

EPHESIANS 5:22-24

WHAT MY WIFE TAUGHT ME

“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.”¹

It is tragically sad when an individual is unable to learn from another person. It is doubly tragic when a man argues that he cannot learn from his wife. Such an individual likely is already dead, even if he isn't interred yet. You may recall that the Wise Man has written,

“He who finds a wife finds a good thing
and obtains favor from the LORD.”

[PROVERBS 18:22]

This assuredly is a true statement, though it is distressingly easy for some people to ignore it. Perhaps in this day when marriage is depreciated and dating is increasingly outmoded, it will be a hard-sell to convince people of the value of marriage. And if marriage is a hard-sell, the idea of parents remaining married for years may tragically be relegated to a concept that has become outmoded. As a culture, we are the poorer if this proves to be the case.

Mother's Day witnesses some of the heaviest phone traffic for the entire year.

Undoubtedly, for most people, the name “Mother” is precious because of the memories of tender, loving care. It is an interesting fact that “mother” is among the oldest words in the English language. The concept of “family” goes back thousands of years, to the very beginning of human existence, to be precise. People needed a way to describe the person who brought us into this world, and “mother” became that word in our English language.²

I have frequently admitted my personal lack of qualification to speak about motherhood. My mother deserted her sons when I was but five years of age. Being deserted at such a young age had a great and detrimental impact on my life. I witnessed mothers from a distance, and though women in our little village could be nice, they could never be a mother to me. My grandmother loved me dearly and as much as possible invested her love in me. She said on several occasions after I was grown, “I had to love Mike; no one else would.”

I suppose this dreadful condition might have continued if not for the intervention of the Master. He brought a wonderful woman into my life, though at the time I neither served Him nor acknowledged Him. Lynda not only showed me love that I did not deserve, when we had children of our own, she demonstrated what a mother should be. My eldest daughter learned from her mother, and she is the joyful mother of children. Lynda's children rise up and call her blessed. Again, observing the love of my wife for her children and the love of my daughter for her children, I have captured a glimpse of what a mother should be, and I rejoice in the thought of motherhood. May I say from experience, the man without a mother is deprived of something very special. In saying that, I do not depreciate fathers; I only observe the obvious.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² See “The Oldest Words in the English Language,” <http://www.dictionary.com/e/s/oldest-english-words/?param=HP#mother>, accessed 7 December 2017

MY WIFE IS A COMPLEMENT, NOT A COMPETITOR — “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” [EPHESIANS 5:22, 23].

I have never made a secret of the fact that my mother abandoned her family. A memory was burned into my five-year-old mind of my mother denying her love for her sons and for her husband. I saw my mother intermittently during my childhood years, usually when it was convenient for her to drop by for a brief while. Though my dad was careful to teach his sons to respect their mother, it is not surprising that I would have a distorted understanding of motherhood. Unconsciously, I carried that distorted view into marriage. It would have been impossible not to have such a distorted view, I suppose. I wanted a mother, and I didn't have a mother. I knew a woman who had been a surrogate to bring me into the world, but she wasn't a mother. I'm not complaining; I'm simply acknowledging reality.

I have often confessed that Lynda didn't get a bargain when she married me; I was about as smooth as the backyard fence. How could I have understood anything about love for my wife, about how a husband was to work with his wife or how a wife was to complement her husband? God was very gracious to me—He gave me a wife who accepted me, but who was unwilling to abandon me to the distorted creature I had become through my lack of training.

My wife assuredly had her hands full. Lynda was forced to work with broken pieces, carefully putting them together again piece-by-piece. I do not say that she was never frustrated. It would be impossible that a wife should be equanimous when her husband is as rough around the edges as was Lynda's husband. However, she saw that my great need was to learn to love. She demonstrated her love for me by loving the children whom God gave us, investing herself in each one. She would not desert them like I had been deserted. She would ensure that they had both a mother and a father. Above all else, she loved me, making it evident even to the most blind that she chose to love me. With God's help, Lynda taught me truths about love that would have otherwise never been taught.

Though a wife may not be complimentary, she is assuredly charged to be complementary. A wife cannot be a wife without a husband. Together, husband and wife become one, as is taught in the earliest words recorded in the Bible. You may recall the account of the creation of woman from man. “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” [GENESIS 2:18-24].

Focus on that statement which the LORD God pronounced, that a man and his wife shall become one flesh—*one flesh*. Have you ever noticed, and I know you have noticed, how couples grow together with time? Having lived together for many years, a husband will be speaking, and his wife is fully able to complete his sentences—she may do so on occasion. Husbands know what their wife is about to say before she speaks. There is a merging of the minds, and it is beautiful to behold. I don't mean this in a negative sense; I mean that we see how husband and wife are joined, growing together as they support and strengthen one another.

