**GOD’S PURPOSE FOR MARRIAGE**

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*[Unless otherwise stated, the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible has been used for reference, but common modern words such as you for ‘thou’, ‘thee’ and ‘ye’ have been used, so that readers not familiar with the KJV Bible may find it easier to read. Mostly the New King James Version (NKJV) translation has been used as an alternate]*

This book explains God’s purpose for marriage as understood by the modern era of God’s Church, which He founded through Herbert W. Armstrong. From the pages of the Bible, it proves that marriage is not a man-made institution, but a God ordained one.

Over the years, God’s Church struggled with decisions on divorce and remarriage issues. But over the past 70 years, those issues have been mostly resolved from a better understanding of the scriptures. These issues have been dealt with in great detail in the book.

One of the most effective ways to minimize divorce and remarriage is to marry the most suitable mate. The best way to find the most suitable mate is through right dating practices prior to marriage. The right dating practices and conduct before marriage as practiced by God’s Church are also briefly discussed.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Statistics tell the current sorry state of marriage in the USA and much of the rest of the western world, and the agonizing pain and suffering it is causing. It seems marriage is usually the first casualty of prosperity. It happened in the ancient Roman Empire, and it is happening in the USA, the most prosperous large nation on earth.

In 1787, after 20 years of labor, Edward Gibbon completed his history of the Roman Empire titled *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In it he attributed the major reasons for the fall of the Empire as:

1. “The rapid increase of divorce; the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.” Ancient Roman historian Seneca noted of middle second century Rome, “They divorce in order to remarry. They marry in order to divorce.”

2. “Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace.”

3. “The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.”

4. “The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within, the decadence of the people.”

5. “The decay of religion–faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people.”

Does that not describe America and British Commonwealth nations today?

According to conservative estimates, 41% (45-50% according to other estimates) of first marriages, 60% of second marriages and 73% of third marriages in the USA end in divorce (Source *Enrichment Journal* as provided by www.divorcestatistics.org).

The divorce rate per 1000 of population has actually declined from 4.7 in 1991 to 3.6 in 2010. These statistics, however, can lead to the wrong conclusion that the state of marriages is improving. The statistics have to be examined together with another troubling trend. The percentage of women who are cohabiting (living with a man in a sexual relationship) rose from 3.0% in 1982 to 11% in 2006– 010; it was higher in some groups, including Hispanic, and the less educated. This means that since these people are not marrying, their separation from cohabiting partners (which can be as traumatic as a divorce from marriage with troubling consequences for the children, family and friends) does not show up in divorce statistics. Therefore the estimates that first marriages, or marriage-like cohabitation relationships break up is close to 50%, thus showing an increasing divorce trend.

The rising trend in cohabitation does not bode well for marriage in America because it has been well documented that the likelihood of first marriages ending up in divorce is higher if they are preceded by cohabitation by the spouses.

Cohabitation also contributes to rise in the number of never married adults.

According to the Pew Research Center, “After decades of declining marriage rates and changes in family structure, the share of American adults who have never been married is at an historic high. In 2012, one-in-five adults ages 25 and older (about 42 million people) had never been married, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis of census data. In 1960, only about one-in-ten adults (9%) in that age range had never been married. Men are more likely than women to have never been married (23% vs. 17% in 2012). And this gender gap has widened since 1960, when 10% of men ages 25 and older and 8% of women of the same age had never married.

“The dramatic rise in the share of never-married adults and the emerging gender gap are related to a variety of factors. Adults are marrying later in life, and the shares of adults cohabiting and raising children outside of marriage have increased significantly. The median age at first marriage is now 27 for women and 29 for men, up from 20 for women and 23 for men in 1960. About a quarter (24%) of never-married young adults ages 25 to 34 are living with a partner, according to Pew Research analysis of Current Population Survey data. “In addition, shifting public attitudes, hard economic times and changing demographic patterns may all be contributing to the rising share of never-married adults.”

There are painful consequences of broken marriages for individuals and society, which will be discussed next.

**Chapter 1**

**Consequences of Broken Marriages**

Divorce is always traumatic for the spouses and more so for the children. It also affects other family members and friends.

Research on suicide published in *Social Science Quarterly* showed that, of

many variables, divorce had the strongest relationship to suicide rates and

marriage had the weakest.

From *divorceinfo.com* web site: “One recent study by the *National Institute for Healthcare Research* in Rockville, MD indicates that divorced people are three times more likely to commit suicide as people who are married. The Institute says that divorce now ranks as the number one factor linked with suicide rates in major U.S. cities, ranking above all other physical, financial, and psychological factors.”

*Suicide.org* web site states: “It is extremely common for people to become depressed over a divorce, and untreated depression is the number one cause for suicide. Thus, a divorce can significantly increase a person's risk for suicide.

“A study of 13 European countries by the regional European office of the World Health Organization found that divorce was the only factor linked with suicide in every one of the 13 countries. The study showed that factors like poverty, unemployment, and disability were associated with divorce in some of the countries but that disruption of the family was the only factor linked with divorce in all 13.”

From the *divorcereform.org* web site:

The *National Center for Health Statistics* finds that married women suffer

half the injuries that divorced women do.

Dr. Walter Gove, working from Vanderbilt University, found that divorced men

are over 9 times more likely to die of tuberculosis and over 4 times more

likely to die from diabetes than their married counterparts. A divorced male

is 3.4 times more likely to die from any cause than a married male and a

divorced female is 2.0 times more likely to die from any cause then her

married counterpart.

One of the most authoritative studies ever done in the United States on

mental health found that the divorced are nearly twice as likely to suffer

from any mental illness than those who are married.

Additional research done at Yale and UCLA reports, "Researchers have

consistently found that highest rates of mental disorder among the divorced

and separated [and] the lowest among the married...Compared to the married,

divorced persons are six to ten times more likely to use inpatient psychiatric

facilities and four to five times more likely to be clients in outpatient

clinics."

From 1973 to 1992, the violent crime victimization rates for females (per

1,000 females age twelve or over) were 45 for divorced women and 11 for

married women. This rate was 43 for single women.

 The effects of divorce are passed on even to the future generations.

On *Focus on the Family* web site, in an article titled “*How Could Divorce Affect My Kids?*” Amy Desai, J.D., writes:

“Research comparing children of divorced parents to children with married parents shows:

\* Children from divorced homes suffer academically. They experience high levels of behavioral problems. Their grades suffer, and they are less likely to graduate from high school. [Other studies show that children of divorce are more than twice as likely to drop out of school when compared with children of intact families].

\* Kids whose parents divorce are substantially more likely to be incarcerated for committing a crime as a juvenile.

\* Because the custodial parent's income drops substantially after a divorce, children in divorced homes are almost five times more likely to live in poverty than are children with married parents.

\* Teens from divorced homes are much more likely to engage in drug and alcohol use, as well as sexual intercourse than are those from intact families.

\* Before you say, "Not my kid," remember that the children and teens represented in these statistics are normal kids, probably not much different from yours. Their parents didn't think they would get involved in these things, either. Again, we're looking at increased risks.

A few more statistics to consider:

\* Children from divorced homes experience illness more frequently and recover from sickness more slowly.

\* They are also more likely to suffer child abuse.

\* Children of divorced parents suffer more frequently from symptoms of psychological distress.

\* And the emotional scars of divorce last into adulthood.

The scope of this last finding -- children suffer emotionally from their parents' divorce -- has been largely underestimated. Obviously, not every child of divorce commits crime or drops out of school. Some do well in school and even become high achievers. However, we now know that even these children experience deep and lasting emotional trauma.

For all children, their parents' divorce colors their view of the world and relationships for the rest of their lives.

Psychologist Judith Wallerstein followed a group of children of divorce from the 1970s into the 1990s. Interviewing them at 18 months and then 5, 10, 15 and 25 years after the divorce, she expected to find that they had bounced back. But what she found was dismaying: Even 25 years after the divorce, these children continued to experience substantial expectations of failure, fear of loss, fear of change and fear of conflict.

The children in Wallerstein's study were especially challenged when they began to form their own romantic relationships. As Wallerstein explains, "Contrary to what we have long thought, the major impact of divorce does not occur during childhood or adolescence. Rather, it rises in adulthood as serious romantic relationships move center stage…Anxiety leads many [adult children of divorce] into making bad choices in relationships, giving up hastily when problems arise, or avoiding relationships altogether."

Other researchers confirm Wallerstein's findings. Specifically, compared to kids from intact homes, children who experienced their parents' divorce view premarital sex and cohabitation more favorably.

This is disturbing news given that cohabiting couples have more breakups, are at greater risk of domestic violence and are more likely to experience divorce. In fact, 75% of children of divorce also end up in divorce in their own marriages.

And the high rate of second-marriage divorces can leave children reeling from yet another loss. Full "recovery" is nearly impossible for children because of the dynamic nature of family life.

Other statistics show that the best predictor of teen suicide is parental divorce and living with only one parent.

In my job for seven and a half years with the state of Florida’s welfare department (Department of Children and Families) I saw the tragic results first hand. Vast majority of the people on welfare are single women with 1-8 children, mostly with different fathers, and many are now cohabiting with a different partner, who may be the father of one of their children, or there may be no mutual child in the family. In many of the families, the teenage daughters have children of their own, born out of wedlock.

The reason is quite obvious. Some of the women have to work to provide a little extra income for the family’s survival. That neglects proper child education and training. That’s why the poverty and welfare cycle gets perpetuated from generation to generation. Life on welfare is the only kind of life many of these families have known for 2-4 generations. That is normal life for them.

Another shocking statistic that points to the troubled state of marriages in the U.S. is that 50% of married women and 66% of married men commit adultery. About 83% (that is five out of six) of marriages have at least one partner that has been unfaithful to his or her spouse.

What has caused this rising trend in divorce and infidelity? Researchers have analyzed the problem from different points of view. Here is a summary from the socio-economic perspective by Prof. Eli J. Finkel of Northwestern University as published in the *Sunday Review* on February 14, 2014 under the title “The All-or-Nothing Marriage”:

“To understand marriage today, it is important to see how we got to where we are. Throughout America’s history, its populace has experienced three distinct models of marriage, as scholars like the sociologist Andrew J. Cherlin and the historian Stephanie Coontz have chronicled. In the era of the institutional marriage, from the nation’s founding until around 1850, the prevalence of individual farming households meant that the main requirements Americans had for their marriage revolved around things like food production, shelter and protection from violence. To be sure, Americans were pleased if they experienced an emotional connection with their spouse, but such affinities were perquisites of a well-functioning marriage rather than its central purpose.

“In the era of the companionate marriage, from roughly 1850 until 1965, American marriage increasingly centered around intimate needs such as to love, to be loved and to experience a fulfilling sex life. This era overlapped with the shift from rural to urban life. Men increasingly engaged in wage labor outside of the home, which amplified the extent to which the two sexes occupied distinct social spheres. As the nation became wealthier and its social institutions became stronger, Americans had the luxury of looking to marriage primarily for love and companionship.

“Since around 1965, we have been living in the era of the self-expressive marriage. Americans now look to marriage increasingly for self-discovery, self-esteem and personal growth. Fueled by the countercultural currents of the 1960s, they have come to view marriage less as an essential institution and more as an elective means of achieving personal fulfillment. “You make me want to be a better man,” from the 1997 movie “As Good as It Gets,” could serve as this era’s marriage ideal. In the words of the sociologist Robert N. Bellah, love has become, in good part, “the mutual exploration of infinitely rich, complex and exciting selves.”

“One of the most disturbing facts about American marriage today is that while divorce increased at similar rates for the wealthy and the poor in the 1960s and ’70s, those rates diverged sharply starting around 1980. According to the sociologist Steven P. Martin, among Americans who married between 1975 and 1979, the 10-year divorce rate was 28 percent among people without a high school education and 18 percent among people with at least a college degree: a 10-percentage point difference. But among Americans who married between 1990 and 1994, the parallel divorce rates were 46 percent and 16 percent: an astonishing 30 percentage point difference.

“The problem is not that poor people fail to appreciate the importance of marriage, nor is it that poor and wealthy Americans differ in which factors they believe are important in a good marriage. The problem is that the same trends that have exacerbated inequality since 1980 — unemployment, juggling multiple jobs and so on — have also made it increasingly difficult for less wealthy Americans to invest the time and other resources needed to sustain a strong marital bond.”

Prof. Finkel goes on to show that those who are educated and are financially well off can and are having flourishing marriages as they invest time and energy to strengthen the marital bond. But marriages among those who are less educated, or relatively poor due to unemployment or less well-paying jobs, or those who don’t have the time to invest in their marriage due to juggling multiple jobs are falling apart. Hence the title of the article “The All-or-Nothing Marriage!”

But the reality is that it’s more than just socio-economic factors that are to blame. The slide in values and a lack of understanding of the purpose for marriage also play an important role. Here is an analysis from a religious [or values] perspective:

From *Troubling Sources of American Values* by Dale Garrett, *Enrichment Journal,* April 2009:

“Many Americans, including several now in decision-making roles in Congress and Hollywood, began buying into a revived Nietzsche style philosophy adopted in the 1960s and 70s in America by resurrecting Nietzsche’s “God is Dead” mantra. So prevalent did this philosophy become that 3 years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling symbolically ejecting God from our public education process was completed, TIME magazine asked, “Is God Dead?” on its April 8. 1966 cover. (TIME, 1966)

“This was soon followed by a “sexual revolution” (Romans 1:24) and an assault on previously held values concerning fidelity and the sanctity of marriage. No-Fault Divorce laws, introduced in Oklahoma in 1953, began reaching avalanche proportions after California adopted the law in 1970. By 1998, the number of children living in single-parent households in America had passed 56 percent of our population; among African Americans the number was closer to 64 percent. (*US Divorce Statistics, 2002*)”

That of course merely accounts for children allowed to survive in the first place. Since legalizing infanticide under *Roe v Wade* in 1973 an estimated 48.6 million infants have been butchered (*National Right to Life, 2003*). Put in perspective, abortion will destroy more lives in America in one day than the total number of U.S. soldiers who lost their lives in the entire Iraqi war.

These analyses recognize the role that prosperity, man’s laws, and turning away from God play in breakdown of the marriage institution. But from this discussion we see that even religious leaders don’t like to publicly admit the role a powerful spirit being, Satan the devil, has played in instigating a conspiracy to bring about the downfall of the American and British peoples. This role of this unseen hand behind the scenes in corrupting laws and culture will be discussed next in a brief history of the American and British peoples from their origins to modern times, and the history of marriage among them.

**Chapter 2**

**Spirit World Influences on Marriage**

*The Unseen Forces behind the Scenes*

There are two unseen forces at work behind the scenes in the lives of human being and nations. First is God, Jesus Christ and angels loyal to them. The second unseen force is Satan, helped by hundreds of millions of demons. The purpose of Satan and the demons is to oppose and try to thwart God in every purpose and project.

As will be proved shortly, marriage is a divine institution created by God for mankind only, and not an institution invented by man. God has deep purposes for creating this institution for the benefit of mankind. Satan being an enemy of God would naturally do his utmost to oppose, denigrate, and belittle this institution with all the cunning craftiness he can muster.

Under Satan’s influence there was a massive breakdown of the marriage institution that actually led God to drown the world in Noah’s Flood. The situation is quite clearly described in Genesis 6:1-12:

“1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God [the correct translation should be ‘sons of gods’. These were the non-white descendants of Cain who had deified themselves and demanded that the rest of humanity worship them] saw the daughters of men that they were fair [white women of the line of Seth]; and they took them [meaning forcibly or otherwise married them or took as concubines] wives of all which they chose [meaning in polygamous marriages]… 5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repents me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord…11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence [because of interracial marriages, and many trying to establish their control over as much of humanity as they could in order to collect tribute and also demand to be worshipped by them]. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”

There was a massive breakdown of the marriage institution before the Flood, starting with polygamy and interracial marriages. Finally, as a result of interracial marriages, only Noah, his wife, his 3 sons and the wife of his son Shem were left racially white on earth. The rest of humanity had racially mixed through marriage.

Lamech, a descendant of Cain had started the practice of interracial marriages first and then polygamy. But lawlessness started with Cain. After he murdered his righteous brother Abel, he was separated from the rest of Adam’s descendants to develop his own civilization. He began to hate God and willingly came under Satan’s influence. As a result, lawlessness continued to multiply on earth so that ultimately “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually’ as verse 5 says, and ‘The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence” as verse 11 says. God then saw that the only way to put mankind out of its misery was to end the lives of all of humanity in a worldwide Flood and save only 8 human beings alive.

After the Flood, God again worked with all of humanity in general to get them to live according to His ways. But rebellion against God’s way of life as practiced by Noah and his son Shem was led by Nimrod under Satan’s influence [later worshipped as the pagan god Baal], his father Cush, mother Semiramis [the Astarte or ‘queen of heaven’ of the Bible], in league with Asshur (the ancestor of the ancient Assyrians and modern Germans). Within 400 years after the Flood Noah had passed away, Shem was an old man and the population of the world was expanding, the false pagan religion started by Nimrod and Semiramis, supported by the Assyrians won out over God’s way of life so that all of humanity turned to paganism.

*Brief History of Ancient Israel*

After all of humanity turned to paganist, God changed the way He would deal with humanity. He would no longer deal with all of humanity in general. He would first develop a model nation, give that nation His laws, bless it for obedience and let the rest of humanity learn by seeing its prosperity. God chose to start building His model nation through one man, Abraham. God made incredible promises of riches and status as a great nation to him and his descendants if he obeyed His laws. Abraham was faithful to God throughout his life. After Abraham demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac in obedience to God’s command, God’s promises to him became unconditional. This is described in Genesis 22:1-18:

“1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

“6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

“13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The Lord it shall be provided." 15 Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son-- 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

God’s blessings to Abraham were passed on to his son Isaac and not Ishmael. Isaac then passed on Abraham’s blessing to his son Jacob, later renamed Israel, and not his son Esau. Jacob then conferred Abraham’s promised blessings to all his twelve sons jointly. However, the birthright blessings, which entailed incredible material prosperity and great nation status, were conferred on Joseph’s two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. But the blessings of rulership were conferred on the descendants of Judah.

During a great 7-year famine, Jacob went into Egypt with all his family where his descendants multiplied greatly over about 240 years to number between 2-3 million people. They were greatly oppressed in slavery in Egypt, but God brought them out of Egypt with great miracles under the leadership of Moses to become a nation. God gave the nation His laws through Moses which formed the constitution of the nation. The nation was promised incredible blessings for obedience to His laws, but great curses if they disobeyed the laws. The foremost requirement of the Law was that the nation worship no other gods than the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who had rescued them from slavery in Egypt. They were to utterly destroy the inhabitants of the land they were going to possess and make no league with them. The blessings and curses were recorded by Moses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

Ancient Israel failed to completely destroy the inhabitants of the land they were going to possess. They also inquired about the pagan gods those people worshipped and began to worship those gods and follow their pagan practices. The consequences of disobeying God followed as described in Leviticus 26.

God had laid out in Leviticus 26 how He would punish the nation for its sins if it did not obey the terms of their covenant/agreement with Him.

Leviticus 26:14-26 (KJV), “14 But if you will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15 And if you shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that you will not do all my commandments, but that you break my covenant: 16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague [fever], that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 And I will set my face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and you shall flee when none pursues you.”

During the period of Judges ancient Israel refused to keep God’s laws. As a result, they went through all the suffering and terrors described in these verses. But the Israelites were not reformed by these punishments. The punishment continued getting more severe as stated starting in verse 18:

“18 And if you will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass [famine conditions due to droughts]: 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. 21 And if you walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. 22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.”

The Hebrew word *shibah* translated “seven times” can have a dual meaning. It can mean ‘seven times’ referring to duration of punishment [prophetically ‘time’ equals one year in fulfillment of prophecy] and can also mean “sevenfold” referring to increase in intensity or severity of punishment.

Verses from 18-22 refer to intensity of God’s punishment on Israel for continued violations of the terms of the covenant. The use of the word ‘more’ with ‘seven times’ by the translators also indicates that these verses refer to the severity of punishment increasing sevenfold twice. The use of the term ‘seven times’ here is used in the same sense as in Daniel 3:19 (NIV), “19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual.” In this case Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had refused to bow down and worship the image King Nebuchadnezzar had made for which the stated punishment would be being thrown alive into a furnace of fire. When given a second chance to do so and still refusing to worship the image, Nebuchadnezzar ordered that the furnace be made seven times hotter than usual.

Israel continued violating God’s laws and were oppressed by their neighboring nations. When they repented and turned to their God, He delivered them from the hands of oppressors by sending a judge. But they regressed to violating God’s laws and worshipping idols repeatedly and the cycle of oppression and deliverance continued. With time, the oppression increased in severity.

Then Israel sinned even more by rejecting God as their king and asking for a human king. The kingdom prospered in the days of righteous king David and continued in the days of Solomon and tasted some of the birthright blessings. But Solomon turned to idols under the influence of his foreign wives. As a result, God stopped blessing the nation and then caused the nation to split into two kingdoms with the northern ten tribes constituting the House of Israel and the southern kingdom being called the House of Judah.

Remember God had promised to bless the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob unconditionally. But God would control the timing of conferring His unconditional blessings. Since the northern House of Israel separated from Judah, their first king Jeroboam reasoned that he faced a major problem if all of Israel went to worship God in Jerusalem during the 3 holy day seasons as commanded. He feared that the kingdom would be wrested from him by the House of David. The Bible says in 1 Kings 12:26-27 (NRSV), “Then Jeroboam said to himself, ‘Now the kingdom may well revert to the House of David. If this people continue to go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will turn again to their master, King Rehoboam of Judah; they will kill me and return to King Rehoboam of Judah.”

To prevent this from happening, Jeroboam changed Israel’s religion and worship system. United Church of God booklet *“The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy”* describes the changes Jeroboam made:

“To prevent such a development Jeroboam established a competing religious system. For political reasons—to maintain his hold on the northern tribes—he changed Israel’s forms of worshipping God.

“Idolatry had already become popular during the last days of Solomon, so Jeroboam erected his own idols. “Therefore, the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!’ And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan” (1 Kings 12:28-29).

“Dan was in the far north of his kingdom. Bethel was in the south, just above the border with Judah and right on the major route people would travel while journeying to Jerusalem to worship.

“Believing that observance of the same annual festivals as the Jews—the Holy Days of God (Leviticus 23)—would rekindle a desire for national unification, Jeroboam also changed the timing of the great fall festival (Leviticus 23:23-44) from the seventh to the eighth month (1 Kings 12:32-33).

“He dismissed the Aaronic and Levitical priests (1 Kings 12:31; 1 Kings 13:33), men set apart by God’s own decree (Exodus 40:15) to maintain the integrity of the nation’s religious life. To Jeroboam the Levitical priesthood was a threatening independent power base. The Levites inherited their office, owed the king nothing and were largely outside his control.

“By dismissing the Levitical priests, Jeroboam established monarchical control of the nation’s religious life. As a result, many of the Levites moved to Judah, where they could continue to perform their divinely appointed functions (2 Chronicles 11:13-15).

“In place of the Levites Jeroboam created a new priesthood of “the lowest” and least-experienced people (1 Kings 12:31; 1 Kings 13:33, KJV), men who owed the king all that they had and were. These appointees would have to cater to royal preferences to retain their positions.

“Jeroboam introduced syncretism, a fusion of differing systems of belief. He combined aspects of God’s true religion with pagan beliefs and human rationalization. He may well have patterned many aspects of his religious practices after the customs of Egypt and Tyre—Israel’s allies by treaty—to strengthen his relationship with these two major commercial and military supporters. [Jeroboam himself had fled to Egypt for fear of Solomon, and was recalled from there to become king].

“From that time forward the northern kingdom appeared to the outside world as merely an extension of the powerful coastal cities of the Phoenician Empire. They were commercial partners, shared a language and likely held similar religious views.

“The distinction that God had originally intended between Israel and the surrounding nations was soon obliterated. So, it is no wonder that historians have difficulty detecting Israel’s role in the region as anything other than traders with the coastal Phoenician cities. Israel was reduced to approximately equal status with the other kingdoms. Regrettably, it had forsaken its role as a spiritual light and example to the nations.”

Once Satan was able to introduce this wedge between the House of Israel and its religion given through Moses, it was easy for the northern kingdom to be influenced by the pagan religions of its neighbors. It’s quite likely that Jeroboam also changed the weekly worship day from the seventh days of the week, the Sabbath day, to Sunday. The Sabbath was a sign between God and His people. Those who kept the Sabbath were identified with the true God who created everything in six days and rested on the Sabbath day and made it holy. The Jews who have been identified with the Sabbath have not lost their identity as God’s people, whereas the northern House of Israel after losing its identity were not known as God’s people as they had lost the identifying sign, which was keeping the Sabbath day holy.

The House of Israel began worshipping Baal and Ashtoreth, the gods of their pagan neighbors, and never turned from the sins introduced by Jeroboam throughout the remainder of its history in the land of Israel. God gave the nation every chance to repent to receive the promised blessings, even sending prophets to warn them. Increasing the severity of punishment sevenfold twice did not cause the northern House of Israel to learn from these experiences, even with the prophets telling the nation that violation of God’s laws and their covenant with God was the reason for their sufferings. But the nation under the influence of its 19 kings in 7 dynasties, despite being punished for its sins, never showed any inclination to return to God’s ways. By its conduct, the nation demonstrated that it would not return to God. As a result, God then imposed His next punishment on the nation, per the terms stated in verses 23-26 of Leviticus 26.

“23 And if you will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; 24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. 25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when you are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and you shall eat, and not be satisfied.”

After increasing the intensity of punishment sevenfold twice, when the House of Israel showed no inclination to change its ways and obey God’s laws, the nation would now be punished ‘seven times’ for its sins. ‘Seven times’ here refers to the duration of punishment. God further said that He would avenge the quarrel of His covenant by the nation being completely delivered into the hand of the enemy.

The House of Israel was delivered completely into the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BCE who removed them from their land and carried them off into national slavery. The House of Israel has so far not returned to that land over the past more than 2,730 years.

To understand how long this punishment of withholding the unconditional blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s descendants was to last, we need to understand how long a prophetic time is.

In prophecy, a ‘time’ equals a year of 360 days. There is also a ‘day for a year’ principle that applies in prophecy. Numbers 13 and 14 describe the situation when Moses sent out 12 men from each of the tribes of Israel to spy out the land that Israelites were to inherit. They spied out the land for 40 days. Ten of the twelve men brought an evil report about the land and discouraged the Israelites from going in to possess it. God was displeased with them for their unbelief and punished them for 40 years, a year for a day that they spied out the land by not allowing them to possess the land. This is stated in Numbers 14:34, “34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection.” Here the punishment was to withhold blessings of occupying the Promised Land for a year for each day of sin.

This ‘day for a year’ principle can also apply in reverse. After the House of Israel rejected God as their king, He allowed them to live an additional 390 years in the land where they continued in their sins. Then God removed them from the land in the Assyrian captivity. Ezekiel the prophet was asked to bear the sins of the House of Israel for 390 days by lying on his left side in an imaginary siege of Jerusalem pictured on a tile. This is mentioned in Ezekiel 4:4-6 (NIV), “4 "Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. 5 I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So, for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel. 6 "After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year.”

Applying the ‘day for a year principle’ we can now understand how long the actual punishment of withholding the unconditional blessings promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would last, mentioned as “seven times” in Leviticus 26:24. ‘Seven times’ refers to seven prophetic years of 360 days each which equal 2,520 days. Applying the punishment principle of a year for each day in Numbers 14:34, the actual punishment on the House of Israel of withholding the blessings would thus last for 2,520 years. And that is precisely what happened in the case of America and British Commonwealth nations, descended from the House of Israel. Their ‘seven times’ punishment began around 722 BCE when they were driven out of their land, and 2,520 years later, around 1800 A.D., Britain and America burst on the world scene into unprecedented national greatness and began to experience prosperity and material blessings that no people on earth had previously enjoyed.

Leviticus 26:27-28 mentions another ‘seven times’ of punishment, “27 And if you will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; 28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.” This punishment is to be applied by God in fury, meaning His full wrath can only imply sevenfold intensity of punishment than nations of Israel have ever received.

The nations of Israel have enjoyed great prosperity and blessings for over 200 years now after their ‘seven prophetic times’ punishment for 2,520 years. This can only mean that this sevenfold intensity of punishment will be applied only in the future. This punishment is poured out in God’s full fury during the three-and-a-half year long great tribulation, the time of trouble in which all life could be destroyed if God did not send Jesus Christ to intervene and stop man’s insanity under Satan’s influence. Jeremiah 30:7 calls it a ‘time of Jacob’s trouble’, meaning that the brunt of the Great Tribulation will be borne by Jacob’s descendants, the British, American [holders of the birthright promise of national greatness and material blessings] and the Jewish people [holders of the scepter or ‘rulership’ promise].

**Chapter 3**

**Satan’s Strategy of ‘Rationalism’ to Destroy Marriage**

After conquest by the Assyrians, the northern House of Israel was completely removed from their land in 722 BCE. The southern House of Judah (or the Jews) were conquered by the Babylonians and removed from their land in 587 BCE. The Israelites continued in the sins introduced by Jeroboam and paganism they picked up from their Baal and Ashtoreth (Nimrod and Semiramis deified) worshipping neighbors. After they were removed from their land, they lost their identity as the House of Israel. The Jews as a people however maintained their identity as God’s people as they kept the Sabbath and were keepers of the Holy Scriptures.

In captivity and freedom after that, Satan was unable to affect the institution of marriage among the Israelites. Life was toil and hard work and the marriage institution is the best means to cope with it. The rationale was provided by Prof. Eli Finkel as quoted earlier, “…the prevalence of individual farming households meant that the main requirements [people] had for their marriage revolved around things like food production, shelter and protection from violence. To be sure, [people] were pleased if they experienced an emotional connection with their spouse, but such affinities were perquisites of a well-functioning marriage rather than its central purpose.”

Though Satan was unable to affect the marriage institution among the nations that grew from the tribes of the House of Israel, he developed a strategy to try and destroy the marriage institution among the Jews who came back to the holy land. He could not corrupt the scriptures, the Old Testament of the Bible because with God’s guidance the Jews maintained the integrity of their scriptures, but he attacked by corrupting the interpretation of the scriptures, particularly the laws concerning divorce and marriage. That story will be told later.

By and large the marriage institution remained intact around the world. In the Christian world, the Roman Catholic Church interpreted marriage and divorce laws because the scriptures were unavailable to the general public. But invention of the printing press by Gutenberg around 1440 A.D. began a gradual process of questioning the interpretation of the scriptures by the Roman Church. Over the following centuries, the Bible and parts of it became more accessible to the common man and many more people could read the scriptures for themselves. Satan then began developing a strategy to attack the divine inspiration of the scriptures.

Germans have been Satan’s model nation which has obeyed Satan much better than the Israelites have obeyed the God of the Bible. The Germans have done so since the time of their ancestor Asshur, the grandson of Noah.

Satan in a diabolical strategy began using the Germans under the guise of ‘German rationalism’ in the mid-18th century to attack the scriptures.

**Brief History of Rationalism**

The Greeks were the first Rationalists who in their philosophies had rejected the true God but had adopted the Egyptian and Babylonian mythical gods by giving them Greek names. They probably adopted them because they were so human in their characteristics and foibles. They could choose gods to worship that they liked or create them to their own liking, such as in some cases even creating different gods from one god based on different attributes of the god, or a god based on just one attribute. That way they could pray to the particular god depending on what boon or benefit they sought from him. Thus, many gods were created from the original Nimrod or Baal, each based on just one attribute and worshipped as such. They did not want to retain the true God in their knowledge because He holds humans accountable for their conduct.

Nimrod was worshipped under different names by different peoples, and as different gods based on his many attributes. For example, he was worshipped as the sun-god Baal [which means ‘lord’] by the Canaanites and Phoenicians, as Tammuz by the Babylonians and Sumerians, as Osiris in Egypt, as Jupiter in Rome, as Adonis by the Greeks. He was worshipped as Chemosh by the Moabites and Molech by the Ammonites. He was also worshipped as Saturn.

Nimrod was also a mighty hunter. Wolves were one of the animals he hunted. For this attribute he was worshipped as the god Lupercus, the hunter of wolves. He was also worshipped as the Greek god Pan, the god of light. He was a great reveler and as such was worshipped as the god Bacchus, the god of wine. He was also a mighty man and a womanizer, and as such he was worshipped as Valentine. The word Valentine comes from the Latin Valentinus, which derives from valens - “to be strong, powerful, mighty.” Genesis 10:8-9 describes Nimrod with these words: “And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord” (Gen. 10:8-9). Thus, worship of most of the gods and goddesses is really worship of Nimrod and his mother Semiramis.

After rejecting the true God and creating gods according to their own thinking, the Greeks did not rely on revealed knowledge from the true God but relied on their own ‘rational’ thinking and reasoning.

The Roman Catholic Church was then responsible for injecting such Greek rationalism into Christianity. Greek was the *lingua franca* of that time and works of Greek philosophers were widely available in countries around and near the Mediterranean. Clement of Alexandria writes on how the early Catholic fathers viewed Greek philosophy (This information can be accessed at http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/clement.html):

Book 2, Chapter 5: “…before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes conducive to piety; being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration… philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For this was a schoolmaster to bring "the Hellenic mind," as the law, [brought] the Hebrews, "to Christ." Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ.”

Then in Book 2 Chapter 7 he writes: “The Greek preparatory culture, therefore, with philosophy itself, is shown to have come down from God to men, not with a definite direction but in the way in which showers fall down on the good land, and on the dunghill, and on the houses. And similarly, both the grass and the wheat sprout; and the figs and any other reckless trees grow on sepulchers. And things that grow, appear as a type of truths. For they enjoy the same influence of the rain. But they have not the same grace as those which spring up in rich soil, in as much as they are withered or plucked up. And here we are aided by the parable of the sower, which the Lord interpreted [meaning the seed falling on different kinds of soil].

“And philosophy-I do not mean the Stoic, or the Platonic, or the Epicurean, or the Aristotelian - but whatever has been well said by each of those sects, which teach righteousness along with a science pervaded by piety - this eclectic whole I call philosophy. But such conclusions of human reasoning, as men have cut away and falsified, I would never call divine…”

What Clement is saying is that the eclectic mind has to separate out the truth that leads to righteousness and piety, from the false in Greek philosophy. That is a recipe for disagreement and debate because different ‘eclectic’ minds will reach different conclusions. That is what human ‘rationalism’ or ‘logical’ human reasoning leads to.

He further writes:

“They [the *Stromata*, which are Clement’s collections of miscellaneous speculative notes on the true philosophy] consist of the speculations of Greek philosophers, of heretics, and of those who cultivated the true Christian gnosis, and of quotations from sacred Scripture. The latter he affirms to be the source from which the higher Christian knowledge is to be drawn; as it was that from which the germs of truth in Plato and the Hellenic philosophy were derived. He describes philosophy as a divinely ordered preparation of the Greeks for faith in Christ, as the law was for the Hebrews; and shows the necessity and value of literature and philosophic culture for the attainment of true Christian knowledge, in opposition to the numerous body among Christians who regarded learning as useless and dangerous. He proclaims himself an eclectic, believing in the existence of fragments of truth in all systems, which may be separated from error; but declaring that the truth can be found in unity and completeness only in Christ, as it was from Him that all its scattered germs originally proceeded. The Stromata are written carelessly, and even confusedly; but the work is one of prodigious learning, and supplies materials of the greatest value for understanding the various conflicting systems which Christianity had to combat.”

After Greek rationalism was injected and woven into the fabric of Christianity by the Catholic Church, the errors that crept in could not be corrected because the Roman Church prohibited Bible translations in native languages. And laymen were forbidden to read the Bible. Only Catholic priests were allowed to interpret it for the masses. The priests were not free to interpret the Bible for themselves either and merely taught what the pope and his minions required them to teach the laity. Thus, Satan used the Roman Church to suppress the truth of the Bible throughout the middle ages (from about 500 A.D. till 1,500 A.D.).

However, the truth of the Bible did not completely die down. God’s true Church has always existed since its beginnings in 31 A.D. though it has been a ‘small flock’ heavily persecuted by the Roman Church. True Church was known by various names such as the Waldensians, Albigensians, Paulicians, Petrobusians etc. They always had access to the Bible and opposed the Catholic beliefs and were severely persecuted for it.

