# HOME IMPROVEMENT

Enriching Values & Strengthening Relationships



# HOME IMPROVEMENT

**Enriching Values & Strengthening Relationships** 



# **Presented by Brent Hunter**

9425 Alanbrooke St. Temple Terrace, FL 33637 813-988-8756 <u>Brenthunt@aol.com</u>

# THIS MATERIAL IS <u>NOT</u> COPYRIGHTED AND FREE TO BE DUPLICATED TO USE TO HELP OTHERS.

Brent Hunter served has as a Associate Professor of Communications and Marriage and Family at Florida College in Temple Terrace, Florida from 1978-1997, and from 1997 until October 2004 served as the college's Director of Development. Brent lives in Temple Terrace with his wife Gail, and daughter Allison who is now a junior at Western Kentucky University. His oldest daughter, Amy is married to Jonathan Sims. Amy and Jonathan live in Lexington, Kentucky. Brent worked for twenty-one years as the evangelist for the North Street church in Tampa, and just recently completed three years preaching regularly for the Zephyrhills congregation. In late 2004 he took a position in senior management for Nautilus Asset Management Group, after 26 years of service at Florida College, but his commitment to preaching, gospel meeting work and counseling still takes top priority. He has decided to leave the business now in order to focus more on serving the Lord and spiritual activities. Brent combines a high level of training as a minister, counselor, and teacher. Since the early nineties he has directed his efforts on marriage and family enrichment with a focus towards preventing problems. He believes that couples who commit themselves to God and to each other, and who are willing to learn to better communicate their love, can experience the fulfillment and intimacy that God intended for His people. He has chosen to focus more on this type of work and is available for weekend meetings based upon a schedule and topics that will best suit each congregation's needs. Brent also holds weekend meetings on the following topics: Personal Evangelism 101, True Spirituality, Restoring the Spirit of New Testament Christianity, The Life of Christ, God/Man and the Cross, and Enriching our Prayer lives.

May 19-21, 2006 – Friday – Sunday

Oldham Woods church of Christ

2301 Old Sligo Road La Grange, Ky 40031 502-222-0625

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Friday p.m.	HOW TO GIVE AND RECEIVE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM (Criticism pulls people apart and severs emotional bonds unless it is do correctly. These guidelines will help you to do it right!)	
	GO ON A 24 HOUR FAST	5-6
	TAKE THE CRITICISM PLEDGE	7
Saturday a.m.	SUCCESSFUL QUARRELLING (Part one)	8-11
	Discover why this is the most important skill to a happy marriage! SYMPTOMS OF SPIRITUAL DIVORCE	12
	SEVEN RULES FOR FIGHTING FAIRLY (Part two) These "guidelines for a well-kept skirmish" will help arguments to become	13-15
	doorways to intimacy that increase understanding instead of destructive scrabbles that harm the relationship and mutual respect.	
Saturday p.m.	A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN (Gen 2:24-25) These four pillars from the Garden of Eden that are critical to the success of every relationship!	16-17
	UNITY	18
	THE MARRIAGE CREED	19
Sunday: Bible class	CREATIVE PARENTING: THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX. (Family slogans, what's in a name, family traditions, etc.)	20-24
	EATING TOGETHER PROVIDES MORE THAN NOURISHMEN	NT 25-26
	FAMILY MOTTOS OR SLOGANS	27-28
	THOUGHT QUESTIONS FOR CREATIVE PARENTING	29
Sunday : Worship: a.m.	HONOR THE WOMAN (I PETER 3:7) (The key to a woman's heart and a forgotten command)	30-32
	THOUGHT QUESTIONS FOR HONOR THE WOMAN	33
Sunday: Worship	MARRIAGE AS A SPIRITUAL COVENANT	34-35a
p.m.		35b-37
	"COMMITMENT TO VOWS" WORKSHEET	38
	THE MOST IMPORTANT WORDS.	39-41

# HOW TO GIVE AND RECEIVE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

#### Introduction

- A. "First behold the beam in your eye..." Matt 7:1-5
- B. However, one is not to deal with oneself alone.
  - 1. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Prov 27:6
  - 2. "Admonish one another." Rom 15:14
  - 3. "Silence may be golden but sometimes it is just plain yellow!"
  - 4. The old adage, "If you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all," is not true. Sometimes it takes courage to warn or to instruct a person so s/he is built up spiritually. It may be what is sorely needed.

### I. BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- A. Prov 12:1 "He that hates reproof is stupid!"
- B. Prov 12:15 "He that hearketh unto counsel is wise."
- C. Prov 3:11 "Don't refuse criticism."
- D. Prov 13:18 "If you refuse criticism, you will end in disgrace."
- E. Prov 25:12 "He wears a badge of honor who accepts reproof."
- F. Eph 4:15 "Speak the truth in love."

# ALL OF US ARE IMPERFECT & NEED HELP! THIS IS TRUE OF EVERY RELATIONSHIP.

We all have room to grow!

- 1. Husbands & wives, parents & children, etc. need help from one another. We tend to shun it, but we need it!
- 2. Have you ever tried to proofread your own work?
- 3. We all need help from others who periodically shed light on our blind spots. Prov 16:2 *Self-deception* is the worst kind.

The problem is not criticism--but <u>destructive</u> criticism. Too often we don't know how to do it right so we avoid it all together.

# WE MUST BUILD UP & NOT TEAR DOWN!

# II. HOW TO GIVE CRITICISM CONSTRUCTIVELY

- A. Choose your setting carefully -- timing is everything!
  - Do so after a meal and not when you're hungry.
     Ex. Esther gave two banquets before she approached the king.
     Afterwards, she got what she desired.
  - 2. Criticize in private -- praise in public!
  - 3. Consider the feelings of the other person.
    - a. How do you find out when it is okay?
    - b. *Ask!* "Honey, do you mind me sharing a constructive suggestion with you tonight?" S/he will either say "yes" or "no." If "no", usually curiosity will cause your spouse to ask about it later. Then s/he will be mentally prepared and less defensive. Doesn't that make sense?
  - 4. Most people want to be helped and desire honesty in the relationship if they are just approached in the right way.
  - 5. However, "A man convinced of his will is of the same opinion still!"

# DON'T SHARE UNTIL YOU ARE SURE THE OTHER PARTY IS *EMOTIONALLY* READY ...

# B. Don't give an <u>overdose!</u>

- 1. One common failure is to pour it on! ("...And another thing, and another thing, etc.")
- 2. Hagar the Horrible gets permission and then says, "Better sit down and get comfortable."
- 3. Most don't realize how critical they have become... LISTEN to yourself. (Prov 17:9)

#### **WARNING:**

### **OVERDOSING KILLS THE MOTIVATION TO CHANGE!**

#### SUGGESTION:

### ONLY ONE CRITICISM A WEEK!!!

(That ought to be enough -- that's 52 a year!)

### GO ON A 24-HOUR CRITICISM FAST!

(See attached handout)

4. Challenge: Make it easy! Ask for it periodically.

### C. Couple criticism with compliments

- 1. Notice the ratio: 3 compliments to 1 criticism (John's example in Rev 2:1-4)
- 2. "The bitter pill of criticism can be swallowed much easier if first sugar-coated with the medicine of sincere praise."
- 3. Mary Poppins says: "Just a spoon full of sugar helps the medicine go down!"

# III. HOW TO RECEIVE CRITICISM CONSTRUCTIVELY

- A. Recognize the hand of GOD! Rom 8:28 (GOD wants to use this for my good.)
- B. Let your first words be "Thank you!" I Thess 5:18 "In everything give thanks." Three reasons:
  - 1. He said it to your face -- not behind your back.
  - 2. If it is true, you need to change and now you can grow.
  - 3. If it is false, it gives you opportunity to correct the misunderstanding.
- C. Always ask:

### What can I learn from criticism?

Not all are valid. But we can still learn something from all kinds of criticism.

- 1. Then **take action** if possible. You can't do what everyone says! Ex. My daughter wanted me to triple her allowance--not a good idea.
- 2. Work with the reasonable requests for small things as much as possible.
- D. Never give the same criticism two weeks in a row. Give the other party at least a month before you bring up the same thing again.

## IV. WHAT ABOUT THE THINGS THAT WON'T CHANGE?

A. "Love covers a multitude of sins." I Peter 4:8

# LOVE ACCEPTS MANY IMPERFECTIONS!

Some things you will need to accept...

- 1. Otherwise, anger turns inward and becomes bitterness and depression.
- 2. Say the Serenity Prayer!

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference!"

3. "It is to His glory to pass over a transgression and seek love." Prov 18:11

### THE CONCLUSION:

Don't mind criticism...

If it is not true, disregard it.

If it is unfair, keep from irritation.

If it is ignorant, smile.

If it is justified, learn from it!

# TAKE THE "CRITICISM PLEDGE" & TRY A UNIQUE FAST

We live in a negative world! We are all bombarded with criticism constantly. Why not allow your home to be a refuge from criticism? Think of your mate as a haven, a peaceful retreat, the ever-quiet eye of the hurricane.

Research has found that the significant decreasing of criticism and negative comments from our family relationships is even more important than learning to express love positively. Small wonder Paul stresses we are to dwell on the positive! "Whatsoever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, dwell on these things" Phil 4:8. One of the reasons this is so important is that it takes a great many positive strokes to make up for even one critical comment. So, keep criticisms to a minimum and express them only if you feel it is really necessary. "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath" Jas 1:19.

