

The Lack of Intimacy in Marriageⁱ

G-d loved marriage so much that He not only created marriage and presided over the very first wedding, but also He took tremendous pleasure in pronouncing them husband and wife, commanding them to fill the earth and be happy. When the second man Adam came and he commissioned us to go and “repopulate the earth” and recover what Satan had stolen from the first man Adam, and when He chose a perfect representation of what His relationship between Yah and His People would be like, He chose marriage. The L-rd chose to be “married” to His people. He chose marriage to represent the relationship between the Lamb of G-d, the Son of G-d and the Believing Community, His Bridal Body.

A Satanic Strategy

If G-d so loved marriage that He chose it as His perfect analogy, then the flip side of that is Satan hates marriage with a passion. There is nothing Satan hates more than marriage. He will do everything in his power to destroy your marriage. Marriage takes a higher precedence in Satan’s strategy than children, because if he gets the couple, the children come for free. Satan also hates marriage because within the context of marriage, a husband and a wife create life and make more “like kind.” Satan and the all the angels (fallen and not fallen) cannot reproduce or create life. But a man and woman can bring forth seed. You see, even if the children are innocent and have nothing to do with the circumstances that lead a couple to break up and separate, the pain, the trauma, and the hurt that stay with those children is more acute because they say “what did I do to deserve this?” This in itself is enough justification for this being such an important part of Satan’s strategy.

Even more than the strategy itself, there is one category of people that get much more attention when it comes to marriage disharmony, the believing couple. The Satanists and New Age followers are involved in a conspiracy, even though they do not agree on everything with what each other believes, they have agreed to join their power and channel their Satanic prayers against ministers and their marriages. There are countries like Brazil where every Friday is a day of prayer and fasting for the Satanists with the sole purpose that in that day the marriages of believing leaders will crumble. The same is happening in the United States. We are at war. I am not saying this so all of you would say “oh no, then I better never get married.” Our purpose is to expose the strategy of kingdom of darkness with respect to marriages. You cannot fight the enemy if you cannot see them or if you do not know their strategy. The good news is that our L-rd loves marriage. When the L-rd puts a couple together, no one should separate them (take them apart). The good news is that all the resources of heaven and the Holy Spirit are available to married couples.

An area of concern today, while not as drastic as the breaking of marriages, is that of believing couples that remain together but they do have no intimacy—or not as much intimacy as they should or would like to have. I think this is Satan’s scheme. If he cannot destroy your marriage, he will undermine it to the point that ‘you put up with it.’ For the sake of the children, for the sake of the ministry, for the sake of your reputation. Here we have loveless marriages, men who are committing adultery with their jobs, if they are in the ministry, with their ministries and wives withdraw into child rearing and affairs of the house, or education. There is this huge gap between the husband and their wives and on the outside they look good, but deep down inside they are so empty because there is no intimacy. When that happens Satan has the upper hand on us. Every time I see someone who is harsh, that is lashing out, that is critical, who has no patience with people, that takes the strongest stands and hurts other people, I always find someone who has no intimacy in his marriage. Somebody that somehow is in some much spiritual pain that he takes even the good things and uses them to hurt people.

The good news is that G-d is the one who invented marriage. The good news is that the Bible tells us that a spouse is a gift from G-d (Scripture uses the term wife, but I believe it is applicable to both). Every time I use

this terminology, I can read in the eyes of so many husbands “if this is a gift from G-d, wow! I wonder what the devil will bring my way, you know” Why is it that so many people feel so strongly in a negative sense about marriage. We can often ask married people to “look at each other” and instead they shoot at each other. They do not turn and look at each other’s eyes, instead the husband does this kind of wide sweep while the wife waits and wonders “is he going to look at me or not?” One of the clearest symptoms of lack on intimacy in a marriage is that they longer look at each other’s eyes when they talk. If a spouse is a gift from G-d, why am I not enjoying His gift as much as I should?

Tracing Lack of Intimacy in Marriage to a Violation of a Scriptural Principle

Every time we deal with consequences that are negative, we have to identify the Biblical principle that we have violated. There is a Biblical principle in Deuteronomy 24:5 that is very clear: “*If a man has recently married his wife, he is not to be subject to military service; he is to be free of external obligations and left at home for one year to make his new wife happy.*” In other words when a man takes a wife, he is not to be charged with any extraordinary duties, nor to go out to war, but to stay home. Why? For one year? He is stay home to make his new wife happy. To the men that we ask to consider that their spouses are a gift from G-d we ask them to think back to their first year of marriage and to pick one word to describe that year. The word that most often is used to describe that first year of marriage is “hectic.” People say: “We were in our last year of college,” or “We married in between finals or semesters.” Then this couple took out a loan to get established. Then they both got jobs to deal with the loan. Then babies came so then they had to take out more loans to get established and be able to provide for the family. When they were coming out of those loans they had to take out more loans to send their kids to college. And it goes on and on... So that first year of marriage was not a good one, it was instead a very hectic and frantic year of marriage (and in many ways, so have the remaining years since the first one). Why is it that the Bible tells us so clearly in the Torah that we have to take a year to make our wives happy? For a lot of reasons, but among them is the fact that the Bible word for sexual relationships is the Hebrew word *yodea*, to know (intimately.) We read ‘and so and so, knew his wife...’ In our society, we have reduced sexual intimacy to something often understood purely at a physical level. But the Bible takes sexual relationships to the level of the soul, to ‘knowing each other.’ When you get married, that first year, that first month, that first week, and that first night, you are confronted with all your insecurities. You have never been with another person alone and here you are, totally exposed (literally and figuratively.) Unless you create the right environment, unless you provide your undivided attention to what is at hand, you are going to come out with something less than excellent.

