" (vs. 10,12).

I am not unaware that, as we list the clear biblical injunctions against homosexuality, sodomy, and other sexual activity which the Bible refers to as "unnatural sex," that we are advocating a standard which part of the church today finds unacceptable.

Some current "religious" definitions of "love" completely reject these biblical injunctions and attempt to wrap the mantle of respectability around all kinds of sexual activity, no matter how perverse, provided they label them "a meaningful relationship between persons." Thus some churches are already recognizing marriages between men or between women.

Where, one wonders, will the trend toward making acceptable that which is perverse in God's eyes come to an end?

CAN THE MARRIAGE BED BE DEFILED?

Now we come to the most difficult

and sensitive portion of this article. To make observations which intrude into the privacy of sexual union in marriage, to attempt to influence — even in the most respectful way — that most intimate of all human relationships, is to invite if not guarantee criticism. We look to the Holy Spirit for insight and understanding!

To say that many Christian couples are facing real difficulty in the marriage bed is a gross understatement. Those of us regularly engaged in counseling and teaching on family life are acutely aware that problems of sexual adjustment between husbands and wives are both numerous and profound. Perhaps this is not surprising since no other human relationship offers greater potential for joy, fulfillment and satisfaction or, conversely, offers greater potential for shame, frustration and humiliation.

The limited scope of this article does not permit a complete discussion of sexual union in marriage. Our purpose is restricted to the discussion of the problem of perversion and the scriptural principles which may help those needing help with that problem.

Does the marriage bond erase all sexual taboos? Or, more bluntly, is oral sex in marriage approved by God?

Frankly, many marriage counselors answer this question with an unqualified yes. Their philosophy is, "Anything goes if you're married." Other counselors disagree. It is my conviction that no little part of the controversy can be traced to the currently blatant trend toward sexual permissiveness. The "anything goes" attitude of our society as a whole puts great pressure on Christian couples who are struggling to chart a satisfactory course through a troubled sea of conflicting sexual attitudes and practices. For earnest Christians seeking to know God's will, much of the controversy centers on a single verse of scripture:

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoredoms and adulterers God will judge (Heb. 13:4 KJV).

Scripture is subject to varying inter-

pretations and admittedly there are Christians who, interpreting this verse as automatically meaning "Anything goes in the marriage bed," follow their own desires into various forms of sexual activity beyond normal intercourse. We do not presume to judge them. However, an examination of *all* scriptures dealing with sexual activity would seem to prompt a reevaluation of that particular verse. In addition we must reckon with the real distress of many Christian wives and husbands who feel such a liberal interpretation of Hebrews 13:4 sanctions a form of unnatural sexual activity which embarrasses or shames them.

Does sodomy, which is clearly forbidden as "unnatural sex" outside marriage, become natural, right or permissible in marriage? Or, if sodomy is sinful, is oral/genital or anal/genital sex in marriage considered something other than sodomy? Is perversion outside marriage perversion inside marriage? The liberal interpretation of Hebrews 13:4 KJV would suggest there is no perversion in marriage.

But other translations of Hebrews 13:4 prove revealing. (*Italics ours*).

Let marriage be held in honor among all and *let the marriage bed be undefiled*, for fornicators and adulterers God will judge (New Am. Std.).

Marriage must be held in honor by all, and *the marriage relations kept sacred*. Persons who are sexually vicious and immoral God will punish (Williams).

Both honorable marriage and chastity should be respected by all of you. God Himself will judge those who traffic in the bodies of others or *defile the relationship of marriage* (Phillips).

These translations, in contrast to the more self-indulgent interpretation of Hebrews 13:4 in the Authorized version which insists that "nothing can defile the marriage bed," clearly imply that certain kinds of sexual activity *are* defiling to a marriage, and therefore the Christian should refrain from such sexual activity, lest his marriage be

dishonoured. In short, these translations of Hebrews 13:4 set forth a position diametrically opposite to the first point of view.

Frankly, I hold the second, more conservative point of view. I confess my position has been strongly influenced by seven years in the ministry of casting out evil spirits. Repeatedly, while ministering to Christian husbands and wives tormented by uncontrollable sexual appetites, we have expelled unclean sex spirits of lust, perversion, homosexuality and sodomy. Many of these Christians admitted practicing oral sex. While we do not conclude that every person desiring or practicing oral sex needs deliverance, such deliverances do seem to seriously challenge the position that the marriage bond automatically sanctifies that which was previously perverse.

In addition to the many vivid experiences in the ministry of deliverance there is the weight of repeated counseling sessions and personal correspondence with devoted Christians, both men and women, who are regularly pressured by their mates into performing what they consider to be unnatural sex acts which leave them guilt-ridden and ashamed.

Another guideline to be considered by couples seeking to establish scripturally-wholesome sexual attitudes and practices in their marriage is the clear parallel which the Bible draws between the marriage union and Christ and the Church. Marital sex, in its ideal expression, signifies not only the most exalted and intimate union possible between a Christian husband and wife, but also the union between Christ and the Church. Paul makes this clear in his teaching on husband/wife relationships in Ephesians 5.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, *and they two shall be one flesh*.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:31-32).

While we know the phrase "and they two shall be one flesh" is not to

be limited to a description of sexual union alone, obviously it includes it. Personally, I believe sexual union in marriage is in no way "over-spiritualized" by seeing it in this light. Proper sexual union of a husband and wife signifies Christ's union with the Church.

This beautiful and profound parallel is easy to apprehend as long as we hold to the image of normal sexual union. The husband's intimate embrace with his wife is matched by Christ's passionate love for the church or the figure of the heavenly Bridegroom embracing His "bride."

But to try and apply the questionable figure of a husband and wife engaged in oral sex, or any other "anything goes" kind of bizarre sexual activity to the parallel of Christ loving the church or the heavenly Bridegroom claiming His bride, seems to be a distortion in the direction of the profane rather than an illustration of that which is holy.

HOW CAN HUSBAND AND WIFE FIND AGREEMENT?

(1) Scripture makes it plain that in all areas of the marriage relationship — including the sexual — the rule for happiness and fulfillment lies in *giving* rather than *getting*. Paul reinforces this principle in his wise, practical counsel that ideal sexual union requires each partner to surrender control of his own body to the desires of the other.

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife (1 Cor. 7:3-4).

The faithful honoring of this principle by both husband and wife will go far toward settling any problem over what is permissible in marital sex. Most sexual problems we hear from husbands and wives stem from the determination of one partner (more often but by no means exclusively the husband) to engage in sexual activity

the other partner deems improper if not immoral.

But while the Scripture says "the wife hath not power over her own body," obviously there is no way a sensitive wife can joyfully submit to the sexual desires of her husband unless she can trust him not to shame or humiliate her in any way. Further, since "the husband hath not power of his own body" he is not at liberty to seek personal sexual gratification at the expense of his wife's conscience.

There is an essential requirement in marriage, binding on both husband and wife if their sexual life together is to be full and satisfying. *Each must honor the conscience and feelings of the other.*

The greater part of the burden of this requirement seems to fall on the husband since it is normally he, rather than the wife, who takes the lead in sexual activity. Perhaps this is why Peter admonishes husbands to "give honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel" (1 Pet. 3:7). A husband can scarcely "give honor to his wife" by insisting on involving her in sexual activity she finds personally revolting.

On the other hand the wife has no justification for depriving her husband of the joy of normal sexual intercourse since Scripture clearly expects that of her (1 Cor. 7:3).

(2) Another factor which may help husbands and wives to strengthen their sexual union is the realization that innovative sex is no cure for inadequacies in other areas of the marriage.

A husband weak in exercising proper headship and authority in his home may try to compensate by becoming domineering in the marriage bed, making sexual demands on his wife that he knows will humiliate her and "keep her in her place."

On the other hand, a rebellious wife, out from under the authority of her husband and unwilling to submit to him as the true spiritual head of the family, can deal the husband a crushing blow either by refusing to go to bed with him or by suggesting some deviate form of sexual activity which brings into question his ability as an adequate sex partner.

(3) But what about those cases where both husband and wife have agreed to non-coital sex only to find that satisfaction still eludes them? More than once I have counseled with couples who say, in effect, "We've tried everything, and we still have problems in bed."

Some modern counselors would suggest their answer lies in further abandonment of traditional morality. They would claim the problem lies in "outdated cultural restraints" which still prohibit "free sexual expression."