Criticism of the Roman Church’s doctrines began with John Wycliffe (1330 – 1384), who relied on the Scriptures as the highest authority for doctrine. He was most likely a member of God’s true Church as he was a Sabbath keeper. His followers known as Lollards began to preach his criticisms of the doctrines of the Roman Church. When his message began to spread, the Roman Church was so incensed that it dug up Wycliffe’s body, burned it and threw his ashes into the Swift river.

Wycliffe’s message continued to spread. The Roman Church then began a vicious persecution of ‘heretics.’ John Huss, a Czech who had been influenced by Wycliffe’s writings and had criticized the selling of indulgences by the Church to raise funds and considered the authority of Scripture to be higher than the pope’s authority was martyred. Then Martin Luther influenced by John Huss’s writings also began writing against the Roman Church. Luther was condemned by the Church as a heretic, but by this time, the rulers who coveted the Church’s riches and the properties began to support the dissenters.

Meanwhile in England, Tyndale began his work on the English translation of the Bible. He was persecuted, fled England and completed his translation of the New Testament copies of which were smuggled into England. He was betrayed to the authorities and was tried, declared a heretic and finally strangled and burned at the stake. But he had completed his translation before he was put to death.

In the meantime, King Henry the VIII broke up with the Roman Church because of the pope’s refusal to grant annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon so that he could remarry and father a male heir. In retaliation, Henry confiscated the Roman’s Church’s wealth and properties and disbanded the monasteries. He became the head of the Church of England. The Protestant Reformation initiated by Wycliffe, paid for with his life by John Huss, catalyzed by Martin Luther under the protection of the rulers was now in full swing in England with the backing of Henry VIII and other European rulers.

It was also the age of exploration and discovery ushered in by men like Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Magellan, Drake and others. The Renaissance (meaning ‘rebirth’) reignited classical learning of the Greeks and Romans which had been suppressed by the Roman Church during the Middle Ages. The Renaissance also led to scientific discoveries, innovations and inventions such as those in paper, printing, the mariner’s compass, gunpowder; the work of Copernicus and Keppler in astronomy, Galileo with the telescope, Pascal and Boyle’s experiments with air pressure and Newton’s development of calculus.

These scientific discoveries disproved some of the Roman Church’s beliefs such as geocentricism at the trial of Galileo. This was a blow to the credibility of the Church.

Because of the invention of the printing press, as the Bible and parts of it became more accessible to the common man in his or her own language, many more people could read the scriptures for themselves. They began to question the beliefs of the Roman Church, and many determined that they were heretical. More and more people were beginning to be convinced in Europe that the Bible was the true word of God.

Thus, the Roman Church was successfully challenged on many fronts, loosening and then breaking its iron grip on the minds of the people and the rulers in Europe. Most people were still relatively poor. Through all this, the marriage institution remained largely intact.

**German Rationalism**

But worldwide commerce was growing by leaps and bounds. A kind of globalization was taking place. With explosion of scientific knowledge, new inventions and growth of commerce, great amount of wealth was being created in Europe and America. The industrial revolution started in Britain because God’s 2,520 year-long punishment of Israelite nations was coming to a close and God inspired the scientific discoveries and inventions. God was now going to confer great material blessings promised to Abraham unconditionally.

The Bible was being read by the masses in Britain and America. Though the nations had continued in the sins of Jeroboam the first king of the northern kingdom of the House of Israel after the split from the House of Judah - idolatry in the form of images and statues in the Churches, breaking the Sabbath and not keeping God’s commanded holy days, but instead keeping holidays of pagan origin such as Christmas, Easter, New Year’s Day and the like – the people generally kept the remaining eight of the ten commandments, and were by and large a moral people.

By the second half of the 18th century, the power of the Roman Church had been broken. It could no longer keep the people away from reading their bibles in their own languages. Research and knowledge of the Bible was spreading. The British and American people were thus being prepared to receive the unconditionally promised material blessings. To prevent them from fully enjoying their blessings and steal part of the blessings, Satan had to develop a new strategy.

Satan developed a two-pronged strategy to keep Israelite Americans and the British from enjoying their blessings to the fullest extent, and the strategy involved getting them away from God and the Bible, and then get them to sin, which without fail produces anguish, pain and suffering. The first prong of the attack was to question the existence of God Himself and the divine inspiration of the Bible. The second prong of the attack was to use the many German masqueraders (persons of German origin who have been living in America, the British Commonwealth nations and northwestern European nations) to induce them into sexual immorality, attack the marriage institution, and ridicule morality and replace it with ‘anything goes.’ The vehicle used to accomplish this was German Rationalism.

Hahn, a German Rationalist, defined Rationalism as "that manner of thought by which human reason is considered to be the only source and the only judge of all kinds of knowledge" (Hahn, *De Rationalism*, 1827). This simply means that ‘right’ is whatever seems reasonable to you!

The rationalist denies divine revelation and rejects the idea that the scriptures of any religion are the true inspired word of God. According to the rationalist, human reason alone is sufficient for answering all of life’s questions and deciding how to live. Gradually, the German rationalists had become bolder and bolder in their blasphemies. Nietzsche said, “God is dead!” They were professors of Theology in leading German Universities. Conrad Philip Henke, the Professor of Theology at the University of Helmstedt (1752-1809), taught his ministerial students that the inspiration of the Bible was superstition (Hagenbach, *History of Doctrines*, p. 377).

Germans actually try to portray to the world that they are atheists and rationalists and do not believe in God. But do not be fooled. They do believe in ‘god’ and their god is Satan the devil. Like Satan, the father of lies, they are liars and diabolical deceivers.

*German Rationalism is nothing new. It’s as old as the Garden of Eden where Satan told Eve the first lie in Genesis 3:4-5 (NIV), “4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it [the forbidden fruit] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Satan in effect told Eve that she should be rational and decide for herself what is good and right, what is evil and wrong.*

German rationalists in a diabolical plot began to teach that the Bible is old Jewish folk lore; the main characters in the Bible and some of the kingdoms mentioned never existed. Hence, they said it is ignorance and foolishness to believe in the Bible. Then a German masquerader named Charles Darwin questioned the very existence of God with Satan-inspired Theory of Evolution. A handful of German masqueraders strategically placed in different countries of Europe added to Darwin’s theories and it began to appear that the evolution theory was accepted as a fact by most of the scientific community. Those who really looked at the evidence and saw that evolution simply could not be proved were labeled as ‘ignorant, foolish, irrational, believers of superstitions.’ Anyone who could provide evidence to the contrary was effectively silenced with such labelling. I myself had become ashamed to admit that I was religious for fear of being labeled as ‘ignorant’ or ‘a superstitious fool.’

The natural result of denying the existence of God and believing that humanity evolved rather than being created by an intelligent God was that ‘life has no meaning.’

Romans 8:7 says, “7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.”

Carnal humanity does not like to be subject to the law of God. Therefore, many accepted the rationalists’ arguments that the Bible is old Jewish tales and not to be believed. So, they did not have to obey the Ten Commandments and other statutes and judgments in the Bible. Preachers of all hues were swept in by the arguments of the ‘rationalist’ preachers (many of the leading ones being German masqueraders) and pounded the pulpits saying because of Jesus’ sacrifice, humanity no longer had to keep the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law. Further, they said they could commit any sins and they would be forgiven due to the shed blood Jesus Christ. Carnal Christianity was swept away with their reasoning.

After an attack on the credibility of the Bible and belief in the existence of God was well under way, an assault was begun on the front of sexual purity and sex only within marriage. Thomas Henry Huxley, a biologist and contemporary of Charles Darwin was known as “Darwin’s bulldog” because he championed Darwin’s theory of evolution. I believe both men were German masqueraders. Among his descendants were physiologists, biologists and men of letters such as Aldous Huxley, intellectually distinguished men of their respective generations. These men declared their motives for championing their causes in their writings

Julian Huxley bluntly declared: “The sense of spiritual relief which comes from rejecting the idea of God as a superhuman being is enormous” (*Essays of a Humanist*, 1966, p. 223).

Julian’s brother Aldous Huxley wrote: “I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption…Those who detect no meaning in the world generally do so because, for one reason or another, it suits their [purpose] that the world should be meaningless” (*Ends and Means*, 1946, p. 273).

Huxley further explained: “For myself, as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom…There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt: We could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever” (p. 270).

Aldous Huxley admitted that they wanted to feel free of any moral standards as they desired sexual freedom. So, he and his contemporaries who thought likewise, devised their own ‘rational’ justifications for refuting any moral standards. Since God was the source of moral standards, they denied the existence of God and attacked the credibility of His inspired word, the Bible, which contained the moral standards.

Another assault on sexual purity and ‘sex within marriage only’ was made through literature. After the first world war, novels and short stories began to appear describing infidelity and other explicit sex scenes outside of marriage. One example was *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* by D.H. Lawrence in 1928 which was immediately banned in the U.K., but copies were available in other countries of Europe. Short stories by W. Somerset Maugham and others also depicted sex outside of marriage. Thus, Satan drove a wedge into fidelity within marriage.

Satan continued to drive the wedge deeper and deeper over the following decades till the sexual revolution of the 1960s, when the flood gates were opened. That was made possible by Germany developing the technology to electronically deliver threats to individuals and offering it to German masqueraders in America and Britain. Then the German masqueraders swung into full action to destroy marriage and families within Israelite countries. Smut began to pour out in torrents from the publishing industry in the form of viler and viler pornographic novels and magazines such as *Playboy* and *Hustler*. Then assault began in Hollywood in the film and TV industries. Marriage became the butt of endless jokes on film and TV. Gradually but relentlessly, programs and shows depicting wholesome marriages and families of the 1950s, 1960s and the early 1970s such as the Cleavers in *Leave it to Beaver*, the Nelsons in *Ozzie and Harriet, and Little House on the Prairie* were replaced by *All in the Family* (Archie Bunker)*, Roseanne, The Simpsons, Everybody Loves Raymond, Married with Children, That 70s Show* and many others*.* Most of these shows made fun of the father as the head of the family, portraying him as dumb, a buffoon, crude and as a laughingstock of the family.

Fornication, adultery, cohabitation, homosexuality and every other form of deviant sex and “alternative lifestyle” they could imagine, including same-sex “marriage,” have been portrayed tens of thousands of times in all types of media. All such programs and publications made all this immorality look fascinating, thrilling and mysterious. Just as the Satan-led propaganda by a few strategically placed masquerader proponents of the theory of evolution had made it look as if the entire scientific community believed in it, similar propaganda made deviant sex and ‘alternative lifestyles’ appear as the norm. Succeeding younger generations were sucked into believing that ‘everybody was doing it’ and followed the ‘herd.’

Minds thus infected in Israelite countries became open to listening to alternative ways of living in addition to the norm of a married family. The masqueraders were not content only with propaganda. Their diabolical plot to destroy marriages and families in America and British Commonwealth nations was followed up with action. They pioneered the alternative lifestyles which drew in the gullible Israelite young into the sexual revolution of the 1960s. The Hippie movement was Satan inspired and orchestrated by masqueraders. Masqueraders were the leading participants in it. Then they married Israelite men and women and deliberately divorced them, leaving them with children and condemning many young mothers with young children to fend for themselves. As divorce multiplied, society generally came to accept such lifestyles as the norm.

Their impact on marriage has been stunning as borne out by divorce statistics. That’s why 80% of marriages in the U.S. experience adultery, and many men and women admit that they do not trust their mate. U.S. lawmakers passing laws recognizing alternative forms of ‘marriages’ such as ‘same-sex marriages’ have only confounded the situation further. No wonder God indicts the American and British people and the leadership through Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 3:9-12, “9 The look on their countenance [face] witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to their soul! for they have brought evil upon themselves. 10 "Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. 11 Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. 12 As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people, those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths."

Thus, we see that there is wholesale violation and disregard for God’s purpose for marriage in America and Britain resulting in untold suffering. In my former job in the call-center in the welfare department of the State of Florida in the USA for more than seven years, every day, I heard stories of single women raising families of 2, 3, 4, 5 or more children, some holding jobs and some not, struggling to feed and clothe their children all by themselves. The fathers were nowhere around to help. When I took calls from them, I saw a sense of entitlement as if it’s the government’s responsibility to feed and clothe the children and provide them free housing adequate for the family, with free maintenance, free utilities, and free unlimited medical help. A family of 5 would have to be earning more than $70,000 annually in Florida before taxes to equal the amount that it costs the government to provide them all the free help they receive.

The world seems to be completely missing an understanding of God’s deep purpose for creating the marriage institution.God’s laws are living laws just like the law of gravity. A person who jumps down from a 100-story skyscraper is subject to the law of gravity and will become formless pulp at the bottom. Similarly, those violating any of God’s laws will suffer an automatic penalty in mental and physical pain and anguish. All those who violate God’s laws on marriage suffer the penalties in a lifetime of misery, poverty and insecurity. And such misery is often passed on to succeeding generations.

In our increasingly godless society most have swallowed the satanic lie that man evolved from simplest life forms rather than being created by a creator God. They think the institution of marriage is a human invention for convenience rather than a God-ordained one. Whenever it’s not convenient for them they can dispense with it. Majority of humanity think they are free to do whatever they want with their lives. In their warped thinking they don’t want God’s restrictive laws curbing their freedom.

God’s Laws in the form of the Ten Commandments and other statutes and judgments are restrictive laws. But they help man avoid danger, pain, suffering, anguish and ultimately death. God’s spiritual laws are living laws. If violated, they automatically exact a penalty. God’s seventh commandment states ‘You shall not commit adultery.” The commandment prohibits any sex of any kind outside of marriage between a man and a woman. If this law is violated it exacts automatic penalties of many kinds: poverty, possible disease, pain, suffering for parents, children, extended families, friends, and ultimately decline of nations. We see the results of violating this law all around the world. It illustrates the folly of the evolutionists’ thinking.

Evolutionists think man is merely a higher form of animal on the evolutionary ladder. The creator God of the Bible has a different view of man. Moses was inspired to write in Deuteronomy 4:19, “19 And lest you lift up your eyes unto heaven, and when thou see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord your God has divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.”

Effectively God is saying to every human being born or who will ever be born that He has a planet reserved for him in the heavens initially as part of his nation; then later as he gains more experience, expanding to other stars and planets where he will be the god, the sole ruler and creator on that planet. When God told Abraham that He would multiply his descendants as the stars in heaven or as the sand on the seashore for multitude, He was not speaking in hyperbole. Abraham’s descendants along with other peoples will expand God’s creation on other planets.

But this God-planned potential of man means that 15% of people in America who are on welfare because of their choice to shun marriage and have children out of wedlock with multiple partners, and around 50% of those who are engaging in divorce and remarriage and having children out of wedlock, are wasting their opportunity to rule the universe unless they repent and change their way of life. They are not learning responsibility. How can God then give them the responsibility to rule a planet?

**Chapter 4**

 **History of the Universe before Man’s Creation**

Marriage as an institution was not created by man for his own convenience at some time in his evolution. It was an institution created by the Creator God at the time man was created. The simple account can be found in the Bible in the book of Genesis in the very first two chapters.

In the account of creation, the Bible states that originally God created the heavens and the earth. Then the earth became waste and chaotic. This happened because of angels’ rebellion against God’s rule. But then in six days God recreated the surface of the earth, then created plant, animal and sea life after their kind. But then Genesis 1:26 – 28 describes the creation of mankind:

“26 And God said, let Us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. 27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

In this account of creation of man, specifically Adam, God says They, not He created man in their image, after their likeness. So, this was not one God-Being creating mankind, but more than one God-Being doing the creating of mankind in their own likeness and image. Mankind in physical form looks like God in His spirit form. He is created in the shape and form of God. He is also created in the image of God. Man has the capacity to think, imagine, reason and speak a language like God. This is how man is made in God’s image. He was created with intellect similar to God’s.

Then the Bible describes the creation of woman in Genesis 2:18-24: “18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help [or helper] meet [or suitable] for him. 19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help [or helper] meet [or suitable] for him.

The account says no suitable helper was found for Adam among the animals God had created. Then verse 21 continues: “21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

When God called Eve Adam’s wife, the institution of marriage was created. So, marriage was created at the same time mankind was created. The only creation of God that practices it is mankind. It is not a humanly created institution but a divinely ordained one.

Before we can discuss this account of the creation of mankind and the institution of marriage in detail, we must first understand why God created mankind in the first place, and in the form He created him. Only then can we fully understand why God created man as a physical being like an animal, but still in the image of God with many powers similar to God’s that animals don’t possess; and why God created mankind male and female, and then the institution of marriage.

To understand why God created mankind the way He did, we must first understand the history of the universe before man’s creation. That history is also revealed in the pages of the Bible. Almost all of what we know about God’s purpose for creating mankind and marriage has been taught to us by Herbert W. Armstrong through whom God founded the modern era of His Church. One can read his original words in three books or booklets authored by him: *Mystery of the Ages, Why Marriage – Soon Obsolete?* and *The Missing Dimension in Sex*, all available free of charge at pcog.org

What follows is my understanding of the history of the universe from the pages of the Bible.

**History of the Universe before Creation of Man**

In the very beginning only one Supreme God Being existed. That God Being from the pages of the Bible we know as God the Father. This is one Being who has always existed. All power in the universe literally belongs to Him. And literally everything has come from His body, if we can put it that way. He is the primal source of everything that exists.

God the Father originally thought through everything and planned out the entire creation. He did not want to be alone. He chose first to create just one Being with incredible powers like Himself. John the apostle reveals the name of that first created God Being as the Word in John 1:1: “1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John reveals that in the very beginning there were two God Beings, and both were God. Then John continues in verses 2-3: “2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”

Here John states that all things, meaning the physical and spirit [angels] creation was actually created by the Word. Paul confirms exactly what John wrote in Colossians 1:16: "For by Him all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him."

Thus, before anything was created, only two divine Beings existed: God the Father, and the Word, who later came in the flesh as Jesus Christ: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth” (John 1:14)

After God the Father had planned out the entire creation, He then worked with the Word to teach Him the entire process of creation. The Word had to learn the plan because the honor of actually creating everything was to be given to Him. The Word in verse 14 is translated from the Greek word *logos* which means ‘Spokesman’ or ‘word’. So, the Word, or Spokesman of the divine family created everything in the universe.

There is a very important reason why the Word had to create the entire universe. The two God Beings had planned for possible failure and rebellion against their rule. In that event they had already planned that because the Word had created everything, He could pay the death penalty for the sins of created beings by dying for them. The need for that sacrifice did arise after the sin of angels and then mankind and that sacrifice was made by Jesus Christ who was the Word before He came as a human being to earth.

Many believe that the Word has always existed with God the Father as John 1:1 state. But I believe John is talking about the creation of the angelic world and the universe and all things in it. He is not excluding the possibility that the Word was originally created by God the Father. Let’s see from the pages of the Bible if the Word was originally created by God the Father or not.

In summary, here is the proof.

Micah 5:2 states: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."

The *New International Version* (NIV) renders this verse: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

*New American Standard Bible* (NASB) renders this verse: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel, His going forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

This verse states that the Messianic King to come was 'from everlasting.'

The Hebrew word translated 'everlasting' is *owlam* or *olam*, which is number 5769 in the Hebrew and Chaldee dictionary of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. It can mean concealed, i.e. the vanishing point; generally of time, out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequently as an adverb, always, ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, for everlasting, evermore, of old, lasting, long (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the world) plus without end.

Therefore, the words 'whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting' can mean from so old that we human beings cannot imagine it, or from way before the world began, or from ancient time, or practically eternity. However, 'practically eternity' does not necessarily mean absolute eternity, i.e. without beginning.

But let us examine more scriptures to see if the Word has always existed along with the Father.

Colossians 1:15 states: "Who [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” NKJV renders this verse: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

If Jesus Christ before His human birth was the image of God the Father, it can imply that God the Father existed before Him and the Word then became His image. Someone or something has to exist first before another can become his or its image. However, it can also mean that both God Beings existed together with one being the image of the other.

But the verse also calls Jesus Christ as the “firstborn of every creature” or the “firstborn over all creation.” If Jesus Christ is the firstborn of every creature [this would include the angelic world as well], then it implies that He was created before every creature. Firstborn here does not seem to imply firstborn from the dead. Angels do not rise from the dead in a resurrection. By implying 'firstborn from the dead', we are reading something into the text which is not there. So, it does not matter if the translation is 'firstborn of every creature' or 'firstborn over all creation', it still means that Jesus was the firstborn.

Revelation 3:14 states: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; these things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

*New King James Version* (NKJV) also translates it the same way. So does the *New American Standard*, *American Standard*, *Revised Standard*, *New Revised Standard* and the *New Century Version*. But *New International Version* renders it: "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation."

The Greek word translated 'beginning' in this verse is *arche*, pronounced *ar-khay*, number 746 in the Greek dictionary of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. It means a commencement, or chief (in various applications of order, time, place or rank); beginning, corner, first (estate), magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule. While this word may mean chief or ruler, nowhere is this word translated chief or ruler in the entire *King James Version*. Forty times it is translated as 'beginning' and once as 'beginnings'. It is translated as magistrates in Luke12:11, principality in 2 places and principalities in 6 places. But the context of the verse shows that the correct translation is 'beginning', and 'ruler' is the wrong translation.

Other sayings of Jesus also lend support to His statement that He was 'the beginning of God's creation', or that God the Father started His creation first with Him.

Before beginning His messages to each of the seven churches, Jesus Christ is revealing something more about Himself that was not previously known before the book of Revelation was given, or to confirm His identity as the God of the Old Testament. Jesus had already revealed Himself as 'the ruler over the kings of the earth' in Revelation 1:5, and the gospels and the epistles had made it abundantly clear in many places that Jesus is the Creator of all of God's creation and ruler over it. Jesus therefore could not have meant 'ruler of God's creation' in Revelation 3:14. Jesus meant to reveal something new about Himself, that He was 'the beginning of God's creation,' meaning that He was the first Being that God the Father created. This confirms that Jesus was created, or as Colossians 1:15 says "the firstborn of every creature."

Other sayings of Jesus also lend support to His statement that He was 'the beginning of God's creation', or that God the Father started His creation first with Him.

Jesus Christ Himself said in John 14:28, "…my Father is greater than I." And in John 10:29, "My Father ...is greater than all." Paul also stated in 1 Corinthians 11:3, "...the head of Christ is God." Jesus is clearly subject to the Father, and God the Father is the undisputed Head of the family.

Jesus stated in John 5:26: "For as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself." Jesus is stating here that God the Father granted to Jesus to have life inherent Himself. This means that if God the Father had not granted the gift to Jesus to have life in Himself, then He would not have been the Self-Existent One. God the Father granted that to Him. This then implies that God the Father gave life to Jesus Christ in the first place, long before the world began, or before anything else was created. This means that the Word had not always existed along with the Father, and that God the Father created Him.

Jesus also said in John 8:28: "...but as my Father has taught me, I speak these things." This is a clear statement that the Father taught Jesus Christ before anything was created by the Word. Earlier in verse 26 Jesus had said, "...I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." Clearly there was a stage at which the Word needed to be taught. There was a stage at which He did not know everything. This can only mean that the Word has not always existed with the Father, and that He was created by the Father.

God the Father seems to have carried out the creation in stages. He first created the Word. There was no heaven at that time. The days and nights began with the material creation. So, the Word had no 'beginning of days.' He existed before days began. God the Father then taught the Word everything, including His law of love. This could have gone on for a very very very long time, and the only words that come close to describing that length of time is past eternity. God the Father had thought through His entire plan of creation well before He created the Word. Then He let the Word plan all the creation in discussion with Him. The Word learnt from God the Father through this planning process. He had to learn how to create. God the Father taught the Word everything. And He also gave the honor of creating everything to the Word.

The only reasonable conclusion we can reach then is that Jesus Christ was created by God the Father as the Word or Spokesman for the God family. He was the beginning of creation by God the Father.

**Confirmation by an Angel**

In my booklet titled *“God’s Messages Delivered Through Angels,”* available free of charge on my website *www.ChurchofGodMessage.com*, I have written that one of the messages delivered to me by an angel was that Jesus Christ is a created Being. In that booklet, I explained how God Himself provided proof for the world that He had indeed delivered His messages to me through angels.

The proof was that the first message delivered to me was that I am of Jewish ancestry. I shared that message with a Church minister in Milwaukee, WI where I attended weekly Church services. Then four years later God revealed to Queen Elizabeth II that I was also a descendant of ancient King David of Israel, a Jew, which the Queen herself is also. If I had not first shared the message with the minister, I could have been accused of just ‘making it up’ that the message had been delivered to me by an angel.

Here is how the message that Jesus Christ is indeed a created Being was delivered to me sometime in late 2007 or early 2008. In one of my weekly messages, I had mentioned that I believed that Jesus Christ is a Being created by God the Father so long ago that we can only call it ‘past eternity.’ This was a complete break with the position of the Church of God which believed that God the Father and Jesus Christ have always lived together for past eternity, and that Jesus Christ is not a created Being.

But my understanding was based on reinterpretation of three scriptures: Micah 5:2, Colossians 1:15 and Revelation 3:14, as already described.

I bolstered my position with the following four additional arguments:

1) Colossians 1:15 says, ‘Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God.” Jesus Christ could not have been the image of God if God the Father had not existed before Him

2) In John14:28 Jesus Christ said, “My Father is greater than I.” Thus, Jesus Christ is clearly subject to God the Father.

3) John 5:26 says, “For as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” This means that Jesus has life inherent in Himself, which was granted to Him by the Father. This implies He originally received life from God the Father, meaning that He was originally created by God the Father.

4) Jesus also said in John 8:28, “…but as My Father has taught Me, I speak these things.” This clearly implies that there was a stage when the Word did not know everything and needed to be taught by God the Father. This can only mean that the Word, or Jesus Christ has not always existed with the Father, but had a beginning and was originally created by Him and was then taught everything, just as a child needs to be taught.

When I delivered this message as one of my weekly messages, very soon my pastor delivered a sermon reiterating the Church’s position that Jesus was not a created Being but has always existed along with God the Father. Later other ministers gave similar sermons restating the Church’s position.

God restored all the truths to His Church in these end-times through Mr. Armstrong. These truths were all major Church doctrines. But whether Jesus Christ was originally a Created Being or not is not a doctrine. So, I felt a position different from what the Church believed concerning interpretation of Scripture could be taken. But our Church pastors continued to reiterate the Church’s position over and over again in sermons. Then one morning I went down on my knees to specifically pray for God’s guidance in this matter. While I was on my knees only a few minutes praying, God sent His angel to deliver His message to me. In this message God’s angel provided the four proofs that I have mentioned that Jesus Christ was a created Being. Since then I have never wavered from my position that Jesus Christ was originally created by God the Father so long ago that we can characterize that time period only as past eternity.

**How God and the Word Lived**

To really appreciate why God the Father and Jesus Christ created humanity the way they did, and instituted marriage, we must first understand how God the Father and the Word lived before they created anything. Then we can appreciate the wisdom in further creating other creatures the way They did.

It is difficult for created beings to fathom how God the Father, the Supreme Being, to whom all power belongs, has always existed. Try as we might, it boggles the mind. We as created beings are used to thinking in terms of beginnings. It is impossible for us to imagine a Being who had no beginning.

God the Father first thought of creating. He planned out His creation and thought through the attributes and characteristics that His entire creation and each of His creatures should have. Of course, He wanted company. He was alone. He wanted to create creatures with whom He could have a good, happy, joyous and deeply satisfying relationship. It would be better to have company than to live alone. But the state of companionship would be better only if the relationship would be a harmonious, happy, joyous and respectful one. Otherwise company would only bring misery, pain and suffering.

God mulled over His plan from every angle over untold eons of time. He determined that the only way He could have a loving relationship with other beings would be to create intelligent beings like Himself. It was absolutely essential for Him to give them “free will” or ‘free moral agency.’ They could choose to live according to His way of life, or choose to live any other way they wished.

Without ‘free will’ God’s creatures would be mere robots, programmed to behave in a particular way. We can visualize quite easily why ‘free choice’ was so important by looking at God’s creation on earth. The kind of deeply satisfying, happy and joyful relationship human beings can have with their own children, or other human beings is not possible with any other creatures made of matter, be they trees, birds, fish or any kind of animals, no matter how loving or loyal the animal, dog or cat or another creature might be. The animals have instinct. They have limited freedom of choice. They act according to instinct as they have been programmed, in the interest of self-preservation and procreation of their kind. Animals can have a satisfying relationship among themselves. But it is an animal plane relationship. It is not a human level relationship, or a God plane relationship. In fact, God created the animal world to teach us the importance of creating “free will” in human beings and the angelic world.

God also created different creatures with differing abilities of communication. We can have a better relationship with animals that can communicate verbally in more complex ways than other creatures.

Humans have animal-like bodies, but with a human spirit imparted to them by God which gives them human intellect or intelligence, which is the power to think; the “mind power.”

The best passage that explains what the ‘human spirit’ is as contrasted with God’s holy spirit is 1 Corinthians 2:9-12: “But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by his [Holy] Spirit: for the [Holy] Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the [human] spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the [Holy] Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the [human] spirit of the world, but the [holy] spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

In the above verses, the words “Holy” where Paul is talking about God’s holy spirit, and the word “human” where he is discussing the human spirit have been added. Paul here explains that the ‘human spirit’ in man helps us understand the things of man, a much higher level of understanding than that of animals. But the spiritual things of God can be understood only if we possess God’s holy spirit. The human spirit alone cannot help us understand spiritual things.

Another verse that sheds further light on the ‘human spirit’ is Ecclesiastes 12:7: At death, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the sprit shall return unto God who gave it.”

Job 32:8 also says the same thing: “But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.” In Job 34:14-15, he says: “If he [God] set his heart upon man, If he [God] gather unto himself his [human] spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together; and man shall turn again unto dust.”

This human spirit in man does not impart human life. Human life is first imparted by God at conception, and is sustained by circulation of blood, oxidized by the breath of air, and fueled by food. But God reveals in the Scriptures that there is a spirit within every human. This spirit is not present in animals. Human and animal brains are quite alike. But man’s superiority in being able to think, reason, acquire knowledge, make complex decisions and choices, communicate at a more complex level in complex languages, create and appreciate music and art, and develop attitudes of both good and evil comes not from the human brain, but from the ‘human spirit.’

Human intellect, similar to God’s intellect makes a personal relationship possible among human beings as well as between God and man, which is a much higher plane relationship than the animal level relationship. But without ‘free will’ a human plane, deeply satisfying and loving relationship would not be possible. Therefore, ‘free will’ is absolutely essential for human beings to have a loving, deep, personal and satisfying relationship with a spouse, children, parents, friends, other human beings, and God.

So, God planned to create intelligent beings who would love Him of their own free will and choose to obey Him. They would obey His laws from the heart, of their own free will, because they would understand that the laws have been given for their own good, as well as for the good of fellow human beings and God’s entire creation. They would love Him as He would love them. God also wanted these beings to have an abundant, happy, joyous, meaningful and thoroughly satisfying life themselves. By creating beings similar to Himself, God in effect, would be reproducing Himself.

God started His creation work small. He first created a divine Being like Himself - the Word, who later became Jesus Christ in the flesh. Just imagine, a brand new Being with incredible intelligence and power, just like God the Father Himself. Now only two Beings existed, and nothing else. Then God the Father tells the Word that He created Him. God had to begin explaining everything to the Word. He was created out of God’s holy spirit, which is God’s power.

The holy spirit imparts godly character to the person who possesses it. To truly know God, one must know what His character is! The character of both God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son is that of spiritual holiness, righteousness and absolute perfection.

One word that sums up God’s character is LOVE, which is defined as outgoing concern for the welfare of others. It can also be called the way of “giving” instead of “getting”, the way of sharing, helping and serving. God’s nature includes the attributes of PEACE, HARMONY, JUSTICE, MERCY, COMPASSION, HAPPINESS AND JOY towards all those He has created. It is a way devoid of covetousness, lust, greed, vanity, selfishness, envy, jealousy, resentment, bitterness, hatred, competition, strife, violence and destruction.

God the Father and the Word lived this way of life ever since the Word was created for practically the past eternity. They lived the way of their perfect character. This was their “life-style”. When John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ, God the Father said, “You are my beloved Son.” Beloved means God loved the Word and the Word loved the Father and obeyed Him completely. They lived in total agreement with each other. But it is also a principle of God’s way that when two walk together, one has to be the head and in control. One has to be the leader. God the Father was the head.

The results of living this way for eternity were perfect cooperation, peace, harmony, joy, happiness and most important of all, tremendous accomplishment. They made this way of life a LAW, a code of conduct or relationship between God the Father and the Word.

Since Jesus Christ was wholly composed of the holy spirit, LOVE, giving, sharing, peace, happiness and joy were His very nature. God the Father first demonstrated this kind of godly love towards the Word, a much higher level of love - God plane love - than brotherly love, a human plane lover. There was no jealousy, envy, competition, greed, hatred or strife between God and the Word. These feelings arise in human beings because Satan and his demons broadcast these attitudes, moods and feelings into their minds. But there was total absence of these feelings and attitudes between God the Father and the Word. When God the Father exhibited total love for the Word, it was natural for the Word to respond in kind.

Godly love far exceeds what is implied by the English word agape. The love God has for us goes much deeper than we can imagine. It implies a decision to love someone even when there is no expectation of a reciprocal response. It often is not a mutual, two-way love.

Godly love is selfless and sacrificial. Jesus said: “This is My commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:12-13, New Living Translation). See 1 John 3:16-18.

Godly love is amazing! It does not seek retaliation (Matthew 5:38-39) It is willing to go beyond one’s duty in serving others (verses 40-42). It even means loving one’s enemies! (verses 43-48). The perfect example of these virtues was the earthly life of Jesus Christ!

When there are only the two beings, both composed of God’s Holy Spirit, and no feelings of jealousy, envy or hatred have ever come between them, but instead they have lived in perfect love with each other, and they know that whatever they create will be jointly owned and shared by them, and the one Created knows that the Creator is the Superior and Perfect One, and He has taught the Created One everything he knows, there can be nothing else but love, perfect harmony, peace and joy in the relationship between the two. God the Father and the Word perfectly understood each other and trusted each other completely. They lived for a past eternity of time and became one in their relationship. Jesus said in John 10:30: “I and my Father are one.”

Mankind was created in the way it was created with the institution of marriage to learn to develop the kind of relationship based on love that has existed between God the Father and the Word for past eternity.

The Word learnt that “Nothing is too hard for the Father to do” as He has all the power, understanding and knowledge, because He has generated it all. Later when God’s plan called for the Word to come in human flesh, live a sinless life and die, even though each and every human being ever born had sinned, the Word through practically an eternity of experience trusted that the Father could help Him live a sinless life to become a perfect sacrifice for the sins of humanity. That kind of complete and total trust between the two was developed in past eternity of living together as the only two Beings in existence.

Further trust between the two God Beings, based on the Word’s understanding of the knowledge and power of God the Father, was developed when they planned out the creation together. God the Father must have given ideas to the Word about the kinds of beings to be created which would have convinced the Word that the Father was the Supreme Being of all that existed. Anything that could cause any disharmony between the two was ironed out in an eternity of living together. And the Word came to know that the Father loved Him totally and completely. And He loved the Father wholeheartedly with complete and total trust in Him. The process of planning the creation together deepened the bond between them.

There are two important implications of Law. Law presupposes GOVERNMENT. An authority, the government leadership, enacts the Law, administers and enforces it. The law prescribes penalties for violations of the Law, and the authority enforces the penalties when violations do occur.

When only God the Father and the Word existed, there was government, with God the Father in command. God’s form of government is from the top down, with God in supreme control handing down His laws. Laws are not legislated by the governed. It is not a government by the consent of the governed. Since God the Father created the Word, this put His government over Him, with the Father as the supreme ruler. Since the Word created everything else, this puts Him in supreme authority over all He created, and God the Father over everything that exists.

There was no problem of government between God the Father and the Word. They had proved that between themselves through a past eternity of time and living together in a loving and trusting relationship. They were confident that they would never violate the law of love or the way of life between them. They also knew that further intelligent beings would also have to live by that law for there to be perfect love, peace, harmony and joy in the universe. But they had to consider the possibility of some of the intelligent created beings choosing to live another way of life, contrary to the laws that God the Father and the Word had instituted. As a result, conflict and adversarial relationships would arise, leading to discord and hatred. The penalty according to law would then apply.