Try promising your mate you will never say a critical word about him or her, make him her the brunt of jokes, nor in any way speak unkindly of the other or betray your relationship, and ask your partner to do the same!

Think about it... What confidence it gives a woman to know that when other men are making fun of their wives or complaining about their weaknesses like their cooking, homemaking, lovemaking, shortcomings, and faults, <a href="her name is safe">her name is safe</a>. And likewise, when women get together and begin to belittle their husbands, what security it gives a man to know that <a href="his name will not be mentioned">his name will not be mentioned</a>. Oh, it is not because there are no faults; faults are self-evident. It isn't because it wouldn't be justified. Speaking no ill of each other is simply...

#### BECAUSE OF YOUR LOYALTY TO ONE ANOTHER!

HOW DOES ONE OVERCOME BEING A CRITICAL PERSON?
TAKE A 24-HOUR CRITICISM FAST!

Start by stopping! For a period of 24 hours, refrain from criticizing yourself, the government, the food, your boss and/or co-workers, your spouse, your surroundings --come to a complete halt for twenty-four hours!! Watch out for back-seat driving and comments on other drivers. Phone calls are dangerous. Especially watch out when you are hungry or under any kind of time pressure! You cannot criticize anyone for any reason unless human life is in danger. Another exception would be if you hear or see another person who has agreed to take the fast but is criticizing without realizing it. You may, in this case, point out kindly to him/her that s/he has done so and needs to start over, without being critical yourself for having pointed it out!

This is not as easy as it sounds. The majority of people do not succeed in their first attempt. Do not be discouraged. If you find yourself being critical, make a note of the time and <u>start your "fast" over again until you have gone for 24 hours</u> (including the time your are asleep) without being critical at all!

BE CAREFUL NOT TO COMMIT WHAT I CALL, "Criticism of the Heart." If a critical thought enters your mind and you get rid of the thought in a moment, then it does not count and you do not have to start your 24 hours over. If, on the other hand, you let that critical thought stay in your mind and you develop it into a full production with quadraphonic sound and vista vision, they you must start over again.

Don't be too hard on yourself if you don't succeed in this assignment right away. This is a <u>difficult assignment!</u>

#### WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?

These are the positive objectives that I hope you will experience while doing this:

- 1. It will increase your awareness of the critical nature of our society.
- 2. It will help you to become aware of your own compulsion to criticize.
- 3. It will enable you to experience the power of self-mastery.

The answer to the question "Why should I try to stop criticizing? is simply..."So that you can lay a foundation for love and acceptance in your home instead of rejection."

Take the pledge of **verbal loyalty to the relationship** to demonstrate your commitment to it! As a token of your <u>willingness</u>, stop criticizing. **Commitment and** willingness are two keys to loving, lasting, emotionally-close marriages.

I challenge newlyweds and couples who desire to enrich their marriages and to experience emotional 'remarriage' to take the following pledge:

"I promise, as your mate, that I will never speak ill of you to friend, family, or stranger. I will not embarrass or belittle you in front of others, nor will I be critical of you in your absence. I will not discuss our personal problems with anyone without your permission. This is my pledge to you."

# NOW LIVE IT !!!!!

# SUCCESSFUL QUARRELING

### Introduction:

- A. Conflict is inevitable. "A fellow who says he has never had an argument with his wife is apt to lie about other things, too."
- B. If you have a partnership, you have to work on things together. You will have disagreements due to different backgrounds and opinions you both possess.
  - 1. Marriage is two *becoming* one and the whole time you are trying to determine which one it is!
  - 2. One fellow said, "The nice thing about being single is that all the decisions are unanimous."
- C. This subject is vitally important because the number one criteria necessary for long-term marital stability and happiness is the ability to resolve conflict successfully!
  - 1. The positives initially draw people together, but the negatives (and how they are handled) ultimately pull people apart.
  - 2. Research has found that there are 4 factors that if not dealt with are precursors of divorce: CRITICISM, CONTEMPT, DEFENSIVENESS, AND WITHDRAWAL. These are the 4 emotional land mines that will blast apart and destroy almost any marriage if they become chronic. Notice: They all deal with conflict resolution!
  - 3. This is critically important, yet so often neglected.

### I. GENERAL POINTERS

- A. Be careful...One zinger erases twenty positives!
  - 1. Song: "Angry words, oh, let them never..." holds good advice.
  - 2. Hurtful, harsh, unkind comments can become huge withdrawals from the love bank and do serious damage to the relationship.
- B. When in doubt, wait.
  - 1. You can always go back and say it later, but once it is out the hurt is not so easily taken back.
  - 2. One secret to a happy marriage: Let three things go every day...unsaid!
- C. Relationships have *momentum*. They have an ebb and flow to them that is either positive or negative.
  - 1. Things tend to be like a snowball rolling down hill. This works both to your advantage and disadvantage.
  - 2. When things start to go in the wrong direction, one or both parties need to recognize it and say, "Let's get off this negative cycle and stop hurting each other. Let's instead apologize, put it behind us, and start doing things to show love and build each other up, instead of tear each other down!"
- D. Beware of the modern egalitarian marriage.
  - 1. People quarrel more and more today than ever before because the traditional roles have been discarded. There is **no final arbitrator of disputes.**
  - 2. No other organization on earth functions this way, but modern marriages attempt to do so. The result is that relationships deteriorate into power plays.
  - 3. Blurred roles and **no more established rules** put untold strain on modern American marriages.

### II. WHAT DO MOST COUPLES ARGUE ABOUT?

- A. There are **5 traditional areas** of conflict that all couples have argued about as far back as such things have been studied.
  - Sex
  - 2. Children (whether or when to have them and how to raise them)
  - 3. Money
  - 4. In-laws ("What's more important to you, your parents or me?")
  - 5. Tremendous Trifles -- small, theoretically inconsequential things that drive most people to the brink of mayhem, divorce, or screaming meemies!
    - a. By definition, a trifle is something small, but it can be a tremendous source of conflict.
    - b. They are usually things one never thought about before marriage.
    - c. Examples: Dog-earring pages of a book, leaving hairs in the sink, squeezing the toothpaste "wrong", eating styles, sleeping habits, etc.
      - 1. One man on his 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary calculated he had kicked the sheets loose about 7,500 times, and that this had taken him at least a minute each night.
      - 2. Therefore, he figured he had wasted 125 hours of his life since he had gotten married fighting with his wife over the sheets!
    - d. If the relationship already has problems, these can become the focus. However, if the relationship is solid, they are usually just irritants that will not destroy the marriage.

### B. New top issues!

- 1. Who does the domestic chores? (Women are often resentful if they have to work full-time and then pull a double-shift at home, too.)
- 2. How do we spend our precious and limited leisure time?

### III. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAPPY AND UNHAPPY COUPLES?

- A. Ironically, both happy and unhappy couples argue about the *same things*. The number of disagreements and how often spouses disagree is not a significant factor in marital satisfaction. The difference is in *how* the parties argue.
  - 1. Happy couples argue as if the issue is external to the relationship.
  - 2. Unhappy couples get personal and "hit below the belt" which attacks the *person* rather than the *problem*.
    - a. Learning to apply the "Seven Rules for Fighting Fairly" is important.
    - b. Following these guidelines will prevent harming the relationship as disagreements are worked out.
- B. Mudd and Hay, two social scientists, found that even after a particular area of conflict or tremendous trifle was fixed in a marriage, it did not solve the problem..
  - 1. The real problem was the *relationship itself*. Other surface issues were just symptoms of the relationship problems.
  - 2. Serious relationship problems were revealed such as:
    - a. Feeling lonely and unloved
    - b. Feeling misunderstood (can't communicate)
    - c. Losing perspective (forgetting what spouses once meant to each other)
    - d. Feeling rejected and unworthy (partner causing a self-esteem problem instead being a solution)

3. Time was wasted focusing on peripheral issues instead of on the *relationship*.

C. Happy couples are very careful to not even think, much less express, the "fatal thought" which is two-fold: "This means you don't love me anymore, so therefore maybe we ought to divorce."

# IV. WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS DURING CONFLICT THAT MAKES IT SO CRUCIAL TO THE RELATIONSHIP?

- A.. Willard Harley in <u>His Needs</u>, <u>Her Needs</u> explains it well when he talks about **THE THREE STAGES OF MARITAL INTIMACY**.
  - 1. **Stage one**: You have become INTIMATE and feel close, so you tell each other *everything*.
  - 2. Stage two: You begin to have disagreements and enter into CONFLICT. This is not bad as long as you can resolve the conflict so you can restore intimacy. Couples go from stage one to stage two all the time. The key is to always return to stage one. Paul admonishes, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Eph 4:26
  - 3. Stage three: You remain in conflict and cannot resolve it. You begin to feel frustrated and misunderstood. The parties begin to hurt each other and the relationship. Emotional turmoil becomes the norm. Eventually one or both parties give up and erect deadly walls of defense. He/she enters into WITHDRAWAL.
- B. The withdrawal decision...is a very serious one. It means you have given up and decided that the way to cope with the hurt is to *emotionally disconnect* yourself from your spouse. This has far-reaching consequences.
  - 1. You become emotionally and spiritually divorced from each other. You wake up one day and decide you "do not love him" or her anymore. The woman especially dreads physical contact because she cannot give of herself in this state.
  - 2. The wall you have built keeps out the good as well as the bad. This explains why even thoughtful, positive things don't mean a thing and will not be allowed as "deposits in your love bank" until you feel SAFE enough to let the wall down.
  - 3. Warning: WHEN THE OPEN SHARING OF FEELINGS STOPS, PASSION DIES! Romantic love is lost!
  - 4. The irony about romantic love is that when you have it, you think you can never lose it; and when you lose it, you think you can never regain it. Both are untrue and naive.
    - a. Romantic love can be regained if the parties understand what has happened to them. Learning how to resolve conflict will let both parties feel SAFE enough to share feelings so the walls can come down.
    - b. Trust is re-established and over time the old feelings of intimacy and romance return!!