From a biblical point of view, such advice is totally unacceptable. It reduces persons to an animalistic level which the Scriptures condemn.

But these speak evil of those things which they know not; *but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves* (Jude 10).

Rather, the couple finding themselves in such an unfortunate situation need to see that while their *motive* is right, in that they are seeking ways to enrich and enhance their marriage, their *method* is wrong. But if they will begin to accept and apply scriptural principles in other areas of the marriage, their sex life will improve. The basic sexual union which is a vital part of every marriage can become so fulfilling that the thrill of deviate sexual behavior no longer allures.

Thus as both husbands and wives seek diligently to bring every facet of their marriage under the lordship of Christ and into conformity with the biblical pattern, with wives learning to submit to their husbands "as unto the Lord," and husbands learning to love their wives redemptively and sacrificially as "Christ loves the church and gave himself for it," the marriage bed, which formerly may have been a place of emotional agony and frustration, becomes the source of joy, blessedness and fulfillment that God intended.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, *and they two shall be one flesh* (Ephesians 5:31). ♡

BIBLE STUDY

SEX AND THE BIBLE

God, in His wisdom and benevolence, created and blessed sex. Man, in his ignorance and perversity, has misdirected and abused it. It behooves us as Christians, in the midst of our society's flagrant violation and misapplication of God's intentions for us as sexual beings, to stand in the light and candor of the Scriptures. God's remedy for our moral dilemma is found in His Word, for there, His matchless plan for sexual relationship between a husband and wife is initiated, defined, and elucidated.

(Bible Study answers are found on page 31.)

1. The last few words in Genesis 1:27 capture the essential part of God's plan in creating mankind. What is this statement? _____
 - a. In verse 28 of that same chapter, what was God's first action toward the couple he had created? _____
 - b. His first command? _____
 - c. And in verse 31, His impression as He saw the completion of all that He had created? _____
2. In contrast to Genesis 1:31, what had God said in Genesis 2:18 about man's plight before the creation of woman? _____
 - a. What was the man's main problem? _____
 - b. What was woman to be to man? _____
3. In God's purpose, what three steps were outlined for a man and woman to be joined? (*Gen. 2:24*)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. Whom did Jesus recognize as the author of this joining? (*Mk. 10:9*) _____
5. In creating the beauty and innocence of the sexual distinctions between male and female, did God intend these distinctions to be embarrassing? (*Gen. 2:25*) _____
6. What phrase in Genesis 4:1 depicts the intimate and personal exchange that God has built into sex? _____
7. What word did Sarah use in Genesis 18:12 to represent her attitude toward sexual relations with her husband, Abraham?

"After I am waxed old shall I have _____"
8. What description does the woman speaking in Song of Solomon 8:3 give of physical closeness between a man and his wife? _____
9. What comment does Paul make in Ephesians 5:32 concerning sex and marriage? _____
 - a. But beyond its God-ordained physical function, what does union between the husband and wife symbolize? (*Eph. 5:32*) _____
10. How are husbands instructed to love their wives? (*Eph. 5:25*) _____
 - a. What three things did Jesus do for the church? (*5:25,26*) _____
 - b. In verse 28, to what degree does Paul urge men to love their wives? _____
 - c. And with what specific actions? _____
11. In 1 Peter 3:7, when a husband dwells with his wife "according to knowledge," what will he give unto her? _____
12. Likewise, in Hebrews 13:4 what significant statement is made concerning marriage? _____
 - a. And how is the marriage bed to remain? _____
13. Similar statements are made in 1 Thessalonians 4:4,5. In what demeanor is a husband to engage his wife in sexual relations? (*v. 4*) _____
 - a. With what attitude is he *not* to approach his wife? _____
14. What three guidelines for sexual cooperation in marriage are offered to both the husbands and the wives in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5? _____
 - a. (*v. 3*) _____
 - b. (*v. 4*) _____
 - c. (*v. 5*) _____
15. What three stipulations does Scripture place on a sexual fast? (*1 Cor. 7:5*) _____
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
16. According to Paul, what is one of the reasons for marriage? (*1 Cor. 7:2*) _____
17. In light of all the scriptural warnings and judgments pertaining to sexual immorality, what simple two-word command is given in 1 Corinthians 6:18? _____
 - a. And in 1 Peter 2:11, what are Christians implored to abstain from? _____
18. 1 Corinthians 6:20 summarizes the overall responsibility of both single and married Christians in regard to the purpose and function of our bodies. Complete this verse:

"For ye are bought with a price, therefore _____"



When I try to decide in what capacity I should claim the audacity to write this essay, I am at a loss to settle on any one fixed identity, other than my identity as a sinner redeemed by Christ: one in spirit and struggle and joy with all who claim him as Lord of their lives and who strive and stumble, regress and return, defy and defer to the patient molding of the Potter whose desire it is to turn us into strong and beautiful vessels of his Spirit.

I am a psychologist (for whatever that is worth, and it feels like less and less all the time), a junior academic, a babe in Christ of less than two years, a single woman who, like the prodigal son, somehow needed — or chose — to do a lot of personal “field work,” sex-wise, politics-wise and head-wise before finally responding, at the age of twenty-seven, to the patient knocking of the Master. All of this will bear importantly on what I choose to say about sexuality and how I say it, for I cannot make a separation among the functions I have just mentioned. They are all me. They interact. They argue

among themselves. They grow, together and separately. They yearn to be brought into a total, consistent harmony with God’s will, yet realize that such a goal can only be progressively approximated, never totally realized, this side of heaven. For now, my hope is only that in writing about what must be the most hotly debated functions of human existence, what I say will reflect biblical truth, in spirit and in consequence, if not always in one-to-one congruence.

THE POLITICS OF SEX

I believe the phrase “the politics of sex” points to an essential contrast between the sexual culture into which we are socialized as North Americans and the purposes to which, as Christians, we are called by God. I am not implying that there is no overlap whatsoever between the world’s conception of sexuality and the Christian one, or that the best Christians are those who have put their sexuality into cold storage. Such either-or thinking, while it may at times have been used by the church, simply

cannot be supported scripturally. But I do maintain that, married or single, male or female, gay or straight, “where your sexuality is, there will your heart be”; and by this I mean that the extent to which we have really given over to God *all* of our human functions, talents, strengths and weaknesses will determine whether or not our sexuality becomes, on the one hand, a bondage, obsession and never-slaked thirst, or, on the other hand, a gratuitous joy which has nothing whatsoever to do with the number of orgasms per week we have, the complexity of our sexual fantasies or the fidelity with which we read from the stereotyped scripts labelled “masculine” and “feminine.”

Politics, in its broadest sense, refers to the ways in which power is distributed and used, and the ways in which rights are defined and claimed. By this criterion, the sexuality of North Americans in the 1970’s is indeed a highly politicized human function. We hear a lot being said and written about how to maximize our sexual powers and go about claiming our sexual rights. Best-selling how-to books, such

as *The Sensuous Man, Any Woman Can* and *Human Sexual Inadequacy*, remind us that by learning the right demeanor and jargon outside the bedroom, plus the right technical skills once we are inside, we can ensure ever bigger, better and more frequent orgasms for ourselves. It would seem that "orgasmic rights" have become an implicitly assumed part of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, with the result that no one has the "right" to prescribe for another person what should or should not lead to sexual gratification. "Whatever turns you on" is becoming the only implicit guideline, and an inevitable one, once one has accepted the premise that getting turned on is a human function as necessary and natural as eating and drinking, and that being able to enjoy variety in your diet is a sign of flexibility and broad-mindedness.

By this criterion, what good reason is there *not* to culminate each and every date with a roll in the hay? What good reason is there *not* to spouse-swap? What good reason is there *not* to encourage your children to masturbate, or even teach them how? After all, practice makes perfect, or so *The Sensuous Woman* tells us, and the better practised you are at turning yourself on, the better you will do it with someone else. What reason is there *not* to explore the options of homosexuality or transvestism or sex with animals or children (provided, of course, that you have due regard for their orgasmic rights as well)?

Really, there is no obvious reason to write off any of these choices once you have accepted, as our society appears to have, the notion of orgasmic rights distinct from any other moral standard. In such a thought-context, adherence to Christian sexual morality becomes as arbitrary and anachronistic as insisting that we should still use the horse and buggy when we now have so many more, and so much faster, modes of transport.