Perfect spiritual godly Love is how we can describe the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ. This is how they want human beings to relate to them, to each other, and in marriage and family relationships. The institution of marriage was created only for human beings in all of God’s creation to develop that character trait in them.

**Next Phase of Creation**

God always begins His projects small as if proceeding cautiously. He is never in a hurry. He does not need to be. He has always existed and will always exist. When His first creation project proved to be perfect and a total success, only then did God and the Word decide to proceed further.

Now since the Word had the honor of creating the rest of the creation, would He proceed by creating hundreds of millions or perhaps billions of beings, or would He proceed cautiously and create a small number of beings first? To see if we can find the answer, we should consider what the Bible says about the twenty-four elders. They are mentioned in Revelation 4:1-4, 6-11: “After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show you things which must be hereafter. And immediately, I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne…

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold…”

These verses show that the twenty-four elders are clothed in white raiment, a symbol of righteousness [which is given after testing and trial of one’s total obedience to God], wear crowns and sit on thrones. Jesus Christ also is pictured in Revelation 19:12 as wearing many crowns. And God the Father and Jesus Christ sit on thrones.

No angels are pictured as wearing crowns, or sitting on thrones, except for Lucifer who was given a crown and a throne to sit on as ruler over the earth. This is implied by Isaiah 14:13 where Lucifer says: “…I will exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God…”

When human beings qualify to become eternal beings as God’s literal sons in His kingdom, they also will wear crowns and sit on thrones. This indicates that the twenty-four elders have higher authority than the angels. They are God’s counselors who have qualified to sit on thrones and wear crowns. If the twenty-four elders were created at the same time as the angels, it is difficult to imagine that the twenty-four elders qualified to sit on thrones and wear crowns, but none of the angels (except Lucifer), including the archangels Gabriel and Michael, qualified to wear crowns and sit on thrones. This indicates that the twenty-four elders were likely created before the angels were created.

It is therefore likely that God the Father and the Word decided to proceed cautiously in the next phase of their creation. They first decided to create 24 spirit beings instead of hundreds of millions or billions of them. It appears that these elders look like the Word, and have human-like faces.

After the twenty-four elders were created, they were taught God’s way of life and His laws. Of their own free will, they learnt to love, respect and honor their Creators, God the Father and the Word. Living that way of life produced perfect harmony, peace and abundant joy for the Creators and the twenty-four elders. They also learnt about God’s method of government.

It is hard for us to imagine what the twenty-four elders did, but it probably had at least something to do with future creation. Of course, in the process they had to learn all the science behind it as the Word had to learn it before them. They participated in planning for further creation and learnt how to do it from God the Father and the Word, as the Word had learnt from God the Father. And while planning out future creation, the twenty-four elders visualized and learnt how God’s way of life and laws would apply to the creatures that would come into being.

The process of learning and living God’s way of life for the twenty-four elders must have gone on for a very long time, perhaps hundreds of millions, or even billions of years. The Word lived for practically a past eternity before the twenty-four elders were created. It stands to reason that the twenty-four elders would have lived a long-time and proved themselves faithful to God and the Word before God would move ahead with the next phase of His creation. They too lived God’s way of life perfectly and had no inclination to go contrary to that way even in their thoughts. They loved God the Father and the Word with perfect agape or godly love as they were loved by God.

This phase of God’s creation plan was also a perfect total success. God’s creation lived in perfect peace, harmony, happiness, joy and love for God and for one another. And the twenty-four elders honored and respected God the Father and the Word as their Creators. As a result, the elders qualified to sit on thrones and receive crowns. They have also qualified to be called righteous, because they are shown clothed in white raiment which is a symbol of righteousness.

Now the 24 elders are counselors of God the Father in heaven. They see what is going on in the earth and with the angels in heaven, find solutions to problems and discuss them with God the Father and Jesus Christ who then implements them.

**When Was Heaven Created?**

It seems there was another phase of creation before the material universe was created. The Bible mentions three heavens: the first heaven is earth’s atmosphere; the second heaven is space where all the galaxies, stars and planets are located; and the third heaven is where God the Father’s throne is located. Genesis 1:1 tells us: “In the beginning God created the heaven[s] and the earth.” Does this mean that all the three heavens were created when the material universe was created? It may not be so. Question then is: When was the heaven created where God’s throne is located?

Genesis 1:1 is talking primarily about the material universe. Therefore, it seems that our atmosphere and space with its billions of galaxies, stars and planets were created at the same time as the earth was created.

Ezekiel 28:14 talks about Lucifer: “Thou art the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” Lucifer was one of the two cherubs who covered God’s throne in heaven. It is possible that God’s throne and hence the third heaven was already in existence when the angels were created. So, God the Father and Jesus Christ may have created the third heaven, where God’s throne is located before the angels were created.

Psalm 45:6 supports this view: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” God’s throne has thus always existed in His holy city, heaven. Psalm 11:4 tells us: “…the Lord’s throne is in heaven…”

This is the creation the 24 elders may have been involved in planning with God the Father and the Word well before the material universe was created.

However, it is also possible that the third heaven was created by God the Father and was in existence before even the Word was created.

**Creation of Angels**

After the 24 elders proved to God that they had thoroughly learnt His way of life and His laws, were convinced that it was the best way to live a happy, peaceful and joyous life, and would always live the way of love, God the Father and the Word decided to proceed with the next phase of their creation plan. They decided to create many more beings: hundreds of millions, or perhaps billions of angels.

In this phase of creation, God for the first time decided to create variety, for all angels don’t look alike. The Bible does not indicate what the angels look like, except that the cherubim have four faces each, the face of a man, lion, ox and eagle, one on each side (Ezekiel 1:10; 10:14). But when the angels appear to human beings, they appear as human beings. The archangels Michael and Gabriel have wings, but the Bible does not indicate what their faces are like.

All angels are not created equal. There were three cherubim of archangel rank, apparently the highest rank: Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer. There are the four cherubim who transport God’s throne (Ezekiel 1:10, 10:14). And then Isaiah mentions Seraphim (Isaiah 6:2, 6.) Also see Revelation 4:8. And then there are other angels of lower ranks.

The angels have differing capabilities. God created variety in them to perhaps provide inspiration and models for them to create a variety of creatures on their own. And certainly, variety makes for a more interesting and exciting world. Isn’t the quality of life improved because there are so many varieties and colors of roses? What would the world be like if roses were only red in color? How comparatively unexciting our world would be if all dogs, cats, horses, cows and other creatures were of one variety only?

The angels are spirit beings, composed wholly of spirit. They do not have circulating blood in their bodies, and do not need to breathe air or be fueled by food to sustain their lives. Their bodies do not deteriorate and age like human bodies. So, they can potentially live forever. But they do not have life inherent in them as Jesus Christ has. They are not self-existent. Though they have spirit bodies that can live forever, their lives are still in God’s hands. He can terminate them as He pleases. Ezekiel 28:18-19 says “…I will bring thee to ashes…and never shall you be any more,” which indicates that God has already judged Satan to be worthy of death.

After being created, the angels first learnt God’s way of life and His laws. They learnt about God’s government at His throne. They learnt to love each other, and respect and honor God the Father and the Word. The angels learnt to love and respect the 24 elders as well. This could have gone on for millions or even hundreds of millions of years. God’s government over the angels was administered by the three archangels: Lucifer, Michael and Gabriel. God, the Word and the 24 elders loved the angels and the angels loved, respected and honored them in return. The 24 elders must have assisted God the Father and the Word in teaching the angels God’s way of life and His laws. God’s government produced a wonderfully happy state of affairs in heaven with perfect love, peace, harmony, cooperation and unspeakable joy.

**Training for God’s Government**

God created three Cherubim of archangel rank: Lucifer, Michael and Gabriel. Two of the cherubs were assigned the task of covering God’s throne with their wings. Perhaps all three handled this responsibility, though only two at a time. What a fantastic opportunity for them to learn God’s government up close, at the very seat of that government. Lucifer was one of the cherubs assigned that role. Thus, he was trained in God’s government at the very headquarters of that government in heaven. This is described in Ezekiel 28:14: “You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.”

The cherubim are super beings. Here is how Lucifer is described in Ezekiel 28:12-13, 15: “…Thus says the Lord God; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created…You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created…”

That is the description of a super spirit being in whom was created the sum total of wisdom, perfection in beauty and brilliance, great genius and superb musical talent and numerous other skills. His understanding of God’s ways and laws and applying them in life was perfect. The name Lucifer means “shining star of the dawn,” or “light bringer.” Apparently, Michael and Gabriel the archangels embody similar perfection, but perhaps differing in their abilities and talents.

Either Michael or Gabriel initially covered God’s throne with the archangel Lucifer. Later when Lucifer was sent to the earth, both Michael and Gabriel handled those duties. These duties gave the archangels the opportunity to observe and experience the administration of God’s government in heaven. They learnt how to administer God’s laws and create perfect order and harmony.

One can be certain that heaven was not a dull place, with only business and no play or entertainment. Lucifer and other angels were created with incredible musical talent to be used. Inhabitants of heaven must have produced and enjoyed beautiful, celestial music and entertainment. God and the angels must have lived a perfectly peaceful, happy and an incredibly joyous life. This wonderfully happy state of affairs must have gone on for perhaps hundreds of millions or even billions of years, if the history of the Word is taken as a guide.

**The Material Creation**

When God and the Word were convinced that the angels were perfectly trained in Their way of life of Love, His laws, and administration of His government, they began sharing their future plans with the angels. They discussed with them plans for the creation of the material universe. They told the angels about the kind of creation it would be and invited input from them to get them to exercise their imagination and build up great anticipation and excitement for the project. This planning could have gone on for a long time. The angels looked at the plan from every angle and learnt how thorough God is in planning and executing projects. When anticipation and excitement had built to fever pitch, the Word then created the material universe. That is what is described in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven[s] and the earth.”

When the angels saw the beauty of the earth, they were absolutely thrilled and shouted for joy as stated in Job 38:4: “4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. 7 When the morning stars [meaning angels] sang together, and all the sons of God [again meaning angels who are sons of God by creation] shouted for joy?”

God is the author of perfection and beauty, and not of chaos and disorder. So, when the earth and the universe were created, they were created in a perfect, beautiful state. That is why the angels shouted for joy. But the earth and the universe were created for the angels to work with. They were to further beautify and preserve the earth.

Then God chose a pioneering party of angels to rule the earth. He chose one of the highest rank among them: Lucifer, to be the ruler to administer His government on earth. Lucifer had proved himself thoroughly capable of administering God’s government through his training and testing at God’s universe ruling headquarters. The earth was to be the abode of apparently one-third of all the angels under Lucifer. And Lucifer was set on a throne as Isaiah 14:13 indicates: “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God…”

**God’s Purpose in Creating the Material Universe**

But what was God’s purpose in creating the material universe. God created the angels with intellect or mind-power. They have the power to think, reason, make choices and decisions, and the freedom to live and act in any way they choose. But free choice means that the angels could choose to live God’s way or choose to live another way.

Though God gave the angels incredible intellect, there is one quality that even God cannot create instantly with His creative powers. That quality is God’s holy, righteous character. To create holy, righteous character is a supreme act of creative accomplishment for God Almighty. This is how the late Herbert W. Armstrong, Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God described it in “*Mystery of the Ages*”, pages 69-70 (emphasis in original):

“God assigns angels responsibilities, but God created within them MINDS – WITH POWER TO THINK, TO REASON, TO MAKE CHOICES AND DECISIONS!

“But there was one super-important quality that even God’s creative powers could not create instantly by fiat – the same perfect, holy, righteous CHARACTER inherent in both God and the Word!

“This kind of character must be DEVELOPED, by the CHOICE and the INTENT of the one in whom it comes to exist.

“So mark well this super-vital truism – that perfect, holy and righteous character is the supreme feat of accomplishment possible for Almighty God the Creator – it is also the means to his ultimate supreme PURPOSE! His final objective!

“But HOW?

“I repeat, such perfect character must be developed. It requires the free choice and decision of the separate entity in whom it is to be created. But, further, even then it must be instilled by and from the Holy God who, only, has such righteous character to endow.

“But what do we mean by righteous character?

“Perfect, holy and righteous character is the ability in such separate entity to come to discern the true and right way from the false, to make voluntarily a full and unconditional surrender to God and his perfect way – to yield to be conquered by God – to determine even against temptation or self-desire, to live and to do the right. And even then such holy character is the gift of God. It comes by yielding to God to instill HIS LAW (God’s right way of life) within the entity who so decides and wills.

“Actually, this perfect character comes only from God, as instilled within the entity of his creation, upon voluntary acquiescence, even after severe trial and test.”

So, God created the angels with free choice. But even God cannot create His prefect, holy and righteous character instantly in an intelligent being. That character has to be developed over time, through tests and trials. Even then such character is instilled by God. The intelligent being cannot do it by himself. God must develop that character in him or her. But it requires the agreement and willing cooperation of the one in whom the holy, righteous character is to be developed.

What then was God’s purpose in creating the material universe? Mr. Armstrong answers:

“What was God’s ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE for the angels? Beyond question it is that which, now, because of angelic rebellion, has become the transcendent potential of humans.

“As the testing ground, and opportunity for positive and active creative accomplishment, God created – brought into existence – the entire vast material universe” (ibid. p. 70).

God’s objective for intelligent beings is to create His own holy and righteous character in them. God wants that they always obey His laws and live according to His way of life, no matter what the circumstances. God had tested the angels and they had passed the test so far and learnt and lived God’s way of life. Now if the angels were removed away from His presence, would they still live according to His way of life? Could they be totally relied upon to live that way of life no matter where they were in the universe? And would they always administer God’s government in the universe? The earth would be the next testing ground.

The angels had demonstrated in heaven that they would live God’s way of life and live under and administer God’s universe ruling government. Lucifer and the angels with him now had the best possible opportunity to prove themselves and qualify to become rulers and creators in the entire universe on their own. It was an incredible privilege for them to be the pioneers in the next phase of God’s creation plan.

**The Earth under Lucifer’s Rule**

When Lucifer and the angels came to earth, they must have been absolutely thrilled. Here was an opportunity for them to create whatever they wanted on their own. They effectively ‘owned’ the earth under God. God had created the earth perfect and very beautiful, but as Mr. Armstrong calls it: “It is perfect, but subject to a beautifying finish that God intended angels to accomplish.” Mr. Armstrong continues describing God’s purpose in creating the angels:

“The original “unfinished” creation was produced by God alone. But He intended angels, prehistorically, and MAN, now, to utilize creative power – to finish this part in God’s creation – of adding the final beautifying and utilitarian phases of what shall be the FINAL COMPLETED CREATION!

“And whether or not it had been revealed to the angels, it was a supreme TRIAL AND TEST. It was to be the PROVING GROUND of obedience to GOD’S GOVERNMENT and their fitness to develop into final finished creation the millions of other planets in the vast universe” (ibid. p. 89).

The angels must have first explored the earth, its soil, water, air, energy and other matter to understand its properties. They must have applied themselves to understanding the various laws of physics, chemistry and mathematics that God had set in motion. The Word must have taught them certain things to start with and then guided them in their discovery. In fact, just as God inspires human thoughts, He also inspired the thoughts of Lucifer and the angels in their discovery of the earth.

The angels would have learnt and developed mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and the other sciences. Then God may have shown the angels how to create vegetation. The angels would have explored this creation and understood it. Their intellectual capacities are far superior to those of human beings. So they would have understood the earth much faster than we can understand it. The angels must then have created some vegetation and living creatures on their own. As time passed, they continued making further progress in creating life. They began to master the earth, and were becoming competent in creating vegetation, living creatures, whole eco-systems and sustaining them. They would have experienced a great sense of accomplishment as their competence increased and they created ever more complex creatures.

The angels were increasing their knowledge on how to create, while God’s government was being administered on earth by Lucifer. They experienced the joys of incredible creative accomplishment, and were living happy lives, enjoying fine music and entertainment under the guidance of the master musician, Lucifer himself (Ezekiel 28:13). This productive and happy state of affairs could have gone on for perhaps hundreds of millions, or a few billions of years.

Archaeologists and paleontologists have unearthed what appears to be the plant and animal world created by the angels under Lucifer’s rule. That is the world we know as the dinosaur world.

From these fossil records, paleontologists have constructed what that world looked like. Though giant dinosaurs capture the fascination of children and adults alike, it should be understood that there was a great multitude of creatures of various shapes and sizes. But certainly, in contrast to our modern world, giants many times the size and weight of our largest land creature, the elephant, abounded. And they were not concentrated only in a few areas but roamed all over the earth. They could be found in what is now North and South America, Asia, Europe and Africa.

And to sustain all these gargantuan and smaller creatures were huge forests of ferns, conifers, cycads (plants that resemble palm trees) and gingkoes (a tree native to China and having fan-shaped leaves and fleshy yellowish seeds with a disagreeable odor – *American Heritage Dictionary*). These forests were probably greater than any that we have a record of in our world. In addition to the tall trees, there were low lying mosses, horsetails and ferns that a variety of creatures chomped on. There were also large inland areas of shrub and scrub, as well as desert regions.

This world was not created in a few short years. According to the U.S. Geological Survey the earth is approximately 4.54 billion years old. This means that the Dinosaur world could have been the result of billions of years of learning and creating by the angels under Lucifer’s rule.

There are indications in the Bible that the angels had to some extent mastered the material creation. Satan was able to inflict sore boils on the body of Job when God allowed him to do so (Job 2:7). This indicates that Satan understands the human body very well and can manipulate it. In Isaiah 11:6-9 God has prophesied that the nature of wild animals will be changed in God’s kingdom. Then God says: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain…” This indicates that it was not God’s intention to create animals that would devour one another.

Present animal nature is a manifestation of Satan’s nature. Perhaps after the Flood God allowed Satan to order the world according to his ways and we see the results in the animal world. The animals were not hostile to man before the Flood but became so after the Flood. This means that Satan has a great deal of mastery over the material creation. He can affect changes in the bodies of animals and their natures. Incidentally, bodies of carnivores don’t have to be changed for them to become herbivores. During world wars 1 and 2 when meat was in short supply, the zoos maintained carnivores on grains and vegetables for years. After the war they were easily switched back to eating meat. And as Isaiah 11:6-9 indicates in God’s kingdom there will be no carnivores again. The Lion will eat straw like the ox.

Lucifer and the angels on earth were most probably creating living creatures on their own after having learnt to create from God and the Word. So, they were well acquainted with the constitution of animal bodies. Revelation 9:4-6 describes terrifying biological and chemical weapons that will be used in a future world war. These weapons will not kill human beings but inflict terrible pain and suffering on them so that they will prefer death rather than living through the pain and suffering. These weapons will certainly be inspired by Satan, which provides further evidence that he understands human bodies very well and can manipulate them. But he is restricted and can do only what God allows.

For perhaps billions of years Lucifer and the angels lived God’s way of life and Lucifer administered God’s government on earth. But at some point in time Lucifer began to entertain thoughts in his mind of doing things his own way; ways that were different from God’s way of LOVE, the way of outgoing concern for the welfare of others equal to one’s own welfare, the way of sharing, caring and cooperation. He felt the way of competition would be better as it would be an incentive to excel for greater accomplishment. He thought it would be better to serve the SELF to maximize one’s own pleasure. He began to imagine a world in which he would be the ruler of the universe.

Ezekiel 28:15-17 reveals that Lucifer’s heart was lifted up with pride, and because of his incredible beauty, brightness, talents and wisdom, vanity seized him. He began to think he could do things better than God. This led to wrong reasoning which corrupted his wisdom.

Such thoughts were violations of God’s law of LOVE for their Creator and fellow-brings. This iniquity began to manifest itself in what Lucifer and the angels with him began to create.

In the dinosaur world, besides the great herbivores, great carnivores also existed that preyed on other creatures. This indicates how far Lucifer had allowed his thinking to be perverted. He and the angels with him began creating creatures for whom survival of the fittest would be a way of life.

God and the Word allowed the conspiracy to go on and let Lucifer and the angels exercise their free will. Did Satan discuss with God his idea of creating creatures that compete with each other, and only the fittest survive? It is quite possible. God would have told him He does not agree with his philosophy. After Satan’s continual harping on his plan, God may have simply turned a deaf ear to it. Satan may have used God’s disapproval of his ideas to convince the angels that God does not listen to them. So, there is not much of a future for them in God’s scheme of things. They don’t have the ‘freedom’ to exercise their creative powers to the fullest extent.

**Satan’s Rebellion**

God allowed Lucifer and the angels with him to continue their experiments in creation and govern it the way they liked and show God their alternate way of life.

Lucifer in his thinking became more and more perverted, contrary to God’s way of life of LOVE. God describes what Lucifer’s perverted thinking led him to contemplate through the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel.

Isaiah 14:12-14: “How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.”

“Sides of the north” means in the northerly direction, where God’s heavenly city is located. Isaiah here is revealing that Lucifer had nothing less in mind than taking the throne of the universe from God. He thought of deposing God and becoming the ruler of the universe himself.

Ezekiel describes what caused Lucifer’s thinking to become perverted. Ezekiel 28:15-17: “You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.” This verse makes it clear that rebellion of the angels did not originate with the other angels, but with Lucifer himself. Continue in verses 16-17: “By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence [indicates introduction of competition leading to violence], and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness: I will cast you to the ground…”

God here reveals through Ezekiel that Lucifer’s heart was lifted up with pride because of his beauty, and vanity seized him. He began to think he could do things better than God. This led to wrong reasoning which corrupted his wisdom. Herbert W. Armstrong describes how sin entered Lucifer’s mind in his book “*Mystery of the Ages*” p. 91-92:

“He [Lucifer] was created gloriously beautiful – perfect in beauty, but he allowed vanity to seize him. Then he turned to erroneous reasoning. God’s law – the basis of God’s government – is the way of LOVE – outgoing concern for the good and welfare of others, love toward God in obedience, humility and worship – the way of giving, sharing, helping, cooperating. He reasoned that competition would be better than cooperation. It would be an incentive to excel, to try harder, to accomplish. There would be more pleasure in serving SELF and more enjoyment.

“He turned against God’s law of LOVE. He became jealous of God, envious, and resentful against God. He allowed lust and greed to fill him, and he became bitter. This inspired a spirit of violence! He deliberately became his Maker’s adversary and enemy. That was his choice, not God’s – yet allowed by God!

“God changed the adversary’s NAME to what he became, SATAN the DEVIL – Satan means adversary, competitor, enemy. [DEVIL is derived from the Greek word for diabolical.]

“Satan directed his supernatural powers henceforth to EVIL. He became bitter not only against God, but against God’s law. He used his subtile wiles of deception to lead the angels under him into disloyalty, rebellion and revolt against the Creator and finally into a WAR of aggression and violence to attempt to depose God and seize the throne of the UNIVERSE.”

**Why Angels Joined Satan’s Rebellion**

Question arises, what caused all the angels under Satan to join him in rebellion against God? Mr. Armstrong provides one possible explanation. He writes:

“I know well the method he used. He uses the same method still today in leading deceived humans into disloyalty, rebellion, and self-centered opposition against God’s government. First, he turns one or two to envy, jealousy and resentment over an imagined injustice – then into disloyalty. Then he uses that one or two, like a rotten apple in a crate, to stir up resentment, feelings of self-pity, disloyalty and rebellion in others next to him. And, as each rotten apple rots those next to it until the whole crate is rotten, so Satan proceeds” (ibid. pp. 85-86).

There may have been additional wrong reasoning that led the angels under Lucifer to rebel with him. After Lucifer and the angels thought they had ‘mastered’ the material universe, they felt that they knew all there was to know about God’s creation. They thought they knew all the laws that govern the universe and matter on earth. They knew how to create living creatures. God had taught them everything there is to know about creating and the universe. They would develop any additional knowledge necessary on their own through trial, error and experimentation. They did not need God anymore. So why be ruled by God? Why not take over the universe from Him? Satan convinced them that they would have a glorious future ahead for themselves. They could do as they pleased and govern themselves.

This obviously was wrong reasoning. The angels who rebelled would not be governing themselves but be governed by Satan. They were to find that out later after the revolt failed miserably. Anytime two or more individuals get together in a group or society, for that group or society to function smoothly and harmoniously, there must be government. And a government has to have some leader in-charge; some constituted authority. The government has to function by certain laws. Laws must prescribe punishment for their violation. And laws have to be enforced by duly constituted authority. By overthrowing God’s government over them, the angels would not be doing away with government, but substituting Satan’s government for God’s government. Doing away with all authority is anarchy, with everyone doing as he pleases. Such a group or society cannot function smoothly.

The angels rebelling with Satan should have known that he would be the authority over them. His government would function according to his laws. The results of the earth functioning under Satan’s government are not hard to visualize. Satan is the ruler of the earth, but still under God’s authority. He is not absolute ruler of the earth. He can do only what God allows him to do. But still his limited rule has brought only pain, suffering and extreme misery on all humanity. If he was allowed to become the absolute ruler of the earth, the result would be utter chaos and destruction of humanity and the earth. In fact, when Satan is allowed by God to exercise more power in the very near future, within a few short years he will bring humanity to the brink of annihilation and the earth to utter destruction. If Jesus Christ does not come and intervene to prevent man from destroying himself, Satan will succeed. But we have God’s word in the Bible that Jesus Christ will prevent that from happening.

Satan may have convinced the angels with him that they knew all there is to know about the universe, but later when God created our present mammalian animals, sea creatures and flying creatures, Satan and the demons, must have been stunned. Here was a world God created totally different from the dinosaur world that Satan and his demons thought was incredible. And the creation of man must have been even more shocking for them. They could not have imagined that God would be able to create intelligent living beings out of matter. Then when it was revealed to the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 6:3) that we humans shall judge angels, it must have been a further staggering blow for the angels that God will actually make puny human beings into superior beings in character and ultimately have power over them.

Creation of man would also be a humbling experience for the angels. They would see humanity go astray under Satan’s rule. They would see vain thoughts of puny human beings as they interact with other humans and even God. Then they would realize how some of their thoughts about God may have been equally vain. They would finally learn the lesson of how superior is their Creator to all that He has created. They would learn the lesson that rebelling against their Creator will always be futile.

Now consider how the angelic world was different from what had been created before. Apparently, the 24 elders are created in the image of God. The book of Revelation does not give any indication otherwise. But it seems angels were created with different looks, perhaps because God now wanted to create variety. It appears that the 24 elders are created equal in rank. The angels because of the very large number created had to be created with a hierarchy of differing ranks. Some of them were higher rank leaders, while others were of lower rank. Angels also were created with different talents and abilities, much like humans. Could these differences have been exploited by Lucifer to cause resentment and a false sense of unfairness against God, among the angels under his command?

People can become jealous, envious and resentful of talents, abilities and beauty of people of other races. When people live among those of their own race, they never get the idea that God has discriminated against their race by creating them the way He has. But feelings of discrimination and envy can and do arise when people of different races live together.

It is possible that Lucifer whipped up resentment against God and the Word among the angels under his rule because of the differences in their looks, abilities, talents and rank. It is probably one of the tactics he used to convince the angels to join him in rebellion against God. He uses the same tactic to cause hatred and division between different human races.

Once Lucifer decided to wrest the throne of the universe from God the Father, how long did it take him to convince all the angels under him to join him in the rebellion? The Bible does not indicate the time involved. It could have taken tens or even hundreds of millions of years. But once all the angels were aboard, they decided to attack God the Father, the Word and God’s angels at their headquarters in heaven. They rose up from the earth and stormed heaven. This is indicated by Jude 6: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

However, Lucifer and his angels were unsuccessful in their rebellion. While they fought in heaven, some of them probably went on a rampage throughout the universe in fits of rage and frustration. They didn’t care if they destroyed the universe. They caused much destruction of the surfaces of stars and planets, throwing everything into chaos. They hurled massive rocks on the surfaces of stars and planets, or threw some of them out of their regular orbits so that they collided. Whatever they did caused the craters and other destruction we see on the planets, probably through some of the universe in addition to our galaxy, the Milky Way. Everything on earth was also destroyed. That is how Lucifer – son of the morning, the light bringer – became Satan the devil. The rebellion changed Lucifer’s character to that of “Destroyer.” He became a rebel, a violent aggressor. He became God’s adversary and turned to EVIL, determined to oppose God in every project.

Then God decided to put an end to this rampage by Satan and the demons. He blasted Satan and the rebelling angels back to earth [where they were assigned] from heaven, or wherever they were in the universe. This is indicated in Luke 10:18: “And he [Jesus Christ] said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”

We have to understand the depth of God’s humility from Satan’s rebellion. God dealt with them in a gentle and humble manner as equals, just as a human being would treat another human being as an equal. As a result, Lucifer and the angels with him thought they were equal to God in power and wisdom. That is why they felt they could succeed in defeating God the Father and wresting the throne of the universe from Him.

**God and the Word Survey the Scene of Destruction**

The result of Satan’s rebellion on the earth is described in Genesis 1:2-3: “And the earth was [better translation is ‘became’] without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

The words ‘without form and void’ can also be better translated as ‘the earth became chaotic and in confusion.’

Thus, as a result of Satan’s rebellion and what he and the demons did to the earth, and our solar system, the earth became chaotic and in confusion, covered with water. And the earth’s surface was covered in darkness because sunlight did not penetrate through its atmosphere as it was filled with toxic gases, ash and other particles. This must have been a very sobering experience for Satan and the demons as they now had to dwell in darkness on the earth. They would have begun to realize their limitations. They could not create light or cause it to envelop the earth. They could have spent thousands, or even millions of years in darkness on earth till God set the next creation event in motion as described in Genesis 1:3, “3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

Till Satan’s rebellion, God’s plan of creation had been highly successful. Satan’s rebellion had somewhat thwarted that plan. But it was not completely unsuccessful. Two-thirds of the angels in heaven did not rebel against God. They remained loyal to Him through the rebellion and fought Satan and the demons. However, using the earth as a testing ground for the angels had yielded results, though not what God had hoped for.

**Chapter 5**

**God’s Plan for Man’s Creation**

When God saw the debacle caused by Satan’s rebellion, He realized that the angels could not be relied upon to always obey His laws and live according to His way of life under all circumstances. A super being, created by Him, had rebelled against Him, transgressed His laws and sinned, for ‘sin is the transgression of the law’ (I John 3:4.) That left only God the Father Himself, and the Word (who also was God, as a second member of the God family) who would not and cannot sin. Only they could be absolutely relied upon to never sin. So, the only way God could fulfill His purpose for the entire universe was to reproduce Himself. God and the Word had already devised a plan to do exactly that. It’s possible the 24 elders have also reached that stage as they have qualified to wear crowns, but we do not know for sure.

What Satan and the demons demonstrated by their rebellion is that they had not learnt the lesson that only God’s way of LOVE works for the welfare of every creature, and it requires godly character to live that way of LOVE. God and the Word saw that Satan and the demons lacked godly righteous character.

In their next phase of creation, God and the Word’s plan would include the development of godly character like their own in the intelligent creatures they would create. Godly character would ensure that these intelligent creatures would obey Their laws, and live Their way of life of LOVE for God and love and outgoing concern for their fellow intelligent beings, and would never rebel against His rule. Their new creatures needed to learn some vital lessons. They devised a plan to teach them those lessons.

The first lesson God wanted His new creatures to learn was that they would always be totally dependent upon Him. Jesus Christ is the only Being who is self-existent, that is with life-inherent in Himself (John 5:26). And that gift was granted to Him after practically a past eternity of developing total and complete faith and trust in God the Father. The new creatures (or man) needed to learn that God gives them everything that sustains their lives. Lucifer and the angels with him had not learnt that lesson. They did not need any kind of food for their existence. So, they thought they could live independently of God. The way God planned to impart this lesson to humans was to create them as vulnerable physical beings rather than spirit beings. They would be dependent on food, water and air to sustain them. Human beings develop pride in their strength, wisdom, talents and capabilities when they grow up. They can allow vanity to seize them. But they would experience old age, know they will die and then realize how vulnerable and totally dependent they really are on God.

The second lesson God wanted His new creatures to learn was that rebellion against Him would always be futile, and end in utter and total defeat. That lesson will be brought home to man by extinguishing the lives of the rebellious [including Satan and the demons] forever in the lake of fire, if they refuse to repent. That way the living will learn the lesson for eternity that God is Almighty and can always solve the problem of rebellion by extinguishing the lives of the rebellious forever.

Thirdly, God wanted to develop godly, holy and righteous character in man. God saw that all the angels that followed Satan in the rebellion lacked godly character as did Lucifer.

Before Satan’s rebellion, the entire universe was governed according to God’s way of love, cooperation and concern for the welfare of others. In such a perfect environment, there was no opportunity to test the character of the 24 elders or individual angels to resist sin against pressure, threat to life or pain and suffering through torture for an indefinite period of time.

After Satan’s rebellion two-thirds of the angels still serving God in heaven have been tried and tested in a limited way because they have to face Satan’s accusations against them before God as indicated in Revelation 12:7-10, 12. [7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down…12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."]

God’s angels are assigned specific duties on earth, functioning as God’s messengers. In these assignments they often have to battle Satan and his powerful demons, who have been appointed as princes over kingdoms of the earth by Satan as described in Daniel 10:12-13, 20-21. These battles are trials for God’s angels and tests of their character. So, God’s angels are being tested to prove their love and desire for God’s work on the earth, for this is the battleground.

However, to develop godly, holy and righteous character in human beings, God’s plan included leaving Satan and his demons on earth as rulers. God would create man but allow him to be influenced by Satan and his demons. He would also teach them His way. Then human beings could decide for themselves whether they would obey God’s laws and live according to His ways or choose to live in ways of their own devising as influenced by Satan. They would experience the results of Satan’s ways in the first 6,000 years of man’s history, and then experience the fruits of God’s Kingdom in the 1,000 years following. Humanity would then be able to compare and contrast the two ways.

God knew that Satan and his demons will persecute human beings loyal to Him. He also knew that Satan will threaten His people to forsake His ways, and persecute them by inflicting pain and suffering and even painful death. But that would be a supreme test of character for God’s people to determine if they will always remain faithful to His way despite all that Satan and his demons can throw at them. God promises to help His people as He chooses, but they must have faith in Him and rely on Him completely. They would have to be willing to sacrifice their physical lives, if necessary, to never compromise with God’s laws and His ways. Some will violently lose their physical lives, but they will attain immortal life and a glorious eternal future. The tests, trials and persecutions inflicted on them by Satan and his human agents will develop godly, holy and righteous character in His people. God devised this perfect plan to test man like no other intelligent creature God has created has ever been tested to develop His holy, righteous character in him.

After holy and righteous character is developed in humans, God will then give them spirit bodies with power and abilities multiplied billions or trillions of times, making them perfect and incapable of sinning, like Himself and the Word. That is what human beings are called to as stated in Matthew 5:48: “Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Fourth lesson God wants to impart to man is to learn how to love God and each other. Not all angels had been able to learn that vital lesson. We can visualize the feelings of angels for God by imagining the feelings of children. They are born into the world and are totally dependent on their parents in childhood and youth. As they grow up they long to be independent of their parents’ control. They cannot fully realize how deeply their parents love them until they have children of their own. They know how precious their children are to them, and how deeply they love them. Then they realize how much their own parents loved them and did everything that was only in their best interests. In the same way the angels perhaps could not perceive how deeply God the Father and the Word loved them, because they had not experienced similar love for ‘children’ of their own or their own creation.

Humans have been deceived into believing that God hates His creation and is ready to pounce on humans and blot out their existence at the slightest sin. So, far more important than humans learning to love God and fellow man is to learn how deeply God loves them. The best way for them to learn that lesson would be for them to reproduce and experience love for their own offspring. In addition to parent-child relationships, God also planned to create other relationships for experiencing love. He created the marriage relationship for them to experience the love the Word has for them. As a result of family, humans would also experience brother and sister relationships. Thus, God wanted His new creatures to experience love in many possible ways. Their physical bodies would also enable them to experience love in close bonds through loving physical contact. God also planned to create all humanity from one man. From that man He would create the woman. Then through that one man and one woman, all of humanity would spring forth. Hence all of humanity would be related. This way God would knit His entire creation closely together. The angels would also learn by observing and caring for humanity how God the Father and the Word love them.

