

Marriage Tune-Up

- I. Sometimes marriage doesn't run properly. The default answer should not be, "Junk it" or "Trade it," but "Diagnose it and fix it."
- A. A lot of break-downs can be averted by proper maintenance. Why wait for the "idiot light" on the instrument panel to let you know you're about to be stranded?
 - B. A well-cared for marriage can last long enough to become a classic that isn't taxed like younger marriage.
 - C. Like an engine, your marriage needs cranking power (covenantal love), spark (romance), gas (self-sacrifice), oil (caring forbearance), coolant (temper, patience), filtration to keep out destructive elements, balanced air flow (reasonable expectations) and exhaust (don't worry about this one---it just happens, but don't let it get plugged): all working in coordination.
 - D. Husbands need a continual membership in AAA: Attention, Affection, Appreciation. This is the security package that gives her the assurance that you care for her.
 - E. Wives need to remember where the keys are: submissiveness, support, respect.
 - F. Your spouse has two data ports for diagnostics (both critical but sometimes disconnected): brain and heart.
 - 1. *Ask* the brain for data and *heed* the heart (since it doesn't always cough out data on command). If either of the OBD systems isn't providing data, it may need a re-boot.
 - 2. Wise diagnosticians know their vehicle well, and treat it accordingly. The same applies in marriage. **1PE 3:6-7.**
 - G. Keep your marriage running well with quality parts designed for your model.
 - 1. Other folks' marriages may have different parts that won't fit yours.
 - 2. Don't use cheap substitute parts like tantrums, yelling, threats, counter-accusations, passive-aggressive manipulations, procrastination, grudges, withholding conjugal favors as punishment, self-love, etc.
 - H. Not every marriage is a Toyota that runs virtually trouble-free but even Toyotas require care.
 - I. Break trust with your car by lack of care or imprudent use and it will stop working well. Break trust with your spouse and your marriage will do likewise.
 - J. If you can't figure out why your marriage isn't running well, get professional input before it fails. Don't wait until break-down. Counsel has its place, and the best counsel is what God's word says about man, woman, and the marriage relationship. **PSA 119:24.**
 - 1. God is the Maker of man, woman and marriage. **GEN 2:21-24.**
 - 2. Marriage is the relationship God has made with His redeemed. **EPH 5:24-25, 32.**
 - 3. God knows best what drives and hinders us. He knows our hearts better than we do. **LUK 16:15; ACT 15:8; HEB 4:12.**
- II. One-shots.
- A. "Marriage is a contest to out-give and out-forgive your spouse." (Dave Ashworth)
 - B. In marriage, it is more important to be always good than to be always right.
 - C. The vow of marriage is its bond but let not the legality of the bond excuse you from managing the relationship wisely, godly.
 - D. Your heart will be where your treasure is (**MAT 6:21**), and your spouse will know it.
 - E. Next to God, the #1 person in your life should be your spouse, not children, parents, friends, employer, etc.
 - F. Realistic expectations can prevent many unfulfilled expectations.