Besides being thought of in terms of rights to be claimed, there is a second way in which sexuality is highly politicized in the North America of the 1970's, and this has to do with the

power that active sexuality has to create dependence in one person towards another. Our sex manuals seem to keep telling us that, besides ensuring gratification for ourselves, the function of sexuality is to "hold" the other person, to keep the partner so dependent on your pleasure-giving and approval-giving capacities that he or she is ideally tamed into a posture of servitude, willingly supplying material security or domestic services in return for sexual pleasure or social status. In this context, the bargaining lever may be sexual gratification, the threat of social isolation or a combination of both, but either way the rule of thumb is clear: The most powerful (and by implication the best) position to be in is one which leaves the other person more dependent on your sexual and social resources than you are on his or hers. Thus the formula for a "successful" relationship is essentially an exchange model, with implied contracts, conditions, threats of withdrawal and a balance of power which is constantly up for grabs.

THE AUDACITY OF GOD'S WORD

In the face of these apparently sensible ways of protecting one's own rights and securing one's own power in the sexual arena, what does God's Word have the audacity to proclaim? That husbands are to love wives to the extent of being willing to die for them and that wives, in turn, are to submit to and respect their husbands (Eph. 5). That spouses' bodies belong to each other and are not to be withheld for purposes of emotional blackmail or any other reason besides a temporary coming apart to concentrate separately on God (1 Cor. 7). That there is only one sanctioned context (heterosexual marriage) for the expression of genital sexuality and that such marriage is for life (see Mt. 19; Mk. 10; Rom. 1; 1 Cor. 7). That marriage is a good thing, but so is celibacy (1 Cor. 7). That it is not enough just to refrain from adultery and fornication with your body, but that God asks for your fantasies to be turned over to him as well (Mt. 5).

Now really! How outmoded, repressive and unscientific can you get? How preposterous and arbitrary! How patently contrary to the obvious need and behavior of the whole human race throughout the whole of history. Will that kind of line ever draw people to Christ? Well, probably not—or at least let me say that if at the time I came to Christ I had known and acknowledged as God-given all of these constraints, I probably would not have gone a step further in my walk with him. If I had known the extent to which he would "put his spirit within me and *cause* me to walk in his statutes" (Ezek. 36:27), patiently, gently breaking down the accumulated habits of twenty-seven years and gradually replacing them with exactly the constraints (or, as I now see them, *freedoms*) I have just listed—well, I would have thought twice about going on this Christianity trip.

Because, you see, I was a very liberated young woman at the time. I had had a rich sexual fantasy life almost since I could remember. I had learned to masturbate efficiently at a very young age. I had almost lost count of the number of men I had slept with in a serially monogamous fashion. I had taken advantage of the spirit of the Women's Movement (in which I was quite active) to begin to exploring my own bisexuality. And I had no intention of giving any of that up. When I accepted Christ, I figured that it was the spirit of the law, not the letter, that mattered, that "love" was the overriding principle, and that I could witness in bed as easily as anywhere else.

But to my progressive astonishment, I found all that changing. Not quickly. Not all at once. Not by anyone's prying into my personal life or trying to send me on a guilt trip (although I am sure I had lots of people praying for me). It was totally a process of God's working on me, one item of behavior at a time, over many months, like patiently peeling one layer after another off an onion.

He accomplished this in two ways. First of all, much like some of David Wilkerson's ex-addicts who really *tried*

to return to drugs and found they could not get high any more, I found that I was getting progressively less satisfaction from my sexual behavior. The various pleasures simply started to be less and less worth the effort and hassle associated with them. Second, I began to sense a correlation between my own behavior and thoughts, on the one hand, and the closeness and reliability of God's peaceful presence, on the other. Gradually, the nature of the correlation became clear: To the extent that I indulged in my "liberated" sexual behavior any given day or week, to that extent did I find myself, in all other areas of my life, thrown right back into the feelings of anxiety, rush, fear and turmoil that had been so dominant a part of my life before coming to Christ. To the extent that I *did not* indulge (even if it was only because I was too busy doing other things), to the extent did I find God's energizing and peaceful presence available to me.

In a nutshell, God's Spirit and presence had become the ultimate positive reinforcer for me, and the more I had of it, the more I wanted. If maintaining that presence meant that other (now less satisfying) reinforcers had to go, then I was willing to let them go. I am not saying that there was not at times struggle or ambivalence, or that the process has not included a lot of prayer and a lot of stumbling. My overriding feelings, however, are *not* ones of being "deprived" or "punished," but rather of being progressively liberated, gentled and strengthened. One of Peter's epistles tells us that "a man is the slave of whatever has mastered him" (2 Pet. 2:19). In other words, to the extent that the caprices of my sexuality dictated my thoughts, motivations and actions in my pre-Christian life (which was all too often the case) rather than my controlling my own behaviors, I was a slave.

SLEEPING AROUND

Not surprisingly, the first layer of the onion that the Lord set to work on

was my sexual behavior with other people. I began to see (and again, without any other person prompting me) that the need to be always in a sexual relationship with someone really did not have that much to do with the release of sexual tension. Rather, it was a desperate fight against a rarely admitted loneliness and isolation; it was the best (or only) way I knew how to approximate some reassurance that somehow, for a little while anyway, there was a semblance of commitment, caring and communication. Very simply, it was an attempt to fill that "God-shaped void" of which Pascal wrote. Over the weeks and months that I still tried to get the best of both worlds, that is, tried to be a Christian and still sleep around, I reached two conclusions. The first was that while I had never had any trouble *attaining* that desired commitment and communication, I was never able to *maintain* it. It was always the same way: A fellow and I would start out with a tremendous euphoric closeness which sooner or later became empty and ritualized. We would go along playing the game for a while, but finally one or the other of us would pull out, determined that next time it would be different. It never was.

The second thing I learned was that feeling isolated has little to do with whether or not one is sharing a bed with someone, or even trying to share a life. I cannot count the nights I have lain awake, sometimes muffling sobs in a pillow, beside a satiated, soundly sleeping male, wondering why I was feeling so alone. It was not that the men in question were doing all the taking and no giving—I did not specialize in relationships like that. Mostly they were people who themselves wanted a real and pretty total relationship. But somehow, just because we were trying to get it all from each other, we ended up having even less than we started with, feeling only constraint instead of communication. Somehow we were running the relationship on the wrong fuel.

On the other hand, I will never forget the tremendous liberation I felt the first night I had enough strength in

the Lord to say no and not feel any need to apologize for it or rationalize it. I remember how good it felt to fall asleep *alone*, in my own bed, by myself, and how overjoyed I was to wake up in the morning and confirm that no one was there beside me. I have never felt *less* isolated in my life—then, or ever since.

SOLO SEX

As if it were not surprise enough to find myself quite happily foregoing sexual contact with other people, I found the Lord starting to convict me about having it with myself! Now, the Bible does not have anything very explicit to say about masturbation, and there seem to be lots of Christians who endorse it as a good safety-valve behavior and as a way of getting in touch with your own sexuality. But aside from the fact that the fantasies which almost inevitably accompany masturbation clearly constitute lust and hence (if we take the Sermon on the Mount seriously) are tantamount in God's sight to the act itself, there are quite sound psychological reasons why masturbation is neither "good practice for the real thing" nor even a good safety-valve. I will try to explain them.

Sexual arousal has tremendous conditioning potential; it can attach itself to whatever stimulus it has been associated with in the past, and if continually paired with that stimulus, it will ultimately *require* that restricted stimulus pattern in order to be evoked at all. This is the way the more peculiar sexual anomalies got built up. For example, a boy whose first stirrings of sexual arousal came in the context of seeing women's underwear may thereafter call up the image of women's underwear whenever he wants to re-evolve the original sexual "rush," and in order to aid masturbation. Ultimately, after years of such restricted associating, he finds he cannot get turned on *unless* he has women's underwear around. Hardly a liberating state of affairs.