Throughout the Word of God, men are taught to esteem their wives, to honour their wives. One example of this teaching is given in Peter's first letter, included among the General Epistles. Focus on instructions that Peter issued to husbands in his first letter to Jewish Christians of the Diaspora. "Husbands ... treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers" [1 PETER 3:7 NET BIBLE]. The word translated "honour" speaks of holding one to be precious; it speaks of esteem, of value, of worth.

By implication, one great purpose of marriage is to ensure that the two become one. Husbands are made complete through union with their wives; and wives are meant to be completed in their husbands. This is not to imply that neither can exist without the other or that either are somehow inferior to the other; rather, it is acknowledgement that in marriage, God's intent was that husband and wife would make each other stronger. A man can be complete in himself, just as a woman can be complete in herself. However, when they are joined in marriage, a new entity is created. This new entity is demonstrated in a rather strange place when the Wise Man writes, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken" [ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12].

I do not suggest that marriage is all sweetness and light. My wife commented recently, "If we are still in love after all these years, why do we have such tension at times?" That is a fair question deserving an honest answer. I responded by noting it is impossible to have two independent people making decisions and conducting their lives as each sees fit, without friction. Rub your hands together vigorously and you can feel heat being generated. Let two people live together, moving independently as they conduct their daily lives and they will generate heat—it is inevitable. Friction creates heat, and heat can irritate and burn at times. Sharp reactions to what one may see as his turf or as her turf are bound to occur. However, despite the occasional tension, the complementarity of marriage creates a stronger relationship in time.

We live in a day when many modern minds insist on equality while depreciating complementarity. Wishing to show themselves to be progressive in matters of the Faith, a startling number of faith leaders would destroy marriage to make husband and wife equal. I seriously doubt that you want equality in your marriage. My wife is not my equal, and I say, "Thank the Lord that she is not my equal." However, it is important to balance that statement with the admission that neither am I my wife's equal, for which each of us can be thankful. I do not need an equal, nor does she need an equal. What we do need, is that each of us should work to complement the other. Our goal is to create a new entity that is stronger because our individual and unique strengths are melded and fused into a strong bond that can withstand the pressures and ravages of life. That is precisely what God does in the marriage relationship that is centred on Him.

There is a common aspect of the difference between husbands and wives that is so mundane as to be passed over. Let me try to explain by giving an example of this difference. When we lived in San Francisco, it was not unusual that I would have an appointment at the church following the service. Often, Lynda would take the girls home and I would remain at the church. Later, I would catch a ride with a friend and she would let me in the house. On one particular evening, as I described, I came home late. I anticipated that Lynda would unlock the door and let me in. I rang the doorbell—probably fifteen times or more. I knocked on the door, literally beating it. I didn't want to waken the neighbours, so I didn't raise my voice—too much. After some minutes, I decided that my wife might be asleep. Our bedroom was in the back and on the second floor. I walked into the backyard and began to toss rocks at the window. I threw enough rocks that I was actually afraid that I might break the window. On a post-graduate income, replacing a broken window would constitute a financial disaster. Finally, I crossed the street to a neighbour's house and asked to borrow the phone. I know that the phone rang at least twenty times. Of course, I was beginning to worry that something must be seriously wrong.

At last, after more than fifteen minutes of trying to waken my wife, she came to the door, groggy and asking, "Have you been here long?" What is fascinating about this incident and her ability to sleep through my desperate efforts to get into my own house is that this is the same woman who would suddenly jump from the bed, wakened from a sound asleep, and rush to the children's bedroom because she heard the baby stir! Sitting in a church service, the congregation could be singing loudly and she would rush past me, saying, "I heard Stephen crying in the nursery." The nursery was one floor down and at the other end of the church building! A mother hears her child even when she can't hear the front door being beaten down!

Wives are not husbands; and husbands are not wives. We occupy different spheres, designed to ensure that together we are strong. When the LORD God confronted our first parents after the rebellion in the Garden, He pronounced a curious sentence on Mother Eve. God said,

"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,
but he shall rule over you."

[GENESIS 3:16]

According to God's own Word, the woman would struggle for mastery over her husband; she would want to prove that she was "as good as" he is. This was, if you will, a prophecy of the Feminist Movement. However, woman is not to rule over her husband. As the Apostle has said, "A man ... is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man" [1 CORINTHIANS 11:7-9]. Woman, intuitively, wants to be a competitor. However, she was created to be a complement.