It is clear from Job 38:7 that the angels had the concept of fathers and sons. They knew that they were sons of God by creation. But the depth of closeness that the father-son bond should have produced in them for God the Father and the Word was not present because they had not experienced the same closeness from the point of view of parents.

Reproduction in the dinosaur world before man’s creation was through laying of eggs and hatching them. But in the mammalian world the method of reproduction was changed to producing young from their own bodies. This develops a closer bond between parent and offspring.

God also wanted man to learn to love all living things. Satan and the demons created the dinosaur world. After their thinking became perverted, they had no love for those creatures, because they thought absolutely nothing of destroying them in their rebellion. To teach man to love all creatures, God created cattle and other animals on which man would be dependent in many ways. He would be dependent on them for food, clothing and to bear his burdens. The animals would represent wealth for him. Even his practice of sustained agriculture would depend on animals [manure] to maintain the fertility of the soil. In short, man’s well-being would depend a great deal on taking care of animals. Indeed, his long-term survival would depend on them. He would have to kill them for food, clothing and other needs, but that does not have to be done with torture, pain and suffering. They could be killed humanely. Man would learn the need to preserve the animals because each plays an important part in the ecological system. This way he would learn to love all of God’s creation.

Fifth, God wanted to demonstrate to His creation how He loves them with the kind of love that surpasses human understanding. At the same time, He wanted to demonstrate to them that He is always just and fair, because Satan and his demons accuse Him of being unfair. God and the Word chose to demonstrate their love by the Word agreeing to empty Himself of all His divinity and power, coming to the earth as a human being, living a sinless life and dying for the sins of humanity. God the Father was also willing to sacrifice His Begotten Son in an excruciatingly painful death. With His sacrifice, the Word would redeem His creation from death, by paying the death penalty on its behalf.

God would also prove His fairness by demonstrating that He and the Word are very strict about their law of love. Unfairness violates that law of love. The penalty for violating that law is death. All human beings have earned the death penalty by sinning. That penalty had to be paid. There was no compromise with that. That is how strict is God about keeping His Law. Jesus Christ paid that death penalty on our behalf. God the Father and Jesus Christ never compromise with their law, and never sin themselves. They are very strict about keeping their law. Therefore, there is no question of their being unfair and unjust.

Sixth, God wanted to demonstrate to His new creatures that He always knows and does what is best for them in the long-run. They must, therefore, learn to trust Him completely. He knows every creature that has ever been created and is intimately familiar with all the details of their life experiences and all their thoughts. He has all the power, and He sees things that the creature itself cannot see or perceive. And He has the benefit of knowing the experiences of all creatures that have ever lived. Therefore, He is in the best position to judge what is in the best interest of every creature, even far more than the creature itself knows. And He has all the power to affect the outcomes of all actions. Therefore, He wanted His new creatures to learn to put their complete faith and trust in Him. The way God would choose to instill that lesson in men would be to require them to praise and worship Him. By praising and worshipping Him, they would never lose sight of His awesome power and greatness, the wonders and miracles He has performed for those who love Him, and always keep in mind how weak and totally dependent they are in comparison.

Seventh, God wanted to drive pride and vanity out of man forever. One way He would drive vanity out of the angels would be to set man in authority over them. That would also be a warning to man for all eternity. If they ever became vain and arrogant against God, He could always create new creatures and set them over man. God never wants pride and vanity to be the cause of rebellion against Him, or of oppression of fellow beings as happened in the case of Satan.

Eighth important lesson God wanted His creation to learn is that it is His prerogative to create a being as He chooses. The angels were created with different looks, talents and rank. Satan may have used these created differences to sow discontent, dissatisfaction, a false sense of discrimination and unfairness, resentment, bitterness and hatred among the angels towards God. God must have thought through all these ideas in the minds of the angels but concluded that there was no alternative to creating variety, and creatures with different talents and abilities for the good of society. God thought through the future of man for eternity ahead and concluded that there was no alternative to creating a hierarchical structure. Possible reason is that billions of beings created equal in rank would lead to anarchy. Therefore, some would have higher authority than others. God created humans with different looks and talents. But He would demonstrate that He is capable of providing for all so that they all can live happy, abundant, productive and joyful lives.

But also remember that human beings will be rewarded according to how they use their talents and abilities as the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 shows. God is always fair.

The ninth vital lesson God wanted man to learn is that violation of His laws, which is sin, always produces pain, suffering and anguish in the long run. He wanted to demonstrate to man that His laws are living laws which always exact a penalty when transgressed. Man would be created as a weak creature. As a result, all would sin and suffer the consequences in pain and suffering. They would therefore, learn to avoid sin as a result of these experiences. When they are resurrected as immortal spirit beings with powers multiplied billions or trillions of times, they will become perfect and incapable of sinning. They will become literal sons of God.

It is very important to understand why Jesus Christ had to die for humanity’s sins, and why God wants humans to ultimately become sinless. Muslims argue that God can simply forgive sins. Therefore, there was no need for Jesus Christ to die. But if God simply forgave every sin, humans will keep sinning. And sin always produces pain and suffering. So, pain and suffering would never cease. God has prophesied the kind of world He will bring about in Revelation 21:3-4, “3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." We will never see that kind of world until humans become immortal and incapable of sinning.

Only prescribing the death penalty for sin and paying it can impress on the minds of all human beings that God will not tolerate an iota of sin, because He wants to eradicate all pain and suffering forever. The only way to indelibly write the Law, the Law itself and the penalty for its violation, on human minds is to let them know that violation of God’s Law will without fail exact the death penalty. Since all have sinned and earned the death penalty, Jesus paid the death penalty on behalf of all of us. But if any one willfully sins again, the death penalty will be applied to that individual, and his or her life extinguished forever. God simply does not want anyone in His kingdom who will continue to be a source of pain and suffering for others and himself.

The tenth consideration for God in creating man was that He did not want them to suffer forever. He planned to give man temporary physical existence. To those that developed holy, righteous character such that God could depend on them to be completely faithful to Him and His way of life forever under all circumstances, He would give eternal life. Those who failed to repent and did not develop godly character would have their lives extinguished forever in a lake of fire. This would forever stop the pain and suffering they were causing themselves and others because of their sins. There is no ever burning hell in which the souls of the sinners are tortured forever by Satan and the demons.

The eleventh element of God’s plan for man would be to give eternal life only to those who really want it. When God opens the understanding of an individual to what He has planned for humanity, the individual may be really excited about his potential and work passionately to learn and live according to God’s laws and way of life. He may diligently apply himself to root sin out of his life, and exercise love towards God and fellow man. Such a person will be granted eternal life as God’s literal son and will rule with Jesus Christ in His kingdom. On the other hand, another individual called into God’s Church may understand the incredible potential God is offering him, but may be lazy, lukewarm and not be passionate about overcoming sin and growing in knowledge and love of God. Such a person, who does not bear sufficient fruit to perfection, will lose his life in the lake of fire. He will have demonstrated in his physical life that he is not really excited and passionate about living for eternity. This is indicated by the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, and the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:12-26.

The twelfth element of God’s plan for creation of man was to make him joint heir of all things with Jesus Christ, if he developed holy and righteous character. According to God’s plan, no intelligent being created by God would be tested quite like man, and the firstfruits among men more so. The firstfruits, those called into God’s Church during the first 6,000 years of man’s history, would be required to be willing to die to keep God’s laws and commandments to prove their total commitment to God’s way of life with Satan and the demons around to influence them and put them through tests and trials. As a reward God planned to make them heirs of all things, as indicated in Hebrews 2:8. “All things” means the entire universe. Romans 8:16-17 declares that we shall be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

By analyzing man’s attributes and physical environment, one can understand some of God’s other purposes for creating man the way He has. Herbert W. Armstrong in his book “Mystery of the Ages” describes some of his experiences with demons: “I have had a number of personal experiences with demons through a few demon-possessed people. I have cast out demons through the name of Christ and power of the Holy Spirit. Some demons are silly, like spoiled children. Some are crafty, sharp, shrewd, subtile. Some are belligerent, some are sassy, some are sullen and morose. But all are perverted, warped, twisted” (p. 93).

From Mr. Armstrong’s description, it seems some demons are not as passionate about work. To inculcate the habit of work, and to derive joy and satisfaction from a sense of accomplishment through hard work, God made man dependent on food to sustain his life. To procure food, man must work. This would build the habit of work in man. The angels on the other hand are not dependent on food to live.

Lucifer may have had to contend with this attitude among some of the demons who were merely existing and not working diligently. As a reaction he probably developed the philosophy of ‘success through competition’ rather than through cooperation. He has imparted that same philosophy, attitude and mind-set to humanity, and even the animals.

God also wants man to maintain His creation well, and to finish its beautification. For this purpose, man has to learn to be clean and maintain things in order. Apparently, some of the angels before they rebelled did not have enthusiasm in maintaining the earth in a state of cleanliness, beauty and order. To teach man that lesson, God decided to tie length of man’s life to keeping clean. He created germs that would thrive in unclean environments, and cause disease in humans. If man persisted in keeping his environment dirty, it could literally kill him prematurely with disease.

God also wanted man to learn self-control and temperance. It is one of the fruits of God’s holy spirit (Galatians 5:23). Apparently, some of the angels with Lucifer did not exhibit this character trait. To teach man this lesson, God created human bodies in such a way that if abused through lack of moderation in food and drink, man would get sick. The more he abused his body, the greater pain he would suffer, and the earlier he would die. Man would also develop a higher level of self-control by having to change his eating and drinking habits as he grew older.

Apparently, all angels did not learn to fully cooperate with one another. Man would learn that lesson by being created weak, not possessing all talents and thus never completely self-reliant. Every human depends on services from other human beings for living. He cannot himself produce all he needs. Then in old age he often cannot take care of even his basic needs and needs the services of others. This way man learns the lesson of interdependence, and the need to cooperate with others.

Some of the angels with Lucifer must also have wondered why God created so many hundreds of millions or even billions of them. However, God would create billions of human beings to demonstrate to the angels that numbers are no constraint for Him. He has created many more planets in the universe than there will ever be human beings born. He can always create more. He can provide for all His creation with sustenance and fulfilling work and activities for all eternity.

So, after Satan’s rebellion, God planned out another creation, that of man! And He planned to develop His godly, holy and righteous character in him, found so utterly lacking in Satan and his demons. In effect, God planned to reproduce Himself. Man would learn all these vital lessons so that there would never ever be rebellion against His authority and government. Mankind would learn these crucial lessons through trial and error, sin, and the resulting pain and suffering, and these experiences would be recorded as history to be kept in remembrance for all eternity. God’s Word, the Holy Bible is that history book.

Not only did God plan to reproduce Himself through man, He also planned to restore His government on earth, which was taken away by Satan’s rebellion. Presently, Satan and his demons rule the earth, and that is why we experience so much pain and suffering. Though Satan can do only what God allows, God gives him enough freedom to rule the earth so that it is not the way government would function in God’s kingdom. That kingdom will soon be set up on earth when Jesus Christ returns as King of kings with the immortal saints and deposes Satan and his demons.

After Satan’s rebellion, God and the Word therefore planned to create intelligent creatures in such a way that they would learn what love is, feel it, experience it in many possible ways in multiple relationships and would have a deep desire to live it for eternity. God’s holy and righteous character inculcated in them would ensure that they would not depart from that way of life for eternity. Most important of all, they would learn that God loves them as His own dear children just as they learn to love their own children.

That is the reason why God created mankind the way He did, creating them flesh and blood beings, male and female, subject to death and decay, but with the potential to become immortal beings once they have demonstrated that they have developed God’s holy and righteous character in themselves. *The marriage institution was created to be a vital part of character development*, and to teach mankind that He loves them with godly love that surpasses human understanding, and wants humans to learn how to love Him and fellow man.

**Some Important Lessons from Angelic Rebellion**

Before discussing God’s purpose for human marriage, let’s answer some questions about why God created humans as flesh and blood, male and female beings.

Through the human reproductive process and the institutions of marriage and family, God wanted humans to learn some very important lessons that the rebelling angels demonstrated they had not learnt.

**1. *God loves us with love that passes human understanding***

The most important lesson God wants humans to learn is that He loves us with the depth of love that surpasses human understanding. He wants us to understand that He is our Father and loves us as His own sons and daughters. God chose to teach human beings that important lesson in two important ways.

The first way God chose to teach humans that lesson is through the human reproductive process.

The angels did not comprehend the love of a father for his own children. That is why some rebelled against God. The experience of love for one’s father and mother is enhanced to a much higher degree when an individual experiences love for his or her own children as a father or mother.

The angels were not designed to reproduce. If they could reproduce, the drawback would have been that the angelic offspring had the potential of becoming evil like their own parents, thus capable of much greater harm around the universe like that caused by Satan and the demons. On the other hand, if human children become evil like their parents, their evil would be limited to the earth only, and their lives could be easily snuffed out.

This does not mean that in eternity into the future angels will not at some stage be able to create spirit beings, or even intelligent flesh and blood beings like humans. We just don’t know what God’s plan is for them. Certainly, we can expect that the future will not be any less exciting for loyal angels than it would be for man. The angelic rebellion had merely temporarily halted that future planned for the angels.

The human reproductive process has been designed to deepen the love of a parent for a child. The human baby forms in the body over a 9-month gestation period and then separates as a new human being. This experience creates a much deeper bond than that created by animals and birds that reproduce their offspring by laying eggs and hatching them.

The second way God chose to teach human beings the lesson that He loves them with depth of love that surpasses human understanding is to pay the death penalty on their behalf which each of us has incurred by sinning.

With the world we see around us, and the pain and suffering we all experience without exception, we are led to believe that God hates humanity. We are led to believe that He is a monster, ready to pounce on human beings at the slightest infraction of His laws. That is so far from the truth.

God has a plan to solve every human problem. The problems we experience are not caused by God but by Satan and the demons, and ourselves. When Adam and Eve were given the choice to choose between listening only to God or living their own way of life, they chose to reject receiving knowledge from God only. By choosing to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they rejected revelation of knowledge from God and chose instead to produce their own knowledge. But since Satan and the demons were around before them, and the earth was their domain, Adam and Eve subjected themselves to be influenced by them. The world we see today with its pain and suffering has resulted from choosing our own ways as influenced by Satan.

God has allotted 6000 years for us to govern ourselves in our own ways and learn that it will result only in pain, suffering and ultimately death. We are suffering pain and anguish in the world because we have chosen to govern ourselves rather than be governed by God as our loving Father. But God will solve this problem of pain and suffering for humanity when He ushers in His kingdom for 1,000 years. Then we will see the happiness and joy being governed by God produces, and realize how deeply God the Father and Jesus Christ really love their creation.

Humans experience war mainly because of seeming scarcity of land and resources. But, history of mankind shows that even when the world’s population was less than 500 people, Cain, the first child ever born made a living by robbery and plunder. In reality there has never been scarcity of land and resources in mankind’s history. We have brought a curse on the land because of the way we use it without full knowledge because we have chosen to do things our own way rather than learn from God. With our agricultural practices we have turned fertile lands into deserts. Even then the earth is still capable of supporting well more than ten billion human beings.

However, God will solve the ‘scarcity’ problem for humanity in His Kingdom. In the catastrophes in the form of the third world war and equally devastating wars soon after that which we are going to inflict on ourselves under Satan’s influence, the surface of the earth will be transformed, making more than 20 times the current cultivatable land available. The greatest earthquake in the history of mankind prophesied in Revelation 16:18-20 will flatten all mountains, turn the desert lands upside down, raise ocean floors to make more land available. The earth will then be able to support a world population of 100 billion people or more. God will demonstrate to humanity that there never was a scarcity of resources. But without revealed knowledge from Him we just did not know how to make the best use of our resources.

Man’s ultimate destiny is to rule the universe. In fact God has divided the universe among the nations already as revealed to Moses in Deuteronomy 4:19 [“19 And lest you lift up your eyes unto heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord your God has divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.”] God can and will provide us abundance of everything, and scarcity will never ever be an issue.

We also think that God is a trigger-happy monster, ready to blot out human beings at the slightest infraction of His laws. But search the scriptures diligently and you will find that God acts mainly against those who violate His laws that protect the rights and welfare of others. When we violate God’s laws, we cause pain and suffering to others. God loves all human beings, including the victims of violation of His laws. He wants to free humans from suffering. That is why He sometimes acts harshly against transgressors of His laws who cause pain and suffering to others.

However, God does not act against every infraction of His laws. He allows injustice in a world governed by us as influenced by Satan and the demons. As an automatic penalty we experience pain and suffering. That is how we learn the vital lesson that our own ways only produce pain and suffering. But all this will change in 1000 years of God’s rule in His kingdom. Then we will see perfect justice being administered with mercy. Later God will resurrect (yes, only God can kill and then make alive) all those who have died and will give them an opportunity to experience His full justice and love in His kingdom which will produce abundance, happiness and joy because His way of life will be taught and lived by all. By contrasting justice in God’s kingdom with justice under its own rule, humanity will learn how God deeply loves His creation. Then when we receive a spirit body and live forever, we will be able to appreciate life much better as compared to our physical state at present. It will produce contentment.

It is extremely important for us to have instilled in our minds that God loves us because that is the only way we can develop complete trust and faith in Him. Satan and the demons had not developed that trust in God. Without complete trust in the authority above us, it is impossible to have peace of mind. Without peace of mind we simply will not be happy.

*Impossible to believe*

Another related issue is the difficulty we have in believing that we will become literal immortal children of God. Jesus Christ is God’s literal begotten Son. He was begotten as a human being first. But then at His resurrection He became a literal spirit born Son, a God Being like God the Father.

This was made absolutely clear by John in 1 John 3:1-2, “1 Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore, the world knows us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, *when he shall appear, we shall be like him*; for we shall see him as he is.”

John leaves no doubt that we shall have a spirit body like Jesus Christ. Just as He is a literal spirit born Son of God, we too shall be literal spirit born sons of God the Father.

Despite such scriptures reassuring us, we still cannot comprehend that we shall become gods like Jesus Christ, literal immortal children of God the Father. Our argument against this belief is that Jesus Christ was a God Being, but we were created mere flesh and blood. If God wanted to create us as His literal sons and daughters, He could have simply created us like Jesus Christ. Because we are created as flesh and blood beings like animals, we cannot therefore ever become equal to Jesus Christ as God’s literal sons and daughters.

But we forget that God did in fact create sons composed of spirit before humanity was created. Those spirit beings are the 24 elders and the angelic world. A part of those sons created with spirit bodies rebelled against God. God could not create His holy righteous character in them by fiat because they were created with free will and it requires their exercise of that free will in acquiescing to allow God to create His holy righteous character in them. God has created humans so that they can first allow Him to develop His holy righteous character in them before He will give them eternal life.

To prove to humans that He will convert them to spirit beings God the Father resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead. He will resurrect us in exactly the same way as spirit beings, to become His immortal sons and daughters.

The reality of the resurrection energized Jesus’ disciples so much that they were willing to die for their belief. They knew that their potential was to become God’s literal sons and daughters like Jesus Christ. That’s why John the apostle wrote about it.

We may still think that we cannot be equal to God because God had no direct hand in creating us. We were born as a result of our parents’ actions, and not directly created like Jesus Christ was created by God the Father. So, we think we cannot be equal with Jesus Christ. But we are forgetting that we would not have fully experienced the love of a parent for a child if God had a direct hand in our being born. We also do not realize that the chance of a human sperm fertilizing a human egg by mere chance is almost negligible. This means that God has a direct hand in the conception of a human being, making the near impossible possible. But when a human child is born, its parents know that the child has come entirely from their own bodies. So, they deeply love that child. If God had a direct hand in creating flesh and blood human children without human reproduction, we would not have experienced the same level of love for our children. God has allowed us to reproduce without His seeming direct hand in it so that we can feel and experience love for our own children and thus learn how deeply God loves us. There was no better way to create humans to teach them the eternal lessons God wants them to learn.

**2. *God Never Wants Rebellion against His Rule***

Another reason why God created humans as flesh and blood beings is that He never wants His intelligent creatures to ever rebel against His rule. One rebellion against His rule is enough. That rebellion is being used to teach the lesson to all His intelligent creatures that rebellion against Him will always be futile and will without fail end in utter defeat.

That lesson will be brought home to humans in two ways.

First, humans will learn how vulnerable and totally dependent they are upon God and will be so even when they are spirit born sons of God. The way God planned to impart this lesson to humans was to create them as vulnerable physical beings rather than spirit beings. They would be dependent on food, water and air to sustain them. Human beings develop pride in their strength, wisdom, talents and capabilities when they grow up. They can allow vanity to seize them. But they would experience old age, know they will die and then realize how vulnerable and totally dependent they really are on God.

Since only Jesus Christ is the self-existent created Being, even humans changed as immortal sons of God will not be self-existent. They will still be dependent entirely on God for their lives. So, God could still extinguish their lives if they rebelled against Him.

The second way God will teach humanity the lesson that rebellion against Him will always be futile will be by extinguishing the lives of the rebellious forever in the lake of fire, if they refuse to repent. That way the living will learn the lesson for eternity that God is Almighty and can always solve the problem of rebellion by extinguishing the lives of the rebellious forever.

***3) God Wants Humans to Develop an Eternal Perspective.***

Virtually every human being on earth has contemplated eternity. We have all imagined “What it would be like if we could live forever?” Solomon knew this that this is a thought God has put in the heart of man for he says in Ecclesiastes 3:11, “11 He [God] has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men…”

But what many may not have given deep thought to is what they would like to do for eternity by asking the question, “How would I enjoy eternity.” God is willing to provide eternal life to each and every human being, but not if they do not enjoy life, or if they will be a cause of pain and suffering for others.

God created angels capable of living for eternity. But Satan’s rebellion has showed that if humans with the mindset of Satan and the demons who live according to Satan’s way of life of getting and self-gratification are given eternal life, it will be an eternity of misery for everyone. The only way that can produce happiness and joy for everyone is living God’s way of LOVE, which is defined as outgoing concern for the welfare of others. It can also be called the way of “giving” instead of “getting.”

Here are the areas in which we need to have an eternal perspective:

***a) Get out of Living Cain’s way of Life***

God created humans as flesh and blood beings with their lives dependent on food, which they have to work to produce or gather. This necessity would inculcate the habit of working in them.

Adam and Eve started off living by working to provide for themselves after they were expelled from the Garden of Eden. But under Satan’s influence, humanity began to develop another way of life that the Bible calls “Cain’s Way.” He led Cain to develop a way of living that involved robbery and plunder.

Cain, murdered his own righteous brother Abel. As a result, God banished him from contact with Adam’s other descendants to develop his own society. Humanity had been instructed to keep animals in addition to growing grain crops as animals would help maintain the fertility of the soil, thus producing excellent crops indefinitely. But after Cain’s offering of the fruits of the ground was not acceptable to God, as the correct offering to God was animal sacrifice, Cain began hating God’s way of life. He refused to keep animals. The result was that Cain’s agricultural practices came to nothing because the fertility of the soil was not maintained with manure. As a result, Cain had to keep moving to new soil and became a vagabond. After 150 years of wandering the earth, he moved next to the other descendants of Adam and Eve and began making a living by robbery and plunder. Then from merely stealing from others, he ‘progressed’ to forcing others on pain of violence and death to pay him tribute. From that Cain progressed to ruling over others by force and extracting more from them. That is what is called ‘Cain’s Way’ in the Bible. It means making a living by robbery and plunder or ruling over others by force rather than through one’s own labor; living by the old adage “might is right”, or “keeping up with the Joneses” or getting ahead of others “any which way you can.” Much of humanity has been following Cain’s way ever since.

A person cannot be happy for eternity if he has not learnt to produce something and experience the joy in accomplishment and then enjoy the fruit of his labors or enjoy ruling over what he has built?

Now just imagine if human beings are made into powerful immortal spirit beings, all schooled in Cain’s way and then nations are given stars and planets to rule and create in as prophesied in Deuteronomy 4:19. The result is not hard to imagine because Hollywood has already given us a glimpse of what could happen in Star Wars movies, Start Trek and other shows. Some will certainly see the creation of others better than their own and may simply decide to take over that creation and subjugate its creators. Star Wars would be a reality. But God will not allow that to ever take place.

Creating humans as flesh and blood beings is designed to create the habit of work by necessity to sustain themselves. They would experience Cain’s way as well and learn that that way of life can only produce pain and suffering. Those who do not learn the lesson and get out of Cain’s way of living will not qualify to receive eternal life. Their lives will be permanently extinguished in the Lake of Fire.

It's possible, that a long time after the rebelling angels had bought into Satan’s philosophy of ‘getting’ instead of ‘giving,’ they may have become dissatisfied with their life of creating their dinosaur world. Some may have thought “Is this all there is to life?” Just keep creating more dumb creatures forever and ever!

But God has been showing them what else lies ahead. He has been showing to all angels that He can reproduce Himself through mankind. Angels perhaps were to progress to that capability. But they would have an eternity to reach that level of creative ability. We today reproduce by sexual reproduction; a capability God has put within us. But we would have an eternity to learn how to create creatures that could reproduce themselves like animals do, eventually progressing to creating intelligent creatures that would reproduce themselves like God is reproducing Himself through humanity.

Will we get bored like apparently some of the demons did and give up well before we can reach that stage? In God’s Kingdom no robbing and plundering will be allowed. If we live the way of Cain and have not learnt to work with our hands and minds, then it’s a guarantee that we will just sit idle, get bored and not enjoy living for eternity. They will simply meddle in the affairs of others making them miserable; or simply spreading their misery and gloominess to others. It should be easy to see why God will not grant eternal life to those who live Cain’s way.

God wants humans to demonstrate to Him that each of us wants to live for eternity. This is a message for all who live for generations on welfare or who depend on the generosity of others because they are too lazy and or unwilling to work with their own hands, or they can inveigle others to part with their money and give it to them in charity. Unless they repent and demonstrate that they are willing to work and assume responsibility for their families, God will not grant them eternal life.The earth and later the universe will not have peace until the world is rid of such people.

That is why those who do not repent of living Cain’s way of life are defeating God’s purpose for creating man and will not be granted eternal life. In God’s kingdom, that way of life will not be tolerated. Paul the apostle stated the principle clearly in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, “if any would not work, neither should he eat.” Either mankind does things God’s way of its own freewill or God will simply permanently extinguish the lives of those who still want to continue practicing Cain’s way.

***b) Learn to Enjoy Life so that You Want to Live for Eternity***

In addition to demonstrating a zest for life through accomplishment, humans also need to learn to be happy and content. This means learning to enjoy finer things in life such as the arts, fine music, drama and other forms of entertainment. Some should enjoy life by providing such entertainment and pleasure to others through their creativity whereas others should learn to enjoy these things. That is part of enjoying life for eternity. We have to learn to simply enjoy life and develop a lifestyle that we would love to live forever.

***c) Learn to Love and Build Relationships***

Humans also need to ponder how they want to live for eternity. Do we want to live loving each other or do we want to live alone doing our own thing? Developing relationships for each of us is absolutely essential. We first need to be able to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength. God wants us to develop a relationship with Him. For the person who is not willing to develop a relationship with Him, what is the point in living for eternity? Such a person will only be miserable for eternity. God will not grant such a person eternal life.

God also wants us to develop relationships with other human beings and learn to love each and every other human being as ourselves. If we have not learnt to love our fellow human beings what is the point in living for eternity? A lonely person will be miserable for eternity. God simply will not grant such a person eternal life.

God the Father has lived for past eternity. Then He lived with the Word for practically the past eternity. But they did not want to be alone. That’s why they set the next phase of their creation project, the angelic world, in motion. We too should be able to enjoy the same process. And that process is the very first great purpose for marriage mentioned in the Bible. That is stated in Genesis 1:27-28, “27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

The very first great purpose for marriage mentioned in the Bible is to have children. We are to grow as a family. That is part of the process of learning to enjoy life for eternity. We enjoy life with others, not by living alone. Imagine being marooned in an island to the end of your life with nothing to do. You simply cannot enjoy life that way. Enjoying life means enjoying it with others. That’s why God wants humans to marry and have children. That’s why religions that teach celibacy as a higher form of living are dead wrong. By remaining celibate, or alone, one simply cannot enjoy life forever. Enjoying life means living it together with others. Being recognized and appreciated by others for one’s accomplishments is part of enjoying life for eternity.

God will make it easy for us to develop relationships. When all are made alive, we will be able to connect with our ancestors going back a hundred generations, or our descendants going forward a hundred generations and with extended families in all generations. If somebody is perpetually bored, sullen and morose and has no joy in living, then perhaps a chat session with a great great great great grand father or mother could perk up that individual and give him a reason to live and learn to enjoy life. Perhaps learning about the tremendous accomplishments of an ancestor may finally excite such an individual and motivate him or her to cooperate with others to jointly accomplish something in life. Remember God will heal all physical or mental disabilities when humans are resurrected back to physical life, and later become immortal beings composed of spirit. So, all humans will be able to find someone to get along with and start building relationships.

***d) Learn to live under authority***

How does each of us convince God that we will never rebel against Him if He grants us eternal life? The only way to do that is to demonstrate to God that we are willing to live under authority now and treat authority with respect and honor.

If in any part of our life we demonstrate to God that we cannot live and function harmoniously and productively under authority, then we are demonstrating to Him that we might possibly rebel against Him or against those He has put in positions of authority. He will not grant such a person eternal life.

***e) What if your Life Has been Less than Perfect***

Another issue is, what kind of an eternal perspective must you hold if your human life has been less than perfect. For example, if you have never married and have never experienced family life with kids. God clearly says in the long run it does not matter. Even though you have not married and had children, you have imagined what life would be like in a married state. Jesus said in Matthew 22:30, “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.”

So, mankind’s future as a spirit being does not include marriage and physical children. But human physical life has taught us how to care for children and how to have close relationships with other human beings such as wives and husbands. The Church’s marriage to Jesus Christ will be responsible for bringing tens of billions of sons to glory. As God’s literal sons we will look after human beings in the millennium as literal sons and daughters coming out of the marriage between Jesus Christ and the Church. Having experienced love for our physical children, we will know how to enable the tens of billions in God’s Kingdom to gain eternal life as sons with motherly love and care. So, if you have never married in this life, ‘no big deal.’ Marriage is a state only for physical human beings and not a state for eternal sons of God. As an immortal being, you will not have missed too much if you have never been married. Your life as a human being could have been easier and pleasanter, but it will not affect your life as an eternal son or daughter of God.

Now what if you have all the disadvantages in your physical life in terms of looks or you have been diseased, and your body is much less than perfect? The eternal perspective is that as an immortal son of God, your body will be totally different as spirit, without the fleshly limitations.

The only human being resurrected so far has been Jesus Christ. The Bible gives 3 examples when people did not recognize Jesus Christ after He was resurrected. In John 20:14-16, Mary Magdalene did not recognize the resurrected Jesus Christ, except when He called her by name and she recognized the same way He used to call her as a physical human being.

In John 21:6-7 the seven disciples did not recognize the resurrected Jesus Christ, but they did so from a past event when He had asked them in Luke 5:4-8 to cast their net on the right side of the boat and they caught so many fish that the net was breaking.

In Luke 24:30-31 the disciples again did not recognize the resurrected Jesus Christ until He took the position of the head of the family and broke bread, which He had done many times in His physical life with them.

So as resurrected immortal beings, all the defects of our physical bodies will be gone. Do you think we will be resurrected as mere bags of bones and skin which many of us become in our old age? No. All such defects will be removed when we are resurrected as God’s immortal sons.

**Human Life is the Testing Ground**

God wants each and every human being to receive eternal life. He has put eternity in the hearts of each and every one of us. God reveals in the Bible that this is not a mere fantasy. It has always been His plan from the very beginning to give eternal life to man. But man must first demonstrate that he really wants to live forever and will enjoy life for eternity.

God has given humans physical life as a testing and proving ground to prepare us to live for eternity and to provide a means for God to determine who qualifies and who does not qualify to receive eternal life. Those who are willing to demonstrate:

a) That they trust God completely that He loves them with depth of love that surpasses understanding,

b) That they will never rebel against Him,

c) And human family with ancestors and descendants to hundreds of generations has been designed to give us an eternal perspective on life which is demonstrated by:

1) Learning to work with our own hands to support oneself and one’s family, and enjoy life through accomplishment for eternity.

2) Learn to live life so that one can enjoy living that way for eternity.

3) Learn to build relationships with all human beings based on love because one cannot enjoy life alone.

4) Learning to live under authority because everyone will be subject to authority. Even God the Father does not rule arbitrarily. He rules the universe according to His law of LOVE.

Those are the goals God has in mind in creating human beings flesh and blood, male and female, with the marriage and family institutions. Each of us must evaluate every aspect of our lives to see if we are meeting God’s expectations in demonstrating to Him that we have learnt to love Him and our fellow man, learnt to live under authority so that we will never rebel against Him and that we will enjoy living for eternity by working and having loving relationships with one another. Those who achieve these goals will be granted eternal life. Others will not be.

**Chapter 6**

**Why God Created Humans Male and Female**

Marriage and family is the institution God has designed for mankind to learn all the vital lessons, including how to live under authority. When two or more come together, for things to work smoothly, one person must be in charge. That is God’s method of government.

God could have created all angels equal. But that would have led to anarchy in the angelic world with everyone doing his own thing. So, creating a hierarchy in the angelic world was necessary for smooth functioning of that realm.

Did the angels with lower rank get a raw deal? There are several things wrong with analyzing the situation that way. First of all, no one is going to be ordering you around to do things. You do your own thing, but those higher in rank are there to consult with and receive help from if needed. If they feel they could help you, they would be able to share their ideas with you. Hopefully you will have a teachable humble heart willing to learn and benefit from guidance from others. More likely than not, you will be the one initiating the request for guidance or for getting an opinion on your projects. So those of higher rank will be there to help and not to order you around.

God has designed the human family unit to learn that lesson and accept God’s method of government easily with one person in charge with minimum conflict. God designed mankind male and female. He put man as the head of the family and the woman to support him. This creates a hierarchical structure in the family. By living in a family unit, human beings learn God’s method of government and accept it much easier than if they were either only male or only female.

Do you think a woman who wants to rule her husband will be demonstrating to God that she has learnt to live under authority? Or do you think that children who are rebellious against either of their parents have demonstrated to God that they would be willing to live under His authority and will never rebel against Him? Of course, a man as head of the household has the responsibility to provide for and support his family and love them and give himself for them as Jesus gave Himself for the Church. A man who fails to do so will not have learnt to assume responsibility. And ruling means assuming responsibility. Humans are designed to rule God’s creation, and later their own creation. Those who have not learnt to do so will not be happy for eternity. God will not grant such people eternal life.

Man has to support his family for which he must work. And in a work situation he will be under authority. So, man learns to live under authority through his work while the wife and children learn to live under authority in the home.

If the entire world were either all male or all female, humans would not automatically learn to love the other person as themselves. We know our feelings for other people. Loving others as ourselves does not come naturally.

In a family the husband and wife are to be bound together in love. Here is how God described the first human marriage in Genesis 2:24, “24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” That’s the true purpose of human marriage: to bind two people together as one, or one unit. Husband and wife are to cling or cleave together in love. Sexual union is part of that cleaving process. It creates commitment to one another in the unit.

In a marriage and family unit a man and woman can learn to love each other as themselves much better than men can love other men and women can love other women as themselves. Marriage and the family unit make two human beings work towards the same goal. Looking after each other or loving each other as themselves enhances the accomplishment of the common goals. The family unit leads to greater success, and much faster than doing it alone. And the experience is much more enjoyable and less burdensome as responsibilities and duties towards achieving the common goals can be shared.

Since the purpose of human life is to give mankind an eternal perspective, husband and wife should be working towards creating an eternal bond? They should view their marriage as binding the two of them together for eternity. They should be asking themselves the questions: Are we working together to build a loving and productive relationship such that we will be thrilled to live and work with each other for eternity as one well-knit unit? Are we building a family that will enjoy living and working together for eternity? A happy family with children, then grandchildren, then great grandchildren all knit together in love is or should be the dream of every human being. It is God’s dream. He is trying to expand His family through human beings. Are we demonstrating in our marriages that that is our dream as well and are we working diligently to realize that dream?

A part of having an eternal perspective on life is trying to find the perfect mate, and the idea of a perfect mate for many is a trophy wife or a trophy husband. Some keep delaying marriage because they have not been able to find the perfect mate. Soon they have grown old so that they are no longer able to find a mate. That is a needless tragedy. Here is the eternal perspective that can help.