I began to realize that a similar, if somewhat less exotic, process

accompanies masturbation. Most people enhance and catalyze this behavior with specific, favorite fantasies whose content gradually comes to be closely associated with orgasm. As a result, the goal in sexual contact with another person becomes approximating the content of these fantasies as closely as possible. Now, no earthly reality can compete with a fantasy. Reality just is not that conveniently flexible. Sometimes it may be better, sometimes worse, but for sure it will almost never be the *same* as the fantasy. The best you can do is *use* the other person as the means of approximating the "perfect" experience that you conjure up in your head when you are alone, and as a result the act becomes little more than mutual masturbation—no contact other than the physical, and probably poor even in terms of mere bodily, let alone psychological, gratification.

So, surprising as it may seem, and contrary to the canons of most of our present-day sexologists, I would maintain that the more sexually "naive" you are coming to the marriage bed, the more *eventual*, reliably mutual psychic *and* physical satisfaction there will be. These are some of the thoughts that came out of that period of weeks and months when the Lord reoriented my thinking and behavior about masturbation, and the ultimate result was the same as it had been regarding the issue of sleeping with others: I eventually stopped—again, not without struggle and stumbling, but I stopped. I wanted God's Spirit more than I wanted transient physical titillation, and, over and above that, I began to see that abstinence made sense in terms of optimal preparation for *real* sharing with a *real* person.

FANTASIES

Finally, as if I was not surprised enough to have happily abandoned both fornication and masturbation, God began to prompt me to relinquish my casual thoughts and fantasies even when they were not linked to specific behaviors. At first this seemed like too

much. Sexual fantasies are one of those things that almost everyone indulges in constantly. (One study found that students of both sexes, by self-report, spent up to a quarter of their work time sexually fantasizing.) Fantasies are a way of coping with boredom, fatigue, frustration and anxiety, and as such seem very functional. So why not fantasize?

Why not indeed, if the events and contingencies of our real world are merely random happenings, "full of sound and fury signifying nothing," as Macbeth put it. If God does *not* "work all things together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28), and if he *does* let chance bring us its share of purposeless boredom, irritation and pain, then it would seem that the most healthy and functional reaction would be to withdraw temporarily into a world of pleasant fantasizing, sexual or otherwise.

But on the other hand, if he is as good as his Word, if he is the God of history (both the history of the world and of each of his reborn children in it), if he desires to work *all* the realities (pleasant and unpleasant) of a Christian's life together in a meaningful way with the end result that we are conformed to his image and co-partners in his purposes for eternity, then to me it seems that grappling with *whatever* reality confronts me will in the end be infinitely more exciting than a retreat into any kind of fantasy. I myself am finding this to be gloriously so. (That is a nice thing I have discovered about God: If you test out his promises even hypothetically and conditionally, he lets you know he means business.) In fact, I do not want to miss out on *any* good things he has in store for me, even if it sometimes means doing spiritual calisthenics when it would be easier to grab onto an immediate, pleasant fantasy in order to evade or postpone some boring task or anxiety-provoking commitment.

Again, my batting average is not perfect. My trust in the Lord is still shaky at best, and there are times when I still prefer to believe that my

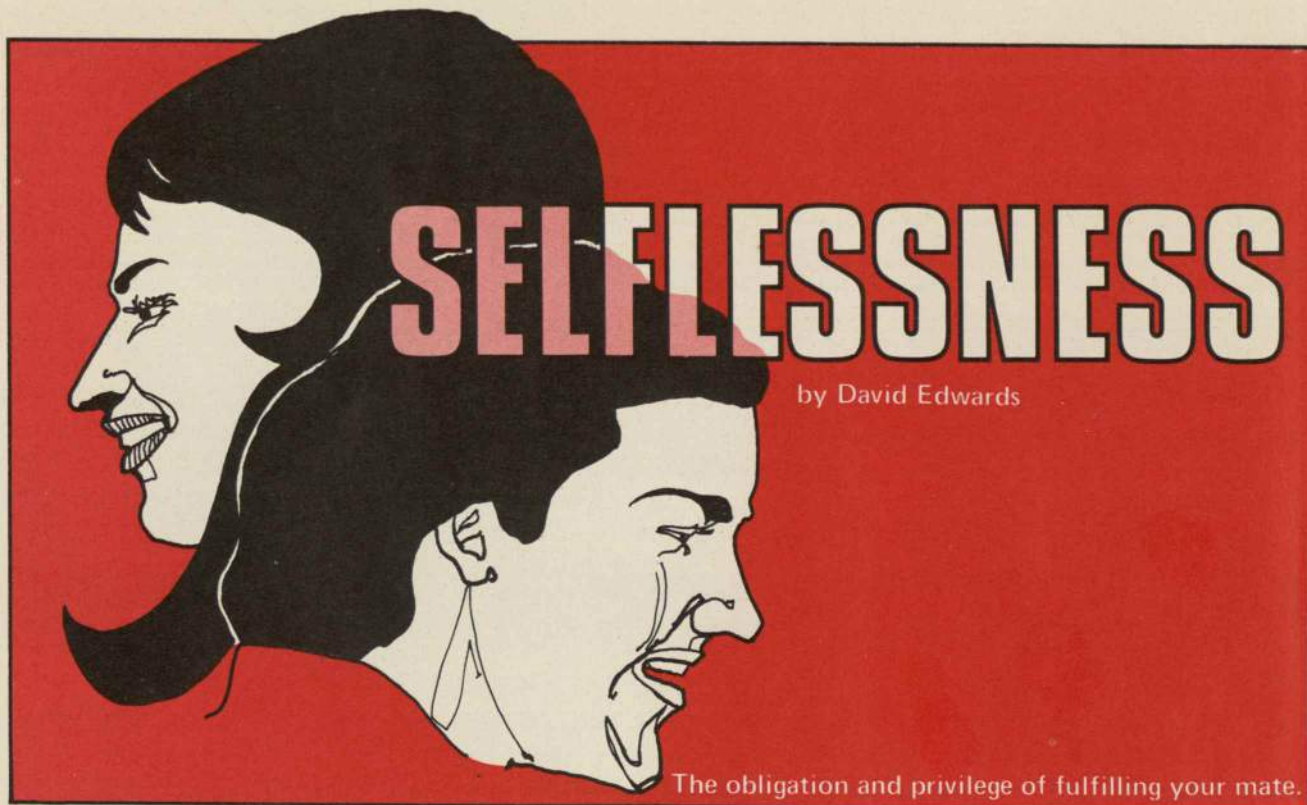
solutions are better than his. Invariably, though, he proves me wrong, and I am learning fast. That is why I have abandoned even my fantasies, and that is why I do not even miss them.

THE JOY OF LIFE

The amazing thing about this whole process of progressively giving over to God all my sexual behavior and thoughts is that I have ended up precisely where Scripture says I should be: a single woman, sexually quiescent, but not feeling the least bit unsexed—even though I myself would never have voluntarily submitted to the housecleaning process in the first place had I known what it would involve. The Lord is a very gentle school master. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. He never came down hard on me or required me to work on more than one area of behavior at a time. He never withdrew his Spirit capriciously or arbitrarily, but was always there, merely waiting for *me* to move closer back to *him* after each stumbling and seeming always to rejoice at my return. He provided the most wonderful Christian brothers and sisters to share my struggles and to pray me through to each new plateau—always with love and never with condemnation.

Furthermore, I found that he never shortchanges anybody: For each "toy" he asked me to give back to him, he had something better in return in terms of the fruit of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, purpose and a progressive integration of all aspects of my life. To some people, particularly those who are single or those who feel that they can never be fully heterosexual, these may seem like inadequate substitutes for those great sexual "rushes" that come from calling up mental fantasies and seeking out physical contact; but to those readers I would simply say: Don't knock it till you've tried it and given it a fair chance in terms of time and consistent effort.

(Continued on page 27)



There is no lack of information either in the marketplace or in any other area of current media on the subject of love, sex and marriage. But not all approaches present the gospel of a happy marriage relationship. I hope to add this dimension to your thinking, even as I try to interject it into every marriage ceremony I am called upon to perform.

When a man and a woman stand in the presence of a duly appointed representative who is vested with the authority to declare them "one," they usually take that stand fairly well acquainted with the consequences. At the time, the consequences may be tinted from wearing rose-colored glasses. The time soon comes however when the glasses are removed and they begin to become acquainted with formerly unrevealed aspects of each other.

As I say to the couple, "Here are four things which will contribute in some degree to your developing relationships," the advice may sound simple. But it is surprising how easy it becomes to overlook these four basic

suggestions: Walk hand in hand; see eye to eye; talk face to face; kneel side by side.

