



YOUR FIRST MINISTRY

Loving Your Wife (or Husband)

1 Timothy 3:1-2a; Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:3-5

1 TIMOTHY 3:2 *[T]he husband of one wife...*

1 PETER 3:7 *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

Prayer is not our first ministry because if we are not living with our wives in a kind and understanding way those prayers are being hindered.

A “one woman man” refers more to _____ than to marital status. Certainly it would prohibit polygamy, but it also requires a man to be completely faithful to his wife.

Is Marital Faithfulness a Problem in Ministry Today?

The failure of pastors or missionaries to be committed to their wife has put more men out of the ministry than any other sin.

What is the apostle saying?

This spiritual leader is to be devoted in his heart and mind to the woman who is his wife. He loves her. He desires her. He thinks only of her. He fights temptations that would draw him away from his wife. Timothy was in Ephesus, where sexual temptation was rampant. Paul says, “Timothy, only put men in the ministry who have a passionate commitment to their wives.”

It is a daily choice to be madly in love with your mate. Paul says, “Timothy, be faithful to your wife. Timothy, maintain sexual purity in your thought life and conduct.”

DISMAL DISCOURAGING STATISTICS

PASTORS:

- 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention in their churches.
- 4,000 new churches begin each year, but over 7,000 churches close.
- 80% of seminary and Bible school graduates who enter the ministry will leave the ministry within the first five years.
- 90% of pastors said their seminary or Bible school training did only a fair to poor job preparing them for ministry.

PASTORS' MARRIAGES:

- _____% of pastors' marriages will end in divorce.
- Almost 40% polled said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry.
- 80% believe pastoral ministry has affected their families negatively.

- 33% say that being in ministry is an OUTRIGHT HAZARD to their families.
- _____% of pastors do not regularly pray with their spouses.

PASTORS' WIVES:

- _____% of pastors' wives feel their spouse is overworked.
- _____% of pastors' wives wish their spouse would choose another profession.
- A majority of pastor's wives surveyed said the most destructive event that has occurred in their marriage was the day they entered the ministry.

Sources: www.maranathalife.com; www.hiswayministries.org

DON'T BE A STATISTIC, BE AN OVERCOMER! (REVELATION 2 & 3)

Seven times our Lord gave 7 promises, "To him that overcometh."

JOHN 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

EPHESIANS 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.*

As God uses you to build His church, do not neglect your first ministry – Love your Wife! The success of your marriage comes down to the daily choices that both you and your wife make each day.

God says, "Husbands, love your wives." The only command given to the husband in this passage. In fact, the Bible never tells a husband to tell his wife to submit. The Bible tells him to love her.

Every year in the USA there are just over one million divorces granted by our court system – one million men and one million women are divorced.

What do you think are the most common mistakes/sins that Christian men commit that lead to the break up of their marriage?

- Failure to be a spiritual leader
- Does not communicate
- Does not show love and affection to his wife
- Leads the family into bankruptcy
- Adultery
- Verbal and Physical Abuse

HOW TO BECOME A SPIRIT FILLED LEADER AND LOVER (EPHESIANS 5)

Many men including pastors, stop romancing their wives because of...

1. A REFUSAL TO _____ YOUR SPOUSE

There is an offense that creates a hurt. From hurt we can quickly go to unforgiveness that turns to bitterness and finally a desire for vengeance.

You can follow the steps – Hurt, unforgiveness, bitterness, and vengeance.

2. A REFUSAL TO BE THE HUSBAND GOD COMMANDS US TO BE.

HOW TO LOVE YOUR WIFE?

1. _____ you love her, everyday.
2. _____ your love her, everyday.

There is a great misunderstanding about love.

Some say love is:

1. Words Only - All talk, & only talk.
2. Actions Only – “Just do it”
3. Emotions Only, “Feelings without Action.”

What does the Bible say?

1. Jesus Loved with Words

JOHN 15:12 *I have loved you.*

2. Jesus Loved in Action

JOHN 15:13 *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

3. Jesus Loved with Feelings

JOHN 11:35 *Jesus wept.*

He showed his feelings of love at the tomb of Lazarus.

“THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES” BY GARY CHAPMAN

1. Words of _____

1 Corinthians 8:1, Love edifies & builds up

2. Gift Giving

EPHESIANS 5:25 *Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

3. Acts of _____

1 JOHN 3:18 *My little children, let us not love in word only, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

4. _____

MARK 3:14 *And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.*

5. _____ & Closeness

Mark 10:13-16, Jesus picked up children...

v. 13, "...and they brought young children to him, that he should touch them."

v. 16 "...and He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

Your #1 Love Language _____

Your Wife's #1 Love Language _____

3. PRACTICE THE BIBLICAL LOVE OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13

What is the Success of your Ministry?

The Success of your ministry is revealed by the countenance of your wife's face and the _____ of your children.

3 JOHN 4 *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth,*

Marriage is a _____. "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Enjoy it now – because it won't last!

SUGGESTED READING:

Your Family/God's Way, by Wayne Mack
A great pastor's guide for couple's counseling.

The Myth of the Greener Grass, by Allan J. Petersen
Family counselor Petersen speaks frankly about extramarital affairs and offers both preventive and healing measures.

Love Must be Tough, by Dr. James Dobson
Dr. Dobson attacks the root problem of most marital crises -- a lack of respect.

Point Man, by Steve Farrar
Encouragement for Christian men to lead their families successfully through hazards and ambushes such as divorce, promiscuity, suicide, and drug addiction.

Moments Together for Couples, Dennis and Barbara Rainey
Christian Couples Devotional Book

Love and Respect, by Emerson Eggerichs

1001 Ways to be Romantic, by Gregory J. P Godek,
Romantic Ideas for Marriage