

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister
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The Sermon: THOU SHALT LOVE THY WIFE

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 49:3

Whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man; wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made.

Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else.

In the very dawn of creation God stated one of the laws of human nature in these words: "It is not good for man to be alone." Every human being needs to know the satisfaction and the security of belonging to someone, of being wanted, of being needed, of being loved. Without that security and satisfaction many kinds of mental, emotional, moral, and even physical disturbances may result. The child who is unwanted and unloved, who does not feel that he belongs somewhere and to someone, is especially to be pitied, for he lacks the stabilizing force which does so much to make him a happy, emotionally mature, well-balanced, well-adjusted adult. It is no mere coincidence that by far the greater number of juvenile delinquents and youthful criminals come from broken homes where the child had no sense of belonging, no feeling of stability of security in his parents.

Each adult also needs someone to love. Without this outreach to someone else, any life will tend to become self-centered, narrow, warped, unbalanced, spiritually dead. The life that turns everything in upon itself soon becomes as barren and as bitter as the waters of the Dead Sea, which receives all the fresh water of the Jordan River, but has no outlet. Love is a two way street. Man needs not only to be loved, but to love. Religion, particularly the Christian religion, teaches us of the love of God for us. It teaches that man should reciprocate that love. We love him because he first loved us. And Jesus taught us further that we should love God with all the heart, might, mind, and strength, and in addition, love our neighbor as ourselves.

The love of God which we receive so freely should find expression in love of fellow man.

Specifically, each mature person needs to have some one other person to share life with him. He needs one person to love above all others; he needs one person who will love him above all others. Man needs woman; woman needs man. Each supplements, completes, and complements the personality and nature of the other, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. To give expression to love, each one surrenders something of self; but in this surrender each receives more than he gives. Each finds self-fulfillment. Each becomes a complete person where before he was only half a person. Man and wife, joined together in Christian marriage, become one flesh. They begin to think alike and feel alike. In legal terms they are one entity. Each is responsible for the debts and contracts of the other. One cannot be compelled to testify against the other in a criminal case, because the fifth amendment guarantees that no man shall be forced to testify against himself -- and a man's wife is his other self. Yet in this unity of husband and wife, each one maintains his own personality. Love does not wish to swallow up the one loved, but to enrich and protect him, and bring him happiness. Two are one entity, but one entity is still composed of two personalities.

Marriage is necessary, then, for at least four reasons. First, that husband and wife might have someone to love. Second, that they might be loved by one

special someone. Thus mutual love -- a two way street -- is necessary, as we have said, to the complete, well rounded personality, and to the happiness of both man and wife. Into this kind of family, children are born. The third reason why marriage is necessary, then, is "that the earth might answer the end of its creation, and that it might be filled with the measure of man." The fourth reason for marriage is closely allied to the third. Marriage is needed in order that children might have the love they need, the good example they need, the Christian training they need; and that they might have the stability and security of a loving father and mother in their early formative years. The long period of human infancy makes permanence and stability in the marriage and in the home absolutely necessary. It is no accident that the great majority of juvenile delinquents, youth criminals, and mentally unbalanced come from unhappy or broken homes where they knew no love, no permanence, no security, no stability.

Joseph Smith was the prophet through whom the revelations of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants were given -- revelations which we believe to be the word of God to men today. What do these modern revelations from God and from his Son, Jesus Christ have to say about marriage? In February of 1831 came the revelation contained in Section 42, which says in paragraph seven: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not shall be cast out." This unmistakably commands that marriage shall be between one wife and one husband, and counsels that this relationship shall not be broken by adultery.

Another statement in Section 63, paragraph 5, counsels against looking upon a woman to lust after her, or committing adultery in the heart. Section 18 repeats the old Mosaic commandment: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." Another section provides for the trial and expulsion from fellowship of those found guilty of adultery, who are not willing to repent and do it no more. Still another counsels against receiving into church membership any who have left their lawful companion for the sake of adultery.

It is also interesting to note what God said about marriage through the pro-

phets of the Book of Mormon, remembering that this book was translated by Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon says "There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none." It says that the polygamy and concubinage practiced by David and Solomon were "wicked practices," "abominable before me," and calls polygamy a "gross crime." It condemns those Book of Mormon people who apostatized into polygamy for forgetting the commandment of the Lord, and for breaking the hearts of their tender wives and destroying the confidence of their children.

Joseph Smith was the prophet and leader of the church in 1835 when the church's Conference adopted a document on the subject of marriage. It is not a revelation, but merely a formal statement of the church's position. It is found in Section 111 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. It says that marriages should be performed in a public meeting prepared for that purpose. That rules out secret or clandestine marriages, and stunt weddings in non-religious, inappropriate, or carnival settings.

This document recommends further that the ceremony should be performed by a minister of the church, but also permits and recognizes marriages performed by secular authority. It discourages, but does not prohibit, mixed marriages to partners of another religious faith. It declares "We believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again."

The most significant portion of this document is the marriage covenant or vow which is taken by all who are married before a minister in this church. Notice carefully its wording: "You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives?" When each partner keeps himself or herself FOR each other, devoted to the happiness and well being of the other, there will be little difficulty about keeping from all others.

"Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her, and none else." "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."