Remember, physical looks are not going to remain the same for eternity. In fact, they don’t even remain the same for 70 years of our physical life. We have seen people beautiful in their young age lose their beauty as they grow older. Others who had average looks add beauty and dignity to their demeanor as they grow older. Then as spirit beings our looks will change. God will add glory and beauty to everyone. And some who pleased God in their human life but did not have the advantage of looks may have greater glory than others. The point here is that one must have an eternal perspective. Beauty in this physical life will last only perhaps 20-30 years. Developing loving relationships will last for eternity. And remember when two people live together they get used to each other and are not even focused on each other’s looks. Their energies are focused on living life as a family. So, find a mate and develop loving relationships with eternity in mind. God may surprise you in this life by giving you beautiful intelligent children. If not, then you can be certain God will give you and your family glory and beauty when you are born as His eternal son or daughter after about 70-80 years of your life. So, go find a wife or husband with this eternal perspective.

Nations are simply extended families of an original patriarch grown large. If we always keep that in mind, then the chances for hatred within nations would be minimized. And that is the pattern God will use to govern the universe. Deuteronomy 4:19 tells us that God has divided the stars in the universe already to nations. Nations, sprung from one original patriarch are thus an important unit in God’s plan for colonizing the universe. And nations are also all related because we have all sprung from Adam.

Those who demonstrate to God that they are working to create a family for eternity will be granted eternal life. Those who don’t will not be granted eternal life.

**Why God Created Humans Male and Female**

God could have created humans as only males or females or hermaphrodites with the eventual ability to reproduce. We see many different methods of reproduction in the animal world. The ability to reproduce would have taught mankind the lesson that God loves them. But why did God choose to create mankind male and female?

God wanted to teach mankind three overriding lessons, which could be best taught by creating them male and female.

The **first lesson** God wanted to teach mankind is to love each other as themselves. If the entire world were either male or female, they would not automatically learn to love the other person as themselves. Loving others as ourselves does not come naturally. God created the angels as one kind of beings. They could learn to be friends with each other, but somehow not loving the others as themselves.

We can see the example of hermaphrodites in nature, which are creatures that have both male and female parts. They reproduce sexually which is a pleasurable activity. But after that they go their own way. There is nothing to bind them together.

That’s the true purpose of human marriage: to bind two people together as one, or one unit. In a marriage and family unit a man and woman can learn to love each other as themselves much better than men can love other men and women can love other women as themselves.

The **second important lesson** God wanted humans to learn by creating them male and female is to learn and accept God’s method of government of one person in charge, for a unit or organization to function smoothly. It is not always easy for two almost equal beings to accept that. God has designed the human family unit to learn that lesson and accept God’s method of government with one person in charge easily with minimum conflict.

The **third important lesson** God wanted humanity to learn is to work with and cooperate with each other. One way they would learn that lesson is when they recognize that they are ultimately related to each other. God directly created only one flesh and blood being: Adam. God did not create Eve as a separate flesh and blood being out of the dust of the ground. He made Eve out of Adam by taking his rib. So Eve was created out of man. Then every human being ever born has sprung from Adam and Eve. So, each and every human being ever born is related to each another. That realization should make all humans love each other.

In contrast, all angels are individually created.

To help humans to learn to work with and cooperate with one another, it was also necessary to create differences in humanity itself and in its environment as it was necessary to create differences in the angelic world. The first difference created was to make them male and female. Males and females are created different in more ways than just with physical bodies. But their differences in strength, talents and abilities are complementary. When their complementary strengths are pooled together they are greater than the sum of their individual strengths.

Then males and females differ in their physical and mental strengths, talents and abilities as compared to other males and females. So, males must learn to cooperate with other males and females must learn to cooperate with other females to improve their collective standard of living and quality of life. This leads to trade which improves the collective quality of life. Then nations differ in their resources and national talents and capabilities. Cooperation between nations should lead to beneficial trade which should collectively improve the standard and quality of life for all of humanity.

Thus, by creating mankind flesh and blood beings, male and female, God is preparing mankind to rule the universe with Him. Humans are designed to learn to love one another if they want greater success in life. That’s why humans having sex and families out of marriage are defeating God’s very purpose for creating humanity. If unrepented of, it will lead to loss of eternal life.

**Chapter 7**

 **God’s Instructions for a Happy Marriage**

Now let’s see what the Bible reveals about human marriage.

First of all, Genesis 1:26-27 tell us that God made man in His image and according to His likeness. This means that humans look like God in appearance and also have minds like God’s and think like Him.

Before man’s creation God created the animal world after its own kind. But God created mankind in His own image and likeness. This means that God created mankind after the God kind.

God made mankind male and female with the institution of marriage. This means that just as mankind was created as temporary physical creation but patterned after the God kind, the institution of marriage and family was patterned after the permanent spirit world reality.

God tells humans in 2 Corinthians 6:18, “18 And [I] will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” Our ultimate destiny is to become sons and daughters of God. This means God is a family and the human family is patterned after the God family.

At present the God family consists of two beings: God the Father and Jesus Christ His son. But our potential is to become part of God’s family. This is confirmed by 1 John 3:1-3: “1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him [meaning like Jesus Christ in spirit composition, shape, faculties and mind] for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

**Spiritual Parallel with Human Marriage**

Just as a human family is patterned after God’s family, human marriage is also patterned after a spiritual relationship; that of Jesus Christ with His Church.

Paul the apostle explained that relationship in Ephesians 5:22-31, “22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church [as a bride], not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

“28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

Paul explains that just as the relationship that the Church has with Christ, so should be the relationship between the husband and the wife.

Husbands are to be the head of the family just as Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. The wives are to submit to their husbands just as the Church is subject to Jesus Christ.

In return the husbands are to love their wives just as Jesus Christ loved the Church and sacrificed His life for her. They are also to love and take care of their wives just as they love their own bodies, as Paul says, ‘For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.”

Now notice carefully verses 25-27 again: “25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

What Paul is saying here is that husbands loving their wives just as Christ loved the Church is part of the cleansing process for the Church. That is the only way the Church will become without spot or wrinkle and fit to marry Jesus Christ. This obviously means that the right relationship between husband and wife in a marriage is essential for qualifying for eternal life.

**Implications of These Instructions**

Consider the implications of following or violating these instructions.

How do two become part of a harmoniously working single family unit? Such a harmonious relationship as God desires is not possible between two males or two females. But in a human family unit with a male and a female perfect cooperation without competition is possible with both members working towards the common goal.

Humans do not have strong motivation to root out competition and to work towards the common goal unless they are thrown together. In a family unit when two human beings share virtually all time together, they are strongly motivated to root out competition and learn to perfectly cooperate with each other to have a happy, joyful and successful marriage. We have to unlearn satanic competition and learn godly cooperation. And God has given us the perfect mechanism to do so in a marriage by man being the head of the unit. That is the best way to resolve any issues on which consensus cannot be reached. But husbands are also to love their wives as themselves. There is no better way for mankind to unlearn satanic competition than the family unit and learn perfect cooperation.

Getting rid of competition, learning to perfectly cooperate with one another and producing happiness and joy for the family demands that the husband and wife safely trust each other. That trust simply cannot be built without total commitment and faithfulness between the husband and wife. Such trust is simply not possible when a husband has more than one wife or when a wife has more than one husband, or even having children outside of marriage.

Any relationship other than between one husband and one wife will always cause plenty of tension. There are enough examples in the Bible to demonstrate that. We have the example beginning with Abraham, then the examples of Jacob, David and Solomon. The greatest cause of tension in the lives of all these men of God was having more than one wife.

The implications of this could be eternal. If you cannot commit to one mate in marriage, and divorce or leave and go to whoever offers you the best of whatever you are seeking (and if that is your situation, then you probably don’t even know what you are seeking, or what is in your best interests in the long run) you will only be causing emotional distress to family and friends in myriads of ways. Do you imagine God will want to have you as a son or daughter in His kingdom? Don’t you think if you are a source of pain and suffering in the lives of all those who come into contact with you in this life, then you will be a source of pain and suffering for all those you will come into contact with in God’s Kingdom? It would be foolish to expect God to give you eternal life under such circumstances, unless the attitude is deeply repented of. That is how important total commitment and faithfulness are in marriage between one man and one woman.

Thus, we see that by creating mankind flesh and blood beings, male and female, God is preparing mankind to rule the universe with Him. Human males and females are designed to learn to love one another. That’s why humans having sex and families out of marriage are defeating God’s very purpose for creating humanity. If unrepented of, it will lead to loss of eternal life.

**How to Have a Happy Godly Marriage**

Since God has designed the marriage and family institution to teach mankind eternal lessons, He must have vital instructions on how He wants each of us to conduct ourselves in this institution. And indeed, God has provided us those instructions.

The first instructions for marriage were given to Adam and Eve when the very first marriage was solemnized. Then detailed instructions on roles of husbands and wives on marriage were provided in Ephesians 5:22-33 and Colossians 3:18-21 which includes instructions on how to treat children. The book of Proverbs also provides some valuable instructions.

When the first marriage between Adam and Eve was instituted, here are God’s instructions in Genesis 2:18, 21-25, “18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him… 21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

***It’s Not Good for Man to Be Alone***

God’s first instruction to man is that it is not good to be alone. God instructs a man to go find a wife. To find a wife is a good thing. Solomon said in Proverbs 18:22, “Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor of the Lord.” That favor comes in the forms of huge advantages married people enjoy over single adults in all walks of life.

Indeed, the very first great purpose for marriage mentioned in the Bible is stated in Genesis 1:28, “28…Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth…”

We are to have children in a marriage and grow as a family, just as God is reproducing Himself to grow His family. That is part of the process of learning to enjoy life for eternity. We enjoy life with others, not by living alone. That’s why God wants humans to marry and have children. Raising children should also be a joyful experience in helping them achieve major milestones in their lives.

That’s why religions that teach that celibacy as a higher form of living are the creation of ungodly fools. By remaining celibate, or alone, one simply cannot enjoy life forever. Enjoying life means doing things together with others. Being recognized and appreciated by others for your accomplishments is part of enjoying life for eternity.

Solomon the wisest man who ever lived except Jesus Christ had this to say about not being alone in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken”

Solomon explains that two in marriage are better than one because they can together enjoy the fruit of their labors. Being together also helps to lift each other up when one is down. Two together can be comfortable rather than a person alone. In addition, two can withstand challenges from the outside better than one can. And then Solomon mentions that a third person, a child really binds the family together just as a rope must have minimum 3 strands woven together to be strong. More children bind the family even closer together and make it stronger.

Those who walk away from their children or have children outside of marriage are simply not receiving the true benefits they could have received in marriage. Such people go through enormous stresses and strains which also affect the emotional and psychological development of the children.

Numerous studies have shown the tremendous benefits of living together as a family and why living alone is not healthy. Statistics show that single people are not happy. These studies show that married people live longer, experience less depression, are more emotionally and physically healthy, have lower rates of alcoholism and substance abuse, and higher income and savings levels than the unmarried. The lowest rates for mental hospital admissions and suicidal tendencies for parent and children are consistently found among the married. In addition, the elderly living alone who never had children as well as children born out of wedlock are more likely to be a burden on the state [in rich countries only] for their upkeep than those who are married.

Married people are more productive in their lives. One can understand it this way. Two people living alone have to do 100% of the work themselves. If they live together, the combined work increases to about 125%, but now two people are available to perform that work. So, each person is saving more than one third of his or her time. Of course, work increases when children come along. But then the happiness and joy come along with having a family, the benefits of which should last in old age and then for eternity. And children can make old age comfortable and endurable.

Thus, according to God’s plain instructions in the Bible men and women should not be alone, should get married and have children.

***Husband and Wife Should Love Each Other as Their own Body***

God’s next instructions to Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:21-24 are: “21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

This account shows that God literally lovingly built Eve for Adam from a part of his own body to be a perfect mate for him. Adam and Eve recognized that she was a part of him. That’s why he said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

They recognized that they both were from the same bone and flesh. There is no human being who would cut off a part of his or her body such as a hand or foot or ear or nose. God’s instructions are that that is how the husband and wife should treat each other. That is how they are instructed to love each other as they love and cherish every organ of their body.

Adam’s enclosed wound in his body from where his rib was taken would serve as a constant reminder to him and Eve that their lives are knit together, and they should be inseparable.

***Husband and Wife Should Leave Their Parents Homes***

Another aspect of marriage is stated in verse 24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife…”

Here God instructs that the new husband and wife should leave each other’s parents and set up a separate family unit. Now they have to work together in the unit which may involve doing things differently from the way each of them did in their parents’ home. Those who fail to heed these instructions suffer much anguish because of interference from parents in their lives. Many times, such marriages fail because of the tension these family relationships create. When living together, a husband and wife need to adjust just to each other. But when living with parents, the parents may have different ideas on how the new husband and wife should live their lives. Trying to meet the expectations of so many different people will only create more conflicts leading to unhappiness in marriage.

***Husband and Wife Shall Become one Flesh***

God’s next instructions for marriage in Genesis 2:24 are that, “…the man…shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” They are now joined together as one unit.

Becoming one flesh indicates how closely their lives are to mesh with each other’s in addition to being joined together in sexual union. They are literally to cling or cleave to each other, or bonded or glued together in the family unit. It means becoming inseparable and doing things jointly, and loving each other as themselves! Sexual union is an integral part of that process of a man and wife becoming one flesh both physically and in mind. It creates commitment to one another in the unit.

In these instructions where is there place for a man marrying more than one wife or a wife marrying more than one husband? Those who do so are violating God’s plain instructions. And where is there place for sex outside of marriage? A man and wife are to become one flesh. One cannot become one flesh with more than one sexual partner.

Those husbands and wives who mistreat each other, don’t love each other, or those who have abandoned their children or spouses, or divorced and neglected their children, or have sex out of marriage relationships are simply not demonstrating to God that they want to build a family like the one God is building. They simply have not learnt to build relationships that would endure for eternity. He will not make such people part of His family by granting them eternal life.

***Both Were Naked and Not Ashamed***

God’s instruction to Adam and Eve says in Genesis 2:25, “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

This verse tells us that sex within marriage is not dirty and is a good thing. God said in Genesis 1:31, “31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” And that includes sex in marriage. Sexual union is part of the cleaving process. That’s why fornication does irreparable harm to a future marriage. Some wounds of fornication may be healed, but not completely. Fornication steals the oneness and closeness that should come from marriage. It cheapens marriage and the guilt can continue to cause further anguish. Adultery can wreck a marriage and the wounds may never heal. Instead the wounds of adultery may turn husband and wife into the bitterest of enemies. And if not sincerely and deeply repented of such sins may lead to loss of eternal life. God does not want unfaithful people in His kingdom as part of His eternal family.

Those were God’s instructions on what a human marriage is supposed to be. Next let’s look at God’s instructions on what are the respective responsibilities of wife and husband within marriage. Those instructions were provided by Paul.

**Wife’s Responsibility Within Marriage**

God first stated a wife’s responsibility within marriage through the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:22-24: “22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”

Here God clearly lays down authority within marriage. The husband is to be the leader and head of the family unit. Wives should submit themselves to the authority of their husbands as God’s Church is subject to Jesus Christ and wives as members of God’s Church also submit themselves to Jesus Christ.

Family has been designed to teach us how to live under authority. When two or more come together, for things to work smoothly, one person must be in charge. That is God’s method of government.

God designed mankind male and female, and in a family, He put man as the head of the family and the woman to support him. This creates a hierarchical structure in the family. By living in a family unit, human beings learn God’s method of government and accept it much easier than if they were either only male or only female.

Do you think a woman who wants to rule her husband will be demonstrating to God that she has learnt to live under authority? Certainly not!

Look at any successful organization in the corporate world. There is always one person unambiguously in charge. That is God’s method of government for success. And husband being the head and leader of the family unit is God’s method for success and accomplishment of incredible goals in marriage.

Most women are taught today that they are equal in authority to their husband and that marriage is a 50%-50% proposition. There is no doubt that men and woman are equal as both are human beings and both have the same potential as becoming God’s literal immortal children. All angels are equal but do not possess equal talents, abilities and hence not of equal authority. For a unit or an organization to function smoothly with the greatest possible success one person must be in charge.

Marriage counselors today view these instructions as badly out-of-date and out-moded. The results are evident for us to view. This is the reason more than 50% of marriages break up and most don’t last beyond 5 years, resulting in terrible pain and suffering for the husband, wife, children, extended families and friends. A family cannot be happy if they disregard God’s formula for happiness in marriage.

Paul the apostle further describes how wives are to submit to their husbands in verse 33, “…the wife see that she reverence [respect is a better translation] her husband.” The wives are thus required to respect their husbands while submitting to them.

**Husband’s Responsibility in Godly Marriage**

Next Paul describes the husband’s responsibility in marriage beginning in Ephesians 5:25, “25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it…”

That verse lays heavy responsibility on the husband in the marriage. His foremost responsibility in marriage is to love his wife. And that love is to be of the highest standard. Just as Jesus Christ loves God’s Church and sacrificed Himself for it, so are husbands required to do for their wives and families. Being leader of the family comes with an enormous responsibility. Husbands are required to provide for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of their wives and families.

Jesus Christ never gives up on His Church. So also are husbands required to love their wives with patience, tolerance, forgiveness and caring.

Then Paul continues in verses 28-29, 33: “28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church.” Then verse 33: “…let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself…”

Paul reinforces the kind of love with which husbands are to love their wives. They are to love them as they love themselves and their own bodies. They are to love, nourish, meaning provide for, and cherish their wives as they do their own bodies.

Thus, a man as head of the household has the responsibility to provide for and support his family members and love them and give himself for them as Jesus gave Himself for the Church. A man who fails to do so will not have learnt to assume responsibility. With these instructions on a man’s responsibility, do you think a man who is responsible for the birth of children and walks out on them will be granted eternal life as God’s son in His family? The answer should be obvious.

Ruling means assuming responsibility. Humans are designed to rule God’s creation, and later their own creation. Those who have not learnt to do so will not be happy for eternity. Those who have not learnt to support their families will not receive the free gift of eternal life from God.

Those are the basic instructions God has provided for mankind for having happy marriages and families. Other scriptures add further instructions.

**Wives are to Love their Husbands and Children**

Not only husbands are to love their wives as Jesus Christ loves the Church, but wives are also commanded to love their husbands and children. Titus 2:4-5 instructs wives to, “4…be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”

Wives are to love their husbands and children. This means their lives should be centered around their family and loving all members of the family. They are instructed again to be obedient to their own husbands over obedience to anyone else, but according to God’s word so that the word of God be not blasphemed. They are to be chaste in marriage, meaning chaste in sexual conduct.

They are commanded to be sober (means not given to drinking too much), discreet, meaning not discussing family matters with other women or people outside their homes or airing dirty laundry. Wives or husbands should not discuss intimate sexual or non-sexual problems between themselves with anyone outside. It often leads to divorce.

Paul elaborated on this in 1 Timothy 5:13, “13 And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.”

Avoiding such behavior is what Paul calls being discreet.

Peter the apostle provides similar instruction for wives in 1 Peter 3:1-6. He writes, “1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without the word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel [here Peter is cautioning against too much emphasis on following fashions], 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit [again cautioning against being busybodies, and rather being discreet], which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”

**Honoring Wives**

Wives are instructed to submit to the authority of their husbands and obey them. But the husbands are also commanded to give honor to their wives as to a weaker vessel. Those instructions were given by Peter the apostle in 1 Peter 3:7: “Likewise you husbands dwell with them according to knowledge giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.”

Peter is saying that wives are only physically weaker, not mentally or spiritually. Making wives physically weaker has been by design to establish authority in the family unit. In the chimpanzee world, the male chimps are stronger than the females. There is no conflict about who is in authority in those species except among the bonobo chimps among whom the female is as strong as the male and the males consequently are clearly not in authority.

But coming back to the point, in a human family, women are only physically weaker, not mentally or spiritually. Today’s corporate world with women CEOs demonstrates that. Husbands are required to give honor to their wives as to the weaker vessel because both are heirs together of the grace or free gift of eternal life from God. God warns that if husbands do not give honor to their wives their prayers will be hindered. GOD WILL SIMPLY NOT HEAR THE PRAYERS OF A HUSBAND WHO DOES NOT HONOR HIS WIFE.

What giving honor to a wife as the weaker vessel means is that if a man wants to bring something to the attention of his wife, he must do it gently and kindly. In that regard husbands are cautioned in Colossians 3:19, “19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.”

This instruction means to simply follow the rules of good communications. No one wants to be ordered around, talked down to, put down, and made the brunt of jokes. Wives must be treated with dignity, respect and honor. Husbands must not behave like drill sergeants in their families.

Part of honoring wives means soliciting and listening to their advice. Every good leader listens to the suggestions and advice of his subordinates for in a multitude of counselors there is safety. Remember family and life goals are joint goals and are to be achieved jointly with everyone in the family being involved and contributing advice and effort to do so.

Also, part of honoring wives means communicating with them regularly. The strong silent stereotype works only in the movies and is a hindrance to a good and happy marriage. It builds for a strong happy marriage when family plans and strategies are discussed together, and progress monitored by discussing how one’s day went. Just as good and effective communications build stronger organizations, good and effective communications build stronger marriages and families. Wives talk to and deal with children at the level of 5-15-year-olds the whole day. They need adult conversation at the end of the day. Hence communicating with wives is part of honoring them.

All this is part of dwelling together according to knowledge as stated by Peter the apostle. This right knowledge about effective communication, leadership, importance of and obedience to authority, proper understanding of sex in marriage is provided in other parts of the Bible.

**Bible Teaches Equality Between the Sexes**

While the two sexes have their differences, spiritually speaking there is equality between the sexes in the Bible. Both male and female are born in exactly the same way. Paul the apostle explained in I Corinthians 11:11-12, “11…neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.” Man cannot be born without the woman, nor the woman without the man. That is why Islam is a religion of the devil that does not acknowledge this equality. Peter declared in 1 Peter 3:7 that men and women are, “…heirs together of the grace of life”

**Proper Understanding of Sex**

Sex is very important and even crucial in marriage. When God created humankind male and female, He created sex and pronounced all that He had created as “very good” in Genesis 1:31.

Thus, sex in marriage is very good. It is not dirty. God does not want husbands and wives to be sexually unfulfilled. That requires some basic understanding of the male and female bodies. *Without proper understanding of female bodies, most men virtually rape their wives on their wedding night.* A needless tragedy which can be averted with proper knowledge.

One of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s greatest contributions for human happiness has been authoring the book “The Missing Dimension in Sex” which is all about the subject of human sexuality. Reading that book just before getting married is a must for building a happy marriage. That book is available free of charge from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org. It is also available free on the Internet.

God gave instructions about sex within marriage through Paul the apostle in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, “3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

Thus, in marriage no mate has the right to withhold sex from the other. After marriage your body belongs to your mate. Withholding sex may lead to adultery which usually leads to divorce. And that leads to severe psychological and emotional problems for the family and children. Properly understood and practiced, sex within marriage binds a wife and husband together as nothing else does.

**Keepers at Home**

In his letter to Titus in 2:5, Paul mentioned that women should be keepers at home. There is no mistaking that instruction. God’s formula for a happy marriage and family is that married women not pursue careers but stay home to look after the family.

Men and women have been created differently. Men have been engineered to look at the overall picture in a family and perform the more physical demanding tasks for support and upkeep of the family. But women were engineered to think of the small details of the family’s needs that make the home friendly, warm and a pleasure to come to at the end of the day. Most men do very poorly at such tasks. In short, women were created to be effective assistants to their husbands in the family.

In today’s world we see many women bucking this trend and pursuing business and government careers very successfully. Actually, women are surging ahead of men in the USA as more women pursue college degrees than men. But plenty of studies have assessed happiness of families and marriages with women in careers vs women as homemakers.

*Mail online* of the U.K reported on July 30,2013: “Stay-at-home mothers are more likely to think their lives are worthwhile than women who go to work, a study of national happiness suggests. They tend not to suffer from boredom, frustration or feelings of worthlessness, according to the research on Britain’s wellbeing.

In America, *The Atlantic* reported on December 18, 2013, “Two facts are often obscured in the public conversation devoted to women, work, and family. First, the vast majority of married mothers don’t want to work full-time. Second, married mothers who are able to cut back at work to accommodate their family’s needs tend to be happier…[This] new data shows mothers report more happiness when they can lean homeward.”

Studies clearly show that married women with children are much happier and more fulfilled when they are “keepers at home.” Such families are simply following God’s formula for happiness.

Other studies show that happiness decreases considerably when there is financial stress in the family. This is really the only situation where a woman working can lead to lessening the stress on the family. In the USA it is impossible for a family to make ends meet in cases where the father works close to a minimum wage job. Only under such circumstances can the wife working relieve the stress on the family.

But remember there are many hidden costs of a career outside the home for the wife which include huge daycare costs for the kids, auto expenses, clothing for work, more expensive eating out and more expensive but poor quality of food to save time, fatigue and stress affecting health, and not having enough time to do many other things that lead to family being happy together. The fatigue and stress may also lead to more arguments in the home.

There is no argument that single women should work as many opportunities are available in today’s world. Similarly, women without children may be able to work outside the home. But women with children must be keepers at home.

Proverbs 31 woman however does not preclude being able to work at home if such opportunities are available. Age of the children is a very important factor. Proverbs 31:16-24 state: “16 She considers a field, and buys it: with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. 17 She girds her loins with strength, and strengthens her arms. 18 She perceives that her merchandise is good: her candle goes not out by night. 19 She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff… 24 She makes fine linen, and sells it; and delivers girdles unto the merchant.”

This chapter is describing a woman entrepreneur. Again, the age of her children has to be considered before taking advantage of any such opportunities. Clearly, if any work interferes with the care and education of children and the upkeep of the home for family happiness, it should be avoided. God’s clear-cut formula for family happiness is that women be keepers at home. Educating children in their younger years should be the wife’s major responsibility. In the younger years of the children, not much free time may be available to pursue a career if children are to be brought up right and to have a happy childhood which they will cherish and grow up to provide for their own families. But as children grow older and are in school, if time allows, talented and creative women may pursue their creative interests and even earn money at it.

Clearly Proverbs 31 implies that. Verse 10 states, “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is above rubies.” Rubies are the most valuable precious stones, generally more valuable than diamonds, emeralds or sapphires. The husband thus should encourage his wife to use her talents and creativity and not limit herself.

Another opportunity women may pursue at home is managing and tracking the family’s investments if training allows.

Of course, many argue that if women don’t pursue careers, all the education is wasted. That is not true. No education is ever wasted. All education affects your perspective on life. It will affect how you educate your children, how you advise and discuss family matters with your husband and other members of the family, and how you manage your family affairs. It may provide opportunities for part-time work if the primary responsibility of being “keepers at home” permits. Later when kids have grown, it may be possible to get into the work place. But don’t forget, if women pursue a career while having a family, the happiness of family may be lost when children are in school and mom was not around to be with them. Studies show that such children grow up being more distant from their parents.

Here is a discussion by an undergraduate student Maribeth Sarnecki of Saint Mary’s College Indiana on such a study:

“One of the main reasons [women] respondents gave for staying at home with their children is that they wanted to be the ones who taught their children and were there for them in their early years. This is very important in the parent-child relationship. Many parents today rely on day-care centers and baby-sitters for their children. Less and less children have the advantage of having a parent send them off to school in the morning, and to pick them up in the afternoon. With children spending less time with their parents, their parent-child relationships are not as strong as they could possibly be. This can have effects on the rest of both the child and parents’ lives. Children may feel anger and hostility towards their parents if they are not there for the children in times of need. If parents put their career above their children, their toughest critic of their decision will be the children. Parents want to provide for their children, so that they can have the best life possible. This may include missing out on important events for their children. Even though parents may try to make up for missing events with material objects, the children will always remember what their parents missed. When a woman decides to stay at home, she is giving herself and her children an advantage in their parent-child relationship since she is more likely to be there for her children when they need her.”

After more than a century of the Feminist movement to promote gender equality, all these studies conclude that God’s formula for happiness in marriage and family that women should be “keepers at home” works. Any tinkering around with that formula only decreases happiness. But the Proverbs 31 woman shows that women do not have to waste their talents, creativity and education while being “keepers at home.”

Real success in a family is raising children who are obedient and successful in their lives. Wives have the greatest responsibility towards ensuring that. There is no argument that single women should work as many opportunities are available in today’s world. Similarly, women without children can work outside the home. But women with children, particularly young children must be keepers at home.

When all children are school going, time may permit some work which women of the caliber of the Proverbs 31 woman may engage in to develop their talents if such opportunities are available. Just as men are endowed with different talents and abilities, different women have different talents and abilities, including in time management. So how much of the Proverbs 31 woman model they can follow depends on individual talents. But the only thing God requires of wives is to be good keepers at home.

In this regard I would like to raise one very important caution. If all young girls are taught that when they grow up, their job is to marry, have children and be keepers at home for the rest of their lives, this will inculcate a mindset in them to not strive to do their best in their education because they believe that God’s plan for them is to be homemakers anyway. But girls should realize that if they do not strive to do their best in their studies, it will preclude them from becoming the Proverbs 31 woman. That woman knows her way around the world, and the only way to do that in today’s world is to do as well as men in education.

So my advice to young girls in Middle and High School is to plan out their education as if they will pursue a career and study to the best of their ability in school and college. Otherwise they will not be developing their intellectual capabilities to the maximum potential.

When they get married and have children, they should know that priority will shift. But if for some reason marriage is delayed, or something were to happen to their husband’s employment, or his health, the wife may be forced to take up a job to support the family. That is where girls who took their education very seriously and did very well will have an advantage. In fact, such a scenario is the reality in many American homes. I dealt with such families in my job in the welfare department of the state of Florida for more than seven years. Many husbands lost their manufacturing jobs paying $20-35/hour. Now they are working in close to minimum wage jobs. In some cases, the family is surviving reasonably well because the wife was able to take up a job in the healthcare sector paying $12-25/hour. She is now the main breadwinner in the family. In other cases where the wives are not well educated, they have had to take up minimum wage jobs and the families are struggling to make ends meet and must rely on government help in the form of food stamps and Medicaid.

The point is that young girls going into Middle and High School must condition themselves to get the best possible education they can in order to be able to pursue a good career. In this regard Solomon’s advice in Ecclesiastes 9:10 to every young man and young woman is very apropos, “10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”

A real-life example illustrates how women sometimes may be forced to step into a man’s world. WW2 hinged on young women in America and Britain having the mindset to step into men’s shoes. They manned the factories that manufactured fighter and bomber aircraft. Production of sheer huge volume of defense equipment, because women were willing, able and enthusiastic about manning the production lines, was a major factor in the allies win in WW2. America was able to supply its own army, air force and navy with military equipment, and also supplement British and Russian needs. All our daughters must have that mindset. Be keepers at home for the welfare of the family, but be highly educated, as well as men, to be able to converse with them at an equal level and step in a man’s world if family finances or other circumstances warrant it. We never want our daughters to develop the mindset that they must always be keepers at home, so they don’t need to pay too much attention to their studies or take up careers such as doctors, lawyers, scientists, accountants and business women and so on. Remember, the Proverbs 31 woman is a very successful business woman in her own right.

To further illustrate the point, I would like to give two examples from my life. I hold a chemical engineering degree from one of the best engineering schools in India. But I have never held a chemical engineering job. Was my engineering education wasted? Not at all! The mathematics, knowledge of chemistry, other tools of analysis, the logical ways of thinking like an engineer have colored my entire thinking and making decisions. I have never used my engineering education directly, but I have made many contributions in the fields of business strategy, computers, healing and medicine, agriculture and theology, attributable to thinking and analyzing everything logically like an engineer. So, though I have never used my engineering education in a job, it has impacted virtually all my decision making in life.

I am not a mathematician by any stretch of the imagination. But with my understanding and use of mathematics I have had major impacts on the world. I pointed out the fallacies in the use of mathematics for economic analysis which overturned the thinking of Nobel-prize winning economists.

I have not done the original probability calculations on the probability of life forming by random chemical reactions from basic amino acids and other molecules. But I had sufficient understanding of mathematics to come to the conclusion that evolution was a hoax being perpetrated on humanity. I have used every opportunity to nail the evolution lie as a result, though originally, I learnt how to nail that lie from Herbert W. Armstrong, through whom God founded the modern era of His Church.

Because of my understanding of mathematics, I had advocated its use in developing software. It led to major improvements in software development as well as computer chip design that corporations like Microsoft, IBM and Intel have benefited from. Again, I would like girls to know that no education is ever wasted.

My second example is more private, but I will share it so that our young girls may benefit from it.

About 21 years ago I had prayed to God for a wife, also adding in my prayer that I needed help in finding one as I was not good in matters of dating and finding the right girl. In effect, I was asking God to arrange my marriage. I don’t know how, but four years later God chose a girl for me and let her know that He had chosen her for me. She probably was between 17-18 years old, most probably just graduating from high school that year.

Question arose about what she should study in college, and I believe my opinion was solicited. She could have either become a journalist, a lawyer, a doctor or got an MBA. I had also let my opinion be known that if we had children, they would be our top priority, and in their young age she would have to personally look after them. That job would not be given over to nannies.

At that time, I already knew that I had been compensated for all the discrimination I had suffered throughout my life in order to prevent me from making a decent living. This compensation has made me very rich. I analyzed that in our family managing investments to retain our wealth would be our primary concern. Thus, a career for my wife as a journalist, doctor or lawyer would distract from our main task of managing our investments. Therefore, the education and career I suggested for my future wife was in finance to assist me in managing our wealth. This was a decision tailored to our unique situation. Everybody’s situation is different and they must make their decisions based on their own circumstances.

Now this is about 17 years later and my enemies who had prevented me from making a decent living, have also been able to prevent me from using any of the wealth for my own benefit. And of course, I have also been prevented from getting married for the past 17 years. I don’t know how long this situation will last. But I know that God has perfect control over the situation and will make everything possible at the time of His choosing.

Now imagine if my future wife had the mindset that she is destined to be a homemaker and should take up courses mainly in home-science, nutrition, and a basic course in accounting. That education may not have been of much use as a single person for 17 years. I assume my suggestion was followed and my future wife has had a strong hand in managing our wealth for the past decade.

If you have wealth, you have to maintain a larger than middle class house. That requires a lot more work that a wife cannot do by herself. She has to hire help and manage it. Help can be obtained for assisting in everything, except for children, who should always remain the family’s top priority. But when I am managing the family’s investments myself, rest assured that my wife will be assisting me fully even when there are children, with the proviso that children and keeping the home get top priority. Remember, the Proverbs 31 woman is an able and diligent keeper at home, who has the praise of her husband and children, and is also a very savvy business woman.

I hope this illustrates why all our girls should get the best possible education they can and pursue careers. When marriage and children come along, priorities may shift, but the education will never ever be wasted. Raising of children should not be handed over to childcare centers, babysitters or nannies. In Genesis 18:19 God was willing to share His plans with Abraham about Sodom and Gomorrah because God knew that Abraham, “19….will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him.” Certainly, Abraham and Sarah did not leave the teaching and education of Isaac in the hands of servants.

**Virtuous Woman Crown to her Husband**

Other scriptures describe how a wife can help build up her husband’s stature in society.

Proverbs 12:4 says, “4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that makes ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.”

1 Corinthians 11:7, “7…the woman is the glory of the man.”

Clearly a virtuous wife can encourage and inspire her husband to become a ‘king’ in the sight of God and men. A good wife with her loyalty, faith in her husband can spur him to greatness. Rather than constantly nagging her husband, with proper communication she can help him excel in his career and life. And her virtuous conduct and life will enable him to be perceived as a wise man, a ‘king’ by men and recipient of honor from God.

Those are God’s instructions from the pages of the Bible on building a strong and happy marriage and a family. The Bible is the foundation of knowledge. It does not contain all knowledge. Humans must discover more knowledge on their own. But the bible provides a strong foundation for growing that knowledge.

For example, the Bible does not contain all knowledge on human bodies and sex within marriage. But such knowledge is vital. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s book “Missing Dimension in Sex” provides that vital additional knowledge. In addition, many marriage counselors and pastors who have counseled on marriage have accumulated very useful knowledge on how to have a happy marriage. Some choice books on the subject have been published and are worth reading. However, one must be very careful with such information. If the information builds on the foundation provided in the Bible, it should be accepted. If it contradicts any of the bedrock principles on marriage contained in the Bible, such advice from men should be rejected and the Bible followed.