- G. If you can't work out a perfect marriage, at least perfect a working marriage.
- III. In all associations or relationships, there are bound to be difficulties and friction. Marriage is no exception. **1CO 7:28.**
- A. If a Christian couple are intent on resolving problems God's way, divorce is not an option. **ROM 7:2; 1CO 7:10-11.**
 - B. Properly handled, friction in marriage can turn to a benefit, inasmuch as it can check excessive or selfish behavior. **PRO 27:17.**
- IV. If strife has become a trademark of a marriage, consider its source. **PRO 13:10; JAM 4:1.**
- A. Insistent and continual bickering is self-destructive. **GAL 5:15.**
 - B. Sometimes, self-righteousness masquerades as a holy, righteous defence of some principle. **ACT 26:11; ROM 7:7-8.**
 - C. Therefore, temper your righteousness. **ECC 7:16, 21-22; ROM 12:3.**
 - D. Righteousness and judgment must be governed by forbearance and mercy. **COL 3:12-13; JAM 2:13.**
- V. Sometimes a cause of marital difficulties is a departure from the respective roles of husband and wife as God has laid them out. **EPH 5:22-33.**
- A. The role of the husband.
 - 1. A man is to leave father and mother and cleave to his wife. Leave and cleave. **v. 31 c/w GEN 2:24.**
 - a. The man must prioritize his new relationship over that of his upbringing. Parents' affections and demands take a backseat.
 - b. *Cleave* means "...to adhere or cling to; to remain attached, devoted or faithful to." See this in **GEN 34:3; RUTH 1:14.**
 - 2. A man is to be the head of his wife; he is to rule her. **v. 23 c/w GEN 3:16; 1CO 11:3.**
 - a. This is not a tyrant's license. Authority is to be used for the improvement of those under it. **2CO 10:8.**
 - b. A woman needs to be able to trust her husband to wisely rule over her and the house. Men need to avoid being Nabal. **1SAM 25:17-19, 25.**
 - c. If all the household decisions are thrust upon her, then she may well not respect her husband as a head.
 - d. This does not mean that the wife should be excluded from the decision-making process. God gave women brains and insight which deserve consideration. **GEN 21:9-12 c/w PRO 14:1.**
 - e. A wise leader considers the thoughts of those under him. He knows that there is a time to give in. **1CH 13:1-4 ct/w 1KI 12:1-20.**
 - 3. He is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. **v. 25.**
 - a. True love gives of itself. **1CO 13:5.**
 - b. A woman needs to feel that her husband has a keen interest in her welfare and that he is willing to sacrifice for her good. Her submission will be much easier where she knows she is truly loved and cared for.
 - 4. A man ought to view his wife not just for what she is, fixating on her flaws, but for her potential under his loving headship. **vs. 26-27.**
 - 5. A man is to love his wife as he loves his own body. **v. 28 c/w JOB 2:4-5.**
 - a. He should give his wife the same regard that he would his own body. He should not demand of her that which he would be loath to do himself.

- b. If a man loves his wife, he loves himself. It is in his best interests to love her sacrificially, considerately, kindly.
 - c. She is poetically called a garden (**SONG 4:12**). Pleasure and benefit are only derived from a garden that is well-cared for.
- 6. A man must provide for his wife's well-being. **v. 29.**
 - a. He is to *nourish* her, which means “to bring up, rear, nurture... promote the growth of.”
 - b. He should provide for her financially, spiritually, emotionally, intimately, intellectually and recreationally.
 - c. Wilful failure to provide for the wife is denial of the faith. **1TI 5:8.**
- 7. He ought to *cherish* the wife (**v. 29**), which means “to hold dear, treat with tenderness and affection; to make much of.” **v. 29.**
- 8. This passage unquestionably sets forth a man's role as one of headship and tenderness: steel and velvet.
 - a. A balance of these qualities are necessary for a woman to feel secure in the marriage relationship.
 - b. This security is needed for her to derive maximum pleasure from marital relations.
- 9. **1PE 3:7.**
 - a. Dwell with your wife according to knowledge, not just feelings. One does not always feel like being married.
 - b. Scripture, observation and common sense all contribute to knowing a woman.
 - c. Give *honour* to the wife, i.e., “high respect, esteem, or reverence, accorded to exalted worth or rank; deferential admiration or approbation.” A woman needs to be praised, feel needed and valuable. **PRO 31:28-31.**
 - d. Remember that she is the weaker vessel, regardless of how thick the outer shell may appear to be.
 - e. A man is to provide a protective shield for his wife against pressure.
 - f. If she bears all the stress of the home by herself, then she will have problems relating properly to the husband.
 - g. He should accept that her physical, emotional and mental make-up may make it difficult for her to do, feel or think as he does.
 - h. He should realize that her defensiveness may be because she knows she is the weaker vessel. If her innate need of fulfillment is not being satisfied, she may defensively lash out and hyperbolize. **GEN 30:1-2.**
 - i. Automotively, she is a 1967 Jaguar XKE: beauty with wiring issues.
- 10. **COL 3:19.** The husband is not to be bitter against his wife and take out his frustrations on her.
 - a. She may be a good sounding board, but not a dart board.
 - b. Reserve disgruntlement for her rebellion, not for her flaws and womanly nature.
 - c. bitter: Characterized by intense animosity or virulence of feeling or action: virulent.
 - d. virulent: *fig.* Violently bitter, spiteful, or malignant; full of acrimony or enmity.
 - e. Muhammad may think wife-beating appropriate but not Jesus Christ.
 - (1) The Qur'an in Sura 4:34 says, “Men are the managers of the affairs of women... Those you fear may be rebellious---admonish; banish

