

## Change to become a better spouse!

### Intro:

- → series of lessons on change: **better Christian, brother or sister in Christ, son or daughter, neighbor**
- **Gen. 1:26-28; 2:21-24** beginning of husband / wife relationship
  - ! first human institution created by God
- **Eph. 5:22-32** major lesson text — relationship between husband and wife
- **This lesson:**
  - ! **Title:** Change to become a better spouse! — quick overview of basic responsibilities
  - ! **Purpose:** challenge you to challenge yourself — become a better spouse
  
- #1 **Godly homes are hard to find!** — resulting in decline of our nation
  - **stat:** ½ of all marriages today, end in divorce
    - ! **50% divorce rate:** not many husbands and wives showing the world the relationship of Christ and the church — statistics show that the suicide rate increases as the divorce rate increases
    - ! **every godly husband and wife is sorely needed** in our perverse and sinful world
      - ! show the world and submissive and loving church is a loving Savior (Jesus)
      - ! show Christians how to live in Christ
  - **illus.:** result of declining homes, is a declining nation
    - ! **In his book *Our Dance Has Turned to Death*, Carl Wilson** identifies the common **pattern of family decline in ancient Greece and the Roman Empire.**
      - ! **7 stages of family decline**, lead to the internal fall of the nations
        - ! **first stage:** men ceased to lead their families in worship — spiritual and moral development became secondary
        - ! **second stage:** men selfishly neglected care of their wives and children to pursue material wealth, political and military power, and cultural development
        - ! **third stage affected men:** change in men's sexual values — men who were preoccupied with business or war either neglected their wives sexually or became involved with lower-class women or with homosexuality
        - ! **fourth stage affected women:** the role of women at home and with children lost value and status — women were neglected and their roles devalued
        - ! **fifth stage:** husbands and wives competed against each other for money, home leadership, and the affection of their children — resulted in hostility, frustration — many marriages ended in separation and divorce.
        - ! **sixth stage:** selfish individualism grew and carried over into society, fragmenting it into smaller and smaller group loyalties — the nation was thus weakened by internal conflict.
        - ! **seventh stage:** unbelief in God became more complete, parental authority diminished, and ethical and moral principles disappeared, affecting the economy and government — thus, by internal weakness and fragmentation the societies came apart.
      - ! **What stage are we in today?** — case could be made for #7
    - ! **application: Christians, godly homes, can lead our nation back to God**
      - ! every godly man, woman, and home is **important to the restabilization of our nation** - turn back to God
      - ! will become **increasingly harder** to have a godly home in our society

→ **stat: Study Finds U.S. Families the Weakest in the Western World**

! **The State of Our Unions 2005**, an annual report put out by the **National Marriage Project at Rutgers University**, highlighted the **dismal state of the family in the United States**.

! **Among the findings:**

! Only **63 percent of American children grow up with both biological parents**, the **lowest** percentage among Western nations.

! **The U.S. divorce rate has declined** over the past 25 years, but that is **offset by the even greater decline in marriages**. Instead of marriage, couples are living together.

! **Cohabiting couples have twice the breakup rate** of married couples.

! Co-author of the study, **David Popenoe**, said, "**Cohabitation is here to stay. I don't think it's good news, especially for children. As society shifts from marriage to cohabitation, which is what's happening, you have an increase in family instability.**"

! According to Popenoe, the **result of that instability** is that "**the United States has the weakest families in the Western world.**" (Sharon Jayson, "Wedding Bells Aren't Ringing, but Neither Are Phones of Divorce Lawyers,"

USA Today Online, 7-18-05)

→ **stat: Decline of the traditional (godly) family**

! **The U.S. Census Bureau** has come out with several findings in regards to the **American family in the 1990s:**

! **Households headed by unmarried partners grew by almost 72 percent** during the decade.

! **Households headed by single mothers or fathers increased by 25 percent and 62 percent, respectively.**

! For the **first time ever, nuclear families dropped below 25 percent of all households.**

! **Thirty-three percent of all babies were born to unmarried women, compared to only 3.8 percent in 1940.**

! **Cohabitation increased by close to one thousand percent from 1960 to 1998.** (Interview with Dr. James Dobson, "The Family in Crisis," Focus on the Family, August 2001, pp. 2-4; source: U.S. Census Bureau)

→ **What's this mean to you?**

! when you obey God, have godly home, the **impact of your life reaches far beyond the borders** of your home — evangelistic message to the whole world

! **our nation needs** your godly home to survive

! **you need your godly home:**

! to go to heaven

! to have a peaceful place from the turmoil of a sinful world

➤ #2 **Four things the Lord expects from husbands:**

→ **Love your wife** — committed to always to what is right to her, and for her

! **Eph. 5:25a** love wife, as **Christ** loved the church

! **Greek, *agape***: mental commitment, to do what is right, every situation, every time