Within marriage, there is a longing for a personal union, of which sexual union is only a part. When both partners can say, "Honey, I want nothing more out of life than your pleasure, fulfillment and satisfaction," then they are on the way to an ideal marriage.

Many of the difficulties that arise and come to the attention of those of us who have assumed a measure of responsibility in solving the difficulties which arise after the "I do's" are sealed, do not necessarily arise out of illicit or biblically forbidden relationships. They may stem from fear, ignorance (not foolish ignorance, but uninstructed ignorance), guilt or

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incorrect instruction. There are frustrations that present themselves within marriage that can prove crippling emotionally, and to some extent, mentally and spiritually. Closing our eyes won't make the problems go away.

Both marriage partners have responsibilities in the area of sex — it comes as part of the package deal called matrimony. To succeed in the business world and fail in the bedroom is to fail. To succeed in the kitchen and to fail in bed is to fail. To succeed in the pulpit and to fail in the bedroom is to fail. Even to be a disciplinarian of one's children and a confidant of one's wife, but not to be her lover, is to fail. Each partner is obliged to see to it that the other finds sexual fulfillment in their relationships.

I have a suspicion that this kind of failure is bound to show sooner or later in some aberration. It might not show itself in sexual aberration; it may take other avenues. However, maladjustment in the husband/wife relationship carries with it a penalty — just as maladjustment in any other portion of the intricate and inspired

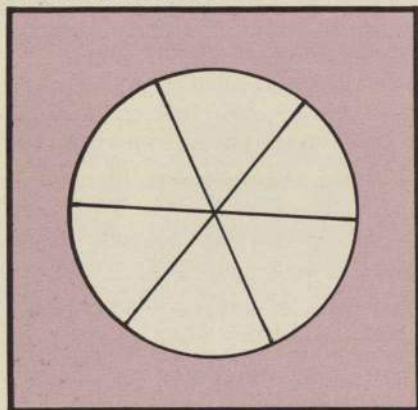
machinery of man's make-up carries a penalty.

SEX — AS WAS INTENDED

All that God created was pronounced by Him as being "good." We shall proceed on His word of commendation. Therefore, I would like to suggest that sex is (1) designed by God; (2) it is designed to be desirable; (3) it is defended throughout the Bible; and (4) in some instances, it is depraved. The first two descriptions are scripturally sound; the third is evident to anyone who reads the Bible; the fourth is a result of man's mishandling of his God-given privileges and pleasures.

First, sex is designed. See Genesis 1:27, 28, 31. We are designed after a pattern of God's choice.

The first question that a new mother asks, "What is it?" usually comes even before, "Is it all right?" The most significant thing about a person is the answer that the doctor gives to that first "mother" question. There is nothing else which is going to so affect one for the rest of his/her existence than his/her sex. This difference shapes and colors every facet of the new human life.



Think of life as this circle. Let us arbitrarily divide it into various segments: physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual. However, if you want to draw a sexual segment, you are making a mistake — for sex is not a part of the pie, sex is the filling in the pie. The answer to the mother's question will reflect itself in all segments. Sex ought not to be regarded as a "segment"; rather it is

what undergirds the whole of these various sections. I continue to be awed in the face of the wonder of design in our sexuality and parenthood.

When God said that it was *not good* that man should be alone, this was the only part of His creation which He saw and did not pronounce "good." Everything else that He looked upon was good. When God remarked on the inappropriateness of solitude or solitary existence as a fitting framework for man's potential, it did not detract from the significance of His creation. In fact, it underlines it. There was such potential created within man that there was more in him than he could realize as long as he was alone.

God made woman out of a rib, a word more correctly translated "side," so that woman is man's other side. As Adam looked at Eve and appraised her, he said, "Here is self of my self." Woman is man's apposite, as well as his opposite. As Adam commented on this helpmeet which God had given him, his response, paraphrased in a colloquialism, might have been, "Wow!"

Secondly, sex is not only designed, but it is designed to be desirable.

God didn't make sex objectionable. It is not an accommodation to the fall or an afterthought. In all probability, there may have been some physiological repercussions in consequence of the fall, but sexuality is not one of them. Sex ought not to be merely tolerated or submitted to. It should be delighted in.

It is the humiliation of woman that she was made for man. It is the glory of woman that only woman can make man what he was intended to be.

It is the humiliation of man that he needs woman to be all that he was intended to be. It is the glory of man that God has made woman to make man all that he was intended to be.

"And they were both naked and they were not ashamed." There is no shame in the intimate relations of marriage. Nowhere does the Scripture teach that husbands or wives need to feel humiliated by their association. There are times when a man might humble a woman in his sexual

relations with her. This is a departure from what God intended. If God's intentions are properly understood, man will realize that he is to glory the woman in their relationship.

"And God said they two shall be one flesh." Some people teach that this Scripture is only fulfilled when the husband and wife have offspring . . . that they become one flesh in their children. I would like to suggest that it is only as they become one, that the offspring results. It is one and one who make two. It is not one and one, plus one, that makes two. *It is in the joining that they become one person.* Children are the issue of marriage, not the occasion for it. Children are the fruit of marriage, not the root of it.

We also mentioned that sex is defended in the Bible.

Throughout Scripture we find references to problems and solutions . . . joys and sorrows . . . all of these inherent in the marital sphere. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, we find the apostle Paul discussing some of the problems that arose in one of the churches under his care. It is apparent that problems were complex in those days, even as they are today. It is encouraging to know that the believers then turned to their spiritual leaders for guidance.

We might begin by saying that only in the narrowest sense, and that as a temporary measure, do the Scriptures teach anywhere the superiority of the celibate state over the married. Paul does express a desire that others might consider the celibate state, even as he did; but he acknowledges the fact that "every man has his proper gift."

Paul covered many pertinent questions in his answers to the Corinthians. Among them were: Should the unmarried marry? Is divorce permitted when one of the partners becomes a believer? If one partner becomes converted, should relations continue? Should Christian fathers give their daughters in marriage? May a Christian widow remarry? Included in the answers is the fact that relations in marriage are

not the conferring of a favor, but the recognition of an obligation. Sexual intercourse should never be withheld as punishment; nor given as reward.

Finally, we said that sex became depraved.

I believe that our sexual experience and our sexuality are parts of our personalities — and the whole of our personalities have been affected by the fall. Some Christians seem to think that man's personality, as affected by the fall, is lacking something; and that in redemption that missing part is added. But I tend to think that the whole of man was affected by the fall, and the whole of man is redeemed.

Some Christian approaches maximize one part, to the minimizing of another part. They stress the soul and spirit . . . and consider the body as just something you wash once a week, whether it needs it or not . . . you feed it occasionally . . . it really is immaterial. My approach is that all of me is all I've got. I think my body is to be redeemed — not disparaged. Redemption affects the whole man — including his sexuality.

Our bodies are divinely made and God-glorifying. They are not necessarily carnal. Carnal and corporeal are not to be equated. Care should be taken that we do not make the mistake of equating "flesh" — when used in a judgmental sense in the Scriptures — with corporeality. This is a common error. The body is good and as long as expressions of mutual affection between the partners are self-sacrificing and intended to lead to the sexual fulfillment and pleasure of the other, they are not to be frowned upon or disapproved.

God was also aware of the ramifications in the two becoming one flesh. Scripture does not recognize non-sexual marriage. A view of marriage which would interpret it as being non-sexual is not an enlightened or redemptive view of marriage. It is a departure from God's design. He designed man and woman in such a way that they get pleasure out of their relationships. Orgasm and climax are intended. Man and wife are to be inter-

dependent. We are to understand each other's needs and obligations.

NEEDS AND OBLIGATIONS

Returning our thoughts to the creation account, when God made creatures other than humans, He cataloged each portion as good. But when He made man male and female, He said that it was very good. The only thing that is added between good and very good is the delineation between male and female. God was well aware of His created design. He also knew they were intended to be interdependent. They were to understand each other's needs and the obligations involved in their differences. This is a vital part of marriage.

Marriage is intended to be organismic, whereas we are tempted to make it orgasmic. What does this statement mean? (1) Marriage is intended to be organismic, where the sections of the organism exist for the benefit of the other. They have no other purpose for existence other than the benefit of the other. (2) In our culture, at the present moment, we are under pressure to regard marriage, and the relationship of husbands and wives, as being orgasmic — with a view to organismic. The biblical basis is that marriage is organismic, with a view to its becoming orgasmic.

