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Build *joy* into YOUR MARRIAGE!

Here are keys to make your marriage live and grow! Here are practical, usable guidelines to help you BUILD your marriage into a precious relationship of JOY and beauty.

by Roderick C. Meredith

WE LIVE in a *sick* society! There is more filth than ever before being shown in the movies, on television, and in hundreds of books and magazines!

Our society is truly *sick* in many ways. The divorce statistics bear this out. Most American marriages are frustrated and terribly unhappy. They are literally ripping apart at the seams! It is a statistical fact that almost *one in three marriages is breaking up in divorce!*

And it's all because the inherent corruption, tension, competition and filth of our *sick society* is pouring over into millions of marriages.

The Loose Marriage

Recent articles show this is not even the beginning of the story. For you see, this is the age of the "*loose marriage*" where mates go out and cheat on each other — where husbands have their mistresses and wives have their lovers.

Thousands of couples are even *wife-swapping!* This way they can avoid going through divorce proceedings, and save lawyer's fees and court costs, as well as retain income tax deductions.

Yes, they'll legally stay together in most cases. But their marriages are like being in an armed camp with an armed truce!

Our Marriages Affected

Most laymen don't fully realize how widespread these marriage problems are, and how many *millions* of marriages are affected.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of our readers' marriages are affected to some degree. This is the underlying problem in many of *your* frustrations — *your* unhappiness and lack of joy and well-being.

An unhappy marriage is also the underlying cause of *many child-rearing problems*. If you are not happy in your marriage, that affects your children. They're not deaf, dumb and blind. They can see your unhappiness, squabbling and hate. They can see the selfishness on the part of each mate, and they realize that you are not practicing what you preach.

Yet many *pretend* to be "happy" and "successful" while this filth and hate — this arguing and constant bickering — exist in their marriages!

Marriage Problems Revealed

Covetousness is the root of many marriage problems. Paul said: "The love of money is a root [as it ought to be translated] of all evils" (I Tim. 6:10). When people lust for and covet

more and more material things, they usually go into debt. The resultant frustrations can and do cause serious marriage problems!

On the other hand, some wives have inconsiderate husbands who are not able to get a right balance. The tendency of some men is to be inconsiderate and overbearing toward their wives and children.

Then there are some rebellious wives whose husbands may be sincerely trying to do the right thing, but are a little too meek or mild. They've let their wives get a head start when they were first married, and now these wives won't "let" their husbands take the lead as they should. Such a rebellious wife tries to hold her husband down. Some would literally break up the marriage, if the husband ever did try to dominate.

This is a *STENCH* in the nostrils of God — if it exists in *your* marriage!

I'm not saying that these problems affect the majority, but they do affect a *significant minority*. And they undoubtedly affect *all* of our marriages to some extent, because none of us has a perfect marriage.

Do you realize there has never yet been a "perfect" marriage? So far, there has never been a perfect marriage,

because there have *never* been two perfect mates.

Although none of our marriages has been perfect, we should all sincerely STRIVE to have more *warmth, happiness, kindness, joy* and *exuberance* in our marriages than most of us have had thus far. For a happy, balanced, wonderful marriage is the very BASIS of all decent society. It is also the FOUNDATION of *happiness, joy* and SPIRITUAL PRODUCTIVITY as a servant of the living God.

God Is the Author of Marriage

God the Father is the Author of marriage. In Matthew 19, Jesus gave us some principles concerning marriage. The Pharisees tried to trick Him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Matt. 19:3.)

In other words, "Can a man put away his wife for just any reason?" They magnified what Moses had said in the Old Testament about putting a wife away, and would even use a pimple, a wart or almost anything as an *excuse* to put their wives away.

"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them *at the beginning* made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall CLEAVE to his wife: and they twain shall be *one flesh*?" (verses 4-5.)

God made the man and the woman *for each other*. He created the man and his wife to *complement* one another physically, psychologically, emotionally and mentally so they could live a balanced and happy life TOGETHER.

Jesus taught that a man should *leave* his father and his mother and CLEAVE TO HIS MATE. Yet millions of people still haven't learned that! They still want to be too close to, or actually *live with*, the in-laws.

That is *not the right approach*! It JUST WON'T WORK! It will *not* produce the happy marriage that everyone wants. God Almighty said a man should *leave* his father and mother and CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE!

