

WEEK ELEVEN

MONEY AND MARRIAGE

*Marriage should be honored by all...
Keep your lives free from the
love of money.
-Hebrews 13:4-5*

In one passage the writer of Hebrews gives instructions about two key subjects for disciples money and marriage (Hebrews 13:4-5) He realized that these were two areas that must be brought under the Lordship of Jesus. This week we will focus on those two areas. Money concerns us all. God's plans for marriage need to be understood whether or not we are currently married.

Day 71-The Necessity of Work _____

1. Money is not an evil. It is a necessity and the Scriptures teach that it should be honestly earned. Read Ephesians 4:28, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 and 1 Timothy 5:7-8.
2. What attitudes did you have toward money before becoming a Christian? What changes have you had to make?
3. What is the impact of the irresponsible person who does not do his or her best to provide for their own financial needs?

Day 72- The Love of Money _____

1. Read Hebrews 13:1-5. We all must deal with money, but what attitude must we be careful not to have? Why is the love of money at cross purposes with following Jesus?
2. Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. We are "rich" when we have the ability to meet our basic needs and then have money left over that can either be used to give us luxuries or help others. Most of us are in this category. From v. 18 write down three or four things we should do with our "discretionary money:"

3. If we are not disciplined in the way we handle money what will happen to our ability to share? Who will we not be able to share with?
4. Read Romans 13:8. Unmanageable and unresolved debt is a major problem for many people in our world. What is to be the disciple's attitude toward debt?
5. Write down at least three negative effects that will be present when we have a problem with debt?
6. What were your financial habits before becoming a Christian? What changes have you made? If your financial house is not in order, if debt is a major factor in your financial picture, do not wait any longer about getting help. Tell one of your leaders you need to talk. Share it with a close friend and ask for accountability in this area. God can help you to victory if you are humble and open.

Day 73-Righteous Use of Money

1. In this study we want to look at two places our money needs to go as disciples of Jesus. First read Luke 14:12-14 and Matthew 25:31-46. How important is it to God that we give to the poor? In what ways can you do this right now? If you just don't know where to begin, ask someone for advice. Find out what organized efforts there are in your congregation. But whatever you find, do it.
2. Read Philippians 4:14-16. Paul describes here the way the church in Philippi supported him as he spent his life spreading the gospel of Jesus. It is right for those who have received instruction in the Word to support those who bring the Word to them (Galatians 6:6). Without the generous giving of Christians we would not have seen the gospel taken around the world in recent years. Without continued generous giving, we will not see the mission completed.
3. How much of your income is being used to help the poor and to spread the gospel? God's Old Testament people under a far less glorious covenant were required to give 10% and beyond. What would faith lead you to do today under the covenant brought by Jesus?

Day 74-Generosity

1. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7. What would be necessary for someone in extreme poverty to "well up in rich generosity"? What steps would enable *you* to become more generous in your giving?
2. According to 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 what will be the joys of generosity?
3. How are you making your decisions about your giving? Do you see your giving as being generous? What sacrifices would you have to make to be more generous?

Day 75-Marriage in a New Light

1. For the rest of this week we will focus on marriage. Read Genesis 1:26-31 and 2:15-25.
2. Who is the designer of marriage? What did he plan for the marriage relationship?
3. What happens today when people forget that God is the originator of marriage? What problems does that lead to? What does it have to do with the divorce rate in most countries of the world?
4. If you are married, what do you have, now that you are a Christian that you did not have before becoming one? How are you letting it change your outlook on your relationship?

Day 76-A Perfect Plan

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. What is God's plan for marriage?
2. Why is v. 21 such a crucial introduction to this section?
3. If the wife follows God's plan for her and the husband God's plan for him, write out what kind of interaction this will lead to?
4. True or false? A husband or wife is relieved of his or her responsibility here if the other person does not hold up their end of the bargain? Explain your answer.

Day 77-Honoring Marriage

1. Read 1 Peter 3:1-7. What would you say the basic message, here is for the wives? For the husbands?
2. If you are married, how does this passage personally challenge you? Share that conviction with your spouse.
3. Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-6. The Christians in Corinth were thinking that they might have more "spiritual" marriages if they refrained from the sexual relationship. What was Paul's answer? What attitude is he saying each marriage partner should bring to the sexual union? For more on the biblical view of sex in marriage read Song of Songs in the Old Testament.
4. Read Hebrews 13:4. In what way can you give honor to marriage if you are married? If you are not?

KEYS TO A GREAT MARRIAGE

1. *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness* (Matthew 6:33). Build the marriage on God, his truth, and his heart.
2. *Get disciplined.* Be open and let others into your lives. Get input, advice, and perspective from others who can be objective about your relationship (Colossians 1:28-29).
3. *Treat each other with great respect* (Ephesians 5:21-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7). Do not tear down the other person or try to "win". When you "win", your marriage always loses.
3. *Settles matter quickly and don't hold a grudge* (Ephesians 4:26).
5. *Love unconditionally* (1 Corinthians 13). Don't love on the basis of performance but on the basis of a decision.