

Marriage – a revelation

by Hendrik Joubert

Have you considered, and do we understand all the implications of the following statement made by the Creator?: ***"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*** Genesis 1:26.

In what way are we made in His image? I suspect that there are more to this than the fact that we have an eternal spirit that will return to God. I would like to suggest a few things for your consideration. In what seems an obvious on marriage and the responsibilities of husbands and wives, Paul writes: ***This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:32.***

The relationship between Christ and the church is as close as the relationship in which the *two become one flesh*. Consider the value we place on fidelity. Men who chase after anyone in a dress will demand that their wives remain faithful to them. God is the epitome of the faithful husband, expecting the same from His bride. Think about the lessons God taught concerning infidelity through the prophet Hosea. Being unfaithful to God is as shameful as being an adulterer.

One may effectively argue the other way; the revealed closeness of marriage is used to show the type of relationship that the church has with Christ. In the marriage relationship much responsibility is placed upon the husband by comparing him with Christ and His relationship with the church – ***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her... Ephesians 5:25.*** The words following emphasizes that the needs of the church are Christ's priority, as the needs of the wife should be that of the husband. Christ is the ultimate example – do husbands live up to this expectation?

Husbands then receive more specific instruction concerning the degree of love for their wives. Keep in mind how marriages were arranged in those societies, especially among the Jews. In our society so much emphasis is placed upon the *chemistry* that should be present at the start of a relationship – *there just wasn't any chemistry*. The husband is instructed ***to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. Ephesians 5:28-30.***

It is important to notice that the relationship is sealed with an oath before God at its inception. ***It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. ⁶ Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands? Ecclesiastes 5:5-6.*** We should not attempt calling a *spiritual time-out* on our vows because we think *things have changed* since we made it. *I just do not love her anymore!* When are you going to repent? It is not an option, it is a command from God that you love and cherish the one you accepted, and in our society chose, to be your wife.

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate. Matthew 19:6. Who has the right to separate what God has joined in light of what is said here? As the apostle Paul may put it: *Not even an angel from heaven*. Notice how he uses angels to put things beyond the realm of possibility. Concerning the gospel he writes that not even *an angel from heaven* can make changes to it, let alone any mortal man.

When discussing importance of love in everything we do, he says about tongues that even if one could speak *the tongues of angels*, and you do not have love, you are nothing.

What if God was to change his mind on the terms of salvation? What if He decides that we have just sinned one time too many – *no sane person would have forgiven us*? What if the Lord would say to us that He just does not love us anymore? Husbands, notice the standard set by Christ and His bride: ***For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*** Romans 5:6-9.