If you do have to bring back senile or infirmed in-laws to your home *later*, after the marriage is *firmly established*,

then that's different. But at the beginning, and certainly for the first several years, normally, you're to leave relatives and *cleave* to your wife or your husband.

A Sharing Institution

God intended a husband and wife to be one flesh in *every* way — not just sexually. God designed marriage to be a great "sharing" institution!

Marriage brings out the *utter selfishness* in people perhaps more than anything else. This is because married partners have to SHARE so many things — including the *same* bathroom. They also have to go to bed about the same time normally, and get up about the same time. A happily married couple must also share the same food, budget, house, and the same *way of life*. Sometimes they may even have to share the same toothbrush or comb when on a trip. And they're either going to share with *good grace*, or they're not!

A lot of bachelors are *afraid* of marriage because they know, deep down in their hearts, that they are SELFISH! They're *afraid* to take on the responsibility of supporting a wife and sharing their life with someone else.

Many eligible young men don't want someone else to find out they're not the "gay blade" they want other people to think they are. They're *not* the great success, the happy-go-lucky, good-time-Charley — the good, friendly Joe — that they would like to convey as their facade and image to the rest of the world!

It's easy to pretend something, if you can stay away from people, and then just appear at the proper time when you're feeling good. But you have to be with your wife *all the time*! She knows your faults, mistakes and habits.

Everything about a person is on trial before his or her mate. We all need to realize that. Yet we must learn to *grow closer* to our mates — to love and respect them, and to CLEAVE TOGETHER!

Cleave Together in Love

Cleaving together is *not* just something that somehow automatically happens. It is not just sex either, although it does include that. Sex is perhaps the

culmination of this cleaving process. But everyone who has been married for a few years knows very well indeed that it is just a *minor part* of all the routine day-in-and-day-out process of marriage.

Cleaving together requires a lot of *kindness* and *patience*, completely apart from any romantic feelings.

Your marriage won't be a success unless Jesus Christ is living His life in you and manifesting the *love* of the Holy Spirit through you. You've got to ask God to help you and give you the power of His Holy Spirit to have a happy, wonderful marriage. And you must learn to ACTIVELY CLEAVE TOGETHER IN LOVE BY REALLY WORKING AT IT!

You young people who aren't married yet can learn a lot from this, too, because many of you will be married someday. These principles also apply to all the older people who are widows or widowers. They need to learn these lessons in their lives, perhaps in another way, if they're going to have the opportunity for *service, responsibility, glory, power* and *majesty* in the coming Kingdom of God.

We all have to OVERCOME the kind of selfishness, temper, impatience, hatefulness, vanity, strife and egotism that can wreck our lives — whether married or not — if we are all going to *live forever* in God's Kingdom. We must become *humble, submissive, yielded, kind* and *loving* toward our great Creator and toward one another.

Cleaving Together at Home

In marriage, the two individuals are to be like *one* person. There is to be a *oneness* of mind, body, emotion, attitude and of sharing physical things in EVERY aspect of life.

This doesn't mean that a man can never play basketball, handball, pool, or cards with other men *occasionally*. Good masculine companionship once in a while helps a husband to be more of a man. This gives him more confidence and more of a release for a particular part of his nature that ought to be expressed *with other men*.

But if a husband is *always* playing cards, basketball, baseball, or pool with other men, then this takes him *mentally*,

emotionally and physically AWAY FROM his wife and children. A CONTINUED PRACTICE of this is an absolute WRONG! It is *breaking* the commandment of Christ that a man is to *cleave* to his wife.

A husband and wife should try to spend most of the time after work and before bedtime *together*. If those hours are *wrecked* by his going off "with the boys," by other interests, or by grabbing a beer and just plopping himself down in front of the TV, then he is slowly but surely DAMAGING HIS MARRIAGE!

Such an inconsiderate husband is going to have trouble in the future because he isn't taking the time to *share* his life with his wife — to rejoice *together*, read things *together*, listen to music *together*, take walks *together*, just plain talk *together* and do other things *together*.

This kind of marriage lacks mutual empathy, understanding and meeting of minds. Such a "busy" husband is NOT *actively cleaving to his wife* as his Creator intended.