**Other Sources of Knowledge**

Some good books have been written on the subject of having a successful happy marriage and family. Churches of God provide very useful information on this subject. I recommend the following web sites on these subjects: ucg.org, rcg.org, pcog.org and lcg.org.

I also recommend that you go to the *Focus on the Family* web site and make use of the resources mentioned there. Here are the topics addressed on the web site:

God's Design for Marriage; Preparing for Marriage; The Early Years; Daily Living; Communication and Conflict; Sex and Intimacy; Money and Finances; Strengthening Your Marriage; Marriage Challenges; Facing Crisis; Divorce and Infidelity; Marriage and the Military.

Here are some other principles I can suggest:

1) Husbands and wives must have a proper understanding of sex in marriage. Sex is only for marriage. Properly understanding sex in marriage requires an understanding of the male and female bodies. Reading Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s book “The Missing Dimension in Sex” (available free of charge at pcog.org) is a must before marriage to gain that understanding as part of building a happy marriage.

2. Avoid arguing at all costs. Heated exchanges are never productive and can have a devastating effect, leaving scars for a long time in a marriage. Follow the golden rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

3. Practice forgiveness. Forgiveness, tolerance and longsuffering may be required to iron out differences and smooth out areas of friction. If there has been infidelity in marriage, forgiveness with God’s help will be required to save the marriage. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in God’s instructions on divorce and remarriage from the pages of the Bible.

4. Manage Finances as a Family – Many arguments in a family can arise due to spending habits of spouses. It is absolutely essential to budget the family’s finances together and stick to planned spending. Children must also be involved later, particularly after they have reached the age of 12. Jesus Christ gave us an example when He told His parents at age 12 that He must be about His Father’s business. For this purpose, I suggest both husband and wife should understand the basic principles behind the accounting journal, ledger and preparing income and expenses statement, balancing the bank check book as taught in introduction to accounting.

5. Keep up the romance in your marriage. Continually uplift, encourage and inspire your mate because your happiness is intertwined. In this regard I would buy and read Gary Chapman book *“The Five Love Languages.”* Here is what is written on the Focus on the Family web site:

UNDERSTANDING THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES by Gary Chapman,

After 30 years as a marriage counselor, I am convinced that there are five basic love languages – five ways to express love emotionally. Each person has a primary love language that we must learn to speak if we want that person to feel loved.

*Words of Affirmation*

“One time when my wife and I were visiting our daughter and son-in-law and our two grandchildren, our son-in-law took the garbage out after dinner. When he walked back into the room where we were talking with our daughter, she looked up and said, "John, thanks for taking the garbage out."

“Inside I said, "Yes!" because I knew the power of appreciation. I can't tell you how many men and women have sat in my office over the past 30 years and said to me, "I work my tail off every day, yet my spouse acts like I haven't done a thing. I never get a single word of appreciation."

“If your spouse's primary love language is words of affirmation, your spoken praise and appreciation will fall like rain on parched soil. Before long, you will see new life sprouting in your marriage as your spouse responds to your words of love.”

*Acts of Service*

“Do you remember the old saying, "Actions speak louder than words"? For some people, that is particularly true of love. If acts of service is your spouse's primary love language, nothing will speak more deeply to him or her emotionally than simple acts of service.

“Maxine, who had been married for 15 years, came to my office one day because she was frustrated with her marriage. Listen to what she said: "I don't understand David. Every day he tells me that he loves me, but he never does anything to help me. He just sits on the couch watching TV while I wash the dishes, and the thought never crosses his mind to help me. I'm sick of hearing 'I love you.' If he loved me, he would do something to help me."

“Maxine's primary love language is acts of service (not words of affirmation), and even though her husband, David, loved her, he had never learned to express his love in a way that made her feel loved. However, after David and I talked, and he read The Five Love Languages, he got the picture and started speaking Maxine's love language. In less than a month, her love tank was beginning to fill up, and their marriage moved from winter to spring.

“The next time I talked to Maxine, she said, "It's wonderful. I wish we had come for counseling 10 years ago. I never knew about the love languages. I just knew I didn't feel loved."

*Receiving Gifts*

“In every society throughout human history, gift giving has been perceived as an expression of love. Giving gifts is universal, because there is something inside the human psyche that says if you love someone, you will give to him or her.

“What many people do not understand is that for some people, receiving gifts is their primary love language. It's the thing that makes them feel loved most deeply. If you're married to someone whose primary love language is gift giving, you will make your spouse feel loved and treasured by giving gifts on birthdays, holidays, anniversaries and "no occasion" days.

“The gifts need not be expensive or elaborate; it's the thought that counts. Even something as simple as a homemade card or a few cheerful flowers will communicate your love to your spouse. Little things mean a lot to a person whose primary love language is receiving gifts.”

*Quality Time*

“If your spouse's love language is quality time, giving him or her your undivided attention is one of the best ways you can show your love. Some men pride themselves on being able to watch television, read a magazine, and listen to their wives, all at the same time. That is an admirable trait, but it is not speaking the love language of quality time.

“Instead, you must turn off the TV, lay the magazine down, look into your mate's eyes, and listen and interact. To your spouse, 20 minutes of your undivided attention – listening and conversing – is like a 20-minute refill of his or her love tank.

“Men, if you really want to impress your wife, the next time she walks into the room while you are watching a sporting event, put the television on mute and don't take your eyes off her as long as she's in the room. If she engages you in conversation, turn the TV off and give her your undivided attention. You will score a thousand points and her love tank will be overflowing.”

*Physical Touch*

“We have long known the emotional power of physical touch. That's why we pick up babies and touch them tenderly. Long before an infant understands the meaning of the word love, he or she feels loved by physical touch.

“In marriage, the love language of physical touch includes everything from putting a hand on your mate's shoulder as you walk by, touching his or her leg as you're driving together, and holding hands while you're walking to kissing, embracing and sexual intercourse.

“If physical touch is your spouse's primary love language, nothing communicates love more clearly than for you to take the initiative to reach out and touch your mate.”

Please, go, buy and read Gary Chapman book “The Five Love Languages.”

6. Build a Care Circle - The next suggestion I have is to build a care circle. I learnt this from Lisa Beamer’s book, “Let’s Roll” which is an account of the life of Lisa Beamer with her husband Todd Beamer who died in the United Airlines Flight 93 crash in Shanksville, Pennsylvania on 09/11/2001 when Todd Beamer and others on the flight did not let the hijackers crash the plane on the White House, the Pentagon or other such target.

The principle probably originated with Benjamin Franklin who wrote in his autobiography about his regular meetings with business friends to help develop each other. Lisa Beamer’s book describes carrying this principle in a Church setting which can be much more advantageous for families. God’s Church follows this principle, but it can be further enhanced and taken advantage of.

Lisa Beamer writes on p. 105, “One group that Todd and I became a part of was a care circle, several young people who usually met once a week on Sunday evening to talk about life issues in relation to our faith. Sometimes our discussion centered around a book we had all agreed to read; often the conversation focused on husband-wife relationships or other topics relating to spiritual growth. The group was more than merely a gab session. We frequently prayed with and for each other, as various members experienced tremendous victories and horrible defeats, great achievements and traumatic events in their lives. When Todd and I first joined the care group, most of the members were married, without children. Before long, our group boasted more than 15 kids among us, and parenting issues were added to our conversations.

“After we had lived in New Jersey for a few years, most of our closest friendships revolved around our Church and our Care Group. Todd and several of the guys – including Brian Mumau, Doug McMillan, George Pittas, Steve Mayer, Axel Johnson, and John Edgar Caterson – started meeting for breakfast at 6:30 am on Friday mornings in an accountability group. The group’s primary purpose was to help the guys maintain a healthy balance between spiritual priorities and home/career responsibilities. They did everything together: played on the Church softball team, did home improvement projects, and at least once a year went on a special guys-only weekend golf trip.

“We had no idea how special those relationships would become to all of us.”

She writes on p 168, how the Care Circle helped her cope with her tragedy when Todd Beamer was killed:

“By that time, our home in Cranbury was swarming with people as well, Rev Bob Cushman, Todd’s and my pastor, was among the first to arrive, along with Dr. Al Hickok, the professional counselor at our Church. They came upstairs and prayed with me. Not knowing in what state of mind they might find me, they seemed almost surprised that I was cogent and able to function somewhat rationally.

“The telephone rang constantly, and since we were hanging on for any morsel of information from United Airlines, we quickly decided it was easier to answer the calls than to let them go to the answering machine. Doug MacMillan and Brian Mumau handled the phones and logistical matters. Members of our Care Circle and others from the community and Church brought in food all day long, feeding the many people who gathered at our home, cleaning up messes, running errands, and taking care of the children.

“Most of this went on without my knowledge while I was sequestered in the bedroom, although I was cognizant that people were there in our home, taking care of the myriad details. So many people pitched in to help during those days that I’ll never be able to thank them all. But God knows. Most important, friends from around the world wrapped us in their love, lifting us up in prayer.

“As it came time to prepare places for everyone to sleep…air mattresses seemed to appear out of thin air. The Care Circle thought of everything, and without fanfare or expectation of thanks, credit, or notice, they went about doing whatever needed to be done.”

Why I recommend building a Care Circle is that it is difficult to form close bonds with 200-500 members in your Church congregations. But it is possible to form close bonds with 8-12 people to help each other out in every tragic or happy event, daily living, and constantly help each other in spiritual development. It also enables pooling of talents for advice in tackling daily living issues.

7. Explain your reasons when you ask family members to do something. I have seen this failure in communications quite often, even in large organizations. We receive email communications from bosses to start doing something in a particular way. I have felt that there would be more enthusiastic compliance if the reason behind the change was mentioned in a sentence or two or a short paragraph. In a family, the husband and wife must not order each other to do something but first discuss the reasons why. Once that is done, the final decision becomes a joint decision with much greater chance of successful implementation.

This principle is actually even more important with children. If parents keep ordering them to do something without explaining the consequences of going the opposite way, children will resent being ordered around. Trust between parents and children can be built when parents explain in detail why they are asking their children to do something or not to do something. I have experienced this in my own life. I did not always want to follow what my parents told me and sometimes longed to be independent of their control. But later I realized how right they were. That problem can be so easily avoided and enthusiastic compliance from children obtained by parents if the benefits of following their advice and negative consequences of rejecting their advice are discussed in detail and explained.

8. To have your children listen to you, point to the example of younger children - One basic requirement for havong a family is to have children who listen to you enthusiastically. This attitude should be quite simple to inculcate in children. Just point a 5-year-old to the example of a 1-year-old and explain that the one year old does not know as much as the 5-year-old because he is young and has not learnt enough or had enough experience. In the same way the 5-year-old has not had enough experience whereas his parents have had much more experience and can guide him to avoid problems. That is why he should listen to them. In the same way God has had more experience than everybody because He has seen it all and can guide us properly. That’s why we need to pay heed to what is written in His word, the Bible.

Having a happy and successful marriage and family requires work as does any endeavor to be successful. The couple that works to make their marriage a success will find that their marriage works. Commitment to each other in marriage is the bedrock foundation of every successful marriage. But whatever the current state of your marriage you can always improve it with the guidelines provided in the Bible and other knowledge built upon that foundation by marriage counselors who respect the Bible as God’s word.

**Chapter 8**

 **History of Divorce**

More insights on marriage can be obtained when we analyze God’s perspective on divorce and remarriage. Before we analyze God’s instructions on divorce and marriage, an understanding of the history of marriage and divorce in Israel can help us appreciate the words of Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament and the words of Jesus and the apostle Paul in the New Testament.

We have discussed God’s instructions on marriage when the first marriage between Adam and Eve was solemnized. God intended a man to marry one woman (because God made only one woman for Adam), and marriage was to be till ‘death do us part.’ That pattern for marriage continued for about 825 years of human history. Lamech mentioned in Genesis 4:18-24 in the Bible then became the first bigamist around year 825 after Adam’s creation. Cain the wicked son of Adam did not originate this practice.

The wicked deeds of Lamech and his descendants in the area of marriage before Noah’s Flood are described in Genesis 6:2 as “…they took them wives of all which they chose.” They were marrying multiple wives, many interracially, keeping mistresses or having uninhibited sex. Certainly, divorces would have been initiated by these descendants of Lamech as well, and those who followed their lead subsequently.

According to Jewish tradition, Naamah the daughter of Lamech survived the Flood as the wife of Ham the son of Noah. Though Naamah remained married to Ham throughout her life, her descendants soon revived the same marriage practices after the Flood. She herself was a black Negro woman and in fact may have encouraged her black Negro son Cush, who was already married to his black sister and had children, to seduce a white girl to lend support to the initiation of interracial marriages and polygamy.

For about the first 2000 years of human history, God dealt with all of mankind in general. Before the Flood, under the influence of Cain, Lamech and his descendants and all of mankind had become so evil, and the world become saturated with violence, that God had no alternative but to drown that entire world in the Flood.

After the Flood, the descendants of Naamah the daughter of Lamech, mainly Cush and Nimrod, revived the same evils of their ancestors concerning marriage. Many of all races had joined with them, rejecting their ancestor Noah’s advice. For the betterment of humanity God had decided that humans should spread out over the earth by their families. That meant that humanity would colonize different areas of the earth by race. But Cush, Nimrod and others wanted to keep humanity together to rule over them. They had dreams of ruling over all of humanity as their ancestor Lamech had done before the Flood. And that would have included ruling over their ancestor Noah and his son Shem’s family, part of which remained loyal to Noah. They would have executed Noah and Shem if needed.

But God intervened by confusing the language of mankind from one language to multiple languages. This forced humanity to separate out by families and by race, and start moving away from the empire Cush and Nimrod were building. However, Cush’s white mistress, Semiramis, and their son Nimrod continued to try to pervert the marriage institution. They waged a massive struggle against God’s way of life and the marriage institution preached by Noah and his son Shem. Then Noah died because of old age, and Shem himself was getting old and could not influence events much. Also, the population of the world was growing and moving away from each other.

About 400 years after the Flood, the way of Baal another name for Nimrod and the goddess Ashtoreth, another name for his mother and wife Semiramis, won out. The ancient Assyrians, the ancestors of the modern Germans, were able to force that way on much of humanity so that no one remained loyal to God’s way of life except for a handful of people, with a young man among them named Abraham.

Shem had died of old age. The only people who remained loyal to God’s way of life were Haran, the elder brother of Abraham, Haran’s son Lot, Abraham and his wife Sarah. Then Haran lost his life in a battle with the Assyrians and Abraham had to flee for his life. It’s possible that Haran and Abraham’s father Terah who had given in to the paganism of Nimrod and Semiramis later changed and began following the true God. But Terah too died of old age. That left only 3 people in the entire world: Abraham, his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot who remained loyal to God’s way of life.

Thus, began God’s next phase in dealing with humanity. For about the first two thousand years God dealt with all of mankind in general. Once before the Flood and then in about 400 years after the Flood all of mankind went astray from the true God and followed Satan’s ways as originated and propagated through Nimrod and Semiramis. But God had already put His next phase of dealing with humanity into motion. He would take Abraham and make his descendants into His model nation of Israel.

**History of Marriage in the World**

God did not abandon the other nations as far as marriage was concerned. When world population grew, and families became tribes and moved away from the area of Babylon, most realized the foolishness of the way of Semiramis and Nimrod of “anything goes” and stuck to the traditional marriage institution as God had originally ordained. Thus, there was not much perversion of the institution around the world.

However, sexual perversions continued for some time among the descendants of Ham and Naamah, particularly the Canaanites. God had to destroy their cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to give them a warning. Still the perversions continued. Finally, God had most of them destroyed through the Israelites when God brought them out of Egypt. So, the perversions ended with their death. Some of them escaped into other countries, but had to come under the influence of those nations. That finally drove their sexual and marriage perversions away from them. Some of them stayed among Israelites as a subject or slave people, forced to follow Israel’s laws to be able to live among them peacefully. That drove out the perversions from among those Canaanites. So, God’s method for driving perversions out of humanity is to let them be enslaved. In slavery, if they continued their perversions, they would lose their lives at the hands of their masters.

Besides the Canaanites, perversion of marriage might have continued among other descendants of Ham. But today they exist as just tiny tribes in remote places in the world. God simply destroyed most of them.

**History of Marriage and Divorce in Israel**

Now let’s consider God’s dealings with His model nation, ancient Israel. Through Moses God documented the perversions being practiced by the Canaanites whose land they were going to possess and commanded Israel not to practice them and prescribed the death penalty for those who did.

God laid down the laws concerning marriage, and the practice of fornication and adultery. In most situations the penalty was death.

When the marriage institution was created at the time of the creation of Adam and Eve, the marriage was to be between one man and one woman for life. But by the time of Moses divorces were taking place among Israelites without regard to what God’s will was. So, God inspired Moses to address the situation and lay down the Law under which divorce could be allowed. Jesus the giver of that law through Moses explained when He came as a human being that divorce was allowed because of the hardness of humanity’s hearts in general, which other prophets describe as a “heart of stone.”

Let’s read the law concerning divorce in the book of Deuteronomy. Issues concerning marriage and putting away are mentioned in two places.

First Deuteronomy 22:13-21, “13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid [or virgin]: 15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: 16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hates her; 17 And, lo, he has given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not your daughter a maid [or virgin]; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. [The bible is not clear how all this was done.] 18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; 19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he has brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. 20 But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: 21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she has wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shall you put evil away from among you.”

This situation is describing fraud committed before marriage. It is not describing a divorce but an annulment of the marriage because of fraud. The husband expected his wife to be a virgin, but did not find her to be a virgin. In this situation the marriage was not bound in God’s eyes because of fraud.

The second passage in Deuteronomy specifically mentions the conditions under which divorce could be granted.

This law is stated in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, “When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her [“some unseemly thing” or “some matter of nakedness”—in other words, perhaps she has been naked in front of another man]: then let him write her a bill of divorcement [a better translation is that he write her a bill of divorcement, meaning that the divorce has already happened], and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and you shall not cause the land to sin, which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.”

This passage does not command divorce, but merely allows it if the parties want it.

Was divorce a major problem in ancient Israel before Israel and Judah went into captivity? If it had been a major problem, God would have spoken through the prophets of those times to condemn it. But none of the prophets before the captivity mention it. The only divorce addressed by the prophets is God divorcing ancient Israel because of their unfaithfulness to Him and adultery with other gods of wood and stone. So, divorces were taking place in ancient Israel, but were not a major problem.

However, divorce had become a major problem among the Jews that returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel from the captivity. It had become such a major problem that God sent Malachi the prophet to condemn it in the strongest terms, stating that “He hates divorce.”

Malachi 2:13-16, “13 And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.14 Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 5 But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. 6 "For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," Says the Lord of hosts. "Therefore, take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

There can be no stronger condemnation of divorce than that given through Malachi the prophet. God says He hates it. Here men were dealing treacherously with their wives and divorcing them for any reason. Can you imagine the plight of a 30-50 year old wife just divorced when her husband has given her divorce papers and walked away from her and the kids, or even worse and more likely, thrust her and the kids out of his home? What weeping and crying there would be in front of God for that family and her extended family? God says such divorces were acts of violence, and may have actually led to violence between the families. No wonder God rejected the prayers and offerings of such people.

They had no welfare system in place. The wives were totally dependent on their husbands to provide for them. The burden of caring for the divorced wife and her children fell on her family, or they were left to fend for themselves.

The effects of divorce have been somewhat mitigated in the USA and UK due to the welfare system. But that is simply encouraging more divorce and cohabitation and children born out of wedlock who then become wards of the state in many cases. I dealt with mostly such people in my job in the welfare department of the State of Florida in the USA.

Did God’s condemnation of divorce through Malachi the prophet solve the problem among the Jews? Not at all!

In the time of the Pharisees two schools of thought had arisen concerning the passages in Deuteronomy 24 about divorce. One was the school of Hillel which allowed divorce for any and every reason. The second school, that of Shammai, was more conservative and allowed divorce only for unchastity, meaning adultery, prostitution or some other sexual promiscuity.”

A source (*Gittin, Chapter Nine, Mishnah Ten*), describing these two schools of thought, states this: “Rabbi Shammai says, ‘A man should not divorce his wife unless he has found her guilty of some unseemly conduct, as to say, because he has found some unseemly thing [sexually-related] in her according to Deuteronomy 24.’ Rabbi Hillel, however, says, ‘Even if she has merely spoiled his food she has prepared, he has found something unseemly in her. Even if he finds another woman more beautiful than she is, she no longer has favor in his sight. Rabbi Akiva says, [he may divorce her] even if he finds another woman more beautiful than she is, as it says, ‘it cometh to pass’, if she find no favor in his eyes.’” Many Jews obtained divorces based on Hillel’s ridiculous, liberal teaching

These were the situations concerning divorce and remarriage among the Jews that Jesus and later Paul the apostle addressed in the New Testament.

The Jews ended up being driven from their land, and divorce has not been such a problem among them since then.

Divorce has not been a severe problem in the nations of Israel except in modern times. Today people are getting divorced for any reason. Examples include incompatibility, irreconcilable differences, loss of interest, infertility, one party has gained weight, mental cruelty, alienation of affection, incompatibility, loss of interest, adultery, death of a child, financial problems and virtually any reason human nature can invent. Husbands and wives simply walk out on each other, thus, without any inhibition, “putting away what God has joined together.”

Why should Israelite nations expect a different result this time? God has cured such problems of infidelity in marriage and sexual perversions through defeat in war and national slavery in the past. Uninhibited divorce and remarriage will likely be one of the major causes of coming Israelite nations’ slavery.

Satan has had a direct hand through his agents, the German masqueraders in America, in multiplying divorce. Germans and German masqueraders living in Britain and other countries such as Charles Darwin originated and popularized the theory of evolution which led to most in our nations rejecting God as their Creator. They then inventing the fiction that marriage was a human invention rather than a divinely ordained institution. So, they could dispense with marriage when suited them.

*Then German masqueraders in America and Britain married Israelite men and women and divorced them to further popularize divorce within our nations. It has been part of their strategy to destroy our nations from within and control our population growth.*

German masqueraders have also infiltrated God’s Church from the very beginning as tares. Genuine Church ministers have had a horrible time when dealing with marriages, divorce and remarriage between these tares and genuine members of God’s Church. After their experiences some ministers commented that some people in God’s Church were never really converted. But now we know the real truth. These were tares planted by Satan in God’s Church who obeyed Satan’s commands and tried and tested members and the ministry in every abominable way with diabolical cunning craftiness that only Satan can invent, stretching the limits of God’s law so that they could blame it all on the genuine member spouses despite making their lives as miserable as possible. They would have tested the patience of genuine members to their utmost limits, finally ending the marriages in divorce. No matter what the genuine member may have done to try to reconcile and solve their marriage problems, the tares would have invented some new thing as directed by Satan to continue the tension in the marriage, and as much as possible to lay the blame for the entire tension on the genuine member. I deal with such tactics multiple times in my life literally every day and have lived with them for more than 57 years now. I can only imagine the nightmare the genuine members must have gone through in living with such infiltrator spouses.

Because of all these horrible experiences, peoples’ hearts in Israelite nations and around the world have hardened as Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, “1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”

How much of harder heart can people have than these described here.

The cause of such problems seems to be prosperity which leads to decadence as in ancient Sodom and Gomorrah, and Rome. That’s why Jeremiah prophesied about our modern Israelite nations, America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jewish state of Israel, in Jeremiah 5:7-11, “7 How shall I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. 8 They were as fed horses in the morning: everyone neighed after his neighbor’s wife. 9 Shall I not visit for these things? says the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? 10 Go up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord’s. 11 For the house of Israel [America and British Commonwealth nations] and the house of Judah [the Jews] have dealt very treacherously against me, says the Lord.”

It seems to be a general human condition that prosperity leads most people in a nation to divorce and remarry, and into decadence.

God drove away perversion of marriage out of people in the past by letting them be destroyed or defeated in war and sold into slavery. Besides ancient Israel, another major example is ancient Rome. One of the major reasons for the downfall of that empire was the rampant divorce and remarriage. But Italians now have strong families with the father as the head of the family. America and Britain are following in the footsteps of ancient Rome as far as sexual perversions and divorce and remarriage are concerned. Why should our Israelite nations expect a different result for themselves than ancient Rome and the Canaanites?

That briefly is the history of divorce in the world and in Israel. After God’s dealing with His model nation of Israel for about 2000 years, which refused to become His model nation, He had to divorce her because of her infidelities [meaning following pagan gods]. Then God began the next phase of His plan to deal with humanity. He decided to raise another model nation, His Church which would bring forth the fruits He seeks. The Church would deliver the fruits God seeks because it would have His holy spirit to enable it to keep God’s laws in the letter and spiritual intent of the Law.

**Chapter 9**

**Divorce and Remarriage Law**

We have already discussed God’s instructions in Deuteronomy 22:13-14, “13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid [or virgin]:”

This we have understood to be dissolution of marriage because a fraud has been committed. This is not describing divorce, but annulment of a marriage because of sexual fraud, because God had not bound such a marriage. Other kinds of fraud that can be committed would include a person claiming to be in perfect health but has terminal cancer; a drug addict or an alcoholic; someone with a criminal past, a prison record, or has undisclosed children. The defrauded party can end the marriage soon after the fraud is discovered if he or she chooses to. But on discovery of the fraud, if the offended party chooses to continue in the marriage, then that party cannot make a case for fraud 10, 15 or 20 years later to end the marriage.

Now let’s reread and consider what Moses wrote concerning the conditions under which divorce could be allowed:

Deuteronomy 24:1-2 states, “1 When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.”

In this reading do you find anything that says a man may divorce his wife for any reason? When Moses wrote the words “that she find no favor in his eyes,” he did not end the sentence there. He went on to say that “she find no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her.” So, the only reason a man divorcing his wife could be allowed to stand is because he found some uncleanness in her, as a result of which she no longer finds favor in his eyes. What in this reading of the law lends even an iota of support for Rabbi Hillel’s liberal view that a man may divorce his wife for any reason?

The conservative view of Shammai is closer to the truth according to which divorce could be allowed only for unchastity, meaning adultery, prostitution or some other sexual promiscuity. So, a man should not divorce his wife unless he has found her guilty of some sexually-related unseemly conduct.

Just as the German masquerader Charles Darwin, originator of the theory of evolution, and a demon-possessed Jew named Karl Marx, originator of communism were able to do so much evil to humanity, Rabbi Hillel either was such a descendant of liberal Jews returned from Babylon, or descendant of a Babylonian masquerader (probably steeped in the Babylonian Mystery religion like Simon the Magician of Acts 8 who sought to buy God’s gift of imparting Holy Spirit to those baptized with money from Peter the apostle) who had found his way into a high position in Judaism and was able to do much evil among the Jews by the time Jesus came into the world, just as Simon the Magician would do later to Christianity. Or Hillel could have become liberalized, influenced by Greek culture who perverted the teaching of Moses to say that a man could divorce his wife for any reason. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4 again. Moses did not allow divorce for any reason, but only if the man had found some unseemly sexual conduct in his wife prior to marriage.

After a few centuries, the Jews who went into captivity, and even those who returned became liberal because they believed that God had not kept His promises to David to have his descendant sit upon the throne of Israel forever. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jews did not have a nation of their own till 1948 when the modern state of Israel was born. They believed that David’s dynasty had ended, without realizing that Jeremiah the prophet had been used by God to uproot David’s throne from the House of Judah and transplant it in Ireland among the House of Israel. Because of this error in interpreting the scriptures, most Jews did not want to retain their religion. Those who settled in other nations adopted the pagan religions of the lands they settled in, just as my Jewish ancestors in India became Hindus, and later some became Sikhs. Many converted to Islam. Even many of those who came back to Jerusalem became liberals doing whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

By the time of Jesus Christ, fables had entered into the Jewish religious literature, some of the books of the Apocrypha being examples. One can read many more similar fables in other Jewish commentaries of those times. Paul the apostle mentions Jewish fables and tells Timothy and Titus to shun such fables in 1 Timothy 1:4, 4:7, 2 Timothy 4:4 and Titus 1:14. The apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:16, while referring to the truth of the coming of Jesus Christ to pay the death penalty for humanity’s sins and His resurrection says: “16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”

Satan uses the device of cunning fables to corrupt history or religious truth. He has used Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Indian myths to corrupt pre-Flood and immediate post-Flood history so that humanity would not learn the lessons that history should have taught us that mixing of races and that following Satan doesn’t work for the welfare of humanity. That is how corruptions in interpretations of God’s law concerning divorce and remarriage like those of Rabbi Hillel entered the Jewish literature.

Getting back to the divorce and remarriage Law, now read verses 3-4 in Deuteronomy 24, “1 When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no FAVOR in his eyes, because he has found some UNCLEANNESS in her: then let him write her a BILL OF DIVORCEMENT, and give it in her hand, and SEND HER OUT of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. 3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and gives it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; 4 Her former husband, which sent her away , may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and you shall not cause the land to sin, which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.”

These verses are saying that if a man divorces his wife, then he may not remarry her again if her later husband divorces her or dies. God is instructing the Israelites that if because of the hardness of their hearts they are going to divorce anyway without regard to His will and purpose for marriage, then they cannot remarry the wife they had divorced. Moses was not commanding the Israelites to divorce because of something unseemly in the conduct of their wives. In his instructions he was simply allowing it to happen if they wanted it without regard to God’s will and purpose.

The Hebrew word translated FAVOR is *Khane*, #2580 in Strong’s Concordance of the Hebrew, which can be translated subjectively as graciousness, kindness, favor. Objectively the word relates to favor, grace, pleasant, precious or well-favored as it relates to beauty.

With so many different ways the word can be translated, now we can understand how various translators or commentators could wrest words and provide a wide variety of interpretations of this statement of the Law. Some would say divorce could be allowed for any reason if the wife finds no favor in the man’s eyes, even if she is no longer beautiful.

The word translated UNCLEANNESS is *eroah* #6172 in Strong’s Concordance which is derived from the root Hebrew word *arah*, #6168 in Strong’s, which can mean to make bare, hence to empty, pour out, demolish; leave, destitute, discover, make naked, rase or uncover. Therefore, the word *eroah* translated UNCLEANNESS can also mean nudity, or figuratively disgrace, blemish, nakedness, shame or uncleanness.

An interpreter of this law or a commentator may choose any of these meanings to say that a man may divorce his wife because some information came to light that she had been naked before a man or men before their marriage, or can go to another extreme saying he had found something shameful or disgraceful in her past; so he has the right to divorce her. And what he or she considers shameful or disgraceful in the spouse’s past or present is his or her own subjective opinion. Who decides what a person finds some conduct in another to be disgraceful or shameful? And how many in the world have nothing disgraceful at all in their past?

Jesus Christ illustrated this very well in the real incident of the woman taken in the very act of adultery in John 8:3-11, “3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. 7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

The word translated “BILL OF DIVORCEMENT” is *ker-ee-thooth*, #3748 in Strong’s means cutting of the matrimonial bond or divorce. The word translated “sends her out” is the Hebrew word *Shalach* (pronounced Shaw-lakh), #7971 in Strong’s Concordance, which is a root word meaning to send away for, or out, appoint, bring on the way, let depart, push away, cast away or out, conduct, earnestly, or put away. Two different words BILL OF DIVORCEMENT and the SEND AWAY are used.

As already mentioned, these verses began to be interpreted in different ways by the time of Jesus Christ. One interpretation is that this passage does not command divorce, but merely says that if the man is going to divorce anyway without regard to God’s will by giving the wife a bill of divorcement, then he may not take her to be his wife again. So what Moses was writing in the Law is that if the husband has found some uncleanness in his wife before marriage, and he writes her a bill of divorcement and sends her away, then he can never remarry her. He was laying down the law about remarriage, and not commanding that the husband divorce his wife if some uncleanness in her before marriage came to light.

Others such as the Rabbi Hillel School interpret these verses to mean that Moses is allowing the parties to give a bill of divorcement for any or every unseemly reason and end the marriage, such as the wife spoiling the man’s food, or he has found someone more beautiful than her. The Hillel school of thought could justify its position by the different meanings of the Hebrew words for FAVOR and UNCLEANNESS. Still others such as the Rabbi Shammai School differ in their interpretation of the reason for the divorce being allowed. They say divorce is allowed only if “he has found some sexually-related uncleanness in her.” Shammai was more conservative and allowed divorce only for unchastity, meaning adultery, prostitution or some other sexual promiscuity.” Which interpretation is correct?

Because of the wide variety of interpretations of the Law as stated by Moses, Only God who originally gave the Law could clarify what was the correct interpretation. Happily for us, the Pharisees posed this very issue to Jesus Christ, the God who originally gave the Law to Moses, whose answer provides the correct interpretation.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus first clarified what adultery is in the letter of the law as well as its spiritual intent. He said in Matthew 5:31-32, “31 It has been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you [Jesus is here clarifying Moses, meaning that the Pharisees and the peoples’ interpretation of Moses’ Law is incorrect], that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication [the Greek word here is ‘porneia’], causes her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery.”

The meaning of the Greek word “porneia” and how it is used in this verse will be discussed at greater length later. But bear in mind that divorce was not a command in the Law given by Moses, but something allowed as people demanded it and were doing it anyway. The Law was simply stating that if the husband divorces his wife because of her conduct before marriage, then he may never remarry her.

So we can summarize the divorce and remarriage law as stated in the Law of Moses:

1. A marriage may be annulled or put aside if either party has been deceived by the other prior to marriage. But such fraud or deception should be acted upon when discovered and not decades after the discovery.

2. The second reason Moses’ law allowed divorce to stand is if a man or woman has found something unseemly in the sexually related conduct of the spouse before or after marriage. If under this condition a divorce takes place, then the person may not remarry his or her former spouse.

Some argue that Moses was writing the Immutable Law and cannot be changed. This issue will also be addressed later.

**Pharisees Raise the Issue**

Now consider Jesus’ response to the Pharisees when they raised this issue with Him concerning the Law in Deuteronomy 24. That conversation is recorded in Matthew 19:3-12, “3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? [Here they were stating the Hillel School view of divorce.] 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have you not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”

The Greek word translated PUT AWAY is *apoluo*, #630 in Strong’s Greek Concordance which means to free fully i.e. literally relieve, release, dismiss, or figuratively let die, pardon, or specifically divorce, let depart, let go, loose, send or put away, set at liberty.

The Greek word translated ASUNDER is *chorizo* (pronounced Kho-rid’-zo), Strong’s #5563 which means to place room between, i.e. part, or to go away, depart, put asunder or separate.

We see that when the Pharisees tried to question Jesus whether He agreed with the Hillel School view of divorce for any reason, He referred them to Genesis 2 when the marriage was instituted, pointing out that marriage is supposed to be permanent, “till death do us part.” But the Pharisees persisted:

“7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?”

Here the Pharisees were misquoting Moses’ Law. The Pharisees said, “Why did Moses command.” Moses did not command divorce if the man finds some uncleanness in his wife prior to marriage, but merely allowed it because they were doing it anyway because of the hardness of their hearts, without regard to God’s will for the marriage institution.

Now consider this. If after marriage some gross sexual uncleanness prior to marriage came to light which was not disclosed or discussed prior to marriage, then fraud had been committed. Then the couple could divorce or rather annul the marriage on the grounds of fraud. When we view the law concerning divorce in Deuteronomy 24 in this way it is linked to the law concerning annulment of marriage and remarriage in Deuteronomy 22:13-3.

But let’s return to Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees about “why did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away?”

“8 He says unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”

Jesus knew that because of the hardness of the hearts of ancient Israelites unsoftened by God’s holy spirit, people would not be able to forgive and overlook the past mistakes of others. So, Moses merely allowed the divorce, not commanded as the Pharisees alleged, as they were doing it anyway. But Jesus told them that it is not God’s intention. Referring to Genesis 2 He told the Pharisees that God’s intention is that marriage be permanent. Jesus continued in verse 9:

“9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication [the Greek word here is “porneia”], and shall marry another, commits adultery [a different Greek word “moicheia” which means adultery]: and whoso marries her which is put away commits adultery.”