The most common complaint in wives is: “My husband does not pay attention to me.” “When I talk, he doesn’t listen. When I complaint he tells me I am nagging him. There is absolutely no attention paid to me by my husband.” Well, it goes back to that first year. G-d has given Marilyn and me many, many victories, and you know what? It goes back to that first year. And there are areas in which we still struggle, and you know what? The struggles go back to defeats we suffered that first year. It goes back to that first year when I was not paying the attention due to Marilyn. When I was not devoting myself to making her happy, to understanding her. That is the reason why, if anyone is listening to a recording of this message or reading it on the web, and asking themselves “if a wife (spouse) is a gift from G-d, why am I not happy with them.” The answer is because in most cases you got to play with the toy before reading the manual. In so doing we have blown up a few fuses here and there. It is the man’s responsibility to make sure that the first year of marriage is anything but hectic. This is especially true in the ministry. If we do not give our wives the assurance that first year of marriage that they are a gift from G-d we are going to get to know, they cannot compete with G-d. If a husband gives his entire time to the ministry without an intimate relationship with his wife, Satan has an incredible upper hand. If you work for a secular company, your wife can get angry with the company and bring correction to the situation. But how can a wife be angry with G-d’s ministry? So many times we say, “honey the L-rd told me that we should move to Montana and start a beaver fur business there, what do you think?” What can she think? If G-d

said, what can anyone say in response? Should the woman respond “Do as you wish, my L-rd?” While I am using an extreme example here, I want to illustrate the point that the situation I described is lacking in sensitivity. There was no interaction and we do that time and again. There was only one-way communication and little if no consideration. Is there hope for marriage? Yes. G-d is interested in marriage. You see, G-d loves marriages. When we pray for marriages we pray according to the already stated Will of G-d. We want to present G-d’s solutions in the context of spiritual warfare because we can see more and more marriages turned around when we apply the power of G-d first to the situation.

Next Time: Two Commands – One Promise

In Ephesians chapter 5 and in 1 Peter 3 G-d gave two different commands with the same promise. Let us consider the substance of these passages as we salt the oats for a future message.

“Submit to one another in fear of the Messiah. Wives should submit to their husbands as they do to the Lord; because the husband is head of the wife, just as the Messiah, as head of the Messianic Community, is himself the one who keeps the body safe. Just as the Messianic Community submits to the Messiah, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. As for husbands, love your wives, just as the Messiah loved the Messianic Community, indeed, gave himself up on its behalf, in order to set it apart for God, making it clean through immersion in the mikveh, so to speak, in order to present the Messianic Community to himself as a bride to be proud of, without a spot, wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without defect. This is how husbands ought to love their wives - like their own bodies; for the man who loves his wife is loving himself. Why, no one ever hated his own flesh! On the contrary, he feeds it well and takes care of it, just as the Messiah does the Messianic Community, because we are parts of his Body. "Therefore a man will leave his father and mother and remain with his wife, and the two will become one." There is profound truth hidden here, which I say concerns the Messiah and the Messianic Community. However, the text also applies to each of you individually: let each man love his wife as he does himself, and see that the wife respects her husband.” Ephesians 5:21-33.

“In the same way, wives, submit to your husbands; so that even if some of them do not believe the Word, they will be won over by your conduct, without your saying anything, as they see your respectful and pure behavior. Your beauty should not consist in externals such as fancy hairstyles, gold jewelry or what you wear; rather, let it be the inner character of your heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit. In God's sight this is of great value. This is how the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves and submit to their husbands, the way Sarah obeyed Avraham, honoring him as her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not succumb to fear. You husbands, likewise, conduct your married lives with understanding. Although your wife may be weaker physically, you should respect her as a fellow-heir of the gift of Life. If you don't, your prayers will be blocked.” 1 Peter 3:1-7.

When we appear before the Judgment Seat of the Messiah, men are going to be asked one thing and women another. Men are going to have to give an account as to how they loved their wives. But women, on the other hand, are going to give an account as to how well they respected and honored their husbands. Men have to be commanded (Scripturally speaking) to love, while women are commanded to respect and honor. In a future message I would like to expand on this theme as we expose Satan’s strategy to destroy our intimacy in marriage. You see, in everything we are more than conquerors through the One who loved us, Messiah *Yeshua*.

ⁱ Adapted from Ed Silvano, 1992