- c. The key to **preventing affairs** is to commit to full disclosure about hard topics. Affairs happen when walls (secrets) are created between spouses and windows of intimacy with someone else. Deep sharing on a feeling level is what causes someone to fall in love.
- d. However, if there is **nothing important your spouse doesn't know** about, an affair will almost never happen.

#### Conclusion:

- A. If you stay in stage one (intimacy) and learn how to avoid stage three (withdrawal), you will remain happily married!
- B. To avoid the wall, learn how to resolve conflict constructively. Have courage to not avoid tough topics to begin with. If a wall is already up, bravely go back and work through the conflict in order to regain the intimacy you both desire.
- C. In order to accomplish this, you need guidelines and rules to follow so that you feel safe. That is the reason for and the importance of the next lesson on "Rules for Fighting Fairly".
- D. Following these principles from the start can prevent a wall from forming and keep the marriage strong. However, if the wall has been there for years, and bitterness and anonymity have crept in, then a third party counselor is necessary to help you work through it!
- E. It is painful and a bit scary, but it is **well worth it**. After a couple comes through the crisis, they are often better off and closer than they have ever been before! Just like with a bone that breaks. Nature heals it back stronger than it was before the break.
- F. When folks tell you it's no use and that their love is "dead", give them HOPE. Remind them that we serve a God who specializes in the resurrection from the dead!

# SYMPTOMS OF SPIRITUAL DIVORCE

Symptoms of spiritual divorce are indicators that a separation is *developing* and needs to be confronted through dialogue. They are "signs" and are present at some time in every marriage. Take about 20 minutes apiece for each to privately do this exercise then exchange your answers and discuss together. Don't allow fear to prevent you from being open with each other.

#### Instructions:

- A. Read through all the symptoms. Which symptoms are currently present in your marriage? Place a check mark next to each one.
- B. Re-read those that are checked. Select 2 or 3 you feel most strongly about right now.
- C. Write and describe your feelings about those 2 or 3. If time allows, continue on to the others checked.
- 1. Prolonged moods of sadness in our marriage and in the family
- 2. Feelings of disillusionment, boredom, and emptiness
- 3. Dissatisfaction
- 4. Indifference to each other's problems
- 5. Occasions of coldness in our relationship
- 6. Avoiding or refusing sexual relationship
- 7. No interest in things of the other lack of sensitivity
- 8. Lack of kindness, tenderness, and small courtesies
- 9. Failure to take time to think deeply
- 10. Feelings of insecurity and mutual distrust
- 11. More confidence in a third person other than with each other
- 12. Lack of dialogue and intimate communication
- 13. Most communication mechanical, routine, and surface
- 14. Feelings of being alone and not understood
- 15. Frequent bad humor and tension
- 16. Feeling used
- 17. Frequent quarrels: in private, or in front of children or others
- 18. Ridicule of each other
- Superficial life and continuous escapes, together or alone, such as liquor, drugs,
   TV, compulsive socializing
- 20. Attitude of selfishness
- 21. Insults, rude words, and sarcasm
- 22. Avoidance of situations that deeply need attention
- 23. Personal relationship with God causing conflict
- 24. Lack of appreciation
- 25. Lack or loss of a sense of wonder
- 26. Lack of faith in love and marriage
- 27. Insensitive teasing
- 28. Nagging
- 29. Lack of planning things together

# SEVEN RULES FOR FIGHTING THE GOOD CLEAN FIGHT

By Brent Hunter

### Introduction

- A. Two ideas to remember about hostility:
  - 1. It is natural. Motion (growth) requires some friction.
  - 2. Since it is inevitable, you can agree to settle differences "agreeably".
- B. View "fights" not as tragedies, but opportunities!
  - 1. Venting personal frustrations through lips which <u>have learned</u> <u>how to do it</u> can serve a wonderful purpose.
  - 2. Skill and self-control <u>can</u> turn potentially destructive squabbles into *"fair fights"* which solve problems and yield positive results.

# Rule #1--DO YOUR THING TO COOL OFF! (Eph 4:26; Prov 29:8, 30:33, 17:27)

- A. Never be ashamed of anger--it is natural, not sinful. The only thing you need to regret is handling it badly.
- B. Since you are literally in a state of **intoxication** when your "fuse is lit," reduce the emotional state <u>before</u> a discussion begins.
  - 1. "There is more hope for a fool than a man of quick temper." Prov 29:20
  - 2. "...and a wrathful man stirreth up contention." Prov 15:18
  - 3. IF YOU ARGUE WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY, YOU'RE APT TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE!
- C. Do whatever it takes to cool off FIRST!
  - 1. Engage in some physical activity
  - 2. Go for a walk
  - 3. Take a hot bath
  - 4. Pray alone--it calms the spirit so you can see the situation more clearly.
- D. Afterwards, you may just decide to forget the whole thing! (Prov 17:9, 19:11)

  If not, proceed to Rule #2!

# Rule #2--ARGUE WITH THE RIGHT PERSON (Prov 3:30, 25:9)

- A. Remember to express frustration/anger toward the person you are really angry with and **not some innocent party**.
  - 1. This is often done to avoid confrontation.
  - 2. Not expressing anger with your spouse will cause you to take it out on him/her or even your children.
- B. DANGER SIGN: OVER-REACTING! (Anger disproportionate to the offense)

- 1. This is called "dumping."
- 2. **Dumping is cruel,** allows you to **escape** the real person or issue, and **resolves nothing**. Have the courage to "speak the truth in love" to the right party.

### Rule #3--ARGUE ABOUT THE RIGHT THING (Prov 15:7, 28)

- A. Many arguments are fought about the wrong subjects.
  - 1. Ex. Criticizing the housekeeping when the real complaint is love-making.
  - 2. Be in touch with your own feelings and ask, "Am I really angry because of this or is it something else?"
- B. People often avoid the real issues because of the risk involved.
  - 1. There's a fear of being embarrassed, laughed at, rejected, etc.
  - 2. Do not abuse the other's feelings but instead love and trust each other enough to allow for transparency.

# Rule #4--ARGUE AT THE RIGHT TIME (Ecc 3:1-11; Prov 25:8)

- A. Both must agree the time is right before beginning.
- B. Here are some times *not* to argue:
  - 1. In front of company (in public)
  - 2. If time is limited (before leaving for a party or church)
  - 3. When hungry or tired
  - 4. Just as spouse comes home from work
    - a. 80% of marital fights occur between 5-6 pm
    - b. Good rule of thumb: Do not discuss problems until after dinner.
- C. Before arguing, make sure you ask the bailiff's two questions...
  - 1. Is the defendant ready?
  - 2. Is the plaintiff ready?

# Rule #5--DON'T BRING UP PAST FIGHTS (Eph 4:26)

- A. Some things you must never forget while some things you must never remember.
  - 1. Once an argument is resolved, it is to be **buried and never resurrected**.
  - 2. "He that harpeth on a matter separateth chief friends." Prov 17:9
- B. Bringing up items thought resolved **breeds mistrust** and a **lack of confidence** in the relationship.

# Rule #6--AVOID NAME CALLING (Prov 14:22, 27:4)

- A. There is no excuse for hurling insults or profane names at loved ones.
  - 1. Abusing intimacy and resorting to "knife twisting" are especially harmful.
  - 2. Thoughtless names (labels) puncture deeply and are remembered for years.
- B. Three reasons why personal verbal assaults are so destructive:
  - 1. They throw an argument off-track.

- 2. They focus attention on the mate, not on solving the problem.
- 3. They hurt the relationship and ruin mutual respect.

### C. Three suggestions:

- 1. Tackle the problem, not the person.
- 2. Lower your voice one octave instead of raising it two. (Prov 15:1)
- 3. Replace "you" statements with "I" statements. (Instead of "You lazy bum!" say, "I feel you're not working as hard as you could.")

### Rule #7--AVOID "STAMP-SAVING" (Prov 10:18)

- A. Some save up grievances like stamps, waiting until the book is full to cash it in.
  - 1. Ex. <u>Unloading</u> other complaints in rapid succession during an argument over something else.
  - 2. Be sure to only discuss one disagreement at a time.
- B. Don't let things build up! Foster the type of relationship where you can express irritations as they occur.
- C. Stamp-saving...
  - 1. Overwhelms the poor mate who is bombarded with so much all at once.
  - 2. Disconcerts the one who discovers that true feelings weren't revealed earlier.
  - 3. Breeds both lack of trust as well as confidence.