Every married man has the God-given *responsibility* of spending time at home with his wife and children. Is this where a considerable amount of your time and interest lies? Or is it always somewhere else doing something else?

Where is your "heart"? *How* and *where* do you spend your TIME?

Happy Marriage KEY to Success

Spending time with your family is a real criterion of *success* or *failure* in life! It determines whether or not we'll have juvenile delinquents, rebellious children, or rebellious wives whom we cannot reach mentally, emotionally and psychologically. This is the inevitable result for a husband who *doesn't take the time* and put out the EFFORT to *actively cleave to his wife*.

Such a husband has probably only tried to cleave to his wife *physically* — but not mentally, emotionally and psychologically. He has tried to be faithful to her, but hasn't done a very good job of anything else — and probably hasn't even done a good job of that either.

For, if a man isn't spending time with and focusing on his wife *mentally* — even though he may remain faithful *physically* — his mind will wander to

other women and other things as they come along. This is so because he *hasn't spent the time* to cultivate that mental and emotional attachment to his wife which is *real love*.

Love Is Outgoing Concern

We need to understand that love is *not* a mechanical act performed once, twice, or three times a week. Love is *constant, outgoing concern, affection, sharing and empathy*.

You married people need to *understand this* — especially you men. This is where husbands fail even more often than their wives.

However, wives sometimes contribute to the problem. If their husbands do try to spend time with them, love them, help them, fellowship with them and encourage them, some wives *start an argument right away!* They should *appreciate and respond* to this *outgoing concern* the husband is trying to develop — even if he does stagger around like a little child learning to walk while gradually learning to express his concern properly. A wife should *appreciate* her husband's desire to build a happy marriage and to have the right kind of *love, empathy and closeness* together.

God Almighty will create a beautiful union — if a husband and wife will yield themselves to Him and let Him do it. This God-created union will make a happy home, since it will be based on *love, joy, peace, mutual consideration and concern* for one another — and for the children.

Curses of an Unhappy Marriage

A happy marriage at home will help you have more personal happiness, balance and contentment. But a man becomes edgy, rebellious and temperamental even on the job if he fights with his wife at home. Many companies are forced to terminate employees because marriage problems at home result in psychological "blow-ups," heavy drinking or carelessness on the job.

Yes, an unhappy marriage can break up a person's job. It may eventually break up the home and separate the parents from their children as well.

So it behooves all married couples to really WORK at *cleaving together*.

Spend Time Alone With Your Mate

Husbands and wives should just be TOGETHER — sometimes apart even from the children. Get a babysitter, if you can, and go out to dinner, or to a concert once in a while. You can, hand in hand, be like you used to be when you were courting and dating. Dance together, talk together, walk together and fellowship *together*.

You can even take short trips together. Then you will appreciate the children more, because you've been away from them for a *few days* (not several weeks or months) perhaps two or three times a year. This doesn't hurt them at all, *if* they are properly trained and your family is emotionally "close" as it should be anyway.

Look at some examples in the Bible. You'll find that men like Abraham, Isaac and Israel were away from their children far more than many of us today. It's a matter of training the children rightly *while you're with them*, and giving them a stable atmosphere and foundation for the remainder of their lives.

Of course, many don't have much opportunity to go someplace together, or can't afford it. But there are other ways you can be alone *together*. You can begin by sending the children to bed by eight or eight-thirty in the evening. Then you will have an hour and a half or two hours *together* — before you go to bed.

You can listen to music together, read the Bible together occasionally, and do other things together. Sometimes you can have a babysitter watch the children while you and your wife take a long walk together.

Just that much can help a great deal!

Many of you men who have marriage problems should "court" your wife like you used to. Practice the art of trying to CLEAVE to her, and spend time *together*. Then you will really understand your wife, and she will feel close to you mentally and emotionally. You both will have more of the mutual *understanding and affection* you used to have when you were first married.

Woman Was Created for Man

After God created the first man, He put him in the Garden of Eden to dress

and keep it. Then God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18).

You men need to fully comprehend the fact that, normally speaking, it is NOT GOOD for you to be by yourself. You're *not* really the "strong, silent type" you might think you are. You're *not* the great "shining hero" who would charge on through the night — if you weren't "burdened down" with a wife and crying little children.

