

Faith That Matters

Hebrews 13:4-6

3/04/07

Intro

The closing chapter of this letter is typical of many letters we have in the New Testament where the writer adds a number of practical words of encouragement and instruction. He might add his practical instruction in rapid succession, but each one is valuable and important in applying the faith that he has been giving instruction in.

This chapter comes down to the everyday challenges of life and addresses how we need to apply our life of faith to each of them. Today we will focus just on two of these areas where we our faith should make a difference in our lives; marriage and money.

One of our primary Christian callings is to not be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. That's faith rather than religion and that what God wants to see in each of us.

**These are principles and insights of the faith
that makes a difference in our lives.**

I. Let Marriage Be Honored

- Paul's instruction to them is just as applicable to us.
- Marriage is under attack today in many ways, but they can all be boiled down to a lack of honor that many place on marriage.

- From several places in scripture we can understand what kind of honor we should have in marriage.

A. With sanctifying love

- This means to set marriage apart for the Lord.
- In other words, we honor marriage when we recognize it comes from the Lord and that He knows how we should live in our marriage.

App – The place to begin is in praying for your spouse. The Lord really convicted me in the past that I needed to be praying for Jordi more. Not only does the Lord bless my prayers, but He blesses me in it as well.

- When we pray for our spouse we are spiritually honoring her and thus honoring God's marriage.

Illus – When we were younger and having some problem, we reacted immaturely and were distant from each other for several days. But when we sat down on the bed and began to pray about it, we both melted and the problem was solved.

Illus – Sometimes I will ask couples just to pray together instead of long words of counsel. The heart must change first.

I Timothy 4:4-5, For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

B. With secure love

- We honor marriage when we make it a priority.

App – I met several young men who were getting married, but I could tell they didn't understand that when you marry someone, that person must become your priority; they weren't making any changes to their busy play schedule... not good.

Illus – One husband spent most of his time in front of the TV. His wife complained that her husband might as well be married to the remote because he was touching it more than he was her.

- Another way to have secure love:
Let the marriage bed be undefiled (vs 4).
- This is a clear instruction from Paul which demonstrates how to honor marriage. There are two ways mentioned here:
- **“Fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”**
We learned last week that God disciplines those he loves, so we know that God would not give a pass to those who thus dishonor marriage.
- Fornication and adultery both refer to sex outside of marriage; we honor marriage when we recognize and commit that God created marriage as the place where sexuality is to be experienced.

Illus – We are bombarded with inputs that do not honor marriage and the wise man will honor marriage by putting his eyes somewhere else.

App – If you do happen to have a remote in your hand, the two most important buttons are FF and the channel arrows. In other words, change the channel or fast forward through inappropriate scenes. This is even more true with children present.

Job 31:1, I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman? NKJV

- This is also the name of a computer method for helping a man honor marriage by having Internet accountability... Covenant Eyes.

Psalm 119:37, Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way. NKJV

Philippians 4:8, Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

C. With cherishing love

- We honor marriage when we understand and give great value to it.
- It is to be cherished and valued.

Illus – If something is very important to us, we take great care of it. If we owned a valuable painting, we would take great pains to make sure that it was not damaged. If we value our spouse we will take great care to make sure that she is not damaged.

Ephesians 5:28-29, He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

Illus – A man who does not honor his wife is like a man who is hitting himself with a hammer.

- Let us not put down, criticize, belittle, or demean, but instead bring honor.

Ephesians 4:29-32 Speak only words that edify...

II. Let Marriage Be God's Way

- We honor marriage when we honor God; understanding that God knows how it should be lived.

A. Marriage is a question of faith

- By faith, the men of old gained approval; they accomplished great feats by faith. Here again, is an opportunity to apply faith in our lives by believing that God knows how we should live and that He is the one who gives power to the life of faith.
- Faith believes that God is the one who strengthens our lives to be able to do what he asks.
- The great stories of the scriptures that tell us about great men and women who did great things also make it clear that God was the strength of their accomplishment.

II Samuel 22:30-31, For by You I can run upon a troop; by my God I can leap over a wall. As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the Lord is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

B. Follow the example of Christ

- Jesus is our example in life. He is the first and last of our example in marriage also.
- The husband who is wise will be a husband in the same way that Christ was a husband to the church.

Ephesians 5:25, Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

- The scriptures give a unique perspective on marriage because this was not the norm at all in that culture.

Illus – Kaveh has witnessed to many Muslims by contrasting the bible and the Koran in treatment of wives.

App – Jesus sacrificed Himself in our behalf because of how much He loved us. That is the same reason we should sacrifice ourselves in our commitment to our spouse.

- Jesus loves us He died on our behalf.

Illus – Many men would be willing to die to protect their families if an intruder broke into the home, but we are also called to die to ourselves while we still live.

Illus - When Jordi wanted a dog and I didn't... this required some dying on my part.

C. Let God have the first portion.

- There are several words in the Greek for husband in scripture and one of them is georgos; meaning a husbandman, a farmer, a head of an estate.
- This is a great word for God's kind of husband who sows good things and reaps good things.
- When you sow good words, you reap good words, when you sow bitter words, you reap bitter words.

Illus – When a farmer produces fruit, he should tithe it to the Lord. In the same way, a husband should give the first portion of his wife to the Lord.

The farmer then enjoys the rest of what he produces. A wife that is right with the Lord is a blessing from God.

Ephesians 5:26-27, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

God knows how to have a marriage that is blessed and in turn we are blessed to be part of it.