#### D. The cure:

- 1. Express displeasure at the earliest convenient time.
- Mention it next time it <u>occurs</u> (if a recurring fault), and not during an argument about something else.
- 3. Or choose to forget it forever!

#### CONCLUSION:

- A. Mature partners know that differences are not wrong overall and <u>can be worked out</u> fairly, amiably, and lovingly.
- B. Both must be honest so a wall of silence will not be built and drive them apart.
- C. Discussion and application of the rules is essential to success.
- D. Marriage run by God's principles can be a little bit of Paradise left to bless both man and woman in a sinful world.
- E. "Marriages are made in heaven, but the maintenance contract must be maintained on earth."

### **ADDITIONAL POINTERS:**

- 1. Have a happy disposition.
- 2. Make the solution suit both, not just one.
- Accept your share of the blame.
- 4. Don't damage the ego.
- 5. Never make demands or give ultimatums.
- 6. Play fair.
- 7. Compromise.
- 8. Forgive and forget.

# A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

#### Introduction

- A. "Holy **Head**-lock" or "Holy **Wed**-lock"? (Is <u>love</u> the **wine of life** and <u>marriage</u> the **hangover**?)
- B. A "marriage made in heaven" (not perfect, but highly satisfactory) IS possible!
  - 1. "It takes two to tango---three to marry"
  - 2. "What God joins together..." Matt 19:6
  - 3. God invented marriage. It's the only part of Paradise left!
- C. KEY: Return to the **beginning** (source, blueprint)
- D. The Garden of Eden provides 4 MUSTS (pillars) for a successful marriage
  - 1. When building, concentrate on YOURSELF, not your spouse!
  - 2. "Marriage is not so much finding the right person as being the right person."

### The 4 PILLARS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE ---

#### **#1 SEVERANCE**

- a. "Leave & cleave" --- breaking the parent/child bond is ESSENTIAL!
- b. Weddings are simultaneously sad and beautiful --- there is a loss!
- c. When there is no severance, there is trouble.
  - 1. Adam & Eve represent the perfect family (no problems)
  - 2. Adam had no mother-in-law! (no parent/child conflicts)
- d. If one can't leave, one shouldn't marry!

  Illus.: The song "Billy Boy" shows that if the girl is "a young thing and cannot leave her mother,"...it's a good reason to not take her for a wife.
- e. "A man SHALL leave..." is strongly stated. It's not <u>might</u> or <u>may</u>.

#### **#2 PERMANENCE**

- a. <u>Cleave</u> means "to cling to, to grab or hold with firmness"
- b. It's not drifting from the dock and tying up somewhere else!
- c. IT IS FOR LIFE! (Not masking tape, but super glue!)
- d. KEY: Never consider divorce an option!
- e. "What God has joined together..." Matt 19:6
  - 1. Don't prematurely sever marriage by divorce, but only by death.
  - 2. Embalming & divorce: 2 things not to be done before their time!

- f. We must learn to live with and just accept some things like our bodies, the day of our death, and the people we have chosen to marry.
- g. Choose your love and love your choice!

### #3 UNITY

- a. "Shall become one..." It's a PROCESS designed perfectly by GoD for us.
- b. "Marriage is two becoming one and the whole time you are trying to figure out which one you are becoming!"
- c. This is a growth process you work toward.
  - 1. It's not just liking the same things (though that helps)!
  - 2. It's more than just uniformity.
- d. There must be <u>surrender</u>, or it becomes <u>uniformity</u>, <u>not</u> <u>unity</u>! Illus.—Picture two cats with tails tied together thrown over a fence... is this union or unity???
- e. Unity involves the willingness to blend wills, YOURS with your MATE's!
  - 1. KEY: Look for mutual goals.
  - 2. "Love is not so much looking into each other's eyes, but looking in the same direction!"
  - 3. Only then will you become one!

THE GOAL: To grow closer to each other by molding each one's will to GoD's!

### **#4 INTIMACY**

- a. They were "both naked and not ashamed."
  - 1. This is literal, but broader than physical.
  - 2. It means no emotional barriers --- no covering up.
  - Be emotionally naked and open before each other...not afraid!
- b. It's tragic when one can't share his/her life with the other.
  - KEY: Meaningful self-disclosure!
  - 2. This requires some T.V. --- Transparent Vulnerability!
- c. Being totally open with each other's faults, knowing you are still loved anyway, and trusting this information will not be misused, then you will truly discover a MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN!

### **CONCLUSION:**

THESE ARE GOD's PRINCIPLES --- THEY WILL WORK TO BLESS US IF WE WILL WORK TO USE THEM!!!

# "Unity"

Man satisfies the woman; Woman satisfies the man; GOD blesses the union.

Man plants the seed; Woman bears the child; GOD gives the spirit.

Man sets the discipline standards; Woman sets the love standards; GOD balance discipline with love.

Man is the bread winner; Woman is the bread warmer; GOD is the bread provider.

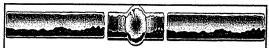
Man is woman's hero; Woman is man's cheerleader; GOD is the coach.

Man leads as the woman's head; Woman follows as the man's body; GOD makes them become one flesh.

Man presents a picture of Christ; Woman presents a picture of the church; GOD makes them joint-heirs.

# THE MARRIAGE CREED

- COMFORT EACH OTHER...Provide a refuge and sanctuary for each other from the chill winds of the world. Your marriage is a hearth, from whence comes the peace, harmony, and warmth of soul and spirit.
- CARESS AS YOU WOULD BE CARESSED...Warm your loved one's body with your healing touch. Remember that as babies can die with lack of touching, so marriages can wither from lack of closeness.
- BE A FRIEND AND PARTNER...Friendship can be a peaceful island, separate
  and apart, in a world of turmoil and strife. Reflect upon the tranquility of the
  many future years you can share with a true friend and beware of becoming
  battling enemies under the same roof.
- BE OPEN WITH ONE ANOTHER...Bind not yourselves in the secretness that causes suspicion and doubt. Trust and reveal yourselves to each other, even as the budding rose opens to reveal its fragrance and beauty. REALLY LISTEN...and hear not only words, but also the non-language of tone, mood, and expression. Learn to listen in order to understand rather than listening to argue.
- RESPECT EACH OTHER'S RIGHTS...Remember that each is a person of flesh and blood, entitled to his or her own choices and mistakes. Each owns himself and has the right to equality.
- ALLOW FOR INDIVIDUALITY...Seek not to create for each other a new mold
  that can only fit with much discomfort and pain. Accept the other as he or she is,
  just as you would have yourself accepted.
- GIVE MUTUAL APPROVAL...Remember, criticism divides while compliments
  encourage confidence in the other. Hasten not to point out the other's mistakes,
  for each will soon discover his own.
- CHERISH YOUR UNION...Let no one come between your togetherness...not child, not friend, not worldly goods. Yet maintain enough separateness to allow each other his or her own uniqueness.
- LOVE ONE ANOTHER...Love is your river of life---your eternal source of re-creating yourselves. Above all else---love one another.



# Creative Parenting "Thinking out of the Box"

- R. Lewis: "Last stage of maturation process."
- We are raising God's kids! Ps 127: 3-4
- ❖ Many areas of judgment...
- ❖ Need is to ask for wisdom! Jas 1: 5-6



# Focus: Nurturing, Creating Strong Emotional Bonds

Eph 6:4 "But nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord."

Nurturance = Cherishing (lit. warming). Close knit!

- Chastening = Punishment, discipline
- Admonition= Warning, counsel Prov 29:15 "Rod & Reproof"
- Instruction = teaching Deut 6
- ❖ Training = Prov 22:6



# The Importance of Names

"Nomen est omen" - Latin: "Names are destiny"

- Are names important to God?
  - Eph 3:15 "Everything on heaven and on earth is named."
    - ❖ Adam—named the animals Gen 2:19-20
    - ❖ Parents—responsibility to name children
    - \* Abram/Abraham & Sarai/Sarah Gen 17
    - 7 births named by angels—usually told what to name the child so app. Named:
      - Jesus "Jehovah saves" Matt 1:21
        - Song: "Jesus: Name Above All Names"
    - \*John "Grace" -Lk 1:13; Jn 1:17
- \* Personal Favorites:
  - Hezekiah-"Jehovah is my strength"
  - Timothy "Devoted to God."
  - ❖ Samuel "Answered Prayer."



# Importance of Names

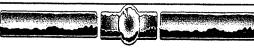
- Parent's need to use this as a part of building self-esteem and purpose...
  - \* Amy "Beloved"
  - \* Allison "Honest one"
    - \* Allison Louise (Grandmother)
      - ♦ Louise- Maiden= protector, watchful.
      - We chose to emphasize Nana's good traits.
    - Same thing true with a Bible name
      - David: Heb. "Messiah's love"
      - · Giant killer, after god's own heart, leader...
- \* "The Name Book"-Dorothea Austin
  - "Character-building value in understanding its meaning,"
  - "Each name carries its own message, its own gift. Discover its heritage, significance and spiritual application we can live up to!"



# Importance of Names

Nomen est omen - "Names are destiny!"

- Brent High place, honor—"Rising above obstacles."
- \* Gail Joyous one, a merry heart
- Do you know what your name means? Never too late to benefit!
- \* Take the names of the local congregation and publish the meanings...
- Tell children in Bible class the spiritual significance of their name can have lasting impact!!
- Prov 22:1 "A good name is more to be desired than great riches."