The Pharisees had basically asked Jesus if He agreed with the Hillel School’s liberal view of divorce or the more conservative view of the Shammai School. In His answer Jesus was even more conservative than the Shammai School’s view. He was allowing annulment of marriage if ‘fornication’ is discovered after marriage, whereas Shammai School believed that divorce could be allowed even for adultery [which obviously takes place after marriage], prostitution or other sexual promiscuity after marriage.

After Jesus had answered the Pharisees, His disciples were shocked and questioned Him further in verse 10:

“10 His disciples say unto him, if the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” This remark illustrates how deeply the liberal thinking had permeated society of those times. The mindset of even the disciples was that when their wife got old and no longer pleased the husband, she could be put away and they could remarry. If she could not be put away, then they were better off not marrying. Such thinking would lead to cohabiting without marriage as happens in America and British Commonwealth nations today. Jesus answered:

“11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.”

Jesus here told the disciples that the world at large could not accept His saying because of the hardness of their hearts. But those to whom it is given, meaning His disciples, whose hearts would be softened by God’s holy spirit after conversion, would then be able to receive and accept this saying. They could understand the deep meaning, sanctity and permanence of marriage as a type of the marriage between Jesus Christ and His Church and would accept it.

Jesus continued further: “12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb [those who would be unable to marry because of a birth defect]: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men [meaning castrated as ancient rulers did to those who kept their harems]: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.” These would be men who have chosen not to marry as would have been the case with Paul the apostle, or who cannot marry because he or she is bound to someone else but is separated. In this case remarriage is not allowed. This situation would be covered later.

Jesus concluded with the words: “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” He basically told the disciples that after conversion, members of His Church have to endure the circumstances they find themselves in, including making themselves like eunuchs for the Kingdom of God’s sake if that is necessary because of separation, but still bound in marriage. He told them that marriage is permanent, and they have to patiently make it work. Thus, God’s standard for marriage between members of His Church is even higher than the most conservative view of marriage in the world concerning divorce and remarriage.

Some, including many commentaries state that the Greek word “porneia” has a much broader meaning than mere ‘fornication’ and can include any kind of sexual immorality, including adultery. Here is how other Bible translations translate Matthew 19:9:

NKJV: 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

NIV: 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

CEB: 9 I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Complete Jewish Bible: 9 Now what I say to you is that whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery!"

ASV: 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.

New Century Version: 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery. The only reason for a man to divorce his wife is if his wife has sexual relations with another man."

RSV: 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery."

We see that most Bible translations use the broader meaning of “porneia” to translate this verse, allowing divorce on the grounds of any type of sexual immorality, either undiscovered fornication before marriage that has come to light, or adultery or other sexual promiscuity after marriage. Only the KJV and ASV use the word fornication as the only grounds of divorce. The question therefore is, what meaning of the word “porneia” did Jesus actually intend in His answer to the Pharisees.

The conclusion God’s Church had reached before the split into different organizations in the 1990s was that Jesus intended the meaning to be “fornication” as the only grounds for divorce. That is the interpretation of the Law that was followed previously and still adhered to by three of the larger Church of God organizations: The Living Church of God (LCG), The Philadelphia Church of God (PCOG) and The Restored Church of God (RCG). However, the United Church of God (UCG), of which I am a member, in its statement of belief of 1997 on Divorce and Remarriage differed from the position of the other Church of God organizations on the meaning of “porneia” to include sexual immorality after marriage as well and hence grounds for divorce. Which view is correct?

The Churches that hold the view that Jesus meant “porneia” to mean “fornication” offer four reasons for their view.

1) If Jesus Christ intended the meaning to be adultery as grounds for divorce, He would have specifically used the more precise word “moicheia” instead of “porneia”. In fact, in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 both the words are used. So “porneia” is used in a contrasting sense than “moicheia” and hence the intended meaning must be “fornication”.

2) According to the RCG booklet “*Understanding Divorce and Remarriage*”, “Nowhere in the New Testament is “porneia” used where the meaning in context is adultery. This would be the only place (in Matthew 19:9), if indeed Christ meant adultery.

3) Thirdly, if Jesus Christ intended “adultery” to be the meaning of “porneia”, then Matthew 19:9 would read, “whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for adultery [not just fornication] and shall marry another commits adultery and causes her to commit adultery.” Question then is why would there be a concern about adultery resulting from putting away a spouse if adultery was the reason for putting away? It does not make sense.

4) In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus stated, “27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Jesus here defined adultery to include lusting after another person than one’s own spouse. In such situations if a wife catches her husband watching another woman for too long, she could accuse him of committing adultery of the heart and use that as grounds for divorce. If Jesus meant adultery [which would also mean ‘lust’ or adultery of the heart] as the meaning of ‘porneia’ as a reason for divorce, then Jesus would have destroyed marriage as an institution.

This particular objection is easily met. From the context of Matthew 5, we can see that Jesus was broadening the law to cover the intent of the Law. He was telling humans that we should curb our underlying attitudes that lead to the sins, such as curbing anger that leads to murder and curbing lust that leads to adultery. Therefore, the context in Matthew 5:27-28 is different from the context in Matthew 19:9 in which the term adultery is used. Jesus was not allowing lust as a ground for divorce on the grounds of adultery. He was simply warning us to guard against unbridled lust as it would lead to adultery, just as unbridled anger could lead to murder.

The other objections can be met if we use the broader meaning of “porneia” to include sexual immorality of any kind, which would include fornication, adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, incest and other kinds of sexual perversions. All Bible dictionaries and lexicons are in agreement that while the word “moicheia” has the narrow meaning ‘adultery’ the word ‘porneia’ has a broader meaning to include all kinds of sexual immorality, including adultery. While the KJV invariably translates “porneia” as fornication in the NT, when we look at the context, it can have a broader meaning. Indeed, in such verses the broader meaning makes more sense. The KJV is used in the following examples which translates “porneia” as fornication to illustrate that the context can have the broader meaning of all kinds of ‘sexual immorality”:

John 8:41, “41 You do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.” Here the meaning adultery or fornication would fit the context.

Acts 15:20, 29, “20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood…29 That you abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication:” Here again the broader meaning “sexual immorality” would fit the context as well as fornication.

The UCG statement of belief on “Divorce and Remarriage” lists other verses where the broader meaning “sexual Immorality” of all kinds would fit the context. These include:

1 Cor 5:1, “1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication [or sexual immorality] among you, and such fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’] as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.” Here from the context, clearly the translation should be adultery or sexual immorality, rather than fornication.

1 Cor 6:13, 18, “13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’], but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body…18 Flee fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’]. Every sin that a man does is without the body; but he that commits fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’] sins against his own body.”

2 Cor 12:21, “21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’] and lasciviousness which they have committed.”

Gal 5:19, “19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’ or sexual perversion], uncleanness, lasciviousness…”

Eph 5:3, “3 But fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’], and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints…

Col 3:5, “5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’], uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience…” In context, ‘porneia’ here can only mean the broader sexual immorality.

1 Thes 4:3, “3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’]: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:”

Rev 9:21, “21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication [or ‘sexual immorality’], nor of their thefts.”

Thus, we can meet the first objection that “porneia” always means fornication as translated in the KJV. The broader translation ‘sexual immorality’ is more appropriate in most places as other Bible translations actually use.

Next is the objection that if Jesus meant adultery to be the meaning of ‘porneia’ then He could have simply used the more precise word ‘moicheia’ which means adultery. In addition, Matthew 19:9 would translate as “whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for adultery [not just fornication] and shall marry another commits adultery and causes her to commit adultery.” The sentence does not make sense. And why would there be a concern about adultery if adultery is the grounds for divorce.

This objection is easily met if we use the broader meaning of ‘porneia’. For example, the sentence would read, “whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for sexual immorality [not just fornication] and shall marry another commits adultery and causes her to commit adultery.” Now the sentence makes perfect sense. In fact, the NKJV translates this verse as follows:

Sex between an illegally divorced spouse [on grounds other than ‘porneia’ or ‘sexual immorality’] and remarrying another can only be described precisely as adultery, not fornication or ‘sexual immorality.’ So using the word ‘moicheia’ to mean adultery is the right word to describe the act of an illegal divorce and remarriage after that as a matter of Law. Using ‘porneia’ with its broader meaning as grounds for divorce is also the correct word to use. Therefore using ‘porneia’ and ‘moicheia’ in the same sentence when we use the broader meaning of ‘porneia’ as ‘sexual immorality’ including adultery makes as much sense as translating it as ‘fornication.’ We are not forced to translate ‘porneia’ only as ‘fornication’ for the sentence to make sense.

We thus see that the word ‘porneia’ has a broader meaning than just fornication. But it also includes fornication. However, we are still left to deal with the question of “Which meaning of ‘porneia’ did Jesus intend?” Did He mean to allow just fornication as grounds for a legal divorce, or broader sexual immorality as well? It also leads to further questions. Can one act of sexual immorality constitute grounds for a legal divorce, or a repeat pattern of such immoral acts is required as grounds for divorce? And what role should forgiveness play in all of this?

**Example Set by the God of the Old Testament**

These questions can be answered when we look at the example Jesus Christ set for us as the God of the Old Testament.

Jesus Christ as the God of the Old Testament was married to ancient Israel. He married the nation as a virgin as it was formed after the Exodus from Egypt. But history tells us that ancient Israel as a nation was unfaithful to its God and went after other pagan gods, thus committing adultery. And the Bible describes in great detail how the nation repeatedly committed adultery with other gods as a pattern. When the nation committed adultery with other gods and was oppressed by surrounding nations it returned to its God. He forgave the nation for its adultery and delivered her from the hands of its enemies. When the nation had rest, it committed adultery again and was again oppressed by its neighbors. This pattern continued for hundreds of years.

Finally Jesus Christ the God of the Old Testament divorced His wife ancient Israel according to the Law of Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1“1 When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her [some translations use the word ‘unseemly’ in place of ‘uncleanness’]: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.”

God of the Old Testament divorced ancient Israel for its repeated adulteries and put her out of His house, meaning put her out of His land to be taken out of the land as slaves.

The God of the Old Testament describes the divorce through Jeremiah the prophet in Jeremiah 3:6-15:

6 The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Have you seen that which backsliding Israel has done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there has played the harlot. 7 And I said after she had done all these things, Turn unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 *And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce*; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. 9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks [pagan stone and wood idols].10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, says the Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah. 12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, you backsliding Israel, says the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. 13 Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed my voice, says the Lord. 14 Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: 15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

We know the result of the warning through the prophets. Ancient House of Israel was given a bill of divorcement and put away from God’s land and has not returned. Ancient Judah was also put away for all its adulteries and sent out of the land as a slave nation. But the Bible does not mention that the House of Judah was given a bill of divorce. Judah was allowed to return to its land after the 70-year captivity. But its marriage ended at the death of Her Husband, Jesus Christ as the God of the Old Testament. Then Jeremiah mentions bringing back the children one of a city and two of a family to Zion. This is talking about the second Exodus in the future for both the Houses of Israel and Judah.

Thus, we see that Jesus Christ as the God of the Old Testament set the example for us to follow regarding divorce and remarriage. He as the God of the Old Testament gave the Law to Moses concerning divorce and remarriage and would not have broken His own Law. He divorced ancient Israel for its repeated adulteries. Hence the Law allowed divorce for a repeated pattern for adultery, in addition to other forms of sexual immorality such as fornication, prostitution and other sexual perversions which are included in the broader meaning of the New Testament word ‘porneia’. In Moses law the Hebrew word translated as UNCLEANNESS or UNSEEMLY is *eroah* which in context relates to sexual uncleanness and is equivalent to the Greek word “porneia” which in context means “sexual immorality.”

So, Moses’ Law given by Jesus Christ as the God of the Old Testament allowed divorce for sexual uncleanness. Jesus Christ also allows divorce for sexual immorality in the New Testament. Thus, there has been no change in the Law concerning divorce and remarriage in the New Testament. In that sense, Moses’ Law stands immutable.

We may thus conclude that the correct translation of the word “porneia” as used in context by Jesus Christ is the broader “sexual immorality” of all kinds rather than the narrower ‘fornication.’ Thus, the UCG statement of belief concerning Divorce and Remarriage is correct on this issue and the other Church of God organizations need to amend their positions.

Divorce was allowed because of the hardness of heart of the ancient Israelites. But Jesus Christ as God of the Old Testament set the example for us in the New Testament in how we as members of His Church should live according to this Law. We are not to divorce unless there is a repeat egregious pattern of sexual immorality. Just as Jesus Christ forgave ancient Israel for its adulteries when she repented, we members of God’s Church in the New Testament follow that example in exercising forgiveness and not divorce for just one or two incidents of sexual immorality.

**Jesus Christ Explains How the Law is to be Applied**

As already explained, Jesus Christ clarified God’s intent in Moses’ Law concerning divorce in His Church in Matthew 19:11, “11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.”

Jesus here told the disciples that the world at large could not accept His saying because of the hardness of their hearts, but after conversion, with their hearts of stone softened by God’s holy spirit, members of His Church have to endure the circumstances they find themselves in, including making themselves like eunuchs for the Kingdom of God’s sake if that is necessary because of separation, but still bound in marriage. He told them that marriage is permanent and they have to patiently make it work. Thus, God’s standard for marriage between members of His Church is even higher than that followed according to even the most conservative view of marriage in the world concerning divorce and remarriage.

This makes it so much more important for young men and women in the Church to properly counsel with ministers about choosing the right mate before entering into marriage, realizing that marriage is till “death do us part” and that divorce is not an option if the marriage does not work out. You will not be allowed to divorce and remarry in God’s Church.

**Divorce on Grounds of Fraud**

A major issue we need to address is divorce on grounds of fraud or misrepresentation before marriage. This is the area that gives the ministry in God’s Church the most headaches because fraud can be committed or claimed at many different levels of severity, and may be extremely difficult to prove conclusively. For example, there may have been just a small withholding of information before marriage, but the spouse may feel and claim (or may fraudulently claim to increase the chance of divorce being granted) that this was a major misrepresentation constituting major fraud and wants divorce on grounds of fraud. Then the question arises, how much details of his or her past must a person disclose to a potential mate before entering into marriage?

Besides undisclosed fornication before marriage, other kinds of fraud that can be committed could include a person claiming to be in perfect health but has terminal cancer; or is a drug addict or an alcoholic; has a criminal past, prison record, or has other undisclosed children.

We need to stress here that Jesus in His clarification of Moses’ Law made no mention of divorce being allowed for such kinds of fraud. He mentioned divorce being permitted only for the cause of fornication or gross sexual misconduct prior to marriage which was not disclosed at the time of marriage. This issue needs to be addressed.

Jesus Christ wants marriages to be permanent, with two people doing their best to make the marriage work by learning to forgive each other’s sins, because there is no human being who has not sinned. Guidelines on dealing with divorce on the grounds of fraud can only be developed based on actual experience by ordained ministers in dealing with such cases.

The only kind of fraud in marriage that was addressed in the Bible is fornication, or sexual immorality. And the Law always has to be applied on a case by case basis. Probably that’s why all the position papers of the UCG, RCG and LCG are silent on this issue. There should be some guidelines on how the divorce Law is to be applied on grounds of fraud. For example, just as the U.S. Congress writes the Tax code as Law, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has to develop the regulations (or Regs) to provide guidance on how the Tax Law is to be applied in practice. The Bible provides us the divorce Law, but we must use the Bible to provide some guidance and develop regulations on how the Law is to be implemented for allowing divorce on grounds of fraud. This task is best performed by ministers in God’s Church who have dealt extensively with cases of divorce, particularly where parties want to obtain divorce on grounds of fraud.

Again, the only kind of fraud in marriage that was addressed in the Bible is fornication in Deuteronomy 22. So, we must use God’s other commandments, statutes and judgments in the Bible to provide some guidance and develop regulations on how the Law is to be implemented for allowing divorce on grounds of fraud. In this regard, the eighth, ninth and the tenth of the Ten Commandments are of importance.

The purpose of entering into marriage based on fraud is to gain material advantage which one would not obtain otherwise. Such advantage may include marrying a beautiful woman or a handsome man, or marrying someone who is financially well-off, or gaining some other advantage by misrepresenting one’s circumstances by lying or withholding information, which if disclosed would have led the potential mate to not marry the individual.

When a person is marrying by committing fraud due to lying, misrepresenting or withholding information, he or she is violating the ninth commandment on bearing false witness, the tenth commandment on not coveting which results in some form of stealing, thus violating the eighth commandment.

We all know that the gains of stealing or theft should not be allowed to stand. The gains of fraud in marriage should also not be allowed to stand. Judgment requires that the thief restore what he or she stole. That’s why divorce should be allowed on grounds of fraud. A person with a terminal disease, deeply in debt, a serious addiction or undisclosed children is attempting to steal from one’s spouse by deception. Such fraud that constitutes theft, the effects of which will continue possibly throughout the marriage, should not be allowed to stand and divorce should be permitted.

There can be other kinds of fraud committed by not disclosing material information that would have affected the decision of a spouse to marry or not marry the person. The effects of such fraud may or may not be ongoing materially and physically, but it may affect one’s reputation, or present emotional or psychological difficulty in dealing with such knowledge. In this category would be issues such as having a criminal past, a prison record or other withholding of information on past conduct of a less severe nature. Should divorce be permitted in such cases?

There are also other considerations in this issue. How much and of what kind of one’s past should a person lay bare? What if all such sordid events occurred in one’s past before conversion? Then there is also the issue of the defrauded person having much or little tolerance for absorbing such minor or major shocks. Should divorce be permitted for a minor violation that was not disclosed for which the spouse has little tolerance?

In this regard consider Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 6:7-11, “7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because you go to law one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded ?8 No, you do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. 9 Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Many people have come into the Church who have a sordid past. When God opened their eyes to the truth they wanted to get away from that past, repented and put that past behind them. In such cases, the spouse is not being robbed in terms of their time, or life by burdens being added such as in undisclosed debt or past addictions. We all have to be forgiven for our past and must learn to forgive. If a spouse discovers something sordid about his or her spouse’s past that was not disclosed at the time of marriage, but the spouse has put that past behind and is not materially affecting the behavior of the offended spouse, then that spouse needs to consider Paul’s words and work on forgiving their spouse and not end the marriage. Also remember that Jesus in His clarification of Moses’ Law permitted divorce for the cause of sexual immorality. Members of God’s Church with God’s holy spirit need to learn to forgive one another’s sins. If in the divorce Law God wants us to forgive even adultery committed once or twice, how much more sins in a spouse’s past which have been overcome. If, however the attitudes that led to those past sins have not been overcome, then the marriage is probably being materially or psychologically affected in the present. Divorce in such fraud situations should be permitted.

If undisclosed facts are affecting the present marriage, such as a criminal act coming to light for which the spouse is now required to answer before the law, this has the same effect as robbery and divorce should be allowed.

As members of God’s Church, we have to learn to and work at forgiving one another. We need to learn to take some wrong, especially from our spouses as mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:7 and which is implied by Jesus’ clarification of the divorce law. Also remember Jesus’ words in the incident of the sinner woman anointing Jesus’ feet with ointment in Luke 7:47, “47 Wherefore I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”

It is quite often true that those who have had many grievous past sins forgiven love God much more than those who committed few sins and were forgiven. Such persons have changed much more and become better persons in God’s eyes. Thus, Jesus’ and Paul’s words clearly tell us to learn to put the past behind by forgiving one another. But if the past keeps manifesting itself, then fraud in terms of undisclosed past is affecting the present in marriage and divorce should be permitted.

Again, the facts of each situation should be ascertained to make decisions on divorce and remarriage.

Jesus Christ made it abundantly clear that God’s intention is that marriage be permanent for life, and that God hates divorce. Therefore, divorce is not to be easily granted. We have also seen the prominent role ‘forgiveness’ should play in marriage, including in divorce and remarriage issues. All the position papers of the UCG, RCG and LCG acknowledge this.

So here is how we can summarize this.

1) Marriage is to be permanent and divorce is not to be easily granted. If marital differences and frictions arise, the couple must exercise forgiveness and work on reconciliation. This also means that the couple should be careful and obtain proper counseling before entering into marriage, knowing that marriage is to be permanent.

2) Both spouses should understand that they must disclose as much material facts about their past and present which could affect a potential mate’s decision to enter into marriage or not. Tolerance limits for absorbing such shocks may be different for different people. Disclose as much material information as possible so that it will not affect the future marriage.

3) Undisclosed information can affect the marriage in three different ways.

1. It is having major material and physical consequences now and ongoing into the future, constituting theft from the affected spouse. In such cases divorce should be granted.
2. Undisclosed information in the past is not materially or physical affecting the marriage. In other words, it does not constitute material theft. But the affected spouse can have little or much tolerance for absorbing such shocks and dealing with them emotionally. If the affected spouse has enough tolerance for dealing with such shocks, then the couple should not seek divorce. But if a spouse has little ability to absorb such shocks, the only criterion that can be used to determine whether divorce should be allowed or not is whether a reasonable person if confronted with such a situation of fraud would not have entered into the marriage under any circumstances. In other words, the fraud has to be a major type of fraud. But even here we must remember that God hates divorce, wants marriages to be permanent for life, especially among members of His Church who have His Holy Spirit. So, divorce should rarely be allowed, even if a spouse has little tolerance for small shocks. Again, this has to be determined on a case by case basis. Separation for some time, marriage counseling with God’s ministers for reconciliation, exercising God’s holy spirit to forgive and focusing on the positive such as what led the couple to marry one another in the first place should be pursued instead of divorce.
3. If the couple are still believers, have overcome their past, forgiveness should be exercises, and the couple should not seek divorce. But if the couple are simply unable to get along and one of the spouses by his or her actions is demonstrating that he or she has become an unbeliever or was never converted, only then consideration should be given to whether divorce should be allowed.

**Marriage between Believers and Unbelievers**

When the New Testament Church came into being on the day of Pentecost in 31 A.D., a new issue arose that had not been faced before: that of marriage between believers and non-believers. Jesus did not address this problem because the Church had not yet come into being. But Paul the apostle was forced to address the problem after some in the Corinthian Church wrote him letters to address the issue. He addressed the following circumstances in 1 Corinthians 7:10-15.

*A) Marriage Between Two Believers after Conversion*

1 Corinthians 7:10-11: “10 And unto the married [this is a marriage that took place between two people after they became members of God’s Church] I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But and if she depart [that is she has departed because of marriage difficulties], let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”

Here Paul is stating that in a marriage that took place after conversion, then if the couple separate because of difficulties in marriage, they cannot remarry anyone else. Their only options are to live separately, or be reconciled to one another. They cannot divorce and remarry someone else.

Under such circumstances, if the husband and wife are unable to reconcile and must live separately, they will effectively have been forced to become eunuchs for the sake of attaining the Kingdom of God. If they divorced and remarried they would be committing adultery and also be violating the instruction in Romans 7:1-3, “1 Know you not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? 2 For the woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”

Thus, in a marriage between two converted people that took place after conversion, no divorce or remarriage is allowed. If marriage difficulties develop and they are forced to separate, then their only recourse is to reconcile or continue to live separately. They may not remarry. Effectively they may have to become eunuchs to attain God’s kingdom.

*b) Marriage Between a Believer and an Unbeliever*

Then Paul addressed the next circumstance in which marriage took place in verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 7.

“12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother has a wife that believes not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.”

The question is, when did this marriage between a believing husband but an unbelieving wife took place? 2 Corinthians 6:14 states, “14 Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel?”

Here clearly marriage between a believer and a non-believer after conversion is forbidden. Therefore, the marriage circumstance Paul was addressing in 1 Corinthian 7:12 was that between a believing husband and an unbelieving wife that took place before the husband’s conversion.

Then Paul continues in verse 13: “13 And the woman which has a husband that believes not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God has called us to peace. 16 For what know you, O wife, whether you shalt save your husband? or how know you, O man, whether you shall save your wife? 17 But as God has distributed to every man, as the Lord has called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.”

Here Paul was stating that if a marriage had taken place before one of the spouses became a believer, then if the unbelieving spouse is pleased to dwell with the believing spouse, then the believing spouse may not divorce his or her unbelieving spouse. The key phrase here is that unbelieving spouse is “pleased to dwell with the believing spouse.”

If by obvious serious, repetitious or continual conduct the unbelieving spouse demonstrates that he or she is not pleased to dwell with the believing spouse and departs, then a divorce can take place, whether initiated by the unbelieving spouse, or in serious situations the believing spouse may have to initiate it. Then the believing spouse is free to remarry.

But Paul goes on to say that if the unbelieving spouse is pleased to dwell with the believing spouse, then the believing spouse may not divorce the unbelieving spouse and must do his or her best to make the marriage work. The reason is that the children in that marriage are holy to God, and the unbelieving spouse is also sanctified in God’s sight. In addition, Paul stresses that there is the strong possibility that the unbelieving spouse may be converted by the conduct of the believing spouse in the marriage. This has actually happened in God’s Church after patient conduct of the believing spouse. The unbelieving spouses and children in such a marriage are in a special category in God’s sight, neither called by God, nor cut-off from Him. Thus, even divorce between believing and unbelieving spouses should not be taken lightly. Only in very serious circumstances should a believing spouse divorce an unbelieving spouse.

Based on what Moses wrote, what Jesus clarified in the New Testament, and what Paul wrote about divorce and remarriage between believers and unbelievers we can summarize these judgments as follows:

1) *Annulment*: In a marriage based on fraud in which one of the spouses did not disclose something important such as fornication, or other types of sexual misconduct before marriage, the marriage can be annulled. This is not divorce but an annulment of the marriage. In that case remarriage can take place. Remember Jesus did not specifically address fraud other than fornication or sexual misconduct prior to marriage. Such fraud or deception of sexual nature should be acted upon when discovered and not years later. Jesus clarified Moses’ Law. The only reason divorce was allowed was fornication or other sexual fraud. Jesus did not allow divorce between two believers for adultery, if repented of, which obviously takes place after marriage. The offended spouse should forgive.

2) In a marriage between two believers, if marriage difficulties develop and they are forced to separate, then their only recourse is to reconcile or continue to live separately. They may not remarry. Effectively they may have to become eunuchs to attain God’s kingdom.

3. In a marriage between a believer and unbeliever:

a) If the unbelieving spouse is pleased to dwell with the believing spouse, then the believing spouse may not divorce and remarry. He or she must make the marriage work.

b) However, if the unbelieving spouse is not pleased to dwell with the believing spouse as demonstrated with habitual immoral, criminal conduct or addictive behaviors, abuse, desertion or failure to provide physical support, and departs from the believing spouse, then divorce and remarriage can take place. In this case, the believing spouse may even have to initiate divorce proceedings if necessary.

c) In this category are also marriages in which a believer has become an unbeliever as demonstrated by his or her conduct. This then has become a marriage between a believer and an unbeliever in which the unbelieving spouse is not pleased to dwell with the believing spouse. Divorce and remarriage are permitted. Tares also fall into this category as by their conduct they would have demonstrated that they are unbelievers, and not pleased to dwell with the believing spouse.

4) And finally, individuals who were divorced before they became believers are accepted into the Church in their current marital state, whether divorced and single, or divorced and now remarried, as all their sins were forgiven on conversion and baptism.

**Further Issues to Be Addressed**

Even though we can understand God’s Law concerning divorce and remarriage from the Bible, its actual implementation in the past 80 years in God’s Church has presented many challenges. Of course, the most trying circumstances for genuine believers and genuine ministers were caused in marriages between believers and tares because the tares were acting under the influence of Satan and the demons. Some difficult cases of divorce and remarriage would also have arisen between genuine members. Some of the issues that can be raised include:

*Illegal Divorce and Remarriage*

1) Some in the Church have remarried after divorce allowed by credentialed ministers. And some of these credentialed ministers were tares. The divorce may have been illegal. After such a long time how do we decide whether these marriages are allowed by God’s Law under various exceptions or are prohibited?

The guideline in such situations is provided in Matthew 14:3-4 where John the Baptist spoke concerning Herod: “3 For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4 Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

If for any reason something unlawful has taken place and is still continuing, it should be put right and corrected. If the remarriage is unlawful, then it should be ended. Though extremely difficult to accept, genuine members who have their minds on God’s Kingdom should be able to receive this decision because they are much more concerned about attaining the Kingdom of God than preventing temporary discomfort for a few years in this physical life.

However, the situation regarding remarriages may not be as clear-cut as this sounds.

2) There are “allowances” exclusions or “escape clauses” in the UCG Divorce and Remarriage doctrinal paper on the basis of which divorce and remarriage was allowed. After such a long time, decades in some cases, it would be difficult to ascertain the exact situation or reasoning behind each divorce and remarriage decision. We may then ask who could or did evaluate those situations and then make the judgment? Were they genuine ministers or tares among us in high positions? Now after such a long time, would it even be possible to accurately ascertain the facts and reach an accurate and honest evaluation in each case?

Then God says through Jeremiah the prophet in Jeremiah 17:9, “9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?” This can apply even to genuine members in God’s Church. Some may dissimulate or color the truth to make their position look more favorable. How does the Church decide whether the remarriage is lawful in God’s eyes or not?

3) Ascertaining whether fraud was involved in a marriage on the basis of which it could be annulled also presents similar challenges? Who knows the truth and who decides? People do color the truth to make their position appear more favorable.

In this regard we members should bear in mind what God said in Jeremiah 17:10, just after saying “the heart is desperately wicked, who can know it?’ He said, “10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

Yes! God is literally testing our hearts and minds. Those who try to color the truth put themselves in danger of losing their eternal life. Ministers can only make decisions based on the “facts” as they discover them or are presented to them. Of course, it goes without saying they are required to ascertain such facts and make judgments in a prayerful attitude to be guided by God. As human beings we do the best we can to ascertain facts with God’s help and make judgments and decisions.

All of us should remember that God has committed all judgment in the hands of Jesus Christ as stated in John 5:21-22, “21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.” Yes! Literally our eternal life is in Jesus Christ’s hands. We must present the truth to God’s ministers when they have to make judgments about our life in God’s Church so that we will be judged to be worthy of eternal life by Jesus Christ.

Another issue that can be raised concerning fraud in a marriage is if allegations of fraud, specifically fornication or sexual misconduct of a grievous nature, were raised against a man or woman resulting in divorce, can they remarry in the Church. That is an easy one to answer. Fraud applied to the previous marriage. But in a subsequent marriage, the facts are known. If someone chooses to marry that man or woman despite knowing the past circumstances it is not fraud. That man or woman who had the allegation of fraud proved against him or her should be allowed to remarry. The previous marriage was annulled because it was not bound in God’s sight. But the past sin has been forgiven by God in His mercy and remarriage should be permitted.

**How the Divorce and Remarriage Laws Are to be Implemented**

The following situations can also arise in God’s Church, which need to be addressed.

1) Problems of adultery or other sexual sins in marriage.

2) Problem of a believer becoming an unbeliever.

3) Problems in a marriage between a believer and a tare.

*Problem of Adultery in Marriage*

First let’s consider the problem when adultery occurs in a marriage between two believing mates. Jesus’ teaching is that divorce is allowed on the grounds of fornication [which occurs prior to marriage] on the basis of fraud. Thus, Jesus taught that adultery or other sexual sin does not automatically end a marriage. The marriage remains bound in God’s eyes. The offended spouse must work on forgiving and both spouses must work on reconciliation in the marriage. So, adultery committed once is a sign of weakness and not a major character flaw. The offending spouse, however, must be repentant and committed to never ever indulging in that sin again.

If the spouses choose to live separately, they may not divorce and remarry. They must work on forgiveness and reconciliation.

However, if adultery or other sexual sins are repeatedly committed and have become a habit, that is a deep character flaw. If the offender refuses to repent in words or deeds, then that spouse by his or her actions is demonstrating that he or she has become an unbeliever. Such a marriage can end in divorce. In addition, such an offender should also be disfellowshipped as an unbeliever so as not to leaven the whole congregation. This is in keeping with Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 5 in a case involving a man committing adultery with his father’s wife.

*Problem of a Believer becoming an Unbeliever*

The second problem is the situation in a marriage where a believer falls away from the faith, loses God’s holy spirit and degenerates into horribly wrong conduct such as repeated adultery (with the threat of contracting sexually transmissible diseases), or other grievous sins or addictions, leaves the Church, becomes hostile to the Church and spouse, or makes life miserable for the spouse. Such a spouse has become an unbeliever and is not pleased to dwell with the spouse. Then divorce can be permitted, and remarriage can take place. A believer does not have to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever who by his or her conduct would have demonstrated that he or she is not pleased to dwell with the believer. Such an unbeliever is also a candidate for being disfellowshipped from the Church.

*Problem of Marriage between a Believer and a Tare*

Next is the situation in a marriage between a Satan-led tare and a believing spouse. The problem here is that it may be difficult to know for sure if the spouse is a tare or not. They will use all of Satan’s cunning craftiness to deceive the genuine member and the ministry. The purpose of the tare is to make the life of the believer miserable so that he or she becomes offended, blames God and leaves God’s Church, thus being deprived of his or her chance for eternal life. But if the tare by his or her conduct in making the life of their spouse miserable has demonstrated that he or she is not pleased to dwell with the spouse and also demonstrates views contrary to God’s teaching, thus demonstrating that he or she is actually an unbeliever, and this can be conclusively demonstrated, then divorce and remarriage can be permitted.

God’s instructions in the parable of the tares are to let the tares continue to remain members of the Church. But if by his or her conduct the tare is causing divisions in Church or in his or her marriage, that would be cause for putting the tare out of the Church, similar to the case of a believer who has become an unbeliever.

**Other Issues**

Certain other issues arise such as the New Testament distinction between “putting away” meaning a *de facto* divorce without a divorce decree and divorce with a “bill of divorce” in Matthew 19:3-9. What happens in such “putting away” cases when no formal divorce has taken place and the spouse in order to cause pain or suffering on the other spouse acts as if they are divorced but does not formalize it?

In this regard Malachi 2:16 is important. The KJV translates this verse: “16 For the Lord, the God of Israel, says that he hates putting away:”

NIV: “16 "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel…”

NKJV, “Malachi 2:16 (NKJV) "For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce…”

The Hebrew word used is Shalach (Shaw-lakh) (#7971 in Strong’s Concordance) which means putting away. So, does this verse mean that God hates putting away without a divorce, but does not hate divorce, or does it simply mean that God hates divorce?

Here are the other verses in the Old Testament that use “Put Away” in the context of marriage besides Malachi 2:16:

Jeremiah 3:1, 8, “1 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, says the Lord…”

In this verse putting away a wife implies divorce. If the wife was merely put away temporarily without divorce and her husband had returned to her again it was no sin. But here the context clearly shows that putting away implies legal divorce which prohibits the husband to return to his wife. So, we see that “putting away” in scripture is used in short form to mean legal divorce, not just putting away without legal divorce.

Then verse 3: 8 “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.”

In this case bill of divorce is mentioned along with “putting away.” But the point from verse 1 is that when scripture uses “put away” it does not strictly mean putting away from one’s house without a legal divorce. It is used in short form to imply legal divorce with a bill of divorce assumed.

Next Isaiah 50:1, “1 Thus says the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have you sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.”

In chapter 49 God is specifically talking about Israel. Israel was driven out of its land because of its iniquities. At that time God had not given Israel a bill of divorce first and then put her away. But later after she was put away, the divorce was finalized with a bill of divorce as mentioned in Jeremiah 3. So, in this verse putting away is distinguished from divorce, but the substance is that it is still describing a divorce with the putting away occurring first, but divorce finalized with a bill of divorce.

The next verses where “Put away” is mentioned is Ezekiel 44:21-22, “21 Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court. 22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.”

Here a different Hebrew word *garash* (number 1644 in Strong’s) is used which means to drive out from a possession, especially to expatriate or divorce, cast out, or divorced (speaking of a woman), expel, thrust out. It appears to be a synonym for the Hebrew word *shalach* used in the previous verses. It appears to have the same meaning. But the context implies ‘divorce.’ Whether a woman is put away by a husband without divorce, or put away after a legal divorce a priest is not allowed to marry her. So here also “put away” is used as a short form to imply a divorced woman.

In the New Testament the Greek word translated “put away” is *apoluo* (# 630 in Strong’s) which means to free fully i.e. literally relieve, release, dismiss, or figuratively let die, pardon, or specifically divorce, let depart, let go, loose, send or put away, set at liberty. It is used in Matthew 19:3-12 where the Pharisees discussed the issue of putting away and writing a bill of divorce with Jesus Christ.

