

Lesson 23

Teacher's Manual

CHART-11

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP - PART I

READ & MEDITATE ON: Ephesians 5:21-33 MEMORIZE: Philippians 2:2
Colossians 3:18-21

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a partnership where a man and a woman can develop character, as they earnestly strive to meet each other's needs. Through their total commitment to Jesus Christ and each other, God can work to refine them and develop their full Christian potential. Building a partnership is a lifetime project. There is an intense worldly attack on the marriage bond today, and many subtle devices are being used to destroy the family. Constant maintenance must be done to preserve the unity and strength of the marriage relationship.

I. WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

A. A Divine Institution

The institution of marriage was conceived and created by the Almighty God. God's Word gives us a very descriptive account of it in Genesis:

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Genesis 1:27

The results of these decrees were so ruinous the government soon discovered that the strength of the nation was being destroyed. Therefore, it issued a new policy declaring that the state could not exist without the family. Chastity before marriage, as well as lifelong commitment in marriage, was to be practiced, inasmuch as it was highly beneficial to the state.

Atheistic Russia—even while refusing to acknowledge God—was forced to return to the sex and marriage standards set forth in God's Word. God is not mocked! His moral laws cannot be broken without dire consequences to both man and society. Societies have concluded that the psychological structure of men and women does not permit them to successfully entertain a polygamous (plural) type of marriage. This finding is in perfect accord with the Biblical principle that marriage is to be between one man and one woman. This factor must be heeded because it is both natural and God-ordained.

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C. A Legal Marriage

Although all fifty states of our union vary in their marriage laws, there are a few points common to all:

1. There must be mutual consent, freely given, on the part of the male and the female.
2. A couple must gain the consent of society to live together for the purpose of fulfilling a married relationship. Society grants permission for the marriage by issuing a license saying, "You have permission to live together as husband and wife."
3. There must be a sexual union to physically consummate (complete) the marriage.

These are things which society says constitute a marriage. This, therefore, is a legal marriage. Marriage, however, is more than law. There are many "legal" marriages where one spouse is in love with another person, thus violating God's law of fidelity in marriage, yet the legal contract is still intact.

D. A Christian Marriage

The constitution of marriage can be summarized by saying it is an emotional fusion of two personalities into one functional

each other, and consequently fewer benefits than a happy relationship.

3. Agreeable Marriage

This type of marriage is marked by struggle. There is difficulty in achieving the art of loving. The lack of commitment to God's concepts of marriage undermines the relationship. Motivation to make the marriage work out is reduced. Failure to relate according to God's directives blocks open communication and destroys the vital functions of this marriage.

4. Permissible Marriage

This type of marriage is only a legal contract, with no Biblical fiber to bind it together. It is characterized by hostility, competition, and purposeful destruction of each other. It fosters misery in the life of each partner. Spouses merely "put up" with each other for reasons either external to their marriage or unknown.

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F. Purpose Of Marriage

Never play with the relationship of marriage, because it involves the emotions of humanity. Also remember the unchanging law of the harvest.

"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind..."

Hosea 8:7

God did not institute marriage to be misused or abused. It was given for the fulfillment of the inborn needs of men and women. The Apostle Paul compared marriage to the church. Fulfillment in marriage is second only to the ecstasy of spiritual communion with God. God instituted marriage specifically for His creation—male and female. A happy marriage can be the most fulfilling human relationship we can enjoy. This was God's intention from the beginning, and His plan deserves our best effort.

"...This is now bone of my bones, and
flesh of my flesh: she shall be called
Woman, because she was taken out of man."

Genesis 2:23

Just as it was necessary for Adam to have the Lord's help in securing a companion, so it is necessary for us to have God's help. It is impossible for two people, being united in holy matrimony, to know all the trials and heartaches they may face and what they must endure and overcome. It is possible for them to know, however, the God who foreknows all things and who can carry them through every trial. To know God is to love Him. To love Him is to obey His commandments. To keep His commandments makes a vast difference in a marriage.

