

God's Kind of Love in Marriage

There are very few things in our world today that were ever a part of God's perfect plan for mankind. The elaborate government systems, with all their checks and balances and laws, would not be necessary if it were not for the corruption that sin produced. The monetary system, with all the buying and selling, would not be necessary in a sinless world that did unto others as they would have others do unto them. And many other things that we consider institutions in our society were never intended by God, but simply are ways of trying to cope with and control the perversion that entered the world through sin.

But one thing that God established while man was still in a sinless condition and said that it was not good for man to do without was marriage. Genesis 2:18 says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet [or sufficient] for him." A perfect man who had none of the pressures or problems that we know of today still was not complete without a mate. And it was not Adam who approached God about the situation and asked for a companion. Adam didn't know what he was missing! It was God who initiated the whole thing because that was His perfect plan. This all emphasizes the high priority that marriage should have in our lives. However, it has not usually held that position.

Even we Christians today have put very little effort into our marriages, and therefore, we have gotten very little out of them. We have had our vision of what a blessing God intended marriage to be, dulled by the sorry examples of marriage we see around us today. Second Corinthians 10:12 says, "But they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." This is what has happened over the years. Most couples have no idea of what God intended

marriage to be, so they settle for the same substandard relations that they see others experiencing. They think conflict is just a part of marriage; and a couple that simply coexists without outward battles is considered to be an ideal couple, although that couple may have a cold war raging. After all, everybody is having trouble with their marriages today.

Well, I am pleased to announce that not everybody is having trouble with their marriages today! The Lord is moving mightily in this area, and regardless of what the rest of the world experiences, Christians can have God's best in their homes. God instituted marriage, so He certainly knows how to make it work properly. The only reason two out of three marriages in America end up in divorce is because the people involved don't follow the instructions God gave concerning marriage. It is that simple. The solution is not easy, but it is that simple.

What does God say about marriage? From Ephesians 5:22-33, we get quite a bit of instruction. This article doesn't allow us enough space to deal with everything these scriptures minister concerning marriage, but certainly one principle that is interwoven throughout them all is love: God's kind of love. It is important that you realize that God's institution of marriage will only work with God's kind of love.

In counseling hundreds of couples, I have found that many Christians, even those baptized with the Holy Ghost, are still operating toward each other with the same carnal love they had before they were Christians. In many cases, they have started trying to apply God's love to their brothers and sisters in the body and have developed a "burden for the lost," but are virtually the same in their relationships with their mates. God's kind of love has to be applied to our marriages too.

One of the most striking differences to me between the world's love and God's kind of love is that you can teach yourself to operate in God's love. Titus 2:4 says that the older women are

to teach the younger women “to love their husbands, to love their children.” Carnal love is completely motivated by the emotions or senses, but God’s love comes from the heart, and although the feelings are definitely affected, they don’t motivate or deter God’s love.

Carnal love is characterized by a naked, little, fat boy who goes around shooting people with arrows to cause them to “fall” in love or to “fall” out of love. That simply is not true love. God’s love is the same yesterday, today, and forever. That is the way God is (Heb. 13:8) and God is love (1 John 4:8). People who love one minute and then their mood changes and they act the opposite way the next minute, simply don’t operate in God’s love. You may feel like reacting in anger, but you can choose to operate in love.

Many people are confused about this and think, *I can’t act like I love them when I don’t feel it.* Oh, yes you can! God’s Word tells us to even love our enemies (Matt. 5:44). It is a command. He didn’t say to do it if you felt like it. If you will choose to do what God tells you to, your feelings will follow. You can teach yourself to love with God’s kind of love.

A person who is truly born again desires to do what God says but doesn’t always feel like it. Our feelings have been corrupted by our old lives before we came to Christ. Now that we are in Christ, we have His promise that our spirits have been totally changed (2 Cor. 5:17) and have become like Him. Galatians 5:22 says that love is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. This is specifically speaking of the Holy Spirit; but our new man was born of the Spirit, so it has to be true that God’s love has been shed abroad in our spirits too. We do have God’s love in our new man. Our feelings are not automatically changed, however. Our feelings will continue to act like they were taught to act until we subdue them and bring them under the control of our spirit man. It is not hypocritical to act in love when you don’t feel it. It is actually hypocritical to

act on what you feel instead of who you really are in Christ Jesus.

God's kind of love is a choice that you make on the basis of what God said, and then act on it in faith until it becomes a reality in your spirit, soul, and body.

If you can receive this basic truth about God's love, then you can begin to be consistent in your love to your mate because your love is based on a choice that you have made, not on the way they act. This is the root cause of nearly all strife in marriage. Everything is fine until one partner does something wrong to the other, and then the feathers fly. Aren't you glad that God doesn't treat us that way? Romans 5:8 says, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Praise God! God's love wasn't based upon what we had done for Him or what we deserved but upon His choice to love us. That is all! We didn't do anything to merit God's love. He just chose to give it. We can choose to receive that kind of love and then give it to others in the same way.

Another way to say this is that God's love is unconditional. Jesus didn't wait until we were worth it or had repented before He gave Himself for our sins. He gave Himself for us while we were yet sinners and living a life of rebellion against Him (Rom. 5:8). His love was extended toward Hitler just as much as it was toward us. The difference is our acceptance or rejection of it not His offer of love. God's love is unconditional.

We have to put this unconditional love of God to work in our marriages. If you live with a person for any length of time at all, you are going to find fault with them. If your love isn't unconditional, then you will begin to give them what they deserve, which is trouble. And you can rest assured that when you make a mistake, you will reap what you have sown.

I used to work in a dark room in a photography studio. We had a joke about these ladies who would come in to see their proofs and just throw a fit about how bad their pictures looked. They would say, "This picture doesn't do me justice!" Our answer would be, "Lady, you don't need justice, you need mercy." That's the way it is in marriage. Our mates, who see us at our worst, have to give us mercy, not justice. Failure in this area is the root of most marriage problems. Many couples actually use their conditional love as a weapon to try and motivate their mates to do things. That will destroy a marriage. If the thing that keeps your mate in line is a fear of your exploding if they mess up, then you are tormenting them. That's what 1 John 4:18 says, "Fear hath torment." You may see some results through that method, but it's a fact that you are building resentment and rejection in them, and sooner or later, it will explode. God's love is unconditional. {eoa}

*March 23, 1968, was the day that **Andrew Wommack's** life changed forever. God showed him just what supernatural love was really about, and Andrew's theology transformed. God was a loving father that accepted him unconditionally and desired genuine fellowship with him. Ever since that day, Andrew has been taking the love of God as far and as deep as he can. He has written nearly forty books and hundreds of lessons. He began broadcasting the Gospel of grace and healing through his Gospel Truth television program and expanded in the digital age with his internet television network and his website, . In 1994, he founded Charis Bible College. What started as a vision in a small building has grown to more than fifty campuses around the world and thousands of students learning to walk in the power of God. In 2016, he established the Truth & Liberty Coalition, an organization dedicated to mobilizing the church to engage in public discourse. Andrew and his wife, Jamie, have been married for nearly fifty years.*

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