The parallel account in Mark 10:2-12 reads, “2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”

When you read the account in Matthew 19 or Mark 10 here, it does not appear that the Pharisees or Jesus were at all trying to make a distinction between putting away without a bill of divorce or putting away with a bill of divorce. Both were discussing a divorce in substance. The issue was putting away a wife permanently.

Then Jesus addressed the issue privately with His disciples in Mark 10:10, “10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. 11 And he says unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, commits adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery.”

Here again by using ‘putting away’ Jesus was in no way trying to make a distinction between ‘putting away’ without a bill of divorce, or ‘putting away’ with a bill of divorce. The phrase ‘put away’ is used as just a short form to imply divorce.

But we know that “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” as Jeremiah 17:9 says. Wicked people, or even people in God’s Church who have God’s holy spirit may do wicked things to inflict pain and suffering on their spouses. They may put away their spouses without going through a formal divorce, keeping them hanging in limbo to inflict as much pain and suffering as they can. This way the domestic conflict cannot get settled. Kids and property and moving on with a new life hang in the balance. How should God’s Church and society deal with such evil?

The answer simply is to look at the substance of what has happened in the marriage. If one spouse has put away the other spouse but is not filing a formal divorce, then the other spouse can file for divorce. Look at Mark 10:12 again. “12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery.” This verse acknowledges that a woman may divorce her husband also. So, the courts and God’s Church should look at the substance of the marriage. If there are grounds for a legal divorce, any spouse may file for divorce. Thus, in the scriptures there is no distinction made between putting away without a formal divorce or putting away with a formal divorce as far as practical action to be taken. Just look at the substance of the marriage and either spouse can ask for a divorce.

**Should Government or only the Church Adjudicate Divorce?**

That then brings us to another question: Should both Church and government adjudicate divorces?

Each of us lives under man’s government. Government has the right to adjudicate marriages. So, the short answer is yes! But we in God’s Church should not seek government adjudication. The Bible is very clear on this issue. Paul addressed it in 1 Corinthians 6:1-7, “1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know you not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. 5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. 7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because you go to law one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?”

Believers should let their divorce and remarriage issues be addressed by the Church and not seek the intervention of the government. But if someone takes the matter before the courts, the government cannot be stopped from intervening. The Church then needs to evaluate the conduct of the member who takes the matter before the courts. That member is a serious candidate for being disfellowshipped.

However, the Church cannot enforce its judgments if a member refuses to accept and obey the judgment. The only power it has is to disfellowship those who refuse to accept its judgments. It cannot enforce its judgments regarding custody and support of children and division of assets and even income where appropriate. The issue of putting away a spouse without formal divorce to avoid one’s obligations for children and division of property also has to be dealt with. Government intervention is required to enforce such judgments.

The Church has to implement God’s Law within its membership. So, the Church has to intervene in divorce and remarriage cases. But when the members are refusing to obey its rulings and one of the spouses will be hurt, Government’s help must be sought to do justice in such cases of divorce. If government has to step in, then it must be able to enact its laws and enforce them. So, both Church and government have to adjudicate divorces.

There may be cases involving a member of God’s Church who is married to a spouse belonging to another Church. The spouse may refuse to obey the judgment of ministers in God’s Church. Clearly government needs to step in in such cases.

**What Should a Divorce Decree Contain?**

Another question is: What should be contained in a divorce decree?I have no experience in dealing with divorce cases, and I simply have not studied the issue at all. But ministers with sufficient case experience should be able to develop guidelines on this issue.

**Substance of God’s Law on Marriage and Divorce**

Finally, we see a difference in the statements of belief concerning divorce and remarriage between the RCG, PCG, LCG and the UCG. The only differences relate to the meaning of the Greek word “porneia” used in Matthew 19:9. UCG statements accept “porneia” to mean the broader sexual immorality of all kinds including fornication and adultery after marriage whereas the position of the other Church of God organizations is the traditional view that divorce should be allowed only for undisclosed fornication before marriage.

All Church of God organizations agree that divorce should be permitted for fraud, extrapolating the principle of allowing divorce for undisclosed fornication. However, in implementation of the Law concerning divorce and remarriage there has been no real difference. Even Church of God organizations that believe divorce should be allowed only for fornication, allow divorce for repeated adultery and other sexual sins. The reasoning is that 1) Such repeated sexual sins pose a danger to the health of the other spouse; 2) A person engaging in repeated sexual sins is a tare or has become an unbeliever. If a spouse has become an unbeliever and is exhibiting by his or her conduct that he or she is not pleased to dwell with the other spouse, then divorce and remarriage are permitted; and 3) A spouse exhibiting such gross violation of God’s Law is a serious candidate for being disfellowshipped and put out of the Church so as not to leaven the whole lump.

Thus, we see that in the substance and implementation of God’s Law on divorce and remarriage there are no real differences between the positions of various true Church of God organizations that adhere to what Mr. Armstrong taught, through whom God founded the modern era of His Church.

To teach God’s perspective on marriage God’s Church has some excellent publications available free of charge. I would recommend the following.

1) *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension*; ucg.org

2) *Divorce and Remarriage: Statement of Belief*; ucg.org

3) *The Purpose of Marriage; Ever Obsolete*; rcg.org

4) *Dating and Courtship - God’s Way*; rcg.org

5) *You Can Build a Happy Marriage*; rcg.org

6) *Understanding Divorce and Remarriage*; rcg.org

7) *The Missing Dimension in Sex*; by Herbert W. Armstrong who taught us God’s perspective on marriage; pcog.org

8) *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*; rcg.org

9) *Mystery of the Ages* by Herbert W. Armstrong at pcog.org

10) *Why Marriage – Soon Obsolete?* By Herbert W. Armstrong at pcog.org

**Chapter 10**

**God’s Standards for Dating and Courtship**

*[NOTE: The audience for this book is worldwide. Most of humanity is non-Christian. Though I explain many concepts by quoting the Bible, the principles for choosing the right mate and having a happy marriage are universally applicable. So, please keep reading even if you are a non-Christian. I also understand that marriages in most cultures are arranged. So, most of humanity skips the dating and courtship process altogether. But the principles illustrated here can be applied equally well immediately after marriage to keep the marriage strong and happy. Therefore, reading this section will benefit parents who arrange marriages for their children. A brief sub-section on arranged marriages is provided at the end.]*

In the beginning of this book, the sorry state of marriages in America and British Commonwealth nations was discussed. Data shows that about half of first-time marriages end in divorce. Most in the world simply do not know that there is a cause for every effect. There is a cause why so many marriages end in divorce. The cause simply is that in most of these marriages each of the partners chose the wrong mate. The choice of the wrong mate, leading to failed marriage was the result of the wrong foundation laid during dating and courtship.

I will briefly, discuss God’s standards for dating and courtship before marriage as taught by the true Churches of God. To obtain a good detailed understanding of right dating and courtship practices, I would recommend reading the book *“Dating and Courtship - God’s Way”* authored by David C. Pack of the Restored Church of God, available free of charge at rcg.org. However, the audience for that book is the Churches of God. The audience for my book is the world. So I will keep my suggestions on dating, courtship and engagement leading to marriage very general that anyone in the world can apply and benefit from.

Additional information can be obtained from *“Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension”*, available free of charge at ucg.org. I have obtained most of the information for this chapter from these two booklets.

Dating followed by courtship and engagement is supposed to lead to a happy marriage. For a building to stand against all winds and storms, it must be built on a STRONG and RIGHT FOUNDATION. Similarly, for a marriage to be successful and able to withstand all the stresses and strains, turmoil and storms of life, it must be built on the right foundation. That right and strong foundation is built during the dating and courtship process.

The right dating and courtship should lead to the selection of someone from among many who would be a real companion and a truly compatible partner for life. However, the right dating and courtship process has to be taught in advance to young people before they begin dating. Otherwise they will make mistakes resulting in choosing the wrong mate, and likely become a divorce statistic. The high divorce rate indicates that in most American and British families correct dating and courtship are not known, or not practiced, resulting in marriages that should never have taken place.

What is the right foundation for a strong ‘till death do us part’ marriage in a beautiful relationship? The right foundation is LOVE between the couple. Marriages fail because most couples do not understand what true love is. Most peoples’ idea of love between a man and a woman is physical attraction, or INFATUATION for one another, and they do not understand the difference between infatuation and true love.

Here are the major differences between infatuation and true love:

1) Infatuation happens quickly whereas love develops slowly. A solid enduring relationship based on true love develops over time. For that reason, there is no such thing as ‘love at first sight,’ or ‘smitten with love’ for someone or ‘falling in love.’ The quick feeling for someone at first sight is infatuation or lust, and not love.

2) In infatuation, the main attraction for the other person is physical appearance or ‘looks’, whereas in love the main attraction for the other person is the whole person, including the total personality and character. It takes time to get to know the personality and character of a person. That’s why love develops over time.

3) Infatuation is almost exclusively emotional or based on feelings whereas true love is mental. An infatuated person is led by emotions which dictate actions. In infatuation, the mind is occupied and wrapped-up around the other person. Nothing else seems to matter. The infatuated person becomes almost blind and unable to see anything wrong with the other person; unable to recognize any danger signals in interactions with the other person. A marriage based on such emotions will not last as it will quickly crack under the stresses and strains of married life.

True love on the other hand is based on logic. Persons seeking true love in another do not think with their hormones and sex organs, but with sound logic. During dating and courtship, one should objectively evaluate the other person’s maturity, ability to handle stressful situations, how the person relates to others, dependability, total personality and character for suitability as a potential mate and that process takes time. In true love, the other person is loved for their character, maturity, personality and not merely their physical body. Such a relationship is built over time and is enduring.

4) A relationship based on infatuation or lust is mostly selfish. That’s why a relationship based on infatuation will collapse quickly, but true love is unselfish. True love expresses outgoing concern for the other person, bearing and sharing the mate’s burdens**.**

There is a very important SPIRITUAL DIMENSION to understanding true love. God’s character is LOVE and that’s what He wants all human beings to develop in themselves. It has already been defined (a definition given to us by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong) earlier as follows:

“One word that sums up God’s character is LOVE, which is defined as outgoing concern for the welfare of others. It can also be called the way of “giving” instead of “getting”, the way of sharing, helping and serving. God’s nature includes the attributes of PEACE, HARMONY, JUSTICE, MERCY, COMPASSION, HAPPINESS AND JOY towards all those He has created. It is a way devoid of coveting, lust, greed, vanity, selfishness, envy, jealousy, resentment, bitterness, hatred, competition, strife, violence and destruction.’

The Bible also gives a very simple and concise definition of SPIRITUAL LOVE with additional explanations.

John the apostle wrote in I John 5:3, “FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and His commandments are not grievous.”

We express godly love when we keep the Ten Commandments. And the Ten Commandments are the Law. The apostle Paul added further explanation to what love is in Romans 13:10, “Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.” Obedience to the Ten Commandments thus fulfills the Law.

Jesus Christ also summed up the Ten Commandments in his answer to the lawyer who asked Him which is the great commandment in Matthew 22:37-40, “37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Since love is keeping God’s commandments, the importance of God’s help in keeping His commandments becomes crucial, and that help comes in the form of God’s holy spirit. God gives His holy spirit only to those who have repented of their sins, been converted, and have been baptized to demonstrate their commitment to keep God’s law. Only after baptism does a person receive God’s holy spirit. Therefore, CONVERSION is crucial to be able to express godly love after receiving God’s holy spirit.

The Bible also talks of three kinds of love: *Philia* is defined as brotherly love; the love between brothers and sisters and friends; *Eros* is the love expressed in a marriage through romance and sex; and finally, *Godly Love* (sometimes the word *agape* is used to label this kind of love) which is the love God the Father and Jesus Christ expressed for humanity when Jesus laid down His life to pay the death penalty for humanity’s sins. Godly love is thus SELFLESS and SACRIFICIAL in nature for others. Godly love is expressed even when there is no guarantee of a reciprocal response.

Jesus said: “This is My commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:12-13, *New Living Translation*). This is an expression of godly love, or SPIRITUAL LOVE. That is the kind of love a husband should have for his wife and children.

The apostle Paul further described the attributes of godly love in the ‘love chapter,’ I Corinthians 13: “4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails…13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

All three forms of love, *philia*, *eros* and *godly love* for one’s mate are vital for the marriage to remain strong and endure to the end.

Two people starting a relationship must be further cautioned about the relationship starting on the basis of lust or infatuation. In the early stages of the relationship, it is hard to distinguish between one founded on infatuation from one based on true love, because infatuation often comes disguised as true love. When two people are attracted to each other, they enjoy each other’s company immensely and everything seems wonderful. True love, however, develops over time after the two people have come to know each other more intimately by learning of each other’s strengths and possible weaknesses, and interacted with each other in possible stressful situations. A relationship built on infatuation will collapse under stresses and strains of life whereas one built on true love will endure.

*The Correct Age for Dating and Courtship*

In the Bible, when God asked ancient Israel to number the adults, they were numbered from age 20 years and older. Therefore, the Bible considers a mature adult to be one who is at least 20 years old. Therefore, around 20 years is the age when two persons can begin dating one-on-one followed by courtship that can lead to marriage.

There can be a few exceptions to the general rule. Apparently, the evangelist Timothy was a teenager when he was baptized. Therefore, in some cases, two young people can begin one-on-one dating around 18-19 years of age.

The key criterion when persons can begin one-on-one dating is MATURITY. Maturity is related to assuming responsibility in life. It is demonstrated when a young adult has pondered the bigger questions of life such as “What am I going to do to earn a decent living to support a wife and family?”, “What values and principles will I follow in relationships with my spouse, children, our extended families, close friends, and others in society?”, “Understanding of what it takes to raise a family and demonstrating commitment to do so.” After having pondered these big questions of life, maturity is then demonstrated by the concrete steps the person has taken to achieve success in life and marriage. Success in marriage can be achieved only when the partners are emotionally, intellectually and spiritually mature.

DIFFERENT STAGES OF DATING

If the earliest recommended age for one-on-one dating is 18-19 years, preferably 20 years, then does that mean that teenagers should not date at all? The answer is no.

There are two important categories of dating in which teenagers and younger children can and should participate in. These are ‘group activities’ for pre-teen and younger teen children, and ‘group dating’ for older teens. The cut-off age here is around 16 years.

*1)* GROUP ACTIVITIES

Children before the age of 16 should participate only in ‘group activities.’ Here are the characteristics of ‘group activities’:

1) These are very large groups enjoying activities together, involving a variety of parents and other adults and their children of both sexes. These could be family picnics, games nights at church, evening of bowling, combined visits to interesting places etc.

2) Parents need to be very watchful, particularly of less responsible teenagers, to not allow ‘pairing off’ within the activity between boys and girls and straying away from the group.

3) The purpose of the activities is to help young people overcome nervousness and become comfortable around those of the opposite sex. They can learn to relax and respond naturally to them.

2) GROUP DATING

From the age of 16 onwards, teenagers can begin “group dating”. These are the characteristics of group dating:

1) ‘Group Dating’ should only be within groups with full parental knowledge and permission. The groups can comprise six to eight teenagers who make an appointment to enjoy a wholesome activity together, with parents or other responsible adults close by.

**2)** The purpose of these activities is to help young people overcome nervousness and become comfortable around those of the opposite sex. They can learn to relax and respond naturally to them. This will enable them to evaluate people more realistically when courting later to find a suitable mate. Without such comfort level around the opposite sex, a young person may evaluate a person of the opposite sex emotionally rather than rationally.

3) At this stage, it’s important to date many different people of a variety of different personality types. The purpose is to determine which personality type you are most compatible with and makes you most comfortable. This should enable a young person to narrow his or her search for a suitable mate.

The ‘group activities’ and ‘group dating’ stages should lay a solid foundation for exposure to the opposite sex in a wide variety of settings.

4) Some feel that going steady with someone at this stage under peer pressure is a good way to show and develop an early interest in someone to choose a lifelong mate. Some parents may encourage this. But this is either a lazy and or a selfish method of dating. It is also short-sighted as you lose the opportunity for social development that come through dating widely. It may also prove to be the dangerous way to date because you may end up marrying the wrong person.

However, there can be exceptions to this rule. If two young people have grown up together because their families were good friends and have known each other since childhood; understand each other very well; are comfortable with each other and have developed the social graces, known each other’s ability to support and raise a family and know each other’s character, then they have most likely found each other a suitable lifelong mate. But still, it’s a good idea to do this after the age of 18, after exposure to a variety of personality types.

5) It’s very important to understand that romance should not be involved at this stage as teenagers are too young for such activity. That should take place later when the young persons have gained maturity, with direction on how they will earn a living and support a family. Romance at this stage may lead to pre-marital sex which could cause a multitude of problems.

6) Avoid the danger of falling in with the wrong crowd under peer pressure. It could lead to pre-marital sex, rape, or even criminal activity. It may also lead to wasting time in frivolous activities rather than concentrating on educating oneself to be able to earn a decent living.

3) ONE-ON-ONE DATING OR COURTSHIP

The next stage of dating is courtship when one-on-one dating can begin. The most suitable age for this activity is around 19-20 years. These are the main characteristics of courtship:

‘Group activities’ and ‘group dating’ should have provided wide exposure to the opposite sex in a variety of settings and the young people should have overcome nervousness and emotional response in presence of the opposite sex. If this foundation has not been laid, then the danger is that a shy or a nervous-type of person will have a tendency to quickly pair-off with either the first person that pays attention to him or her, or the first person he or she is comfortable with. That person may not be the most suitable mate for that person.

Understand that courtship is not the stage when the couple has already decided to get married. It is not the final stage before the decision to marry someone is made. It is the stage where a mutual interest in each other has begun, and now that interest can be further explored and developed. The two persons have now begun to consider each other as possible lifelong marriage partners. A person can feel on ‘cloud nine’ when he or she is in love with someone. But care should be exercised in the early stages of courtship as sound judgment without heavy emotional attachment still needs to be exercised in carefully evaluating the suitability of the other person as a lifelong mate.

David Pack in his book *“Dating and Courtship – God’s Way”* describes the process of courtship in this way: “It is important to suppress feelings of romantic love (*eros*), while carefully focusing on and building the bond of true friendship (*philia*), all the while practicing and developing the love of God (*agape*) within the relationship.”

*Some Guidelines for One-on-One Dating or Courtship*

David Pack describes the fundamental purposes of dating: to “Develop your personality, build character, learn from others, grow in the social graces, enjoy fun, experience widely, learn to communicate. As the teenage years pass, dating provides a wonderful opportunity to learn a world of information about the opposite sex. This will greatly enhance your ability to one day become properly acquainted with the person who will go on to be your lifelong partner.”

Keeping these purposes of dating in mind, the following guidelines should be followed while dating one-on-one:

1) One of the purposes of dating is to find the right mate for life. Pray to God to guide you in selecting the right type of mate and lead you to find the ‘best person’ for you.

2) Dating is an ART and must be taught by parents to their children. I learnt a great deal of it through my Church, which makes it a point to teach and practice the social graces as part of our normal Church activities.

Parents (Church or even schools) should teach children how to conduct themselves on a date such as whether to touch each other or not (which will be addressed shortly), how to respect your date, how to be a gentleman or a lady, good and bad manners, proper etiquette, how to handle a fork and knife, the dangers of alcohol at social gatherings, especially when around young people, dangers of pre-marital sex, to avoid peer pressure and falling in with the wrong crowd.

Parents should impose rules about dressing for a date, what is permissible to do or not to do on a date, where to go or not go on a date, and when to come home. These rules should be enforced, and children made to understand that the rules are meant to keep them from harm, which is the purpose of all God’s spiritual rules.

3) The ability to communicate effectively on a date is vital, and this ability must be developed. Dating provides an excellent opportunity to do so. Like achieving anything of value, it takes serious effort and time. Once developed, this ability will benefit you in every aspect for the rest of your life, including your profession. It will enable you make friends easily.

Many people use the same limited number of words or phrases over and over again when communicating with others. But effective communication means the ability to express yourself precisely, tactfully without giving offense, with color and enthusiasm. That requires developing a good vocabulary. When you can communicate well with others, people will find you fascinating and fun to talk to and will want to be around you. It will open many doors for you.

Another key aspect of being a good communicator is to be an effective listener. That requires being attentive while listening, allowing others to express themselves, and occasionally acknowledging what they have said or asking questions related to the discussion to show keen interest. People will consider you a great conversationalist even if you have merely LISTENED actively to the other person. Take the biblical advice in James 1:19, “Be swift to hear and slow to speak” to heart. It will make you an excellent conversationalist.

To continuously develop my vocabulary, even at my age I still write down words that I don’t know the meaning of, with their pronunciation, meaning and how to use them in sentences. Then I read them over and over again to commit them to memory.

Here is an example of a communicator using the same words over and over again.

A son came home from college for the weekend and this is how the conversation with his mother went:

Mother: How are things going?

Son: Good.

Mother: And the dormitory?

Son: Good.

Mother: They’ve always had a strong football team. How do you think they’ll do this year?

Son: Good.

Mother: Have you decided on your major yet?

Son: Yes.

Mother: What is it?”

Son: Mass Communications.

Moral of the story: Develop a good vocabulary as part of good communication skills.

The man should take the lead in conversation during the date. But the woman should also actively participate in the conversation, rather than take the ‘entertain me’ approach, as David Pack says in his book.

4) A date should be an opportunity to learn about the other person’s background, where he or she grew up, interests, hobbies, travels, world view, plans for a career or profession. I have been a member of my Church’s Spokesman Club in which the first speech all of us give is called the ‘icebreaker’ in which we give our life background in our own words. That is a good way to start getting to know a person.

Remember the wise saying: “Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.” Use it to keep your conversation edifying and uplifting. If you are not in the habit of doing so, make the effort to change.

Another way to keep the conversation interesting is to use humor. It also creates a relaxed atmosphere during the date. Collect your own set of good clean jokes, which can be worked into conversations.

5) All planned events go far better than unplanned or poorly planned events. And planning takes attention, time and effort. Plan your dates. After the first few dates, when the man has learnt more about the woman’s interests and what she enjoys, and shared his own ideas and interests, then the woman’s advice should be solicited for future dates.

Do not let your dates be always going out for a movie together, and a dinner afterwards. Here are some ideas that can be used that would be enjoyable together: playing some kind of sport (bowling, tennis, swimming, skiing, sledding, golf or miniature gold etc.), going on a hike, going to the beach, touring a museum or historical site a couple of hours ride away, take in a theatre show or a music concert, take in a major league game occasionally, cycling, taking a walk in nature parks, taking a boat ride on the harbor or river (just like a tourist if you have not fully explored your town or city), visiting the zoo or a sea park or oceanarium, going to dinner, and many other interesting and uplifting activities. Your local newspaper will have many upcoming activities listed. Use that as a resource for ideas.

Make your dates also educational. There can be some areas of common interest in which to increase one’s fund of knowledge. Some such areas can be learning about gardening to beautify one’s home, remodeling and decorating shows on how to furnish and beautify the home, learning first-aid or safety tips around the home. Then pursue a common intellectual interest if you have one.

6) Remember, dating is a tremendous opportunity to change and IMPROVE. Iron sharpens iron. Use dating as an opportunity to help improve each other’s character and personality. Practice the social graces and strive to become a gentleman or lady. If your Church or social group does not offer opportunities, or your parents are unable to guide you, then learn it by reading books or web sites on etiquette.

Ignore those who discourage you from learning the social graces such as opening doors and car doors, seating your date or helping with her coat or other ways of assisting your date. They may scorn you for doing such things by applying labels such as ‘living in the past.’ There might be a trend towards the ‘casual.’ But there is a time and place for everything. LEARN and PRACTICE the SOCIAL GRACES. These are valued in better society.

7) Do not forget to enjoy yourself and have fun on your date. Learn to relax and help your date also relax. Work to be fun persons around each other. Particularly in the first few dates, don’t get too serious and treat the dates as an activity to enjoy with the opposite sex.

8) One of the major pitfalls to avoid is developing an attitude of “hyper analyzing” every date and “sizing up” the other person as a potential husband or wife at the very first date, and offering unsolicited suggestions on how to ‘improve.’ These would be attempts to remake the person in your own desired ‘ideal’ image. This never works when you do this on the first couple of dates. It will be resented by your date and will most likely ruin the relationship. The Bible says in Jeremiah 13:23, “23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?” The right time to discuss such issues is much later in the courtship process, and only when solicited or with mutual understanding to offer similar advice to each other for improvement. Then the maxim ‘iron sharpens iron’ is applicable.

9) Who pays on a date? With all the stories we hear these days of ‘charming’ men dating women and ending up swindling them of much of their savings by getting them to pay for their debts, or buy things for them, or lend them money for their ventures, it should be obvious to women that if a man cannot carry his own weight, he is unlikely to do a good job of supporting the family. It’s an attitude issue. A man who would gladly let a woman pay is not demonstrating a right attitude about providing and caring for his family. He will probably care more for himself than his family. Therefore, a woman should not pay on a *one-on-one* date, except in a rare emergency.

10) Ask for advice from your parents on dating. Listen carefully and pay heed to what they have to say, because they care for you. Benefit from their experience, rather than relying on advice from friends and peers.

More importantly, involve God in your life, including your dating. Take to heart wise Solomon’s Proverb 3:6, “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Pray to God for guidance before and after each date, and ask Him to guide you to make the right choices.

11) Compatibility of cultural background and interests can become very important factors in causing discord in marriage. If the person you are interested in comes from a different culture, then get to know the differences in clothing, music, cuisine, religion (applies to a broader audience), customs, traditions and any other differences that may cause conflict, which you may find very difficult to tolerate, live with, adapt to, modify or compromise with.

Picture yourself living with the cultural differences to see if you both can adapt to develop a common culture that both can become comfortable with. Be realistic with your assessment and the ability of both of you to compromise, or live with the differences comfortably.

Also, carefully consider each other’s interests. Do you have at least two or three mutual interests, or interests that are compatible? If you have no mutual interests, then you may find that after marriage, you may share the same address, but both of you are living in different worlds, ignoring each other when you see each other. For example, if one of you loves pets, and the other absolutely detests animals, you are setting yourselves up for misery in your marriage.

12) It is very important to address physical intimacy during one-on-one dating because it is a major reason why many dates ultimately lead to disaster. Today, sex as part of a date has become the norm. It has become the expected thing to do, many times even on the first date. As a result, many end up having sex with multiple people as they date different people. A large number end up contracting STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), ruining their own lives and the lives of others.

While many are following this norm, others may become physically intimate during dating which often leads to premarital sex.

Progressive levels of physical intimacy while dating would be first holding hands, then more physical contact in the form of hugging; next would be kissing. Then would come greater physical contact which is often called ‘petting’, then ‘necking’; and finally, sex.

“Petting” means caressing or passionate embracing, while ‘necking’ is heavy kissing. Simply put, these belong in marriage—and nowhere else, no matter the opinions of peers, friends or society. Follow the golden rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” As you would not want anyone putting his hands all over your future wife, you do the same and do not put your hands on someone else’s future wife. This dictum applies to women as well.

The recommendations in God’s Church are to be more conservative to be on the safe side. That means no sex, petting, kissing, or hugging before marriage. Before writing the United Church of God booklet titled “*Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension*” this issue was discussed among the leaders. They were asked to comment on their own personal experiences. Most did not even hold hands while dating. Some did say that they did hold hands after they came to the point when they thought that the relationship had become deeper and was on solid ground and the other person was a potential marriage partner. But even this was felt to be a distraction as any physical contact can invoke exciting emotions. If one feels that holding hands may lead to desire for any greater physical contact, then one should follow the biblical advice to ‘flee fornication’ and avoid any close physical contact, including holding hands.

God’s Church has a beautiful marriage ceremony. After the pastor officiating at the ceremony has read the marriage vows and both the husband and wife have agreed to them, the pastor then says to the new husband, “You may now kiss the bride.” There is a reason for that statement. The presumption is that the couple are now kissing each other for the very first time. That is God’s standard according to God’s Church.

13) Annulment of marriage based on fraud in which one of the spouses did not disclose something important such as fornication, or other types of sexual misconduct before marriage has been discussed at length. Therefore, before marriage past sexual sins of any kind must be frankly discussed. In addition, other areas that can constitute fraud include a person claiming to be in perfect health but has terminal cancer; or is a drug addict or an alcoholic; has a criminal past, prison record, very poor credit or bankruptcy, or has other undisclosed children. These issues that could change a person’s decision to marry someone should be fully disclosed. If not disclosed, then the marriage could be annulled.

4. ENGAGEMENT BEFORE MARRIAGE

After courtship, you two have now decided to get married. That commitment is sealed with engagement. The first important question to answer is ‘how long the engagement period should be?’

Many people, not having followed the proper dating and courtship practices, make the decision to get married too early and get engaged. Then they really begin to get to properly know each other. In such cases, the engagement may drag on for one or two years and even longer. Based on experience of ministers in God’s Church who have counseled thousands of couples, the recommended engagement period is 3-6 months, with 3-4 months being the norm.

The reasons for this recommended period are that it takes at least 6-12 weeks to properly plan a wedding. But the most important reason is that once you are engaged, have committed to each other and know that the two of you will be married soon, the desire for physical intimacy will grow. If you delay getting married too long after engagement, you will be fighting a losing battle with intimacy and will likely engage in fornication. Quoting David Pack, “necking and petting eventually lead to outright fornication—with virtually no exceptions. Long engagements also invite fornication—with virtually no exceptions!” So, keep the engagement period short.

If you become sexually intimate after engagement but before marriage, the guilt will remain, and it will scar you psychologically and emotionally throughout your life. Here is how Paul described it in I Corinthians 6:18, “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without [outside] the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body.”

Thus, fornication has an impact on the body and mind like no other sin. And it precludes you from receiving God’s blessings as stated in Jeremiah 5:25, “…your sins have withheld good things from you.”

Couples engaged to be married need to acquire another piece of extremely important knowledge before they get married. That is, understanding the role of sex in marriage. Improper sexual relations can lead to unfulfilled marriages and my even lead to divorce. *Not knowing the female body, many grooms virtually rape their wives on the wedding night.* I will not discuss this issue, but the Churches of God provide two excellent books on the subject, free of charge. These are a MUST READ during engagement, before getting married. The books are:

1) *The Missing Dimension in Sex*; by Herbert W. Armstrong who taught us God’s perspective on marriage; available at pcog.org

2) *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*; available at rcg.org

In my opinion, by authoring the book *“The Missing Dimension in Sex,”* Herbert W. Armstrong made one of his greatest contributions to ensuring happiness in marriage.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO WRITE YOUR LOVE STORY

Ultimately those dating have a choice in how they want to write their love story. There are two choices. The UCG booklet *“Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension”* describes these two stark choices this way:

“It is a beautiful love story for two people to grow up as virgins – not having engaged in any kind of sexual gratification – and then on their wedding night present their bodies to each other saying, “I loved you so much I saved myself for you and you alone. I respected you before I ever met you. I respected God and His instructions. Now I’m ready to give myself completely and exclusively to you.”

“Yours can be this most beautiful love story of all. This way as a couple you can live happily ever after in a joyous marriage, instead of living life with heartbreak of divorce and the multitude of potentially life-long problems it brings.

“Either you can have this love story, or you can enjoy the modern ‘love story’ of unrestrained sexual activity that has a couple on their wedding night saying, “I have loved so many different people before I met you that I know we can have sex without any problem at all. After all, we’ve been doing it already. So, tonight is not really that special. And did I remember to tell you? I have a few STDs I’ll be sharing with you. They are painful and impossible to cure. They’ll be with us for life. But baby, I really love you. At least right now I think I do and I’m willing to stay with you until someone better comes along.”

Your love story may not fall in the second extreme of sex before marriage and STDs. You may have escaped STDs. But then there may be children born out of wedlock and a myriad of other problems, which can actually be almost as bad. Do you see that you have a choice in which love story you choose for yourself! You can choose the true good love story and genuinely live happily after ever.

**Note on Arranged Marriages**

Most marriages in the world are arranged marriages. And not all marriages in North America, Europe, and other advanced countries are preceded by complete step-by-step dating and courtship as discussed in this book. Some marriages in these countries are also arranged marriages; arranged by parents who have been friends, or part of a social circle. Actually, such marriages in the western world could more accurately be characterized as semi-arranged marriages because the couple have had opportunity to meet with each other many times before courtship and engagement.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with marrying that way. And these arranged marriages are not disasters and are often happy marriages, particularly in non-Western countries such as India.

What are the keys for success in arranged marriages? The principles for having a godly happy marriage as described in this book are fully applicable. But the key ingredient in having a long-lasting marriage in non-Western countries is COMMITMENT to the marriage. Once the marriage has been arranged and the young man and woman have agreed to the marriage, they know they have made a commitment for life, ‘for better or for worse.’ So, they have to make the marriage work and make it as happy as possible. Divorce is an option, but severely frowned up and discouraged. Remarriage is difficult in such cultures as contrasted with the western world.

There are other aspects of arranged marriages in different cultures that lead to abuses in marriages such as the dowry system in India and other countries, and perhaps the easy divorces granted in the Muslim world if a man initiates it. Those are evils that such societies have to deal with by changing the culture through vigorous effort through education and perhaps law enforcement by bringing the guilty to justice in cases of abuse.

How then can the principles outlined in this book be applied to building a strong happy marriage if it is an arranged marriage?

There are two major difference between arranged marriages and marriages preceded by dating and courtship. The first major difference is that in arranged marriages, the choice of mate is primarily made by the parents or someone else rather than the couple themselves. In the common western marriage model, the choice of the mate is made primarily by the couple themselves.

The second major difference is that a common western marriage is preceded by one-on-one dating or courtship to select the mate. There are many benefits to the process as already described earlier. In an arranged marriage such as in India, this step is completely skipped, and in semi-arranged marriages in the west, this process is brief. Because courtship before marriage is skipped or is brief in arranged marriages, the benefits to be realized by one-on-one dating or courtship are lost. However, some of those benefits can still be realized after marriage when a total commitment has been made by the couple to be married for life. This is generally true for most of the non-western world.

These two major differences in the two types of marriages can help us develop guidelines for building a happy marriage even if it is an arranged or semi-arranged one. After the couple are married, the principles for having a godly happy marriage apply no matter how the couple got married.

Considering that in an arranged marriage, the parents or someone else has a major hand in selecting the mate for a person, the greatest danger lies in making the selection and forcing the young man or woman to accept the choice. The resulting marriage may or may not be a happy one.

Sometimes, parents in order to retain their friendships among themselves may coerce a couple to get married. The young man and woman may not be suitable for each other, and they can see it themselves, but the parents still coerce them to get married. This will likely lead to life-long resentment against the parents, and possibly an unhappy marriage, which may lead to divorce. Therefore, it is important that the young man and woman consent to the marriage without serious reservations. On the other hand, if a person rejects too many potential mates, then the danger that he or she person may find it difficult to get a suitable mate exists.

The parents or the one helping in the selection of a suitable mate should make the selection after objectively evaluating the potential mate’s ability to support a family, maturity, ability to handle stressful situations, how the person relates to others, dependability, total personality, character, ideas and attitudes about marriage, and the ability of the couple to bridge any cultural differences.

In an arranged marriage, when the selection of the mate has been made, there should be a total commitment to the marriage for life. The couple must do everything to make the marriage work. And that is when the laws of having a happy marriage as described in this book should be applied. These principles should be studied before getting married, during the engagement period.

During courtship, the young man and woman do their best to put their best foot forward. The danger to avoid in arranged marriages is to take one’s spouse for granted, and not put forth the effort to know one’s spouse intimately which one would have done during the dating and courtship process. Once a total commitment is made in an arranged marriage, the couple can follow the principles of courtship in the early stages of the marriage, perhaps within the first two years, to realize the benefits that accrue from dating and courtship, which are developing one’s personality, building character, learning from others through the process of iron sharpening iron without being competitive, growing in social graces by learning to behave like a gentleman or lady, learning to have fun together, share a wide variety of experiences, learn to show respect for one’s spouse, and learn to communicate effectively, precisely, tactfully, without giving offense.

Thereafter, the couple in an arranged marriage can apply the principles described in this book to have a happy godly marriage for life, with an eternal perspective in mind. Involve God through prayer to help you find the right mate, and then bless your marriage and help you to have a happy, godly marriage.