

## Study 0079

Our last study, took us through the rest of what God intended for marriage, and concluded that the most important input for any marriage to function as God intended, is for the Parties concerned, the man and his wife, to live, first and foremost, as Christians individually, then, as a couple who are Christians! We also studied how we can conduct ourselves to accomplish God's intention for marriage as follows:

6. ***There must be trust between the man and his wife.*** God intends that the man and his wife, who are from two different backgrounds, experiences, exposures, etc., should live in absolute trust of, and openness to, each other (**Genesis 2:25**). But to be able to trust each other, they must first have trusted in God; and before they can be genuinely open to themselves, they must first have turned to Christ, and be open to the Holy Spirit and to the word of God. Such trust and openness before God eliminates treachery—deceitfulness, craftiness, cunningness, etc. (**Proverbs 3:27-30**) on one hand; and on the other hand, makes it possible for either Party to be able to share their past life (even before they were born again, if it becomes necessary), and, be ready to admit their faults (including sin) to God and each other (**James 5:16a; Proverbs 28:13**).
7. ***Godly seed should be the fruit of marriage.*** Fulfilling God's injunction to "*Be fruitful and multiply ...*" (**Genesis 1:28**), a couple must first get married, then, remain faithful to God and each other, and, maintain a sanctified home. And when children are born to them, they must both be involved in raising them up (training and discipline) as prescribed in Scripture; the man more so: in the fear and nurture of God, not sparing the rod of correction (**Proverbs 20:30**); and, disciplining them promptly, and while they are young and mouldable.
8. ***Sexual purity must be maintained in marriage.*** One of the fundamental intentions of God for marriage is the avoidance of sexual immorality (**1 Corinthians 7:1-5**). To maintain sexual purity in marriage, therefore, a couple should not deny each other sexual intercourse within reason; they should avoid hanging out with sexually immoral people (especially if such people claim to be believers), and, flee sexual immorality (no lustful look at other women/men, no marriage to a divorcee, and, above all, be satisfied with your spouse); and, flee youthful lusts (no hanging out with those engaged in youthful lusts, no lewdness in dressing, and no sexually explicit conversations and texts). Also, decency should attend sexual intercourse with each other, and the marriage bed should be undefiled.
9. ***A life-long union is the goal.*** God's intention is that a marriage union expire only when either the husband or wife departs this world (**Romans 7:1-3**). To achieve this goal, couples should not use sex as a weapon; and, divorce should never feature as an option no matter what. Also, hardness of heart which is shutting oneself against God's word and counsel should be dealt with decisively. Wives should submit to their own husbands as to the Lord, in everything; show respect to them; and spend more time developing the inner (spiritual) man. Husbands should lovingly lead their wives with understanding, being mindful of her frame and raise their children in the fear of God.

It is important to note that unless all nine parts (from Studies 0076 and 0077) of the intention of God for marriage is realized in our marriages, we cannot be said to have fulfilled God's purpose for our marriage. In this study, we shall be looking at the basis for fulfilling God's purpose for marriage, by focusing on the model He has given us.

### **Scripture text: Ephesians 5:22-33; Galatians 2:20**

The union between Christ and the Church is a perfect illustration of our model of the union that God intends for a man and his wife. To understand and appreciate our first scripture text we must understand that the entire epistle speaks about the Church and its relationship with Christ. The Holy Spirit, through the epistle to the Ephesians tells us of God's intention of uniting Jews and Gentiles who put their trust in Christ for salvation into one Body, the Church, on one hand; and then, uniting the Church with Christ as Head, on the other hand. We are told of how we can maintain the union between Christ and His body (the Church): it begins with doing away with the old man, and then, putting on the new man. It is the new man, which after God is created in true holiness and righteousness that makes the unity in the body of Christ, and the union with Christ, a well fitting one. Such unity and union affects every relationship between believers on one hand, and believers and unbelievers on the other hand; and includes our roles as individuals, wives, husbands, children, servants, bosses, etc. Thus, for a man and woman to fulfil their respective roles and responsibilities in marriage, they must have Christ on their inside (**Ephesians 4:17ff**)! Our second scripture text leads us into how we should then live if Christ is living in us.

