

Men's Conference 2002

1 Peter 3:7 (KJV) 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.

1 Peter 3:7 (NLT) In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat her with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. If you don't treat her as you should, your prayers will not be heard.

- Socrates: "By all means marry. If you get a good wife, you'll become happy. If you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher."
- Modern culture is obsessed with our own happiness, and the hundreds of self-help books on the subject of improving your marriage reflect that. Most of us have discovered that these simple steps only work on a superficial level at best.
- For about 50 years Hollywood has been teaching us a myth that if I just find the right person then I'll live happily ever after. You may have walked down the aisle at your wedding thinking, "I'm going to live happily ever after!" but were you in for a big surprise!
- The fact is, even the best of relationships goes through ups and downs. You're not happy all the time in a relationship. You married a human being; you're friends with a human being. People get sick, we argue, we have misunderstandings, sometimes we're inconsiderate, sometimes things just don't go right. Life is not a constant honeymoon. Some days, to be honest, are just a complete disaster.
- **You know it's going to be a bad day when ...**
 - your horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell's Angels on the freeway.
 - your twin forgets your birthday.
 - you sink your teeth into a beautiful steak and they stick.
 - your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.
 - you wake up to discover that your water bed broke and then you realize that you don't have a water bed.
 - you put your clothes on backwards and they fit better.
- Whenever we look for relationships, whether it's in a marriage or a friendship, people say, "I just want to be happy." **But what you need in your relationships is not happiness; that's too temporary!**

- Most people think, "If only I could ..." or "If only someone else would ..." then I could be happy! They have DESTINATION DISEASE. But life is not a destination, it is a journey! You'll never "arrive!" The grass may be greener on the other side of the fence, but the water bill is higher over there too!
- After people make drastic changes, walk away from marriages, quit decent jobs, switch careers, move across the country, build a new house, buy a new car, or get a great promotion, THEY STILL HAVE TO LIVE WITH THEMSELVES, SO THEY ARE STILL UNHAPPY!
- **Nowhere in the Bible does God advise us to pursue happiness – because happiness is not a Biblical concept!**
- The word "happiness" is only used 22 times in the Bible (NT – 6X, OT – 16X), and it NEVER means what we have been conditioned to think of today! In the Bible, "happy" doesn't mean, "having everything go my way." It means, "blessed or favored by God."
- Happiness is extremely vulnerable!
 - Happiness wrapped up in people is insecure because people let us down.
 - Happiness centered in possessions is unsure because material goods deteriorate and depreciate.
 - Happiness based on health is unreliable because time takes its toll on all of us.
 - Happiness grounded in social achievement is unpredictable because a new star eventually eclipses you!
- Everything we build our happiness on eventually double-crosses us! That is why the world is full of cynical and discouraged people; this is why we live in an age of despair. People have tried everything to attain happiness, and it never lasts! Sinners are basically BORED!
- In contrast to happiness, the Bible uses the words JOY, JOYFUL or REJOICE over 160 times. And it teaches us that joy only comes from the Spirit of God living within us! This is how it works:

Happiness is external	Joy is internal
Happiness is temporary	Joy is permanent
Happiness is based on chance	Joy is based on choice
Happiness is based on circumstances	Joy is based on Christ

- When men look for HAPPINESS in their marriage, they are looking for things to be easy and comfortable. **But what if God designed marriage to make us HOLY more than to make us HAPPY?**

- The idea that FEELINGS are the most important indicator of a successful marriage has wrecked more marriages than anything else. YOUR FEELINGS ARE COMPLETELY UNRELIABLE!
- Much of the dissatisfaction men experience in marriage comes from expecting too much from it (like trying to get an old computer to run new software – the computer's not bad, it just can't give that much!).
- **When you want to get the largest portion of your life's fulfillment from your relationship with your spouse, you're asking too much of your marriage! YOUR WIFE CAN'T BE GOD, AND YOU WERE CREATED WITH A SPIRIT THAT CRAVES GOD. ANYTHING LESS THAN GOD, AND YOU'LL FEEL AN ACHE!**
- Because we do not understand this principle, we put incredibly unrealistic expectations on our marriages and on our other relationships. That's why the divorce rate is now slightly higher among Christians than among the general population!
- **Ephesians 5:25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
- GOD HIMSELF GAVE US A ROLE MODEL FOR A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE – BY GETTING MARRIED HIMSELF! In the Old Testament, He is a husband to Israel; in the New Testament, He is a husband to the church. God hates divorce because He is married, AND HE HAS BEEN FAITHFUL TO HIS BELOVED DESPITE EVERY CONCEIVABLE OBSTACLE!
 - God's marriage is a COVENANTAL MARRIAGE. (commitment to Abraham)
 - God's marriage is a PASSIONATE MARRIAGE. (Song of Solomon)
 - God's marriage is a FOUGHT-FOR MARRIAGE. (Hosea and Gomer)
 - God's marriage is a GIVING MARRIAGE. (He gave up all His rights on Calvary!)
 - God's marriage is a ONE-SIDED MARRIAGE. (His needs are often unmet, but He is still faithful!)
- 1 Peter 3:7 teaches us that when we get married, a condition is placed on our prayer life; we will never again be able to pray as a single man – God sees us through the eyes of our wives!
- **GENUINE SPIRITUALITY IS MARKED NOT BY THE QUALITY OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, BUT BY THE QUALITY OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS!**
- How does your wife see your relationship with God? The best wedding gift you received was the full-length mirror God gave you called your spouse! If He had enclosed a card it would have read, "Here's something to help you discover what you're really like!" MARRIAGE HOLDS UP A MIRROR TO MY SIN!
- Howard Hendricks told about a time he had just completed a sermon and an eager young man came up to him and called him a "great man." On the drive home, Hendricks turned to his wife and said, "A great man. How many great men do you know?" She answered, "One fewer than you think."
- As our marriages reveal our weaknesses, the temptation is to resent the spouse who is doing the revealing! COUPLES DON'T FALL OUT OF LOVE, THEY FALL OUT OF REPENTANCE. **BEHIND EVERY CASE OF MARITAL DISSATISFACTION LIES UNREPENTED SIN!** That's why one divorce often leads to another one – sin is still there!
- IF YOU'RE A CHRISTIAN, CHANGING SPOUSES IS NEVER AN OPTION, BUT CHANGING YOURSELF IS ALWAYS AN OPTION!
- Christianity is not about what we DO, but what we BECOME!
- Happiness in a relationship comes from receiving. **JOY IN A RELATIONSHIP DOESN'T COME FROM RECEIVING, IT COMES FROM GIVING!** Humanly speaking, you are wired to receive. But the Holy Ghost "rewires" you to give!
- **Acts 20:35b (CEV)** Remember that our Lord Jesus said, "More blessings come from giving than from receiving."
- **Psalms 16:11 (KJV)** Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
- When I don't have joy it's a warning light that I don't have God's presence in my life!
- **Proverbs 13:12 (KJV)** Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.
- **Proverbs 13:12 (NCV)** It is sad not to get what you hoped for. But wishes that come true are like eating fruit from the tree of life.
- FAITH is what we believe. HOPE is the benefit of what we believe (i.e. we believe in Heaven). **When all you have is a bunch of doctrines with no life change, it makes your heart sick! WE NEED TO TAKE HOME WHAT WE HAVE RECEIVED HERE!**