

ISSUE

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THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

October 4,
2015

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Jack Langley
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Contentment in Marriage

By Kyle Pope

Marriage was originally instituted to provide happiness, contentment, and companionship to mankind. When God saw that man was alone He said in Genesis 2:18, **“...It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him”** (NKJV). In spite of God’s provision, it is clear that this is not always what happens. Divorce rates are high, infidelity is common, and the fact that so many have chosen to unlawfully test relationships first by “living together” before making the full commitment of marriage shows that we often refuse to be content with what God has provided for our happiness.

The Lord’s church is not immune to this problem. Sadly even Christians face broken marriages and seek to justify unlawful unions. In the church couples who were once happy face depression, fights, and growing alienation from their mates toward whom they should feel the closest. For Christians this is a spiritual issue that can affect where we spend eternity. Because of this it is important to consider how husbands and wives may attain contentment in marriage.

God Intends For Us to be Content

When husbands and wives are unhappy, we must remember that this is not how God wants it to be. Husbands are commanded to live contently with their wives. The wise man taught the husband to find satisfaction in his wife **“at all times”** and to be **“enraptured by her love”** (Prov. 5:15-20). Paul commanded husbands not **“to be bitter toward”** their

wives but to love them (Col. 3:19).

Wives too are to be content with their husbands. Like husbands, wives are commanded to **“love their husbands”** (Titus 2:4). God told Eve after her sin **“your desire shall be for your husband”** (Gen. 3:16). In Bible times many marriages were arranged. A woman’s choices were limited. That’s different now, but the charge to contentment is no different. Proverbs 31:18 describes the virtuous woman who serves her family, but we note that—**“She perceives that her merchandise is good.”** This may refer to the quality of the goods she makes or prepares, but I suspect it also refers to her attitude toward

what she has. She is not discontent with her husband, his provision for her, or the things she possesses. She sees them as **“good.”** That’s contentment.

What Causes Discontentment?

Unfortunately human beings often disregard God’s commands and intentions for our lives. In marriage why is this—what leads us to be discontent? Many things contribute to this:

1. The Entertainment Industry. Movies, television shows, novels, magazines, and the internet make their money by portraying the most handsome men and the most beautiful women in ways that encourage discontentment. This is not just a new problem. Older shows were equally guilty of this. By portraying ideal husbands and wives always making the right choices, a godly, healthy self-image and view of our mates becomes damaged by unfair comparisons. Real life is more complicated. No mate makes all the right choices. Real people have flaws, warts, and wrinkles.

Now the thrust is more often anti-marriage. As the media presents things joy, happiness, and excitement aren’t found within marriage but outside of it, before it, after it, or when one is liberated from it! The grass is not “always greener on the other side.” It is a lie Satan tries to convince us to accept. We must ask, if all the joy is outside of marriage *why do people continue to seek permanent companionship?*

2. A wealthy society. In the past marriage was not merely a decision of affection and companionship but sometimes a matter of necessity. *How could you maintain a house to live in while you were working all day in the fields? How could you provide any income if you were taking care of your children all day?* The wealth of our culture has presented us with options that were not available in the past. We see this in the care of widows. In Bible times church support of widows was vital to the survival of Christian widows with no family (cf. 1 Tim. 5:3-16). Now Social Security and



generous retirement accounts make it more rare for this need to arise. While this is fortunate in many ways it also contributes to attitudes in our culture as a whole that lead us to look at one another as if we don't need each other. A wife may not feel as if she needs a husband. A husband may not feel any responsibility to provide for a wife. This can contribute to discontentment.

3. The Feminist Movement. When the feminist movement first began it was an attempt to address abuses. It advocated equal pay for equal work, and sought to remedy situations in which women had been mistreated. Now it has become a pulpit for viewpoints that are “*anti-men*” in nature. Feminism now advocates pro-homosexual philosophies and opposition to traditional families. It is now clear that this has led to a way of thinking among some of both genders who say, “If I have problems in my marriage, I don't have to work them out, I'll take care of myself!” When these attitudes come into marriage it leads to discontentment. Sadly this has left many in this world alone, bitter, unhappy, and struggling financially and spiritually.

4. Selfishness. The heart focused solely on its own needs, desires, and welfare is never content. It screams, “I want it my way!”—“I'll do my own thing.” Men seem to have more trouble with this than women. I saw a study done some years ago that found that for every 100 hours of leisure enjoyed by women men enjoy 141. (*Women in the World Atlas*, 12). *What does that tell us?* No matter how much they work, or how hard their job, men make sure they find time for themselves. It also shows (at least in marriage situations) they do this for themselves, but they do not seek to make sure their wives have time for themselves! That does not contribute to contentment.

This isn't always a male problem. Men or women who come from homes where they have everything given to

them, when they get married find it hard to cope with a relationship that isn't like the home of their childhood. Selfishness can show itself in how we treat our children. *Are we more interested in our work than our family? Are we unwilling to give our family the attention they need?* This is selfishness and it leads to discontentment.

What Is Contentment in Marriage?

How to we define what it means to be content in our marriage relationships? What does the Bible teach?

1. It is not acceptance with no desire for improvement.

Christians are to, “**consider one another in order to stir up love and good works**” (Heb. 10:24). This is true of our relationship to our spouse as it is true of our relationship to our brethren. We should constantly work for the improvement of one another, but this is not accomplished by...

- **Bitterness.** Remember, husbands are commanded “**do not be bitter**” toward their wives (Col. 3:19).
- **Nagging.** The Holy Spirit



declares, “**A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike**” (Prov. 27:15).

- **Unfavorable comparisons.** Paul taught that the speech of a Christian should be “**good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers**” (Eph. 4:29). The husband or wives who would say to the other, “You sure aren’t like so, and so!” does not *edify* and does not impart “**grace.**”
- **Withholding intimacy.** The Holy Spirit commands husbands and wives not to withhold affection from one another except for times of prayer and fasting (1 Cor. 7:2-5).

Using this close and tender element of a marriage relationship for manipulation and vindictiveness is wrong.

- **Threats and violence.** To threaten, “If you don’t do it my way, I’ll leave you!”—To tell a mate, “If you do that you won’t touch me for a month!”—To raise a hand against a companion is sinful, contemptible, and unjustifiable!
- **Talking bad about one another.** The virtuous woman was said to have had the trust of her husband because, “**She does him good and not evil all the days of her life**” (Prov. 31:12). We do not help a mate to better by spreading gossip about his or her shortcomings to any who will listen.

Instead, we truly help each other do better by calm, objective communication with one another. We help by positive reinforcement of good qualities and actions, and loving patient help to overcome behavior that is wrong. Husbands and wives must continue their courtship of one another. Paul taught that husbands and wives seek to please one another (1 Cor. 7:33-34). This can’t end when the vows are said! We may also say of contentment...

2. It is cheerful adaptation to a situation even if it cannot be changed. Paul taught that the Christian, by his relationship with Christ may find contentment in all circumstances (Phil. 4:10-13). This must pertain to circumstances within marriage as well. When improvement cannot be accomplished contentment must be a quality within us rather than some ideal situation in which to live. This is a world of tribulation and hardship (John 16:33). If that must characterize our marriages, the Christian is in a unique position to be able to bring good things out of very difficult circumstances.