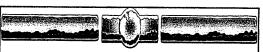
# The Importance of the Family Dinner Hour!

- What is one to do when you disfellowship someone in I Cor 5?
- \* Why? Not eat?
  - The process of eating together creates emotional bonds.
  - \* (Often the most lonely..when eat by yourself).
  - One of the few times during the day you can communicate and share your day.
- Make the family dinner hour sacred.
- "The more often a child eats dinner with his/her family, the less likely that child is to smoke, drink, or use drugs. Frequent family dining is correlated with doing well in school and developing healthy eating habits. This pattern holds true regardless of a child's gender, family structure, or socioeconomic level."



# Study of National Merit Scholars

- \* "One survey examined National Merit scholars, looking for common denominators in their upbringing. Almost without exception, the most astounding teenagers grew up in homes where the whole family sat down and ate dinner together at night."
- The July 1997 Issue of Ladies Home Journal
- Source: The Chicago Tribune



# Family Memory Verses:

- Before we say our prayer we say either our family motto or a verse.
  - \*Keep them on 3" by 5" cards and write them down, review, share Ps 119:11
  - Find verses that meet current needs in the family..
    - \*Isa 41:10 "Fear thou not for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, I will help thee, I will up hold thee with thy right arm of righteousness."
  - \* Sometimes read an article out of the paper and ask what they think...so we can help "process" the material and guide their thinking.



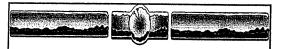
# Favorite saying: "Watch"

- Watch your thoughts;
   they become words.
- Watch your words;
   they become actions.
- Watch your actions; they become habits.
- Watch your habits; they become character.
- Watch your character;
   it becomes your destiny.



# Family Motto or Mission Statement

- Families of the past "Coat of Arms" or "seal" which identified them.
  - Important to live up to values and not dishonor the family name.
- The American Flag—"Stars and Stripes" and pledge of allegiance...
- Businesses understand the value of a motto: GM, Hallmark cards.
- Why not our own families?
  - \* What you will someday be you are now becoming!
  - What the flag is to our country this motto would be for my family!!



# The Hunter Family Motto



We are a loving, affectionate, responsible, obedient, cheerful Godly family. We are always do our best and finish what we start.



# The Walker Family Creed

❖ We are the Walkers. We Walk in Paths of Righteousness. We are a family of loving supportive people, and our goal is to help each other be our best. We focus on whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and of good reputation. We strive for excellence, and being worthy of praise. We are the Walkers and Walker women don't wear brown!!



# Joel and Kate Wilsford's FAMILY MISSION IS TO:

- Love, care for, and support each other . . .
- Making our home a refuge from the world...
- Enjoy life and all its blessings . . .
- ❖ Do for others . . . .
- Giving ourselves to God forever!!

### Signed:

❖ Joel, Emily, Jeanie, Kate, Anna



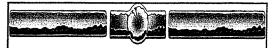
The Huber Family Motto
"We are the ... holy,
humorous, happy,
helpful, honest,
heroic Hubers!"



# We are the Crafts Family

- We are a Compassionate, Cheerful, Crazy, Conscientious, Come-on-over Christian family.
- We Cherish: The Name and Sacrifice of Christ, The Truth of His Holy Word, and Each Other.
- And sometimes we're: cat-loving, cinema-viewing, chicken-eating, chocolate-loving, couch potatoes.

Why not take some time and come up with a family motto, creed or mission statement of our own?



# Family Traditions=Build close-knit bonds!

- ❖ Traditions = "To hand down."
- Good traditions can become cherished memories which show forethought and concern
- Two fold purpose:
  - Create anticipation and meaningful reflection later
  - Cement relationships that create lifelong bonds of closeness Eph 6:4



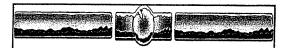
# Traditions..

- God has "handed down" many memorials and Divine traditions. Reminds us of important things/keeps us from becoming ungrateful and forgetful.
  - \*Ex. Passover (Ex. 12: 24-27).
  - NT. The Lord's supper look forward and backwards (I Peter 1:9) become one (I Cor 10:17)



# Examples/Ideas

- Family mottos & verses become cherished traditions...
- \* Spiritual Birthdays...
  - \* 9/9/95 Amy, 10/25/97 Allison
- \* You are special plate...
- ❖ Go for family walks..
- Friday night was Family night
  - Kids choice, ride bikes, watch video, pop popcorn, play games, etc.
  - Put ideas in a fun box where you draw a selection of your family member choices.
- ❖ Tuck in nightly prayer with a blessing.
- \* "Pillow prayers" good with teens



# Let's Make a Memory . .

- Book by Gloria Gaither and Shirley Dobson "Great ideas for building family tradition and togetherness.."
- "We have moment to hold in our hand, and to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand. Yesterday's gone and tomorrow may never come, but we have this moment today."
- May God bless you as you creatively raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!

# Eating together provides more than nourishment

By MARGARET VISSER of the Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES - When members of a family, or of a college fraternity, regularly eat meals together, they are not only nourishing themselves, they are also creating and reinforcing personal and cultural at-

titudes and expectations.

If they decide to eat irregularly and apart — each consuming a different dish, for example, or dining in silence or in different rooms of the house - they just as infallibly enact and symbolize a different series of values and preferences.

The way we treat food and the manner in which we consume it are expressions of our goals and values. Eating choices and rituals help to shape and control daily life

and human relationships.

These are matters of particular relevance today, because in just two decades a new and astonishingly efficient technology has arisen that promises (or threatens) radical change in our relationship to cooking, to dining and hence to each other.

Today, more than 70 per cent of house-

holds in the United States have microwave ovens in their kitchens, and a vast industry has grown up to provide these customers with microwave meals. Fast foods are hardly new, of course, but these are the first designed to create the illusion of home-cooked food and intended to take the place of traditional family meals.

Beyond that, the speed with which they can be prepared - perhaps seven minutes, as compared to 45 minutes for regular frozen food — eliminates the necessity for family members to eat at the same

time, or even the same food.

This unmatched efficiency is transforming the way we eat. But before we canbegin to appreciate how these changes may be affecting us, it is necessary to understand the traditions it is supplanting.

### Communal learning

The most widespread and important of these is probably the family meal, which in some ways has defined the family for nearly three centuries. This communal eating ritual has never been associated with any particular country or cuisine. But'it is

virtually by accumous with a piece of ture: The dining-room table has beer tent symbol of Western attitudes to living together since the 18th century fore that, most people drew up benc the hearth and sat down in relays I The rich used rough planks to set up porary trestle tables.)

The dining-room table stands, sol immobile, in a room of its own. Its size is the size of the family group; when anyone leaves home or is away, the table provides a mute but constant reminder of the absentee, of the space no longer filled. Even a silent, deserted dining room table seems haunted by memories of numberless family dramas that once took place around it.

In our culture the dining-room table also represents a distinctive view of the family as a close-knit, independe extremely disciplined entity. View torically and cross-culturally, to in everyone in the family being p round the table daily is highly unus havior.

To sit, in a chair, in a special ro eating, with the edge of a table-top ( your midriff, with your arms close: sides and to agree to touch food on

special tools is a degree of physical constraint that is quite rare in the history of human mealtimes.

At table, people wait until everyone is ready to begin and never leave until everyone has finished. They are served, or serve themselves, pass condiments to those who request them and refrain from taking more than their share.

Children learn at table "how to behave," to express themselves, to listen, to catch conversational nuances. The table also provides a controlled setting where family relations, in all their ambiguity, can safely be played out. Indeed, social researchers have long studied the ubiquitous, revealing dinner-table drama in order to

See EATING, Page 2G



The way we treat food and the manner in which we consume it are expressions of our goals and values. Eating choices and rituals help to shape and control daily life and human relationships.

# Eating with family may be lost pastime

From Page 1G

explore the dynamics of group interaction.

The traditional meal, then, is time-consuming, intricate, openly hierarchical and communal — its rituals hallowed by tradition and respect for tradition.

By contrast, nothing could more perfectly symbolize the aims as well as the stresses of modernity than the vast proliferation of fast foods: their "anti-hierarchical" uniformity, not only of foods but of venues to eat them in; their sweet and bland flavors (nothing strong enough to displease anyone); the obsessive concern with wrapping and packaging (suggesting technological control and the atmosphere of a children's party with presents); the relaxed and egalitarian way in which they are eaten (while walking along, using plastic cutlery or one's hands).

Above all, fast foods embody cleanliness, a modern Western version of the ancient concept of ritual purity. Most frozen microwaveable meals for the home look hygienic, carrying the message that what is inside is protected, controlled, clean and safe.

Foods are, in fact, a new version of one other extremely ancient phenomenon. Ever since people began living in cities, most of them have had to depend on food vendors to feed themselves.

In ancient Rome, for example, ordinary people lived in apartment buildings called *insulae* and were prevented by safety regulations from building fires for cooking. Instead, they went out into the streets to buy ready-cooked food.

Anyone lucky enough to be asked to dinner in a wealthy house-hold with its own kitchen would return home afterward with parcels of food as a treat for the family.

# Turning clock back

Thus, if microwaved fast foods do become our daily home fare, we shall be turning the clock back, not forward. But history never repeats itself exactly, and here the peculiar impersonality of microwave technology is important.