Because of the fallen nature of mankind, it is necessary to remind all who listen that a man is not to be a brute, he is to see his wife as one who makes his life complete. He is to treasure her, treating her with consideration, as we have already seen. A man is to accept his wife as a gift given by God Who is too wise to make a mistake and too good to needlessly hurt His child. A wife is to be accepted as a divine gift who shares in God's blessing by blessing her husband. As we saw when we read Peter's instruction to husbands, failure to receive one's wife as "a fellow heir of the grace of life" will result in a serious deficit in a man's prayer life.

MY WIFE IS A BUILDER, NOT A BURDEN — “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” [EPHESIANS 5:22, 23]. From living with my wife, a real woman, I might say, I learned that a wife is to be a builder and not a burden. I learned that a wife is to be a worker and not a shirker.

I confess that my wife leaves me exhausted by her outbursts of energy to make our house a home. There is a cost for her to do this, however, as she cannot sit very long in front of the television with a nice fire glowing in the fireplace and expect to watch whatever it is that she queued up for her viewing pleasure. My wife is a builder, not a burden. In this, she reveals the reality of the godly wife witnessed throughout Scripture.

The passage is somewhat extended, but the “excellent wife” described in the Proverbs demonstrates the biblical ideal of the wife who is a builder.

“An excellent wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
She is like the ships of the merchant;
she brings her food from afar.
She rises while it is yet night
and provides food for her household
and portions for her maidens.
She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
She dresses herself with strength
and makes her arms strong.
She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
She opens her hand to the poor
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
She is not afraid of snow for her household,
for all her household are clothed in scarlet.
She makes bed coverings for herself;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
Her husband is known in the gates
when he sits among the elders of the land.
She makes linen garments and sells them;
she delivers sashes to the merchant.
Strength and dignity are her clothing,

and she laughs at the time to come.
She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
She looks well to the ways of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
'Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.'
Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the gates."

[PROVERBS 31:10-31]

The woman described in this portion of the Word builds her husband, knowing that in building him, she strengthens her family. It is no wonder that her children, and her husband, "rise up and call her blessed." No wonder her husband praises her; he witnesses the true beauty of a godly woman who fears the LORD. She knows that she is not an individual who merely belongs to a man, any more than her husband is an individual who happens to own a woman. Together, they have been fused into a new entity working together to create a stronger whole. What she does either strengthens or enervates the family. The same truth holds for her husband. If he is focused solely on his interests, the family will never demonstrate the strength it should reveal. If he seeks to strengthen her, he will make the family strong and bless his children. Likewise, if she seeks only her own interest, the family will be weakened. If she strives to honour her husband, the family will be stronger for that. Together, husband and wife are not a team—they are more than a team, they are a new entity in Christ Jesus if they are serving Him.

I want to take a moment to note for your benefit a truth that is easily neglected in today's world. It is an axiom of the Faith that children learn how to live as adults through observing their parents. If parents love God, their children will turn their hearts toward God from earliest days. Where God is honoured in the home, it is normal that children will seek God early in life. If the parents love the church, the children will love to be with the people of God, singing the hymns of the Faith and learning from the teaching of the Word of God.

If children see a father who treats their mother with respect and honour, the boys will learn that is the way they are supposed to treat a woman and the girls will know that they are to seek out that type of man for a husband. If children witness a mother who respects her husband and unites with him to create a stronger entity than she could be alone, the boys will seek out a wife that joins him in seeking how to create a strong home and the girls will be that sort of wife.

Let me take a moment longer to remind you that we are responsible to raise our children right, providing a godly model for them. E. V. Hill asserts, "You can't get no race horses out of mules." On one occasion, as told by Dr. Hill, "something" knocked at his door to ask for his daughter, Rose. "Is Rose here?" the young man asked. "Not for you," responded Dr. Hill.

"Well, I came to see her," the young man said. "You can't," shot back Brother Hill.

"You mean I can't see her? Who said so?"

"I did. I'm her father. You don't even look like what I'm looking for."

"Well, isn't that her choice?"

“No. Her mother went to death’s door; and I’ve since then taken over and paid the interest. And the best we can, unless she goes crazy, we’re going to keep her for something that has some potential.”

His daughter came running down, asking, “Was that for me?”

“No. That wasn’t for you at all.”

“Well, wasn’t that so-and-so?”

“Yes.”

“Why did you run him away?”

“Because he wasn’t for you.”

His daughter looked at him and said, “Well, I think he’s a nice boy.”