! **saying**: love is a commitment first, a feeling second

! **illus.:**

! **God**: gave Jesus to save us

! **Jn. 3:16a** God loved the world, gave His only begotten Son

! **Jesus**: died on the cross, for us — **e.g., man for wife**

! **Jn. 15:13** (Jesus) love, lay down life

➤ → **Give yourself up for your wife** — what you'll do if you love her (rf. **Jn. 3:16; Jn. 15:13**)

! **Eph. 5:25** husbands love wife, give themselves up, as Christ

! **Greek, *paradidomi***: to give into the hands (of another), to give over into (one's) power or use

! **illus.:**

! **Jesus** gave Himself up, so that we could be saved — arrest (could have called 10k angels), silent at trial, convicted, abused, scourged, crucified

! **911 NY policemen and firefighters**

! world trade center towers attacked by terrorists

! TV: firefighters run toward the towers, to rescue survivors, while most people were running away

! **a paraplegic, climbed the sheer granite face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park**

! **summer of 1989, Mark Wellman, a paraplegic**, gained national recognition by climbing the sheer granite face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park.

! On the **seventh and final day of his climb**, the headlines of The Fresno Bee read, "Showing a Will of Granite."

! Accompanying the headline was a **photo of Wellman being carried on the shoulders of his climbing companion Mike Corbett**.

! A subtitle said, "Paraplegic and partner prove no wall is too high to scale."

! What many people did not know is that **Mike Corbett scaled the face of El Capitan three times in order to help Mark Wellman pull himself up once**. (Greg Asimakoupoulos in Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching [Baker], from the editors of Leadership.)

➤ → **Cherish your wife** — what you'll do if you love your wife

! **Eph. 5:29** cherish, as Christ also does the church

! **Greek, *thalpo***: to warm, keep warm, to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care (only here and 1 Th. 2:7)

➤ ! **E.g.,**

! **1 Th. 2:7** Paul was gentle, like a mother to her children — **e.g., mother to child**

! wives must be treated gently to foster respect and affection - ditto children

! **Christ toward us** (**Eph. 5:25-32**): gentle, fosters our love, respect, affection, obedience — e.g., Jesus to us

! Jesus has made salvation easy, made it easy to go to heaven

! key component in personal evangelism (good neighbor evangelism, relationship evangelism)

! **Illus.: the touchdown heard around the world** (Sports Illustrated, 11-18-02; The Herald-Dispatch, Huntington, W.Va., 11-10-02)

! **Jake Porter, 17**, a member of the **Northwest High football team in McDermott, Ohio**, was born with **chromosomal fragile X syndrome**, a common cause of **mental retardation**.

! He couldn't read. He could barely write his name. But he loved football, and he faithfully attended every practice.

! Northwest coach **Dave Frantz** wanted to do something special for Jake. So before a game against **Waverly High** in the fall of 2002, Frantz called his friend **Derek Dewitt**, the head coach at Waverly. Frantz suggested that both teams allow Jake to run one play at the end of the game, assuming the game wasn't on the line.

! Jake would get the ball and **take a knee**, and the game would end.

! **Game:**

! So, with **Waverly leading 42-0** and **5 seconds left** in the game, **Frantz called a timeout.**

! **Jake trotted out to the huddle,**

! **and the two coaches met at midfield.**

! Fans could see there was a disagreement.

! Dewitt was shaking his head and waving his arms.

! After a ref stepped in, play resumed

! **Jake got the ball.**

! **He** started to **genuflect** (bend the knee as in worship), as he'd practiced all week.

! **Teammates stopped him and told him to run**, but Jake **started going in the wrong direction.**

! The back judge rerouted him toward the line of scrimmage.

! Suddenly, the Waverly defense parted, and urged him to go to the end zone.

! **Players on both sidelines**

! held their helmets to the sky and whooped.

! **Apparently when the coaches met before the play,**

! Frantz had reminded Dewitt of the plan, that Jake would simply take a knee.

! But Dewitt wasn't satisfied.

! He said, "No, I want him to score." Frantz objected, but Dewitt insisted. Dewitt called his defense over and said, "They're going to give the ball to number 45. Do not touch him! Open up a hole and let him score! Understand?"

! **Jake had the run of his life**, scoring the touchdown heard round the world, on the Play of the Year. **All because of Dewitt's unselfish decision: "I want him to score."**

! E.g., **husband cherish (warm, foster with tender care) wife:** unselfish decisions, buy flowers, mail card, take time out of day to call or email, surprise by doing her chores, doing anything to solicit an affectionate response

➤ → **Nourish your wife** — what you'll do if you love her, and give yourself up for her

! **Eph. 5:29** nourishes and cherishes

! **Greek, *ektrepho*:** to nourish, bring up to maturity (only here and Eph. 6:4)

! **nourish** (Webster's): to promote the growth of, to furnish or sustain with nutriment

! **illus.: nourish a garden:** hard work, sweat in summer, fertilize, weed, protect in winter

! husband is to provide wife with everything she needs to grow and mature — he is her head, leader

→ **What's this mean to you? — How to have a great marriage, as a husband:**

! love, give self up, cherish, nourish

➤ #3 Five things the Lord expects from wives:

→ Be subject to your husband

! **Eph. 5:22-24** A godly wife is subjective to her husband, as to the Lord, in everything (relationship with) (ditto Col. 3:18)

! **Greek, *hupotasso***: to arrange under, to subordinate, to subject one's self, to obey, to submit to one's control, to yield to one's admonition or advice

! **illus.: military personnel**

! Greek **military term** meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a **voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden**".