The future, as seen by microwave and microwaveable-food producers, contains refrigerators, but no stoves, plenty of shelves and more than one microwave per family.

The warm stove, our last connection to the sustaining hearth fire, would disappear, as would the slow, sweet smells of cooking that we associate with it. Those qualities of the family meal, the ones that imparted feelings of security and wellbeing, might be lost forever in a world where food is "zapped" or "nuked" instead of cooked.

Accepting ready-cooked microwaveable foods for daily family meals also spells freedom, of course — not only from having to cook, but from regular mealtimes and having to share.

The scarcest commodity of all in modern life is time. Though we like to imagine that our society is devoted to providing us all with leisure, Americans work longer hours, with shorter holidays, than almost any people on earth.

But with the microwave, there is no waiting at all, let alone waiting

your turn. This allows women — on the assumption that kitchen work is ineluctably female work and invariably distasteful — finally to escape from the kitchen. This liberation has much to recommend it, but it has been estimated that by the year 2000, the majority of adults will have become so dependent on prepared microwaveable meals that they will no longer know how to cook a meal for themselves.

# Age of instant gratification

Microwave meal containers already have plastic strips that turn blue when the food is hot, and we are promised still better strips to relieve all remaining necessity for thought by transmitting cooling instructions directly to the oven.

With cooking reduced to pushing a button, the kitchen may wind up as a sort of filling station. Family members will pull in, push a few buttons, fill up and leave.

To clean up, all we need do is throw away the plastic plates. We would receive freedom from social complexity and the fulfillment of the primitive longing to have everything magically available at the flick of a switch, an electronic cornucopia.

Beyond this continuing, infantile desire for instant gratification, market researchers say they have detected in us the equally childlike wish to buy food that looks good before we heat it and eat it. For instance, we don't like food that looks

raw, so many best-selling microwave products are coated in preyellowed crumbs.

Coatings are very big in the microwave business — they provide protection and cover a multitude of sins. They emphasize the self-sufficiency of each little object.

Microwaves happen to prefer food in smallish pieces, but that "clear, clean, separate" appearance potently symbolizes the image we entertain of ourselves. We are individuals, if all comfortingly alike: We do not cling, stick or mingle. We do not need to share, to talk, to interrelate.

### Mass acceptance

Many of our attitudes toward food, however, are not babyish at all, and mass acceptance of microwaveable food depends in part on a highly culture-specific puritanical streak. This is the reason microwave-food producers have made much of the preordained low-fat, low-cholesterol status of many of their offerings. Thus, they wed our extreme physical discipline and knowledge about health and diet to our longing for somebody else's control, by offering us portion management. This means that when you buy pre-cut pieces, say of apple pie in its plastic cover, the slice is severely limited in size so that you can't eat too much of it.

The old dining-room table required each individual to give up some personal autonomy and bow to the dictates of the group and the social system. If we stop eating together, we shall save time for ourselves and achieve mealtime self-sufficiency. But being free inevitably entails deciding from what and for what we wish to be free.

In the case of food, we should perhaps first consider whether, in saving time and effort by accepting microwaved fast foods as our daily fare, we would, in fact, be more healthy, more content, better adjusted.

The communal meal is our primary ritual for encouraging the family to gather together every day.

If it is lost to us, we shall have to invent new ways to be a family. It is worth considering whether the shared joy that food can provide is worth giving up.

# **FAMILY MOTTOS OR SLOGANS**

By Brent Hunter

In about 1987, it occurred to me that families of the past had a coat of arms or some special seal which identified them. These usually embodied all types of positive characteristics that broadcast to the world why that family was especially honorable. The members were to live up to the ideals represented by the seal or coat of arms; otherwise, they risked bringing dishonor to their own family name! A good name in those days really meant something.

The American flag, our own Stars and Stripes, is filled with rich symbolism. Every time we pledge allegiance to it, this pledge reminds us of our heritage and what we represent as a people. Our coins contain the wonderful motto "In God We Trust."

Businesses also know the value of a special slogan or motto that they desire to identify with their particular product. General Motors wants us to think of "The Mark of Excellence", Publix Supermarket with "Where Shopping is a Pleasure", and Hallmark Cards with "Because you care enough to send the very best!" It occurred to me, why not do the same thing for my own modern day family? What did we all have in common that we wanted to live up to as The Hunter Family? We had a discussion one night over the dinner table and came up with a list of adjectives that described what we valued and what we all wanted to become. I was reminded of the saying, "What you will someday be, you are now becoming." What the flag is to our country, this little motto would be for my family.

We came up with the following:

### THE HUNTER FAMILY MOTTO

"WE ARE A LOVING, AFFECTIONATE, RESPONSIBLE,
OBEDIENT, CHEERFUL, GODLY FAMILY.
WE ALWAYS DO OUR BEST AND FINISH WHAT WE START!"

Short and to the point. At first, we said it every night around the dinner table before our

prayer. Now we say it at about once a week and whenever we have guests over for dinner. It is our statement both to ourselves and to the world of what we stand for!

It has been helpful over the past years to remind each other of what we have decided we want to be. For example, if one of my girls is not giving me a very warm hug, I simply ask, "What kind of family are we? A loving, affectionate family, right? Now, let's try that again...you can do better than that." If they are being a little cranky, I remind them that we are "a cheerful family." It has been used as an extremely helpful instruction device that ingrains in each of us the habits that will make us what we all want to be.

My dear friends Ralph and Paula Walker were visiting with us and I shared with him our new concept. He latched on to it immediately and went home and came up a motto for his own family. (Ralph has a charming wife and three beautiful daughters).

True to Ralph's talents, he created a very meaningful one with a humorous, unexpected, and clever twist ending. It goes like this:

# THE WALKER CREED

"WE ARE THE WALKERS. WE WALK IN PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

WE ARE A FAMILY OF LOVING, SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE,

AND OUR GOAL IS TO HELP EACH OTHER BE OUR BEST.

WE FOCUS ON WHATEVER IS TRUE, HONORABLE, RIGHT, PURE, LOVELY,

AND OF GOOD REPUTATION.

WE STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE AND BEING WORTHY OF PRAISE.

WE ARE THE WALKERS,

AND WALKER WOMEN DON'T WEAR BROWN!"

I hope my children will look back and treasure our motto as a fond memory and come up with their own unique family slogan when the time comes. Wouldn't that be a meaningful tradition for *you* to begin in *your* family?

Why not take some time and come up with a family creed or motto of your own! You will be glad you did. Even if you are not yet married, you can revise the one you make up now with your future spouse later. I would think that would be both a fun and meaningful experience!

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR... CREATIVE PARENTING

("Thinking outside the box!")

Parenting is not about just mothering but "fathering" as well.

In fact, Dads should take the lead!

(Proverbs 22:1)
My name means:
My wife's name means:
My children's names mean:
How am I going to use this information to help build courage and character?
List some barriers keeping the family dinner time almost sacred:
How can we overcome these?
How many will commit to composing your family mission or motto?
What are your favorite traditions?
List some new ones to begin right now as you decide to better lead your own amily?
Two great sources for helpful tips: Steven Covey's "7 Habits for Highly Effective families" and Gloria Gather's "Great Ideas for Building Family Traditions and Cogetherness")

# GIVE HONOR TO THE WOMAN

I Peter 3:7

### I. THE SELF-ESTEEM PROBLEM

- A. God commands us "...not to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God who gives us all things richly to enjoy." I Tim 6:17
  - 1. God wants us to enjoy life and find pleasure from obeying Him.
  - 2. Paul commands us to "rejoice always, again I say rejoice!" Phil 4:4
- B. Many Christians find it difficult to be joyful. Depression, low self-esteem, and discouragement are too commonplace.
  - 1. Women experience feelings of low self-esteem about being women more than men do about being men.
  - 2. Why is there a "gender gap" of as much as 5 to 1?
- C. Unique gender needs seem instrumental here.
  - 1. Male "failure in reaching goals"
  - 2. Female "feedback from the closest circle of family/friends in the last few days"
    - a. Memorize this, men --- it explains so much of the "mystery."
    - b. When a woman in your life seems irritable or upset, ask, "Have I (or anyone in the family, friends, or co-workers) said something to put her down recently?
    - c. This will help you to understand a woman's mood-shifts better.
    - d. If a man will just reflect on the lowest periods of his life, then he'll begin to understand how a woman can feel in only a few hours.

#### II. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- A. The solution: two basic points from I Peter 3:7
  - 1. Husbands are to be *understanding and sympathetic* to their wives.
  - 2. Husbands need to demonstrate that they honor their wives.
- B. Doing these two things will solve the fundamental problem in female self-esteem. With <u>rare exception</u>, if the wife is unhappy about who she is, the husband has failed in his role to properly honor and respect her!!!
- C. Some feminists are offended by I Peter 3:6 where the wife is to *call her husband* "lord." The idea is to show deep respect and look up to her husband.
  - 1. "Mutual admiration society" --- Notice the "likewise" in I Peter 3:7. The husband is also to esteem and look up to his wife!