- them to their couches and beat them.”
- (2) Some English translations of the Qur'an and Muslim apologists moderate the impact of such a statement, reducing it to a proverbial “slap on the wrist.”
- (3) But the original Arabic actually says “scourge them,” and the same Arabic word is used to describe the beating of camels and criminals.
- (4) Bible Christianity is not the enemy of women. It is the elevation and salvation of women.

B. The role of the wife.

1. A good wife is a great blessing. **PRO 18:22; 19:14.**
2. She is to submit to her husband and obey him. **EPH 5:22 c/w TIT 2:3-5.**
 - a. submit: *refl.* and *intr.* To place oneself under the control of a person in authority or power; to become subject, surrender oneself, or yield to a person or his rule, etc.
 - b. This should not be the controversial issue that sin has made it to be. Nature itself teaches this (and exceptions do not nullify rules, they prove rules). The current fad of transgenderism in sports is curiously giving the feminist movement pause for thought as Superwoman loses to Averageman.
 - c. The headship of the man in marriage has long been under attack by Cultural Marxism which fully intended “a long, slow march through the institutions” of Western Christianity. The biblical family model had to be broken down to establish the Marxist political system and the way to do that was to liberate the woman from her “enslavement” and marry her to the State.
 - d. **TIT 2:3-5** shows the importance of godly older women setting the tone and teaching the younger women what they need to know and do to please God and prevent the blasphemy of the word of God. Young women will not learn this from the entertainment industry, fashion industry or advertising industry! Many churches have bought into the inversion and turned the faith from a sturdy thistle into a pansy.
3. She needs to remember that she was made, first of all, not for herself, her children or her career, but for her man. **GEN 2:18; 1CO 11:9.**
4. **1PE 3:1-6** sets forth critical guidelines for the wife.
 - a. Her subjection to her husband is not conditioned upon his obedience of faith. He is still the head of the family.
 - b. This does not mean submission to ungodly demands since her first allegiance is to God, not him. **MAT 22:36-39.**
 - c. This does not mean that she must forsake all instincts of self-preservation. **ISAM 25:18-24.**
 - d. Neither does subjection to her husband mean that she must be mentally stagnant. She is to be fearfully submissive without *amazement* (the condition of being mentally paralyzed, mental stupefaction, frenzy).
5. She ought to reverence her husband. **EPH 5:33 c/w 1PE 3:6.**
 - a. reverence: Deep or due respect felt or shown towards a person or relationship; deference.
 - b. This is not just to be lip-service or eye-service, but from the heart. **GEN 18:12.**
6. **TIT 2:4-5.**
 - a. The wife is to be a *keeper at home*.
 - b. keeper: One who has charge, care, or oversight of any person or thing; a