You wouldn't "charge on" *anywhere* — except to the *corner bar*, probably in utter *frustration*. You know it and I know it! Most of you would be *empty, unbalanced and frustrated*. And you would be an "oddball," in many cases. Let's *realize and understand* that it is NOT GOOD for a man to be alone throughout his entire life!

So God said, "I will make an *help meet* [fit, or suitable], for him." Men should really *appreciate* the fact that God did make a companion and helper for them.

And every little girl ought to be taught that — *with some notable exceptions* — women's *purpose* in drawing breath and being created was to be a *help to their future husbands*. A young woman should NOT be taught to *compete, fight and argue with men*, and say, "I'm as good as he is."

It's not a question of being "as good" as a man. It's just that women were created to *help* men — *not to compete with them*. Yet many women will say, "Well, I can get a job easier than my husband." Sadly, in our *sick, mechanical, clerical, computerized society*, sometimes they can. A woman who learns to be a typist, stenographer, bookkeeper, or secretary can quite often land a job easier than her husband or boyfriend.

Why?

Because men have already *conquered* the wilderness. They've *built* the bridges, highways and cities. They discovered and learned how to use electricity, made possible central heating and air conditioning, designed and built computers, manufactured typewriters, etc. — so women could come in and wait on, help and serve *men* 99 and 44/100ths percent of the time!

In most cases, women work as secretaries, typists or stenographers. And *what are they doing?* Although they're not alongside their husbands, they are helping *other MEN*! Yet, they say, "I'm independent."

Independent of *whom?* Independent of *men?*

Who is the president of the bank? Who's the boss over the big department store, the gigantic office complex, the manufacturing plant or scientific laboratory?

A MAN!

They're just *serving and helping other MEN*. That's all.

Generally, women are NOT building and creating new things. Men do practically all of that, and *always have* since the beginning of time. A woman simply was not created with those particular abilities to the same degree.

On the average, women *cannot* normally do as well as men in the fields of science, technology and management!

To Be Homemakers

The reason *most* women haven't been out building bridges, designing and manufacturing jet planes and rockets to the moon is not because men prevented them. It is because God created them with the intuition, mind, emotions, capacity and tendencies to want to *help and supplement* a man, and to *SHARE HIS LIFE WITH HIM*.

And what a tremendous BLESSING to both man and woman! Especially the *man*, who NEEDS a woman's help!

God designed and *created* women to make a house a home, to make it and keep it beautiful, to have children — to have the patience, kindness, understanding and perception to work with, teach, train, help, protect and nurture *potential sons of God!*

God has given every woman a TREMENDOUSLY HIGH CALLING!

A woman should never forget *why* she was created by her Maker. She should never try to argue with her husband, usurp the leadership of the home, or unnecessarily go outside her home and compete with men in jobs she was not meant to perform.

Of course, it is NOT WRONG for women to be secretaries, typists, etc. Those jobs are the best for women to

have, if they're *not* married. However, most married women — particularly young mothers — should *stay at home and be "homemakers."* There can be some RARE exceptions — but they should be indeed, *very rare!*

Woman Made From Man

Notice the rest of the account in Genesis 2:21-23: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."

That was a wonderful event — when you understand it. There was Adam all alone in the garden — with only cows, horses, lions and tigers around him. But who could he *talk* to? Who could he *share* his life with?

If God had put another man in the Garden of Eden, Adam would have been in trouble. Besides not being able to reproduce, they would have been utterly frustrated because both of them would have wanted to be IN CHARGE! They would have had *competing*, instead of *complementing*, natures.

So God put a *woman* in the Garden to be with the man. Then Adam said: "She shall be called woman, because she was taken *out of man*. Therefore," said God, "shall a man *leave his father and mother*, and shall *cleave to his wife*: and they shall be ONE FLESH" (verses 23-24).

This is a very *beautiful* story. But we all need to know and really understand what goes into making a married couple *happy* in CLEAVING TOGETHER, and realizing that they *need each other*.

Men and women are not as happy and balanced if they do not have a mate. Neither will they be as happy or balanced if they don't *cleave together PROPERLY*. They have to really *WORK AT IT!*

God doesn't say "*float together*." He said "*cleave together*." But it's MORE THAN worth all the effort to *have a happy marriage*. So let's realize this. Let's really *appreciate* and CLEAVE to our mates! (to be continued) □