- 2. With rules about authority, headship, and submission come rules about one's *attitude* that must accompany a husband's authority.
- 3. Ideally, both should feel they got better than they deserved.
- D. To "dwell with them according to knowledge" (vs 7), husbands must cultivate a sympathetic spirit and considerately "live with your wives in an understanding way."
  - 1. Gary Smalley says: "Men are like buffalos and women are like butterflies." Emotionally, a man must be careful not to run over his wife!
  - 2. Ex. The wife is hurt and needs comfort, but the husband belittles her for "being too sensitive." The Bible tells him, "as you assert your authority, do so in an understanding way."
  - 3. **Give her your shoulder, not your mouth!** When she hurts, use compassion and understanding! Answer *feeling with feeling, not with fact*!!
- E. To "give honor unto the wife as the weaker vessel" (vs 7) is critical.
  - 1. This needs constant effort. Her sense of who and what she is can be lost in a few days if it is not reinforced.
  - 2. NOT RECOMMENDED: "Honey, I told you when I married you I loved you, and if I change my mind I will let you know!!"
  - 3. How is the woman "weaker" or more fragile?
    - a. She is emotionally the more sensitive and intuitive which enables her to carry out her God-given roles.
    - b. God "formed" man from the dust (Gen 2:7) -- the same word used for shaping clay pots and utensils. In contrast, God "fashioned" the woman -- an artistic term used by skilled craftsmen when sculpting the most intricate items in the temple.
    - c. What is displayed in your hutch with lights and honor? Vessels that are fragile or indestructible? (Ever see an iron skillet in a curio cabinet?)
- F. The phrase "heirs together of the grace of life" (vs 7) may simply be the happy home that God wanted for us, rather than just salvation.
  - 1. A home in turmoil and an unhappy wife means little "grace."
  - 2. Honoring your bride will lessen the tension and change the tone.
  - 3. If the attitude is right, the husband's "prayers will not be hindered."

### III. SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- A. Tell her often how much you love & appreciate her! Be creative!
  - 1. Make her feel valued and special every day if possible, not just on her birthday or Mother's Day. **Be specific**: "Our kids are surely blessed to have a mother like you. You take such good care of them!"
  - 2. Illustration: "Honey, do you like my dress?" Good answer: "That dress isn't half as good looking as you are!" Better answer: "That dress is beautiful, but I like what's IN it a whole better!"

### B. Tell others!!

- 1. Before friends say, "This is my wife and she's <u>all mine!</u>" (Use continual positive reinforcement. What you told her 3 weeks ago is gone!)
- 2. Lavish praise and appreciation on your mother-in-law. Your wife will love the "sideways compliments"!
- 3. Some women only survive because friends or bosses tell them how valued they are. For others, the "paycheck" is their only validation. But GoD wants this honor and esteem to come from the husband!!
- 4. The verbal intimacy in the Song of Solomon provides the husband with a pattern to follow!!

### C. Change your attitude if necessary!

- 1. If you think your wife "can't handle it" or is "a space cadet," it will be extremely difficult to honor her!!
- 2. Watch sarcastic put-downs!
  Give her the benefit of the doubt. (Ex. She's not nosey--just inquisitive!!)
- 3. **Don't bark orders at her!** James Dobson says:

  "A man may call his wife or daughter stupid or dumb and not mean it. The sad part is, a woman accepts and believes what her husband and father tell her."
- Remember non-verbal disrespectful judgments.
   Rolling your eyes at her (or worse, in front of others) wounds her deeply.
- 5. Gifts are important.
  - a. "The little things mean a lot!"
  - b. The price is not important but the message behind the gift!
  - c. Buy her what she wants, not what you want or want her to have!
  - d. Random acts of kindness say, "You are important to me!!"

### 6. Watch comparisons!

- a. Don't compare her unfavorably to your mother or first wife. Accept and love her as she is!!
- b. If you are always bragging on other women, she will be thinking, "What about me?"
- c. Be careful not to make her feel "taken for granted!"

#### CONCLUSION:

- A. Men feel this is a "one sided" lesson. The lesson is for the woman this time and not the reverse. However, the woman as "the helper suitable" is literally "the answer" to the man.
- B. If you honor your wife and love her the way she needs to be loved, she will respond! GoD built her to be that way!!
- C. Remember, much of a woman's self-esteem is based on the <u>positive feedback</u> she receives "from the closest circle of family and friends in the last few days."

# **HONORING THE WOMAN**

(Thoughts on I Peter 3:7)

Do you agree that this is a neglected emphasis in our teaching today?
How many lessons have you heard on "Wives, be in subjection to your husbands" versus "Husbands, honor your wives?"
How can we best restore proper balance?
**************************************
Gary Smalley, in his book If Only He Knew, claims that almost all marital problems can be traced back to the man not loving his wife like Christ loved the church.  What is your reaction to this? Is this fair?  Can you think of a reason why men should feel thrilled about this?
Women are designed as "responders". How they treat us is often a mirror image of how they perceive we treat and feel about them. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
፟ ************************************
Where does your wife feel she fits into your priorities? Do you give your wife the benefit of the doubt and put her actions in the best light possible as a way to show love?
Will you make a commitment to pray more prayers privately and publicly, thanking the LORD for the important role that women play in the church and in the home?

To most women, the "little things are the big things." Think of some little things you can do

that will help your wife/daughters to feel loved and cherished.

# MARRIAGE AS A SPIRITUAL COVENANT

Revised and adapted from Dr. Clark Warren's "The Triumphant Marriage" and Bill Gothard's "The True Significance of the Wedding Covenant."

"Set me as a seal upon thy heart..." Song of Solomon 8:6

# Introduction: Refreshing & instilling marital commitment

- A. We have not entered into a "marriage contract" but a "marriage covenant!" (Mal 2:14, Prov 2:16f)
- B. What exactly is a covenant?
  - 1. A Hebrew word: "In the sense of cutting; a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh"
  - 2. Examples are found in Gen 15:9-10, 17-18 and Jer 34:13, 18
- C. Our forefathers began many wedding traditions and understood this well. Over time, the original meanings have been lost.
  - 1. "The True Significance of the Wedding Covenant" booklet opened my eyes. (\$2 from IBLP Publications Office, Box 1, Oak Brook III 60522-3001) Fascinating!
  - 2. One covenant symbol: the different aisles for the bride or groom to make his/her way to the altar to exchange vows (learn the original purpose and more examples later!)
- D. A marriage is sacred. It is spiritual...heavenly. (Matt 19:6)
  - 1. A "holy triune not a human duet!!"
  - 2. If you break your vow to your mate, you may still have to keep your vow to God ("until death do you part" not "until divorce do you part").
  - 3. "It is a snare to a man to say rashly, 'It is holy' and then to later make inquiry." Prov 20:25 (½ of all divorces in 1997 occurred within the first two years!)
  - 4. The difference between a covenant and a contract:
    - a. A covenant is based on trust---a contract on distrust!
    - b. A covenant is based on **unlimited responsibility** -- a contract on **limited liability**.

*Illustration*: God's promise to Abraham and all He went through to keep His Word demonstrate unlimited responsibility. Just as the traditional words "...for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health."

c. A covenant is **lifelong and not to be broken** -- a contract can be **voided by mutual consent.** 

*Illustration*: The rainbow in the sky reminds everyone that God's promise has no statute of limitations.

### I. COVENANT SYMBOLISM IN THE WEDDING CEREMONY

- A. The groom enters first-why? He is the initiator of the covenant.
- B. The father walks the bride down the aisle–why?
  - 1. The parents are an important part of the ceremony.

- 2. The father's duty is to present his daughter as a pure gift. (Deut 22:13-21)
- 3. The white dress symbolizes purity.
- C. The father gives the bride away to show the full blessing of the parents. This is the formal transfer of authority from the father to the groom after he has asked for the daughter's hand in marriage. (Num 30:4-8).
- D. The ring is a "token of the covenant."
- E. The couple is introduced to establish the changing of names.
  - 1. Illustration: Abram's name was changed to Abraham.
  - 2. Spiritually we wear the "new name" of Christian once we enter into a covenant relationship with God upon baptism.
- F. What is the significance of the guest book?
  - 1. It should be signed after—not before. It indicates there are witnesses to the covenant who have a vested interest in supporting the marriage.
  - 2. The Armenians have a low divorce rate. When a couple gets in trouble, the godparents move in until they get it settled!
- G. What is the purpose of the receiving line? To give a blessing to the couple as in Ruth 4:11, 14f.
- H. The food at the reception is for the covenant celebration. This is very similar to the Lord's supper.
- I. The couple feeds each other cake and they become "one flesh" in the eating of the cake, just as we become one in the eating of the bread. (I Cor 11:24f)

# II. DO WE HAVE A PROBLEM WITH KEEPING VOWS & COMMITMENTS TODAY?

- A. A lax attitude in general makes the taking of our vows seriously difficult.
  - 1. Ronald Reagan in 1981 fired the air traffic controllers because they broke a contractual agreement. Doubtful that would happen today.
  - 2. During the revolutionary war both sides respected vows so much that they avoided taking prisoners. Instead they simply made them promise they would not return to fight again. If they violated their honor and did so, then they were executed.
- B. Examine these scriptures that apply to the taking of vows:
  - 1. Ecc 5:2-7
  - 2. Ps 15:4b (Zion dweller swears to his own hurt and changes not!!!)
  - 3. Num 30:2
  - 4 I Sam 1:11-21 (Hannah's vow)
  - 5. Josh 9:16-20
  - 6. Matt 12: 36f (Jesus)
- C. Commitment: the cornerstone of a triumphant marriage!
  - 1. Consider the following quote about the nature of commitment:

"COMMITMENT ... is what transforms a promise into reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions. It is the actions that speak louder than words. It is making the time when there is none, coming through time after time, year after year.