- guardian, warden, custodian. (c/w **1TI 5:14; PRO 31:27**)
- (1) Her role as guardian and warden will be particularly in play when children enter the picture. The home's spotlessness may have to take a backseat to warden duties.
 - (2) A word to the wise: Let your home be clean enough to be healthy and dirty enough to be happy.
 - (3) Christ's expectation of His bride is *reasonable service*. **ROM 12:1**.
- c. A wife exercises authority over the home under her husband. Hence, the rule of the husband does not imply that she has no power. A wise husband will delegate authority and a wise wife will faithfully exercise it.
 - d. Godly "keepers at home" contrast the unchaste harlot and the untied widow who lacks discretion. **PRO 7:11; 1TI 5:13**.
 - e. She is to love her husband and children.
 - f. She must be *sober*, which is: "moderate, temperate, avoiding excess in respect of the use of food and drink; not given to the indulgence of food and appetite."
 - g. She must be *discreet*, which is: "showing discernment or judgement in the guidance of one's own speech and action; judicious, prudent, circumspect, cautious; often, especially, that can be silent when speech would be inconvenient." c/w **PRO 11:22**.
 - h. She is to be *chaste*, which is: "pure from unlawful sexual intercourse, continent, virtuous (of persons, their lives, conduct, etc.)."
 - i. This peripherally censures aggressive, alluring actions or clothing. **ISA 3:16; 1TI 2:9**.
7. The virtuous woman is a crown to her man. **PRO 12:4**.
 8. The virtuous woman is well described in **PRO 31:10-31**.
 - a. This is clearly not a description of a stifled, ignorant robot.
 - b. This passage acknowledges the right of a wife and mother to be involved in business dealings beyond the realm of domestic duties (as long as the guidance of the house is not surrendered).
 - c. Though industrious, she obviously honours her husband's headship.
 - d. The reason for this virtuous woman's lively balance of meekness and aggressiveness is because she fears God. **v. 30**.
 - e. The **PRO 31** woman is a high standard but so is Boaz. **RUTH 2:1**.
 9. The following texts emphasize the kind of woman a man does not need. **PRO 21:9, 19; 27:15-16; 30:23**.
 - a. brawl: To quarrel noisily and indecently; to wrangle; to squabble.
 - b. odious: Deserving of hatred, hateful; causing or exciting hatred or repugnance, disagreeable, offensive, repulsive, exciting odium.
 10. A contrast:
 - a. This author speaks of Merlin Stone, who wrote a very influential book, "When God Was a Woman" which "justifies" modern Feminism: "Stone concludes that the mature Goddess cultures saw ceremonial sex as an especially potent way to celebrate and share in the life-giving powers of the Goddess. In addition, promiscuous sexual activity was encouraged for the specific reason of confusing the lines of paternity, and thus reinforcing matrilineal inheritance of property and power---fathers could not bequeath power and property to their sons if they did not know who their sons were. Patrilineal monogamy, she says, is just another aspect of the later

oppression of women, and hence sexual liberation today is an essential component of the liberation of women."

(Philip G. Davis, *Goddess Unmasked*, p. 45)

- b. "The strength of purpose which the young wives of America display, in bending themselves at once and without repining to the austere duties of their new condition [marriage] is no less manifest in all the great trials of their lives. In no country in the world are private fortunes more precarious than in the United States. It is not uncommon for the same man, in the course of his life, to rise and sink again through all the grades which lead from opulence to poverty. American women support these vicissitudes with calm and unquenchable energy: it would seem that their desires contract as easily as they expand with their fortunes. ¶ I have often met, even on the verge of the wilderness, with young women who, after being brought up amidst all the comforts of the large towns of New England, had passed, almost without any intermediate stage, from the wealthy abode of their parents to a comfortless hovel in a forest. Fever, solitude, and a tedious life had not broken the springs of their courage...I do not doubt that these young American women had amassed, in the education of their early years, that inward strength which they displayed under these circumstances. ¶ ...Hence it is, that the women of America, who often exhibit a masculine strength of understanding and a manly energy, generally preserve great delicacy of personal appearance, and always retain the manners of women, although they sometimes show that they have the hearts and minds of men."
- (Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy In America*, pp. 237, 244)