It is the biblical position that both husbands and wives have these obligations and privileges. Paul touched on three aspects of this truth in his Corinthian letter. He tackled problems brought to him in a straight-forward and frank manner. He stated that there is within marriage an equality of obligation. Then there is a mutuality of pleasure. A husband is obliged to see to it that his wife finds sexual fulfillment in their relationship. There is also a similarity of potential.

As far as I understand, there is no such thing as trial marriage, any more than there is such a thing as a trial birth. No options! Once you are married, that is it — as far as the sexual "trial" is concerned. Learning what is involved is important, for humans are different from animals in this area.

Animals meet to mate; whereas we live to love. This latter state calls for patient and self-sacrificing love.

We ought not to think of the difference between the male and the female stimulus and response as a difficulty or problem. We ought, rather, to think of it as being built in by the Creator. It was not an after-thought or repercussion because of sin — but part of God's plan to call out from both partners the maximum potential of self-sacrifice that they are capable of. He wanted them to have an understanding of self-sacrificing love and further intensify their sexual delight each in the other. We are the way we are, not because of some mistake in the evolutionary process, but because *this is the way God has made us*. What other kind of stimulus could He have so effectively provided as to cause a husband to be self-sacrificing? But, in the very sacrificing of himself, he finds that his own pleasure is heightened.

Each married couple should seek to work toward meeting their own unique needs. It is my understanding that there are no norms. As persons, we quite often are threatened by projected norms in many areas of life. Couples need have no goals other than those which they determine for themselves. One guideline might be — so long as it is not merely for one's own satisfaction, with the disapproval of the other — but is really aimed at the other's happiness, there should be freedom.

Learning to live together and enjoying mutuality of pleasure has a spiritual implication, too. In 2 Peter 3:7, we read, "In like manner, ye husbands dwell with them [your wives] according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel and as being heirs together as of the grace of life that your prayers be not hindered." There are not only physiological, sociological, psychological and emotional values involved here, but spiritual advances and advantages. Had you ever thought of hindered prayer hinging upon having "knowledge" and applying it in the intimate relation-

ships of marriage? Peter evidently did.

INTIMACY ESSENTIAL

What we, as individuals, must do is to strive for the most satisfying intimacy possible — which is a complete sharing of the whole person.

Now, husbands and wives have a unique communications system. Nobody asks questions and answers them in the way husbands and wives do — not even children and parents. Some communications are verbal; and the questions expressed in words are usually the simple ones. Other communications are expressed in the language of kinetics.

Are you familiar with that system? You may know it as nonverbal communication. Or you may recognize it better as . . . he holds your hand . . . you squeeze his hand . . . both get the message. If your husband kicks you under the table — there's a special meaning for you. If your wife lays her hand, oh, so gently on your cheek, that's kinetics. If she lays it not so gently, that is also kinetics! This particular language is often used because feelings are too deep to be entrusted to words. A slammed door or a plate slammed on the breakfast table can give out its own particular message. There may be a burned cake involved . . . or a forgotten goodbye kiss . . . or a plea for help.

One of the frightening, and at the same time exciting, things about marriage is that it is always alive and growing, for if a wife and husband aren't growing together, they are growing apart. The latter, in marriage, is crisis. If we are to achieve the level of intimacy which will make our marriage attractive to the world, we must do three things. (1) We must decide we want this type of relationship. It doesn't happen instinctively. (2) We must work at it. That's not instinctive, either! (3) We must make use of all the resources available. Marriage is potentially the most totally intimate of human relationships. It is the most difficult on the one hand and the most rewarding on the other.

Another thing we need to under-

stand is that sex is instinctive, but lovemaking is sophisticated. With our increase of sophistication, all of us are coming to a great awareness of the variety of delights that are available to us. Furthermore, I have a suspicion that the ultimate confrontation and disclosure of a man and a woman is not known in sex. It is known in lovemaking. It is not realized in the animalistic side of the experience — only in the sophisticated. We have to learn here, and we can learn. Ordinarily the man is the steersman; but that is not to say that he is obliged to be so on all occasions. As far as I am concerned, there is a place within a happily adjusted marriage for the woman to take the initiative from time to time.

The measure of fulfillment, release and pleasure that we are looking for can be attained by a recognition and acceptance, without restraint, of our bodies as sexual. It is also important that if this goal of release is to be attained between the partners, that communication be kept open. It doesn't have to be verbal communication. We must understand that communication depends more on the receiver than on the transmitter. Care must be taken that the right message gets across. Communication depends much more upon what is heard than what is said.

In considering the importance of intimacy in marriage, let me say that this element is more necessary because of the poverty of intimacy outside of marriage. Why is it that bartenders are traditionally the recipients of confidences and have the reputation for being marriage counsellors? Let's just admit that most of our "relationships" are only contacts. Our tastes and ambitions tend to separate us, and we are tempted to *use* rather than *relate* to others. Intimacy on any level takes time. It requires a face-to-face confrontation. And it must be with selflessness. It is called "nonmanipulative interaction" — a price tag which often proves too high.

A second reason why intimacy in marriage is so important is that intimacy within marriage is enhanced

by the influence of the other. Each partner has the power and ability to deprive or add to the total personality of the other. It seems to me there is nothing quite so destructive as when two partners are locked into a marriage from which there is no way out, and they are consuming each other. Marriage makes us vulnerable, as well as valuable to each other.

Marriage involves a commitment to a responsibility intended to be for fulfilling (or filling full) the other. The personal capacity . . . the personality . . . the totality is at stake. When a man takes a woman to be his wife, he says in essence, "I will lay down my life in order that your personality might come to its best under God." By the same token, that is what a woman says as she makes her vows.

It is fortunate that our biological impulses are as strong as they are, and that our awareness of the nature of our commitment is as limited as it is when we take our vows. Do you understand what I mean? We make a terrifying commitment when we engage in marriage. To the extent that I deprive myself of my own fulfillment to insure my partner the benefits of marriage at their intended level, to that extent am I providing the necessary satisfaction for the God-designed "personality appetite" of my mate. We are meant, not to consume, but to consummate the other.

Intimacy is intensified as couples dare to confront each other. There are some couples who live under the same roof . . . share a common bed . . . purse . . . table . . . even common church and prayer. But there is no real interchange. This can be veiled antagonism.

Other couples only maintain peace by avoiding certain issues and subjects. Thus, little by little, the transparent window, which represents the relationship a man and wife should have, becomes blurred. They become strangers to each other. Remember, there are no secrets in marriage; only things which are not talked about. You know, and you suspect that she knows. And she knows that you suspect that she knows. But you don't

talk about it, and for that reason you grow apart. The only thing that I know to do under these circumstances is to drag it out into the open and deal with it.

Intimacy deepens as we learn to be emotionally, as well as physically, present to each other. Wives, have you ever felt that your husband was a thousand miles away even though he was in the same room? Intimacy grows as couples care. Affection and intimacy are deepened by commitment. There are many avenues for joint commitment in the marriage relationship. Added to sexual intimacy there are: emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, creative, recreational, work, crisis, and spiritual intimacies. Each can prove profitable and pleasurable.

GOOD NEWS

The word "gospel" means good news. As I mentioned earlier, I attempt to present the gospel of a happy marriage to each couple with whom I am privileged to share before the wedding ceremony. I also make it

basic in my counseling of those who come to me with their problems. The commitment in marriage is deep and of lasting duration — at least it was intended to be so when God ordained it for the mutual benefit of His created ones. It was good news to Adam when he was presented with Eve as a helpmeet. It is that relationship between man and woman in which the independence is equal, the dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal.

The criteria in every relationship is what effect the action has on their mutual relationship. Anything that is damaging to either partner, or which offends the integrity of either party (physically, morally or spiritually) is subject to question. And only the individuals themselves can come up with answers to those questions. Sex is meant to be enjoyable, profitable and God-glorifying.

Speaking in general, absolute purity consists in our offering of actions, impulses and thoughts ever more fully to God; not so that He may necessarily remove them, but that He may govern

them and give us the grace to use them according to His will. However, it demands great courage on the part of both husband and wife to venture forth into this freedom. The words which we have shared have been intended to lead the reader into freedom in all areas of sexual relationships. God intended this freedom in His creating us male and female. In intended interdependence there is mutual benefit.