B. God's Order Of Priorities

A happy marriage is predicated upon loving and serving God first. A man must have Christ for his Head before he is qualified to become the head of his wife. A wife must first submit her life to Christ before she attempts to submit to the headship of her husband.

To choose a companion for marriage, it is necessary to follow God's order. Repent—turn from sin and worldliness to Jesus Christ. Be baptized by water immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins. Receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). Completely submit your life to Him. Walk with Him and fellowship with saints of like, precious faith. Two Christ-like people who are attracted to each other can make a happy marriage. Love your companion through Christ.

C. Partner For Life

Marriage is ordained of God and is not to be severed by divorce (Matthew 19:6; Romans 7:23; I Corinthians 7:39). The rapid and total disintegration of the family is the most certain symptom of a dying nation. Divorce rates in the United States are now the highest in the world. Five out of every nine marriages end in divorce. Don't rush into a marriage that is not the will of God for your life. Enter marriage advisedly, discreetly, and in the fear of God.

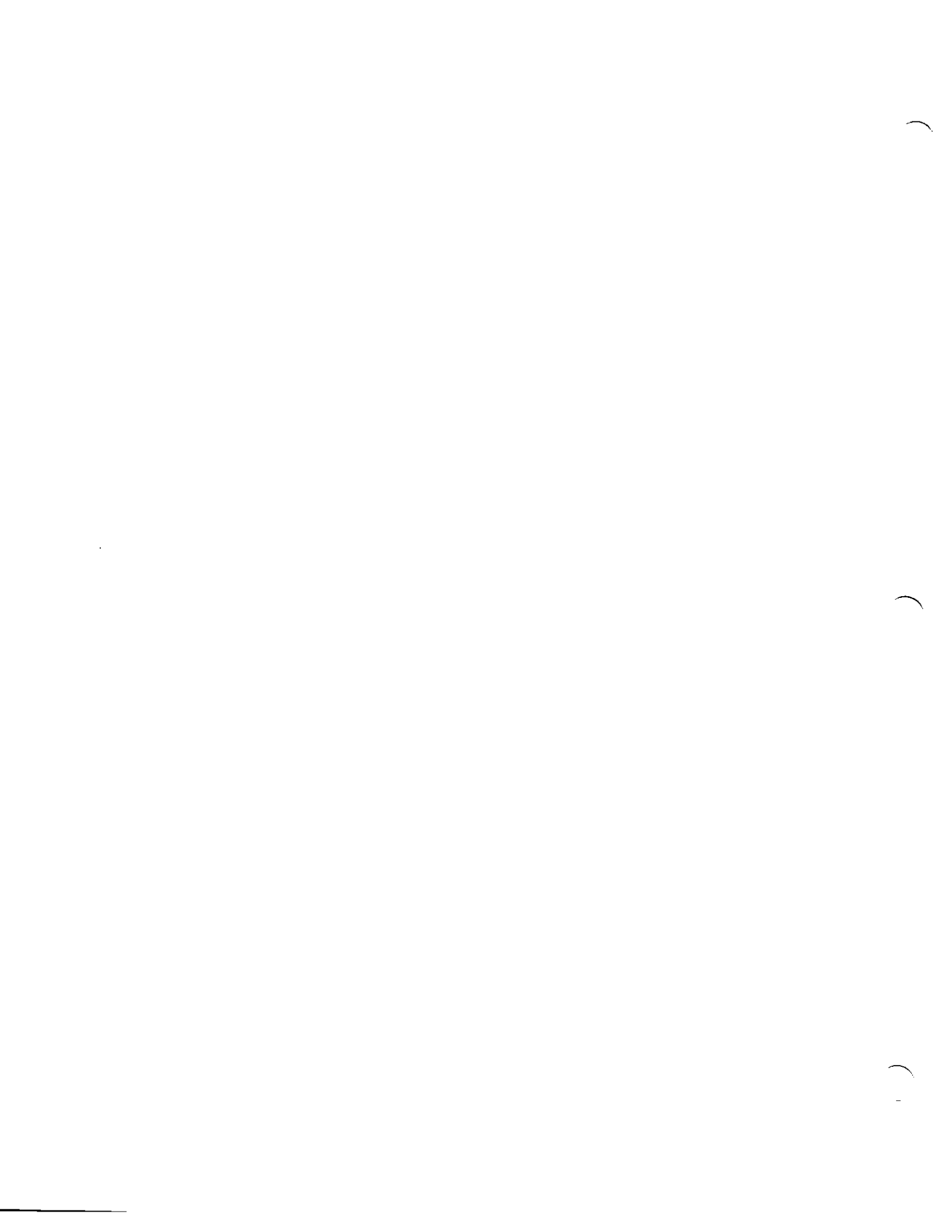


CHART-14 II. CHOOSING A RIGHT LIFE PARTNER

A. Divinely Designed Differences

The basic law of "individual differences" places all of us in only one category; there are NO TWO PEOPLE ALIKE. There never were, there is not now, and there never shall be. When God made each of us, He threw the patterns away. This is good and necessary. If all of us were alike, we would destroy each other with our competitiveness. Differences between people become considerably more obvious when men and women are compared.

Interests, like all abilities and personal qualities, are in-born. This makes us different from each other. A man and a woman were not made to be the same, and therefore should not try to be the same. God did not intend for UNISEX, he created them male and female. They were created different for the unique purpose of complementing each other. Even though men and women were created different, they complement each other in one purpose and that is marriage.

Let us see how the Lord selected a mate for Adam. First, God in His wisdom decided it was not good for Adam to be alone:

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

Genesis 2:18

God then caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam:

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept:..."

Genesis 2:21

This could very well be an example for us to relax, go to sleep, and trust God to secure a right partner for us.

Then God made a woman from one of Adam's ribs, and brought her to Adam after he woke up. Adam was very pleased with God's perfect choice and said,

operation; with each retaining their own identities. The Biblical concept is contained in Genesis.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father