! **stat: most people in USA don't think wives should submit to their husbands**

! **69%** of American adults who disagree with the statement: "A wife should submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband" (Emerging Trends, April 1999; based on a Gallup Poll, conducted June 22-23, 1998, of 1,016 adults)

! **application: Christian wives are different than many other women in the world — you have to be different, to be a Christian**

➤ → Respect your husband

! **Eph. 5:32** A godly wife respects her husband (attitude) - submits to husband

! **Greek, *phobeo***: to fear, reverence, respect — wife respects her husband by respecting his god-given authority and voluntarily submitting

! **e.g., Christians (church) to Jesus**: respect, reverence by submitting

! **e.g., work / school**: respect, reverence by submitting

! **e.g., family / children**: respect, reverence by submitting

! **application: lessons from a woman's submission to her husband**

! a wife who voluntarily submits to her husband **shows how to love and respect God**

! a wife who loves her husband, **shows how to voluntarily submit to authority**

! a wife who voluntarily submits to her husband is **an example to all**

➤ → Love your husband and children

! **Titus 2:4** love their husbands

! **Greek, *philandros***: adj., loving her husband, fond of one's husband — affection for husband

! **Husband cherishes** (woos, fosters tender care), **wife's response is love** (affection) — as Christ and the church

! **illus. of woman's love for family (husband and children)**

! **Frederick Douglass** grew up as a **slave in Maryland** in the early nineteenth century. He **escaped** and became one of the century's leading abolitionists, who fought to end slavery forever. **He writes** in Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an **American Slave about being torn away from his mother's love**:

! "My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about 12 miles from my home." (quote from book)

! Nonetheless, young **Frederick's mother several times found ways to see her son**:

! "She made her journeys to see me in the night, traveling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. She was a field hand, and a whipping was the penalty of not being in the field at sunrise.... She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone." (quote from book)

! **Amazing power of a mother's love**: Frederick Douglass's mother worked all day long in the scorching heat of the tobacco fields, and then, when her body was crying for rest, she walked 12 miles in the dark to

see her son. After comforting him and holding him as he fell asleep, she had to walk another 12 miles back. She gave up a night's sleep. She risked getting a severe whipping if she were discovered, or if she got home late. But nothing could keep this mother from her son. (Kevin Miller, Vice President, Resources, Christianity Today International)

➤ → **Make a godly home, as a “home-maker”**

! **Tit. 2:5a** workers at home (watch, keeper of the home)

! **Greek, *oikouros***: caring for the house, working at home, the (watch or) keeper of the house, taking care of household affairs

! the **most important human institution**, the home, **entrusted to care of the wife**

! **E.g., excellent home-maker (wife, mother)**

! **Pr. 31:13-30**

➤ → **Win the lost, with your chaste conduct**

! **1 Pet. 3:1-6** a godly wife wins (teaches) the lost (and saved) with her conduct — **many lessons godly wives teach all of us, by their conduct**

! **vs. 1-2** win (teach), without a word, by their chaste and respectful behavior

! win: from the devil, sin, hell

! **vs. 3-6** details of chaste and respectful behavior — internal adornment, more than external adornment

! **application:** the lost won by our godly (chaste) conduct

! **saying:** a few people learn from what you say, but many people learn from the way you live

→ **What's this mean to you? — How to have a great marriage, as a wife:**

! be subject to, respect, love your husband — make a godly home (home-maker) — win the lost through your godly conduct

**Conclusion:**

➤ → **Summary:**

! **quick review stats from beginning**

! **illus.:** Many people today, would **exchange family time for money**

! Fast Company magazine asked its readers, **If you could have one more hour per day at home or a \$10,000 a year raise, which would you choose?**

! **83%** chose money

! **17 %** chose time at home

➤ ! **Christians think differently than many people: — different priorities**

! **husband:** love her, give self for her, as Christ gave himself for us - die on the cross

! **wife:** be submissive to him, respect him, love him, make a godly home ,win others with chaste conduct

! **if you'll do this:**

! please God

! have a good life, marriage

! lead others to Christ

→ **Inv.:**

! having a good life and a good family, begins with being a Christian

! What has Jesus commanded us to do, to be a Christian?

Audio sermon notes:

! ➤ denotes the place to proceed to the next PowerPoint slide.

! All Scriptures are NASB unless otherwise noted.

! Sermons recorded 10-9-05 and 10-16-05, Church of Christ, South Livingston congregation in Lutz, FL.