As we learn to enjoy all that God intended for us as husbands and wives, we have an obligation to share this good news with others. This, too, is part of God's intended plan for His created ones.

Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." One of the first evidences about salt is the fact that it makes one thirsty. Does your marriage make others desire to take the same step? It should. It is my hope that you will be able to, both verbally and non-verbally, express to others with whom you come in contact the intentions of God and the scriptural foundations for a happy marriage. ♥

SEXUAL FREEDOM

(continued from page 22)

Jesus came to give us life and to give it more abundantly (Jn. 10:10). He has never said that sexuality was bad; he only asks that we trust him with that function of our lives no less than with our material welfare, our vocation, or social interactions or our family relationships—all of which are equally and awesomely significant reinforcers that we would all, in the flesh, dearly love to control by ourselves. Until we can open our tightly clenched fists, he cannot fill our hand full to overflowing. Unless we can trust his rewards to be better than anything we could possibly provide for ourselves, we will be settling for second-best nourishment and wondering why we still feel deprived. "I desired all things, that I might enjoy life; God gave me life, that I might enjoy all things." ♥

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ESSAY OF THE MONTH

We again invite our readers to submit articles on the theme of the month. One essay per theme will be selected by our editorial staff for publication.

Listed below are the themes for the next three issues and the deadline by which they must be received in our *New Wine* office.

September — "Serving" DUE: June 20

October — "The Restoration of Manhood" DUE: July 18

November — "Covenant" DUE: August 22

Essays should be written from the writer's own experience and observation (preferably in the form of a testimony) and should be 1500 to 2000 words (or 4–6 typewritten, double-spaced pages). Please include a photograph and short biography of yourself.

Send all manuscripts to *New Wine* Essays, P.O. Box 22888, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33315. If you wish to have your manuscript returned, enclose a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

All published material becomes the property of *New Wine*.

* * *

Note to Readers: An essay of the month selection does *not* appear in this magazine. Although many of the essays submitted were worthwhile, in the final analysis, none of them fit in with the tone of this month's articles. We hope that this particular deletion will not discourage our readers from submitting future essays.

ECHOES OF THE SPIRIT

Significant Events in the Body of Christ

In Washington, D.C., in a trans-denominational conference, a Catholic priest, a completed Jew, a Jesuit theologian and an Episcopal bishop joined with Christian senators and congressmen and other capital Christians in ministering evangelism, healing, deliverance.

In Jacksonville, North Carolina, blacks and whites joined in fourteen meetings (the shortest lasting 2½ hours — some ran 4 and 5 hours). Worship, deliverance, healing flowed at each session. There were also significant meetings with men in local leadership.

San Antonio, Texas was the scene of a ministry which drew the attention of the editors of the *New York Times* to cover the meetings. Christian exorcism was the focal point of their interest.

The Holy Spirit knows no national bounds. London, Copenhagen and Stockholm will be scenes during the month of May for charismatic ministry on university campuses and in local churches.

Montreat, North Carolina — Evangelist Billy Graham has called on Americans to help relieve the suffering of people in war-torn Southeast Asia.

In a statement issued from his home he insisted "Americans have a responsibility to make available the medical assistance and food required to heal and sustain life for all Indochina's homeless, needy and afflicted people."

He emphasized that we also have a responsibility to pray for those who suffer, "that God's grace, strength and love will sustain them."

Fresh from a trip to Washington, Dr. Graham said, "The world is watching . . . I have never felt or witnessed so much frustration and discouragement in the nation's capital. If ever America needed national repentance and an outpouring of prayer, it is now."

On the borders of India and Burma, live the Nagas, the Mizos and the Khais. Today, there are about 1,500,000 in these three tribes. Of this number, a full 75% are Christian. The Nagas are the largest of these hill tribes, numbering some 600,000 — 67% are Christian. The Mizos, although only about half this number, are the most responsive of all. With 98% of their people Christian, they are unquestionably the most "Christian" people on planet earth.

It was 74 years ago that missionaries arrived to proclaim the Gospel to the animistic head-hunting hill tribes, which are nestled in the beautiful hills of North East India. The missionaries arrived fresh from the Welsh Revival, their hearts aflame with God's love, their faith released by the demonstrations of the supernatural power of God which they had witnessed. Christianity consequently made a tremendous impact upon those hill people.

Reverend Lal Sawma, one of the leaders in Mizoram, shared the news that his people are "keen to send missionaries throughout Southeast Asia." ♡

Attention Leaders!

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THE COMMON VESSEL



by Sylvia Evans

Unrefined, yet useful to the Master.

Lord, why you've chosen me for this assignment, I can't see. I am a common vessel, scratched, and marred and chipped, thick and coarse and unappealing, feeling out of place among the delicate designs and glossy finishes of the fine and refined china all around.

I am a big brown bowl. There is no place for me upon the banquet table. My one orange stripe does little more than emphasize the crudeness of my dull clay personality, despite the little glaze that tried to smooth me over. There is no hiding what I really am, I should expect no special honor; I am not fit for dainty use; there is no need for big brown bowls in the display and bright array of beautiful things.

Put me back into the kitchen; keep me hidden in my cupboard, where I feel secure. And while I'm there, give me contentment to just sit and be — a big brown bowl.

Contentment? What's this word? How can it come into this prayer that I have prayed? I do not think I wish to be content. I am accustomed to complain about my state of being — a big brown bowl! There is no glory in my place nor in my task, so is it wrong that I should ask to be made into another kind of vessel? To be glass or

china or fine silver would be all my heart's desire. Never mind that in the fire I became what now I am, strong and able to endure the beating of the heavy spoons and ladles or the heating of the oven or the cleaning with abrasives and with brushes. A heavy-duty bowl am I. I can be used, misused, and then reused without concern for that I have been abused. And I would be content?

The hands of children and of novices often choose to use me, seldom handling me with grace. Not holding me in place, they often let me slip and slide while they affirm their faith in my durability by roughly spinning me around, beating and tapping on my side. They do not think that I can break; they have assumed that I can take whatever treatment they may give. Taken for granted, I know again that I am crude and coarse and called only for a common use. So should I be content.

Yes, Lord, I do confess that there

SYLVIA EVANS, the author of this article, takes an active part in the Body of Christ in Waycross, Georgia, where she is involved in writing and counseling, sharing extensively with women and young people.

are times when I feel sure of my own worth, but I am thinking now of my unworthiness. Why must You bring to mind the voice of the Master Chef calling for me, though I am unrefined? Yes, I concede that He must know His vessels. Should He choose, there are a thousand others He might use. There must be reasons for selecting me. Perhaps there is an honor saved for common vessels that can serve when other, finer vessels would not last through the demands of preparation processes. The mixing of the dough, the beating of the yolk, the mingling of the hot and cold — these I can take; I do not break, though I am coarse and old. And so He calls for me — The Master Chef! He chooses me! And when He uses me, I am secure within His hand. Spun and beaten but not afraid to yield to His demand, I feel a part of His deft skill. I have a purpose; He can accomplish what He will through me. I am a tool contributing to some great plan as He prepares to feed the hungry. If no man but He knows what I do and where I am; and if I never have a place on banquet table, still to know that He is able to find use for me, a crude and common vessel, makes me content to be — a big brown bowl! ♥

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This month's answers by Don Basham



Does the enemy sometimes attempt to waste a Christian's time and energy dealing with a "hopeless case," or is there no such thing as a hopeless case in God's eyes?



In one sense, there is no such thing as a "hopeless case" in God's eyes, since "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). Most of us are familiar with situations which seemed "hopeless" until God miraculously intervened. A terminal cancer patient suddenly recovered; a child born with some physical deformity receives a healing.

Nevertheless I feel a real danger facing many Christians today lies in the tendency to become over-zealous in "claiming" Bible promises in a kind of "I'm-going-to-twist-God's-arm-'til-I-get-what-I-want" approach to prayer. While there is certainly a proper place for persistence in prayer, one needs to know whether that persistence is born of the Holy Spirit or merely the product of human stubbornness. The stubbornness some Christians mistake for faith Satan uses to tie them to particular "pet prayer projects" which can impede, if not seriously impair, spiritual growth.

