

MORGAN LEE/ANDREW WOODILL
21 JULY 2017

“The LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So, the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

‘This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.’”

“Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed”
[GENESIS 2:18-25].

Andrew and Morgan seek a Christian wedding. This is reasonable and rational, though the idea of a Christian wedding grows increasingly radical in this age when darkness seems to prevail. Though Andrew and Morgan have sought a Christian wedding, I must caution them, and all who listen, that there is a great difference between a Christian wedding and a Christian marriage. The former is easy to provide; the latter requires work—years of diligence characterised by strenuous effort.

I certainly concur with the desire for a wedding that honours Christ the Lord, and I will endeavour to provide such; however, they are responsible to ensure that theirs is a Christian marriage. We who share this holy and happy hour with them are witness of their commitment to one another and of their mutual commitment to live a life that glorifies the Risen Son of God.

Ours is a culture that has forgotten some elementary truths. God created the first woman to be a complement to the man. God’s ideal is that in marriage, both man and woman make one another complete. What this means is forgotten in this day late in the Age of Grace. We forget that mankind is a tripartite being—that is, each of us possess a body, but we are living souls. Additionally, we have a spirit. In marriage, man and women complete one another body, soul and spirit.

We have become a sexual society; we thought we were exalting sex by emphasising sexuality. In reality, our culture has degraded sex, forgetting that there is a spiritual significance of sex. We are urged, both through entertainment, the educational system and common societal attitudes, to magnify the act of sex. However, in doing this we exchange what is beautiful, noble and glorious for something that is tawdry, debased and cheap.

LEE/WOODILL WEDDING

Make no mistake, God created our sexuality (and thus, He has given us the gift of sex) for our good and for His glory. To be sure, through the act of love, God gives us children to bring joy to the home and to strengthen us in our commitment to one another and to Him. Thus, we read, “God blessed [the man and the woman]. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth’ [GENESIS 1:28]. We forgot that our sexuality was a gift meant to bring joy through providing children to grace our homes. We imagine that we are in control of our destinies and that we will determine when children are born, or even if they will be born.

We know from the Word of God, that God has given us the gift of sex to ensure purity. For this reason, we are enjoined, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous” [HEBREWS 13:4].

Responsibility for our sexuality is also the reason we are commanded, “This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness” [1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-7].

We are created as living souls. Thus, we are to seek to understand and ennoble one another. Peter has written, “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” [1 PETER 3:1-7].

We must never forget, however, that as spiritual beings we are to encourage one another, build one another, comfort one another in the Spirit of Christ. This is especially true in the marriage relationship. Therefore, the Word of God admonishes, “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

LEE/WOODILL WEDDING

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. ‘Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” [EPHESIANS 5:15-33].

I say all that that I have said so that I can remind you that the gift of marriage which God gave you is to encompass the totality of your being. I need not speak further of the physical aspect of your life together. The Creator did an excellent job of designing you to complement one another. However, you will need to encourage one another always to remember that you are to complement one another in soul and in spirit.

As sentient beings, we long to see our souls engaged and challenged. No woman wants to be reduced to a mere automaton used and abused whenever a man decides he wants to possess her; she wants to be appreciated for her ability to think, her ability to fulfil the purpose for which God created her. Likewise, no man wants to be a mere pocketbook exhausting himself for another; he wants to be respected for his devotion and for the love he longs to shower on his wife. We each want to be accepted as those who fulfil the aspirations of our spouse.

We who are saved have received the Spirit of Christ. In Scripture, we read, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you” [ROMANS 8:1-11].

LEE/WOODILL WEDDING

Andrew, Morgan, you have professed Christ as Master over your life. I call on you to live as those who are born from above. I call on you to recall the admonition of the Apostle, who has written, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" [COLOSSIANS 3:1-17].

To those sharing this service today. Andrew and Morgan are not a perfect couple; they have flaws and they may disappoint. However, they have a Perfect Saviour. And you may have that confidence that Christ is your Saviour if you receive Him as Master over your life. God's Word promises, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved" [ROMANS 10:9, 10]. The promise of God to you is, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" [ROMANS 10:13]. Amen.