

Normalities and Abnormalities of Christian Relationships in Marriage and Singleness

“¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.¹⁸ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.¹⁹ Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.²⁰ Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.²¹ Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged” (Colossians 3:16-21).

Colossians 3:16-21 gives the foundational truths for *normal* Christian relationships. Normal means the highest standard. There are foundational truths for the wife to have a normal relationship with her husband (Col. 3:18, compare Eph. 5:22-24). Submission teaches Lordship. It is the normal (God ordained) responsibility of the wife in the family to be in submission to her husband thereby teaching Lordship to her family, children and world.

“²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Ephesians 5:22-24).

There are foundational truths for the husband to have a normal relationship with his wife (Col. 3:19; compare Eph. 5:25-29)

“²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,²⁷ 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.²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Ephesians 5:25-29).

The word “love” means the extreme of self sacrifice. It is the normal (God ordained) responsibility of the husband in the family situation to sacrifice his own personal desires in order to meet the needs of his wife and family. He thereby teaches and establishes the principal of self sacrifice and teaches his family to love others Biblically.

There are foundational truths for children to have a normal relationship with their parents (Col. 3:20; compare Eph. 6:1-3).

“¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.² Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)³ That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Obedience and honor are two central essences of worship. They flow naturally from the established attributes of submission and self sacrifice. The opposites are rebellion and selfishness. Therefore, the God ordained norm for children is for them to possess the attributes taught them in the normal (God ordained) marriage relationship of submission and self-sacrifice. When these are established, they will result in the proper character traits of honor and obedience. In turn this will result in children who find it the norm, rather than the abnorm, to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord, to be governed by His Word and to honor and obey Him in every aspect of life. The goal is the continual worship and praise of God, not just in *lip service*, but in *life service*.

If the norm is not realized, the abnorm will result. Wives not submissive will produce rebellious children. An example is the effect of women's lib society. Husbands who do not practice self-sacrificing will produce selfish children. Suicide is the epitome of selfishness. It is the highest among teenagers today. Suicide is not a cry for help as much as it is a cry for order and absolutes.

God's norm for marriage (norm means the God ordained ideal)

“⁴ And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4-6).

Man and woman were especially **designed** for each other. In marriage, God actually unites two people spiritually as one.

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

“⁶ But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. ⁷ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; ⁸ And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mark 10:6-9).

Marriage is intended to be monogamous. Verse 7 does not say *to his wives*. Verse 8 does not say *they three or four shall be one flesh*. Marriage is intended to be an unbroken partnership. In a partnership, partners do not do the same things. They use their individual qualities to compliment what the other lacks. They complete each other. Example: it is a fact of social behavior that men make decisions based upon fact more than emotions. The opposite is true of women.

Marriage is for this life only. “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” (Matthew 22:30). This verse contradicts Mormon beliefs. Verses stating this same thing are Mark 12:25 and Luke 20:35.

“For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven” (Mark 12:25).

“But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage” (Luke 20:35).

Anytime a proclaimed *new revelation* (such as the Book of Mormon) contradicts *old revelation*, throw out the new in its totality.

“³² And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. ³³ For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (I Corinthians. 14:32-33).

Any new prophecy is subject to evaluation as to its truth by comparison to the established truth of the established prophets (verse 32). God is not the author of confusion. He is consistent in truth (verse 33).

Avoiding marriage abnormalities

Because relationships are based upon social interaction, or more aptly social inter-reaction, the norm is only realized when all parties understand and are in compliance to absolute Biblical principles. When this is not realized, abnormal relationships result. This happens when people do not practically apply the ideals of God for their lives. They are not equally “transformed by the renewing of their minds.” They don’t grow at the same levels. They are not equally yielded to the Spirit of God.

Biblical principles for eliminating abnormalities in marriages and other relationships

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness” (II Corinthians 6:14).

What is an “unbeliever”? The word comes from the Greek word *apistos* (ap'-is-tos). It means to be unfaithful or faithless, (not to be trusted, perfidious), incredible, unbelieving, incredulous, without trust (in God).

This first and primary principal says that salvation is not enough for a basis for a relationship. Just as in the church, co-operation with others is not determined by a testimony of faith in Christ, but by the exhibition of faithfulness to Christ by obedience to His Word. So it should be in choosing a husband or wife. It is not enough to have the same God; couples must have the same Lord.

Can Jesus be Lord if we say we have faith in the Word of God as a governing force of life and we do not live accordingly? Couples need to test each other before they are married to see if both are truly believers in the same sense.

“¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. ² Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: ³ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. ⁴ Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. ⁵ They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. ⁶ We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (I John 4:1-6).

I John 4:5 gives us a test for those who profess Christ, but do not allow Him to be Lord. They will be preoccupied with the things of the world, rather than Christ. I John 4:6 is another test. If they are God’s, they hear God’s Word. The word “hear” in this context means to listen with the intention of obeying what is heard. This is the testing ground for genuineness or pretense. To hear God’s Word not being intent on obeying it is self deception regarding the Lordship of Christ.

“²¹ Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:21-22).

The overlying principle in all this is that couples should hold to the same belief systems governing life and its practice. If couples have different belief systems, they may profess to have the same God, but they will have different Lords.

The Lordship of Jesus centers on people following His teachings. If a couple disagrees on the meaning of those teachings, they will not be able to walk together through life. There will be constant conflict and the need for continual compromise. The Lord knows what He is talking about when He asks the question, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed” (Amos 3:3)?

It is imperative for couples to work at growing together spiritually. If they do not grow together, they will soon be growing apart. Couples not growing together will be two lives going in two separate directions, but heading for the same destiny, FAILURE!

Studies in the Epistle to the Colossians
Chapter Nineteen

Normalities and Abnormalities of Christian Relationships in Marriage and Singleness

1. What does the word *normal* mean from a Biblical context? _____
 - A. What is the word that describes a wife's *normal* relationship with her husband? _____
 - B. What is the word that describes a husband's *normal* relationship with his wife? _____
 - C. What are the two words that describe a child's *normal* relationship with his parents? _____
 - D. If the norm is not realized, what will result? _____
2. Read Matthew 19:4-6. What are some of the Biblical *norms* (ideals) for marriage?
 - A. Men and women are _____ for each other
 - B. Marriage is intended to be mon_____. (*The answer is not: monotonous.*)
 - C. Marriage is intended to be an _____ relationship.
3. Will marriages continue after death and resurrection? _____
4. Besides the obvious physical things, what is another way God has designed men and women differently so that they can complete each other? _____
5. What happens when couples fail to spiritually grow at to same levels of walk with the Lord? _____
6. Read I Corinthians 6:14. From your understanding of the Greek word translated "unbeliever," can a believer ever be an unbeliever as well? _____
 - A. What principle should courting couples apply from this? _____
 - B. How can a couple profess to believe in the same God, but have different Lords? _____
7. Read I John 4:1-6. Although this text refers specifically to false teachers in the church, what are two tests for dating couples to test one another as to their relationship with the Lord?
 - A. Test One, verse 5: _____
 - B. Test Two, verse 6: _____
8. What is the answer to the Lord's question of Amos 3:3? _____
What will be the common destiny of two lives growing in separate directions? _____