

Study 0091

Before we proceed to the new study, let us review our study on “*The True Value of Marriage*” which ended our study on Marriage. We saw that the true value of marriage lies in its critical place as God’s fighting unit against the devil, his host, and his kingdom of darkness. The effectiveness of marriage as a fighting unit in the kingdom of God is in the unity of the couple themselves on one hand, and their individual and joint agreement with God on the other hand. Thus, **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** states, “*Two are better than one, ... If one prevail against him, two shall withstand him, and a threefold cord is not quickly broken*”.

The marriage union as ordained by God, in which the couple are united, can be likened to a synergetic union where the mathematical expression “1+1=3” holds true. This expression is not really an inequality in Christian marriage, because God is the unseen “1” which makes the arithmetic correct! Also, Christian marriage can be likened to an ‘alloy’, which is what you get when you chemically combine two metals to produce a third metal, or an alloy (which is a substance that is far better in strength and quality than the two metals from which it is obtained). Thus, the union of a man and his wife is one in which differences are used advantageously for the benefit of their union, their offspring, and the kingdom of God! Such benefits manifest as they bring forth and raise up godly seed (**Exodus 23:26-30; Jeremiah 29:1-14**); lift up one another in times of discouragement and despondency (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Proverbs 27:17**); obtain readily available help from each other in times of need, and provide warmth for each other, and thereby eliminate sexual immorality (**1 Kings 1:1-4**); and, are able to withstand, and overcome the enemy of their souls (**Deuteronomy 32:30; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-19**).

Indeed, the value of a united Christian marriage is an indispensable and great arsenal in the hands of God (**Jeremiah 51:20-23**). This is one reason why we find the devil paying special attention to creating disunity among Christian couples (**Matthew 12:25**), as well as seek to make them rebel against God, and be thus separated from Him (**Numbers 25:1-9; 31:16; Acts 5:1-10; Isaiah 59:1-2**). The devil’s fight also extends to young widows and the unmarried. His plan is for them not to get married, but live carelessly and contrary to God’s word. Hence, the unmarried must not pay attention to seducing spirits and the doctrines of devils which among others forbid from marrying (**1 Timothy 4:1, 3**). Married couples who are believers in Christ indeed, should stay true to the word of God, and bury their differences in Christ, recognize that they are very critical in the spiritual battle in God’s kingdom, and go all out to overcome and defeat the devil and his cohorts, by ensuring that their union with each other, and with God, is intact at all times!

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE MARKETPLACE

As we begin this new theme, “**The Christian in the Marketplace**”, it is our sincere prayer that God’s purpose in bringing us this study series shall be accomplished in our lives, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

There are certain concepts in Christendom that have taken a bashing today due in part, to wrong doctrines/teachings and incorrect/private interpretation of scriptures, and in part, to incorrect perception and practice in everyday living. For instance, there are very many people who believe that if a person regularly attends church, or in fact, hums a Christian chorus, he or she is a Christian. Also, some believe that if a person sings in a church choir, plays an instrument, or is engaged in some professional capacity in a church, then he or she is a Christian. There is also the perception that anyone who says “Praise the Lord”, “Glory be to

God”, “... in Jesus name”, and such clichés ascribed to Christianity, is a Christian. Then, there are those people who believe that if a person is a bible carrier, and speaks to people about God (whether correctly or incorrectly), he or she is a ‘Pastor’; or if he or she goes from one church to another without being committed to any, then they say he or she is an ‘Evangelist’. This kind of wrong concept has made several people to start churches and ministries, giving themselves all manner of titles along the way. There are also those who use ‘Christianese’ (Christian language, vocabulary, or clichés) to deceive the unsuspecting, so as to propagate their business transactions, which may be anything but Christian. These are clearly manifested in public transport ‘preaching’ where a person gets up ostensibly to preach the good news of the kingdom of God, but ends up selling some drug, book, etc. There is also now what we can call, “the herbalist in a suit” who uses the name of Jesus Christ for all sorts of things which have nothing to do with God, His Christ or His kingdom!

And when we talk of the marketplace, some people think that the marketplace is the place of transacting business; but this is only a part of its meaning. There are others who say that the marketplace is the ‘secular’ (a term which is used to distinguish non-church activity from church activity, which is termed ‘spiritual’). Such distinguishing nomenclature, unfortunately, erroneously suggests that there is a clear distinction and separation between a Christian’s spiritual or church life and his secular or non-church life. This is not true! This is why we hear comments like, “Let us leave Christianity aside and talk business”, or, “Church is church, business is business”. And those who do not separate between business and church or the secular and the spiritual, do so, so that their priority, which is business or the secular, does not suffer. Hence, these ‘secular Christians’ only pay lip-service to church meetings, and are more likely to attend ‘breakthrough meetings’ or ‘business peoples’ meetings in church, rather than a regular fellowship where God is worshipped!

Then there is the expectation that Christians in the marketplace must act or conduct themselves in a manner that ensures that the people they interact with in the marketplace are pleased with them at all times; otherwise, they are said to be acting unchristian. Such misunderstanding of what the Christian in the marketplace is all about is partly responsible for the wrong behaviour and unethical practices of many Christians in the marketplace. It is not uncommon to see Christians who justify bribe-taking, bribe-giving, usury (giving loans at exorbitant interest rates), the payment of kickbacks to secure ‘lucrative contracts’, and so on, who see nothing absolutely wrong with such practices, especially since they will pay their tithes on the proceeds. The result of all these is that Christians who are not practicing such unethical things may be wondering whether they are doing the right thing by not joining the band wagon, especially, since many so-called ‘churches’ today, preach, teach, and encourage such things. And to make matters worse, those who are involved in such unethical practices seem to be doing better than those who are not! It is our hope that as we study the subject of “**The Christian in the Marketplace**”, we shall be able to correctly define who a Christian is, what the Marketplace is, and, what is expected of the Christian in the Marketplace.

ASSIGNMENT

Please supply scripture texts as may be appropriate and relevant to your answers.

1. Who is a Christian?

2. What is the Marketplace?

3. What principles should govern a Christian in the marketplace or how should a Christian conduct himself/herself in the Marketplace?

4. Please carefully and critically study **John 8:31-59**, and note your observations.