Commitment is the stuff character is made of, the power to change the face of things.

It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism."

- 2. "Marriage demands toughness, and toughness proceeds out of commitment. No marriage will ever be stronger than the commitments that serve as its infrastructure."
- D. We ask couples to say some hard-hitting, heavy-duty vows before they get married. So where do we go wrong?
  - 1. Are vows **treated superficially** with the preacher left to "perform the ceremony? The couple is so nervous they hardly think about or realize the significance.
    - a. I encourage couples to write their own vows and wedding ceremony.
    - b. Suggestion: Save the ceremony and go over it ...at least once a year on your wedding anniversary.
  - 2. It is important that what you have vowed to each other be kept current and fresh! It is so easy to forget.

# E. What matters is your current level of commitment

- 1. Often, the vows seem less vital and are less passionately held as time passes.
- 2. Sadly, many only vaguely remember what they said.
- 3. The commitment should be *active* not passive!!

  Illustration: One may stay in a marriage by being passive. S/he doesn't leave, but doesn't *do anything* to make the marriage better either. Don't forget the *positive*, radical part of *active commitment*.

# III. WE NEED THOROUGH, INSIGHTFUL UNDERSTANDING OF MARITAL PROMISES

- A. We need a "promise orientation" that is highly enlightened.
- B. The traditional vows have 6 separate parts:
  - 1. I will **love you** as long as we both live (kindness, sacrifice)
  - 2. I will **cherish and honor** you as long as we both live (thoughtfulness, attentiveness)
  - 3. I will be to you what a husband or wife owes to a spouse (dedication to doing my part and meeting the other's needs)
  - 4. I will take you as you are (acceptance)
  - 5. I will forsake all others (faithfulness!!)
  - 6. I will do all these things for better or worse, in sickness and in health (unconditionally serve and stay with you for as long we live)

# C. WOW! What does that mean, practically speaking??

- 1. If we disagree, frustrate, disappoint, or hurt each other....?
- 2. If I think I don't get what I deserve...?
- 3. If I express how I feel, regardless of hardship...? I will keep my vows!

# D. Now, REHEARSE THE PROMISES until they are BURNED INTO OUR BRAINS.

- 1. Marriage vows are usually spoken a single time, thus they have very little value in a marital crisis.
- 2. Dr. Clark Warren, author of "The Triumphant Marriage", suggests a change in frequency of the marriage vows.
  - a. Instead of "once-in-a-lifetime", 2 or 3 times a week for the first 10 years, and at least once a week for the rest of the marriage.
  - b. Verbalized regularly over a long period of time for tremendous power!!

- c. HOW? Find a way that is natural, meaningful, and even fun! BE CREATIVE!!
- 3. What about you?
  - a. The more you can find **new and creative ways** to affirm the commitment the better.
  - b. Recite it over and over so that when troubles come the brain will trigger new ideas on how to fulfill these vows!!

### **CONCLUSION:**

- A. Do your homework! Write your own concise summary of your vows.
- B. Your marriage will benefit dramatically from a simple exercise designed to help both partners clarify and articulate promises.

Here is a sample of what Gail and I came up with after looking over our original ceremony and thinking about the basic, most important needs that we each share.

### I PROMISE...

(A renewal of our vows from Brent to Gail)

I promise I will do everything in my power to help you get to heaven, to accept you, and to remain loyal to you always.

I promise to put you and our marriage second only to God and to be open and honest with you always as we strive for oneness.

I promise I will cherish, honor, and support you in good times and bad and strive to love you selflessly, like Christ loves the church, as I meet your deepest needs.

I promise to pilot, provide, and protect you and our family and to do these things unconditionally until death do us part...so help me God!!

### I PROMISE...

(A renewal of vows from Gail to Brent)

I promise I will do everything in my power to help you get to heaven,
to accept you, and to remain loyal to you always.
I promise to put you and our marriage second only to God and to be open
and honest with you always as we strive for oneness.
I promise to admire, honor, and obey you in good times and bad
and strive to be an excellent keeper at home and be sensitive to your deepest needs.

I promise to **love you** and to do all these things unconditionally until death do us part...so help me God!!

(Based on the fact that God has provided us with role-based relationships, I suggest you have different vows which focus in on each role. For help look at the handout of scriptures I have provided for you entitled "The Most Important Words about Husband and Wife.")

# Refreshing and Re-instilling Marital Commitment

(Commitment and Vows in Marriage)

# WORKSHOP WORKSHEET: STEPS TO RECONSTRUCT AND REFRESH YOUR VOWS

(Your marriage will benefit dramatically from this simple exercise designed to help both of you clarify and articulate the promises you have made to each other.)

- 1. What do you remember most about your wedding vows from memory? Quickly brainstorm together on a separate sheet of paper and see what you can piece together.
- 2. What vows have you heard said by others that you liked? Reflect upon what you have come to understand as vitally important to you and your marriage since your wedding day that could be added to a new, updated set of vows that you decide to commit to each other. Brainstorm together. Ask your mate for ideas as to what is important to him or her.
- 3. Look over the 6 parts listed on the handout for the traditional marriage vows and use this as a guide to help you reconstruct your vows. Can you put them in your own words that will have special meaning to you?
- 4. Given the different roles that God gives the man and the woman in marriage, look over the handout "The Most Important Words about Husband and Wife". Select from the scriptures some key concepts that reflect your unique roles that God would have you to commit to each other.
- 5. Condense all this into a brief list that you can both memorize and say to each other on a regular basis!! Periodic rewrites of the commitment statement will make it stronger and more meaningful.

### Congratulations--you have done it!

Now write it out on a card, commit it to memory, and say it to each other regularly. You will crave and enjoy hearing your mate talk about the special kind of love you both share as you repeat your promises to each other. And let the kids overhear you say it or say it in front of them--it will teach them valuable lessons about marriage!!

# The Most Important Words About Husband & Wife

"As therefore God's picked representatives, purified and beloved, put on that nature which is merciful in action, kindly in heart, humble in mind. Accept life, and be most patient and tolerant with one another, always ready to forgive if you have a difference with anyone. Forgive as freely as the Lord has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be truly loving, for love binds all the virtues together in perfection. Let the peace of Christ guide all your decisions, for you were called to live as one, united body; and always be thankful. Let the full richness of Christ's teaching find a home among you...

~ Colossians 3:12-16a (Phillips)

"Let all bitterness and indignation and wrath [passion, rage, bad temper] and resentment [anger, animosity] and quarreling [brawling, clamor, contention] and slander [evil speaking, abusive, and blasphemous language] be banished from you, with all malice [spite, ill-will, or baseness of any kind].

~ Ephesians 4:31 (Amplified)

"Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God."

~ Romans 15:7 (New American Standard)

"Be subject to one another ["fit in with" each other] out of reverence for Christ...You WIVES must learn to adapt yourselves to your husbands, as you submit yourselves to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is the head of the church and savior to the body. The willing subjection of the church to Christ should be reproduced in the submission of wives to their husbands in everything."

~ Ephesians 5:21 (Amplified)

"In a similar way you wives should be submissive to your own husbands, so that if any of them will not be persuaded by the message, they may without message be won over by the conduct of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."

~ 1 Peter 3:1,2 (New Berkeley)

"...Let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband, that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates him and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly.

~ Ephesians 5:33 (Amplified)

"For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

~ Gen. 2:24 (New American Standard)

"Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

~ Matthew 19:6 (New American Standard)

"Take heed then, to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. For I hate divorce, says the Lord..."

~ Malachi 2:15b, 16a (New American Standard)

"The HUSBAND must give his wife the same sort of love that Christ gave to the church, when He sacrificed Himself for her...So men ought to give their wives the love they naturally have for their own bodies. The love a man gives his wife is the extending of his love for himself to enfold her. Nobody ever hated his own body; he feeds it and looks after it."

~ Ephesians 5:25,28-29a (Phillips)

"...Let each man of you [without exception] love his wife [as being in a sense] his very own self."

~ Ephesians 5:33a (Amplified)

"Husbands, love your wives - be affectionate and sympathetic with them - and do not be harsh or bitter or resentful toward them."

~ Colossians 3:19 (Amplified)

"...You husbands need to live understandingly with your wives as with a weaker vessel, rendering them honor as joint heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your praying may not be hindered."

~ 1 Peter 3:7 (New Berkeley)

"Do two walk together, except they...have agreed?"
- Amos 3:3 (Amplified)

"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up."

~ Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (New American Standard)

"So let us then definitely aim for and eagerly pursue what makes for harmony and for mutual upbuilding [edification and development] of one another."

~ Romans 14:19 (Amplified)

"...Being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard the other as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

~ Philippians 2:2-4 (New American Standard)

"Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy; it is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. It is not conceited, arrogant and inflated with pride; it is not rude [unmannerly], and does not act unbecomingly. Love [God's love in us] does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking. It is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it - pays no attention to a suffered wrong. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. Love never fails - never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end... And so faith, hope, love abide; [faith, conviction, and belief respecting man's relation to God and divine things; hope, joyful and confident expectation or eternal salvation; love, true affection for God and man, growing out of God's love for us and in us], these three, but the greatest of these is love.

~ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 13 (Amplified)

"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Mas á đ 8