Dr. Hill said, “Go get your mother. I’ve never had any doubts before, but I want to know now if you’re really mine.”

His daughter, angered at her father and trying to hurt him, as daughters can do, on one occasion said, “I will never marry a man like you. You’re a chauvinist; you’re a dictator. You’re good for my mother, but never for me.”

Dr. Hill performed her wedding. He said that while he is the President of the National Chauvinist Association, her husband is the Vice-President.³ Give your children an example to model their lives after. Ensure that they are raised in a godly home.

The 22nd and 23rd VERSES of the text are controversial among modern church goers, teaching as they do, that wives are to cultivate a submissive attitude toward their husband. One of the major problems with the passage is that contemporary Christians are often unable to read, and if they should be able to read, they are incapable of thinking independently. Our children, and many individuals that are now adults, were thoroughly trained in how to get in touch with their feelings, but never trained to think. Too many people react emotionally, they are triggered by words that they have decided are evil, they are traumatised by opinions that differ from their own opinions, they can’t get outside of the box they built around themselves. Therefore, while loudly declaring their independence, they tie themselves into knots in order to be like their tribe.

The wife is to submit to her own husband. This is not a call to submit to men. A wife is called to submit to her own husband, and no other. Moreover, her submission is to be “as to the Lord.” If it is a burden for you to be submitted to the Lord, then perhaps you can attempt to exempt yourself from this charge. However, if your submission to the Lord is voluntary, and it is, if your submission is a recognition of His love for you and your trust in him, and it is, then you are to have the same type of submission to your own husband. How broad should this submission be? The Word of God makes it clear that it covers all things when Paul writes, “As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands” [EPHESIANS 5:25].

Because of our fallen condition, and because of the manner in which this verse has been distorted even among some supposed evangelical ministries, it is necessary to qualify this by stating that submission is never justified when a husband asks his wife to engage in immoral, unethical or heretical behaviour. Her submission to her husband is “as to the Lord.” Christ never calls his people to immoral, unethical or heretical behaviour. Our call is to honour Him in all things. Perhaps this is idealised, but husbands are responsible to model their lives after the Saviour under whom they have placed themselves. Then, in the home, wives are to voluntarily place themselves under their own husbands.

³ E. V. Hill, “His Wife’s Funeral,” YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_CDtEERSiE, accessed 26 April 2018

I am teaching you that it is a wife's glory to offer voluntarily her submission to her own husband; no man has the right to demand that his wife submit to him. The basis for this teaching is found in the instruction provided in the First Letter to the Corinthian Christians, when the Apostle writes, "I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God" [1 CORINTHIANS 11:3]. Christ is not diminished by acknowledging that God is his head. Neither is a wife diminished in accepting that her husband is her head. It ensures order in the marriage as the husband accepts responsibility to guard his wife, expending himself on her behalf.

Just as we don't neglect emphasising the responsibility of husbands to their wives, note that Paul writes, "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 5:25-33]. The love a husband has for his wife pictures the love of Christ for His bride, which is His church. Likewise, the love a wife has for her husband mirrors the love of the church for the Saviour.

MY WIFE TAUGHT ME LOVE — "As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands" [EPHESIANS 5:25]. Love is neither a feeling nor an emotion, love is a choice. Love requires work—tons of work all the time! If a wife is to love her husband, it will not be because he is a handsome brute or a good provider; she will love him because she makes a deliberate choice to love him. Likewise, a man must choose to love his wife. If he does not make that choice, he will find a thousand reasons to justify falling out of love.

Allow me to take a moment to address this issue of love. I sometimes question whether modern people actually can define love. As discussed in a prior message⁴, the modern hook-up culture has destroyed the concept of dating, which was actually ritualised opportunity for a young man and a young woman to get to know one another. The purpose of dating was to take time to learn who these two individuals are. Dating allows a young man to advance such outmoded concepts as courtesy and consideration to the forefront of the relationship. It allows the young woman to put into practise such necessary ideals as respect and complementarity. Dating provides opportunity to learn some of the likes and dislikes that define each of these two individuals; it allows the young man and the young woman to begin to appreciate the unique character of one another.

The modern concept that has replaced dating is the hook-up culture in which the two individuals meet to "hang out" and then tumble into bed to "hook-up." There is no commitment, no consideration of one another as unique individuals, no way to honour either family or God. The entire procedure is a rushed effort meant to gratify self. As I have said before, sex is the easy part about coupling; love, however, eludes modern couples in the new hook-up culture.