There are many Christians who are in church, but not in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). If marriages involving Christian are to fulfil their intended purpose, the person who claims to have believed in Jesus for salvation, must surrender their bodies for Christ to indwell (**Ephesians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 6:16**). Although many people come to the Lord Jesus for salvation, and have said the "sinner's prayer", or confessed Jesus Christ as their Saviour, they are still living the life they were living before they came to Christ for salvation. So, when such people want to get married, their choice of a life partner, and their marriage ceremonies are usually based on worldly principles, rather than on the principles of God. Their marriages are in accordance to what they have seen or read, usually, in the world. If we are to be able to do or live like Christ, therefore, we must become like Christ (**John 1:12**). The Phillip N.T. translation of **Romans 12:2** states, "*Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.*"

Every believer in Christ was born with the self-life, which is what is called, the natural man, the old man, the sinful, evil, or, Adamic nature; and is easily adaptable to this world, being of this world (**Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 8:5-8; John 15:19**). The self-life is self-centered, strong-willed, mindful of earthly or worldly things (**1 John 2:15-16**), uninterested in any other person except it is beneficial to him, and is enmity against God (**James 4:4**). When the self-life is in a marriage, it focuses on itself to the exclusion of the other Party in the marriage. And if the other Party in the marriage will not give in to his/her selfish demands, the self-life will either seek to enforce it in his/her strength (beatings, manipulative shedding of tears, insults, getting sexual satisfaction from other sources, etc.) or seek divorce (the result of hardness of heart or a strong will). The natural man is, thus, only interested in what it can get for itself from the marriage.

But when a person comes to the saving knowledge of Christ, and is born again, or, born from above (**John 3:3, 5; 1:12-13**), the self-life does not, unfortunately, self-destruct. It remains very active, until we knowingly and deliberately kill it (**Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:13-15; Galatians 5:24; 6:14**)! The death of the self-life or the natural man was accomplished through the cross of Christ (**Colossians 2:14-15**), but it is manifested in a man's life through revelation knowledge (**Romans 6:6; 2 Corinthians 5:14b**). Until we recognize that the old man is rotten (**Romans 7:14-24**), corrupting our lives (**Ephesians 4:22**), and making us live far below God's ordained level for us, we will continue to live at that level (**Galatians 5:19-21**); but when we come to this realization, then we are able to receive God's grace to live the life of the new man (**Luke 15:11-24; Romans 8:1-4**).

However, because of the resilience of the old man, the old man must be killed daily as we live in this world (**Galatians 5:16-17; Luke 9:23; 1 Corinthians 15:31**).

The new life, which was given at salvation is manifested and beneficial in marriage, when it is lived by faith in Christ Jesus (**Romans 6:1-7; Galatians 2:20-21**)! This new life is Christ's life in you, and is also known as the new man, or, the crucified life. The crucified life is a God-centered life which seeks to please God, and is the manifestation of Christ in an individual's life (**Philippians 2:3-11; 1 Corinthians 2:16**). When the new life manifests in a man, it brings him to the same purpose and direction as God. Only the new man is able to live as God wants (**Ephesians 4:17-32**), and manifest God's intended plan in marriage!

### **CONCLUSION**

Have you been living the life of the \_\_\_\_\_ which is dependent on the senses, or, the life of the \_\_\_\_\_ which is based on faith? In reality, only the \_\_\_\_\_ can get married according to God's purpose, and stay married as God intended. The person who lives the \_\_\_\_\_ is the one who can truly live out his or her role in marriage. But when a person still has the \_\_\_\_\_, he or she will continue to experience frustrations in marriage! So, let us all go to \_\_\_\_\_ and be \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ. We will be unable to move forward in our marriages as God intended, until we do just that! Please note that the \_\_\_\_\_ is also applicable in every area of your life.