and his mother, and shall cleave unto his
wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Genesis 2:24

God is saying that two types of clay can be fused together to produce one mass, yet both retain their identities.

Any technical field requires training before one can enter it. Our society has decreed that there be eighteen years of training to prepare us for adult life. Yet the oldest institution on earth can be entered into without any preparation at all. One may have the highest of educational degrees, but be unqualified for marriage. Many young couples become experts on wedding ceremonies, but remain novices on the basics of married life. Due to lack of training and preparation for the lifetime institution of marriage, our society is crumbling at its very foundation—the family unit.

E. Classifications Of Marriage

We may classify marriages into several different kinds:

1. Happy Marriage

This includes the ultimate capability of two mature people to carry out the three aspects of love: Eros, Phelio, and Agape. To establish their marriage according to God's order of authority.

This produces a happy inter-relationship, as well as contentment in each individual. In this marriage there is mutual sharing of the joy that can exist between a man and a woman.

2. Good Marriage

The quality of this marriage is less than the happy marriage because both individuals lack understanding of what it takes to be married. There is a lesser degree of commitment to

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

Genesis 2:18

"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; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 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. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Genesis 2:21-24

The institution of marriage is older than the institution of home, school, or government. It is a contract between a man, a woman, and God. It is a relationship that God asks neither party to sever, other than through death. God's concept of marriage is a lifetime of one man with one woman.

B. False Concepts Of Marriage

Let no one be misled by the many false concepts of marriage which exist in our world today. There are many societies in this world, and there are as many different concepts of marriage as there are societies. Even within a particular society there are variations of life styles. Though the concept varies from one culture to another, the one basic structure which all societies have found the most workable is the constitution of marriage. Some societies have violated this principle, but later came to the conclusion that it was harmful to their social structure. For example, at one time during the Russian Revolution, an attempt was made to destroy the Biblical concept of marriage and family. Legal restraints against free love were removed. Premarital sex was given outright approval and even encouraged by the state.