

## Keeping the Family Together

I believe there are two cooperating forces at work on the family today, one outside the family pulling us away from each other and the other pushing us apart. I want us to look at both in detail and see what we can do to overcome them.

### Resisting the Pull from Without – Prov. 5:15-23

God wants our attention and faithfulness to be directed toward our wives and husbands, but there are external temptations vying for our hearts.

Prov. 5:15 Drink water from your own cistern, And fresh water from your own well. 16Should your springs be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? 17Let them be yours alone, And not for strangers with you. 18Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love. 20For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress, And embrace the bosom of a foreigner? 21For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths. 22His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin. 23He will die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he will go astray.

What percentage of married Christian men are tempted by other women?  
100%

Pr 23:27 For a harlot is a deep pit, And an adulterous woman is a narrow well. 28Surely she lurks as a robber, And **increases the faithless** among men.

What percentage of married Christian women are tempted by other men?  
100%, though not likely by sex.

Is there some other temptation that draws women away from their family?  
Power, \$, gentleness, attention.

What can a husband do to fight against the temptation trying to draw him away from his wife and family? Never be alone with a woman, both so that no one will see you in a potentially compromising situation, and so that the woman would never be in a position to make false accusations.

Prov 6:20 My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother; 21Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. 22When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you. 23For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life, 24To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. 25Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her catch you with her eyelids.

26For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, And an adulteress hunts for the precious life. 27Can a man take fire in his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? 28Or can a man walk on hot coals, And his feet not be scorched? 29So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.

Prov. 7:6 For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, 7And I saw among the naive, I discerned among the youths, A young man lacking sense, 8Passing through the street near her corner; And he takes the way to her house, 9In the twilight, in the evening, In the middle of the night and in the darkness. 10And behold, a woman comes to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart. 11She is boisterous and rebellious; Her feet do not remain at home; 12She is now in the streets, now in the squares, And lurks by every corner. 13So she seizes him and kisses him, And with a brazen face she says to him: 14"I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows. 15"Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you. 16"I have spread my couch with coverings, With colored linens of Egypt. 17"I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. 18"Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses. 19"For the man is not at home, He has gone on a long journey; 20He has taken a bag of money with him, At full moon he will come home." 21With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him. 22Suddenly he follows her, As an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool, 23Until an arrow pierces through his liver; As a bird hastens to the snare, So he does not know that it will cost him his life.

1Th 4:4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

Job 31:1 "I Have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?"

Prov. 1:10 My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.

2Sa 11:1 Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. **But David stayed at Jerusalem.** 2Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. 3So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and **when she had purified herself from her uncleanness**, she returned to her house.

A few comments about this well-known event. First, why was David out there? Was there someplace else he was supposed to be? Does anything about the second part of verse four sound odd to you, considering what had just happened? Should we learn anything from these two items?

What about “mid-life crisis?”

What can a wife do to help her husband fight that temptation?

<sup>1Co 7:2</sup>But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. <sup>3</sup>Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup>The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. <sup>5</sup>Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

What can a woman do to fight the temptation that is drawing her away from her husband and family? Careful with priorities outside the home; don't allow things to take away from husband; think of Christ as the perfect Man; enumerate husband's good qualities; dress modestly

What can a husband do to help his wife fight that temptation?

The bottom line is two things: First, each spouse must discipline and control their eyes, thoughts, circumstances, and bodies to resist the temptation of fulfillment outside the marriage. Second, each spouse should do their part in making sure their mate has every reason not to stray or even think about straying.

## Reversing the Push from Within – 1 Peter 3:7; et al

This section contains the other side of the coin, the other cooperating force that could cause the marriage to come apart.

God wants us to stay with our spouses until death, but there are unwitting actions and attitudes on the part of each spouse unconsciously pushing us apart.

### God wants for us to stay together!

<sup>1Pet 3:7</sup>You husbands likewise, **live with your wives** in an understanding way...

<sup>Ge 2:23</sup>And the man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” <sup>24</sup>For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

<sup>Mal 2:14</sup>“Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. <sup>15</sup>“But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then, to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup>“For I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the LORD of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”

<sup>Mt 19:3</sup>And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?” <sup>4</sup>And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, <sup>5</sup>and said, ‘FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND **SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE**; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH?’ <sup>6</sup>“Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. **What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.**” <sup>7</sup>They \*said to Him, “Why then did Moses **command** to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?” <sup>8</sup>He \*said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart, Moses **permitted** you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. <sup>9</sup>“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

### Husbands are to love their wives, wives are to respect their husbands.

<sup>Eph. 5:25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; <sup>26</sup>that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup>for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of His body.

<sup>Eph. 5:33</sup>Nevertheless let each individual among you also **love his own wife** even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she **respect her husband**.

How can a husband love his wife? Be gentle with her, do not push her to do sexual things she doesn't feel comfortable with, give her interests fair play; show respect for her opinions; spend time with her; show appreciation for what she does; help with responsibilities; do not be abusive (physically, emotionally, verbally); do not speak to others about faults, weaknesses; do not expose secrets; be in tune with her love language; do things for her she can't or shouldn't do

<sup>Heb 13:4</sup>Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

How can a wife respect her husband? Do not nag; submit; do not allow disrespect from the children; do not compare him with others; do not try to change him; speak highly of him in front of others; do not take charge; put a “bow” in your hair; never correct him in front of others; don’t overload with a poorly timed to-do list; brag about his adequacy; don’t criticize his work;

Pr 21:19 It is better to live in a desert land, Than with a contentious and vexing woman.

Pr 25:24 It is better to live in a corner of the roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

Pr 27:15 A constant dripping on a day of steady rain And a contentious woman are alike;

Eph. 5:22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

What about those irritating things? What about pet peaves?

Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and **do not be embittered against them.**

What could cause a husband to become embittered against his wife?

### **Ideas to help make staying together easier:**

“Every day I ask myself, ‘What would others change about me?’” Andy Andrews

Every interaction we have with someone is either a deposit into that relationship’s bank or a withdrawal. Relationships end when the balance goes into the negative. It’s true about marriage, children, friends, everyone. We need to approach every interaction with a goal of it making a deposit into that relationship’s account.

### **Conclusion:**

What have you seen in yourself or your marriage that needs to be better?

What specific change are you going to make in your behavior that will stave off temptations outside your marriage?

What will you do to help your spouse resist temptations that would pull them away from you?

Would you communicate with your spouse that you are renewing your commitment to stay with them no matter what?

What will you do to better love or respect your spouse? To improve your “ease of living with?”