⁴ Michael Stark, "You Got What You Wanted, But You Lost What You Had!" (Sermon), April 8, 2018, <http://newbeginningsbaptist.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Genesis-25.29-34-You-Got-What-You-Wanted-But-You-Lost-What-You-Had.pdf>

I've now been married for more than fifty years; I hope I've learned a thing or two about love. Though most people under the age of thirty would consider me older than dirt, I was once a young man madly in love with a beautiful young woman. Mature reflection compels me to confess that we were certainly drawn to one another. There was a definite attraction, but I'm hard-pressed to say that we actually knew much about love. Love grew as the years passed. It was the pressure of living together, learning to trust one another and two becoming one that ensured that we would learn what love meant.

I was enthralled with my young bride; I didn't want to be separated longer than I needed to be away. She was eager for me to spend time with her. Since those heady days early in our marriage, I believe that I have learned something of God's intent for a husband and wife. The Word of God teaches me, "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
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she shall be called Woman,
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"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].

There is so much that I could say based on what God has provided in this account of our first parents, but there is one thing on which I've meditated often. God concludes by stating, "The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed" [GENESIS 2:25]. Early in our marriage I realised the physical implication of what was written, but the actual meaning seemed to elude me. The handsome young man my wife married very quickly proved to have some serious flaws that must have been disappointing for her—he awoke each morning with breath that made it seem a possum had slept in his mouth; he was somewhat more uninhibited than she would like. Worse still, he enjoyed her cooking, with the inevitable and obvious result that his clothing was shrinking. Having lived for too long eating "Koo-Koo Burgers" and "chili cheese dogs," a steady diet of home-cooking ensured that his waistline would expand—significantly! All this meant that naked and not ashamed was not as easy to realise as he might have expected.

As we have lived together, I've learned that I can trust my wife. I can sit with her, revealing my struggles, my hopes, my fears, my desires and we are able to work through the challenges of facing life together. Likewise, she is able to speak with me. I'm not saying there aren't times when there is a sharpness in her voice and a note of accusation or disappointment, but in the main, we are able to speak with honesty and with genuine desire to make the other strong. We've learned that when we build our spouse, we build ourselves. I've learned that when I love my wife, it is to my benefit. We've learned how to be naked and unashamed.

EPHESIANS 5:22-24
WHAT MY WIFE TAUGHT ME

When we read that the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed, it should be evident to readers that the man and his wife trusted one another. In the biblical account, Adam trusted Eve when she accepted the fruit proffered by the serpent. Adam was silent, thus bearing responsibility through his silence. Nevertheless, Adam's acceptance of the fruit Eve offered demonstrated that he trusted her. In the midst of the confusion and the sorrow flowing from the fall of our first parents, there is this one bright spot. The scene may be dark, but there was this positive aspect.

On the authority of God's Word, I urge husbands and wives to work at building trust. Trust, when it is destroyed, may never be restored—it is that fragile. When it is present, trust will enable a couple to withstand the most ferocious storms, as they stand together, strong and unyielding. When trust has been betrayed, it will require the grace of God to restore that trust again. For this reason, it is essential that husbands and wives work to avoid betraying trust; it is far better never to have ruptured trust than to attempt to restore trust when it has been broken. Truthfulness in the relationship, refusal to hide secrets from one another, determination to live openly and boldly, will be required for trust to be fostered in the marriage. Trust should require willingness to share passwords to your phone, willingness to share passwords for your computer, and if requested, passwords for locked files. Without trust, how can there be reciprocated love?

We are suffering an epidemic of divorce in our modern world. George Gallup Jr. states correctly this epidemic: "If a disease were to afflict the majority of a populace, spreading pain and dysfunction throughout all age groups, we would be frantically searching for reasons and solutions. Yet this particular scourge has become so endemic that it is virtually ignored. The scourge is divorce, an oddly neglected topic in a nation that has the worst record of broken marriages in the entire world. Divorce is the 'root problem' in our country and is the cause of any number of social ills."⁵ A major reason for divorce is a failure to accept the separate, equally essential roles of husbands and wives.

Our families must be encouraged to build strong marriages. We need godly husbands and godly wives. Such godliness begins with a commitment to love one another more than either loves himself or herself. Hear the Word of the Lord: "Let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband" [**EPHESIANS 5:33**]. Amen.

⁵ Cited in Kathey Batey, "Divorce is an epidemic that causes as much pain as any disease—so why don't we treat it that way?" FoxNews.com, 8 April 2018, <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2018/04/08/divorce-is-epidemic-that-causes-as-much-pain-as-any-disease-so-why-dont-treat-it-that-way.html>, accessed 8 April 2018