I know Christians who have missed the center of God's will for years because of a pre-occupation with some particular spiritual demand. They plead, claim, beg and bargain with God, becoming filled with frustration and resentment when that which they are trying "to have faith for" is not forthcoming. I remember an enthusiastic group of Christians who some years ago decided to claim "healing" for an amputee. They decided that with enough faith, they could pray him in a new leg. So far as I know, they are still praying and waiting.

While I believe completely in God's

power to heal and have seen God's miraculous power demonstrated in amazing ways in healing services, nevertheless I feel it is tragically naive to take on such a drastic "prayer project" unless one is *directly led by the Spirit to do so*.

Most of the dramatic healings I have witnessed have not been the result of prolonged and determined prayer. More often they have taken place during some meeting or service where there was a heavy anointing of the Spirit, or where someone or some group, *feeling led by the Spirit*, laid hands on the sick or infirm person and prayed expectantly. But what works on one occasion will not necessarily work on another. Each situation requires the wisdom and leading of the Holy Spirit.

Even Jesus did not carry on his healing ministry indiscriminately. He did not "look for prayer projects." In John chapter 5 we read how he came to the Bethesda pool which was ringed with many ill and infirm people. Yet he was led by the Holy Spirit to minister only to one man. He healed the lame man and then walked away, leaving the pool surrounded by other needy people. Did Jesus love the others less? No, indeed! *He was simply led by the Holy Spirit*, and the Spirit knew that in the divine purposes of God only one person at that pool was prepared to receive the ministry Jesus offered.



What should a married Christian's attitude be in his sexual relationship to his or her mate? What about the "anything goes in the marriage bed" theory?



We provide a fairly detailed answer in "The Case Against Perversion" on page 13.



How can you tell if God is nudging you to prophesy in a meeting? Does He tell you everything that you are to say or just give you a few words or sentences to begin with? How can you discern whether it is really God, or just your emotions, or even a satanic influence?



A basic spiritual principle needs to be applied in our understanding of how spiritual gifts are to be manifested. The principle is this: *All progress in the Christian life is by faith*. As I understand the operation of the gift of prophecy, God seldom overwhelms us with such a powerful revelation that we serve merely as a kind of dummy for a Divine Ventriloquist. Rather the "nudge" to prophesy will most often be so slight that it takes a certain boldness and courage to speak out.

God doesn't move on us in a way which violates our free will. He waits for us to choose to be obedient to His leading. Frankly, I'm suspicious anytime I hear a person say, "God *made* me say that," or "I just *had* to speak out!" The devil or an unholy spirit may compel, but the Holy Spirit *never* compels.

More often than not the Holy Spirit will prompt us only with a spiritual thought, or a sort of inner quickening, or even a brief verse of scripture. But the whole prophecy seldom is made known to us until we begin to speak.

This means we are seldom sure of the exact content or even whether or not it is God until we actually speak forth the words. We have to run the risk of being "in the flesh" — in other words, making a mistake.

But if we are mistaken or are in error, (which will not happen too often) God has a means to check on

INSIGHTS

"To what extent iniquity abounds in the world, to such an extent the kingdom of God, which brings along with it perfect righteousness, is not yet come."

— John Calvin

"A disciple is one who hears truth from God, puts it into practice, and observes in his life the resulting qualitative improvement."

— Carl Ellis

"Eternal life is not merely a description of duration, but it is a description of the quality of life."

— E. Stanley Jones

"Satan is never going to bomb you unless you start getting close to the strategic center — Jesus Christ."

— Donald Grey Barnhouse

the prophecy. It is to be evaluated or judged by those who hear (1 Cor. 14:29, 1 Thess. 5:19–21).



Is birth control of all kinds objectionable to God? Is it naive to simply "trust the Lord?"



This is a most controversial question and good Christians have radically differing opinions about it. Traditionally, the Roman Catholic Church has opposed all "artificial" methods of preventing conception as outside God's will, but that position is under severe attack today from many Roman Catholics themselves.

The traditional Protestant view, backed by the conviction that sexual union in marriage is desirable in and of itself and is not meant merely for the procreation of children, approves various artificial means of birth control as right and valid. (I do not include abortion here which is a serious and controversial matter all on its own.)

Yes, I believe it is naive to simply

"trust the Lord" concerning birth control. For a couple to say "We'll just trust the Lord — if He wants us to have a child we will, if not, nothing will happen" is to invite an unwanted pregnancy. Conception occurs by a natural physical process. To expect God to prevent that natural process by some miraculous intervention is a dangerous and unscriptural presumption.



Should a meeting of Spirit-led Christians ever be structured or planned, or should it be totally spontaneous and left up to the Lord?



I'm not sure I've ever been in a meeting of "Spirit-led" Christians. To be Spirit-baptized does not automatically mean one is "Spirit-led." Sometimes he may be led by the Spirit, many times he is led by his own thoughts and ideas, even though he may say, "I feel the Lord leading me to . . ."

Practically speaking, things which are "totally left up to the Lord"

seldom turn out right. A meeting "left up to the Lord" won't remain that way. Someone is bound to move into leadership, and it often proves to be merely the most aggressive person in the room.

Basically, anyone with enough authority to gather a group of Christians together should either exercise authority over the meeting once it begins or arrange to have someone in charge. Scripturally, such authority or oversight is a man's responsibility, delegated to the elders.

Oversight of a meeting can be exercised without any "structures" which would intrude or impede the flow of the Spirit in the meeting. Unstructured or spontaneous meetings without oversight can easily dissolve into confusion or lead to carnal abuse of the gifts of the Spirit. ☞

Each month *New Wine* receives questions from our readers covering a variety of topics and issues. If you have questions for this feature, send them to Questions and Answers, c/o *New Wine* Magazine, P.O. Box 22888, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315.

BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS

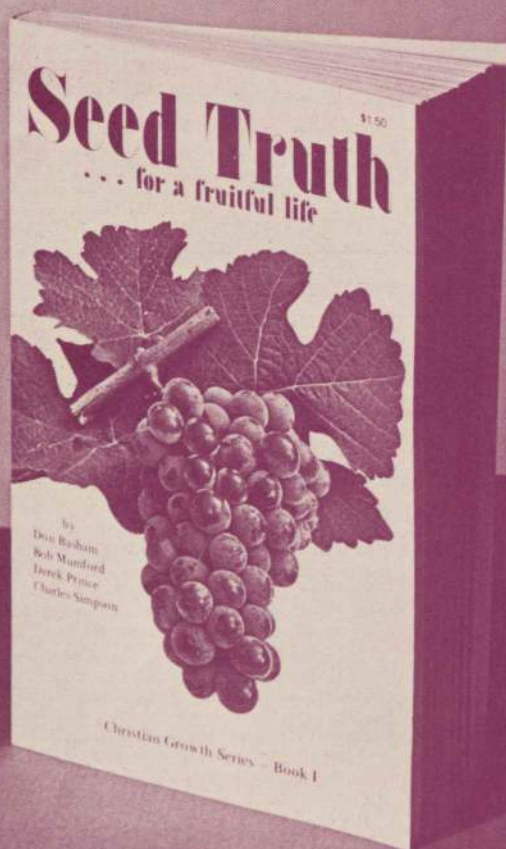
(1) Male and female created he them; a. And God blessed them; b. Be fruitful and multiply; c. it was very good. (2) It is *not* good; a. He was alone; b. A help meet. (3) a. The man leaves his father and mother; b. He cleaves unto his wife; c. They shall be one flesh. (4) God. (5) "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." (6) Adam *knew* Eve his wife. (7) Pleasure. (8) "His left hand should be under my head and his right hand should embrace me." (9) This is a great mystery. a. The relationship of Christ and the church. (10) As Christ loved the church; a. Gave himself for it; sanctified it; cleansed it by the washing of water by the Word. b. As they love their own bodies; c. Nourishing and cherishing. (11) Honor. (12) Marriage is honourable; a. Undeified. (13) In sanctification and honor; a. In the lust of concupiscence. (14) a. Render due benevolence to each other; b. Each has power over the other's body; c. Do not defraud one another. (15) a. It should be by mutual consent; b. Only for a time; c. Come together again to avoid being tempted. (16) To avoid fornication. (17) Flee fornication; a. Fleshly lusts. (18) Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

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