

# “And He Loved Her”

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Meditations on Marriage  
from the  
“Christian Shepherd”

—2012—

## January 2012

### “*[Love]...thinketh no evil*” (1 Cor.13:5)

Judging others' motives for their actions and ways seems to be a very common, almost universal characteristic of our old, fallen nature. Apart from the wisdom of the Holy Spirit guiding our thoughts, we will generally misjudge others' deeds.

It requires true love as recorded in our Scripture to be guided by the Holy Spirit in not wrongly judging the motives of others. How vital and important that such love and wisdom be displayed in Christian marriages. Romans chapter 5:5 shows that such love fills our hearts for we read that “*love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Spirit] which is given unto us*. How wonderful if such love is proven in the actions of husbands and wives! What happy marriages where this is the case!

In 1 Samuel 25 we have recorded the story of Nabal and his wife Abigail. The Spirit of God characterizes Abigail by her actions as a godly wife, one who was not only beautiful but also very wise. In the account given, we learn how her actions in compensating David for Nabal's rude, unloving, and surly spirit, brought salvation to her whole family.

Nabal very foolishly wrongly judged the message from David's young men. It is obvious that there was no love in his heart for David, or for Nabal's own wife and family. We read in 1 Sam.25:10,11 “*And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?*”

What an ill-mannered and wicked answer to the one (David) who had been, unknown to Nabal, protecting his flock and his shearers! Nabal's wicked answer is the opposite of a kind of love that thinks no evil. He questioned David's position as God's King, railing on David by calling him a mere slave—a runaway slave at that, refusing David's request. What a wrong and wicked judgement Nabal made.

Abigail proves the reality of true love by meeting David, humbling herself—willing to take the blame for her husband's discourteous words to David. It is Abigail's spirit of love that, in a marriage union, when displayed by both husband and wife, joy, peace and strong bonds of love and trust result.

## February 2012

### “*[Love]...rejoiceth not in iniquity*” (1 Cor.13:6)

Much of 21st Century Western culture and entertainment increasingly founded on iniquity—the glorification and amusement of actions which God has clearly labeled as sin and abomination. Plot lines for popular T.V. shows, movies, books of fiction—the actions of many professional entertainers, professional athletes, authors, politicians, and even newscasts are filled with the grossest forms of iniquity—yet multitudes delight to feed on such filth.

We are reminded of a most solemn verse recorded in Romans 1:30,32 regarding man in his natural enmity against God; “*...haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things...Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*”

Such a spirit, which seems to prevail and flood every segment of Western culture, can very quickly and very subtly negatively affect God's institution of marriage—especially Christian marriages.

The prevalent abominations found throughout every level of Western culture seem no longer to bring true holy righteous anger to Christians who are constantly bombarded by an increasing mockery of Holy God. Believers often become unknowingly hardened by the moral looseness and vileness of Western culture not realizing how easily these spots of defilement attach to their Christian character.

Such subtle defilements, if not dealt with before the Lord as soon as they are realized for what they really are, can bring tension, unhappiness, and divided affections into the bosom of a Christian marriage. How careful Husbands and Wives must be in what they may daily allow themselves to enjoy from this morally bankrupt world. May God grant that both partners in the blessed, God ordained marriage union seek to keep their garments (morally, their Christian character) unspotted from this present evil world.

“*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world* (Jas.1:27). “*Abstain from all appearance of evil*” (1 Thess.5:22). “*That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*” (Eph.5:27).

## March 2012

### “*[Love]...rejoiceth in the truth,*” (1 Cor.13:6)

It has often been said that this present world in which we live is a moral lie—there is no truth in it. Of course there is truth in this world, *but there is not moral truth* found in it. If one is holding something that is heavier than air and drops it, the object will immediately fall to the ground or to something that stops its course. Gravity is truth, but not *moral truth*.

When Cain willingly went out from the presence of God (see Gen. 4), it was not long before he built a city and named it after his son Enoch. There was room in that city for everything that might make the heart of man happy except for God. The city Enoch was a world in which man sought pleasure, joy, prosperity and wisdom apart from God. Two infinitely precious things were not found in the city Enoch—God and *moral truth*. How can any soul be wise and happy living apart from God? “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*” (Psa.14:1). King Solomon was given the means to try everything in man's world to find happiness. His conclusion are found

in these words: “*Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher* [Solomon], *vanity of vanities; all is vanity*” (Ecc.1:2).

So many things are offered to souls in this world with the promise of finding some or all of these things; happiness, satisfaction, wealth, fame, power, life and so much more—things that have been lost to man since Adam and Eve sinned (that is, ‘man apart from God’). Yet the world continues to advertise all the joy, excitement, fulfillment, and wealth that it can never deliver to anyone. Such false happiness is the moral lie (not the moral truth), this godless world presents to souls.

How wise and happy the Christian husband and wife who love each other and who, together, love the precious truth of God. Such divine moral truth can only be found in one place in this poor world—the whole Word of God. A joyful, stable marriage in which both partners have a deep love of the Word of God, reading it and obeying it, will be spared a lifetime of disappointments and dissatisfaction.

How sad when a Christian husband and wife set aside the pure truth of God’s Word and fall prey to the false truth presented to them by this world. What shipwreck and sorrow such a marriage may experience! God’s desire is that the marriage union might be one of joy and happiness. But that cannot be unless married couples believe, love and obey *the truth*.

#### April 2012

“**[Love]...beareth all things;**” (1 Cor.13:7)

None but our precious Lord Jesus Christ ever fully and perfectly displayed such love. In fact these verses in 1 Corinthians 13 are a wonderful and divinely perfect definition of the character of our blessed Saviour’s love—displayed by Him as perfect Man when He walked here.

So many passages speak of His bearing of our innumerable burdens. Did He do that in order to show how wonderful He is? Well, truly He is the “*chiefest among 10,000*” but the Lord Jesus bore our burdens for an even ‘higher’ or ‘greater’ reason than that—because He loved us and knew we could never bear our own burdens successfully!

“*Cast thy **burden upon the LORD**, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved*” (Psa. 55:22).

“*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are **heavy laden**, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light*” (Matt.11:28-30).

“*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*” (Isa.53:4).

What a wonderful and perfect example for partners in a marriage union to follow. This poor world knows so little about true love. Husband and wife often love only because of what one receives from the other. That, however, is not the same thing as a husband or wife loving their mate so much as to take their burden

upon themselves—one who loves because of the good and peace the loved will receive. This is the love of Christ and this is the love that must be seen in truly stable, joyful marriages.

Such wonderful love is a ‘sacrificial’ love—or we may say, ‘a love that loves to bear the burdens of the one it loves’ — the very best husband/wife love.

When the Samaritan saw the man lying half-dead at the side of the road, he was moved with loving compassion and went to that wounded, dying man, administering all the loving care that was needed to save his life. He then bore whole the burden of the wounded man to a place that would care for him, further bearing all the cost of caring for him. That is true love and marriages where such characterizes the love of husband and wife and happy, joyful and stable.

#### May 2012

“**[Love]...believeth all things;**” (1 Cor.13:7)

Even as divine love is not suspicious, so it is that if hints of unbelief or suspiciousness are allowed to enter and characterize a marriage union, great damage and breakdown will eventually, most surely follow. Of course there are times when husbands and wives honestly, and in love, question whether their spouse had properly understood how they feel, or the reality of a variety of circumstances found in marriages. Misunderstanding and questions are not wrong and will not destroy a marriage if always handled in a spirit of love and desire to never hide anything from a spouse. But to allow a spirit of unbelief to regularly taint such honest and necessary dialog is terribly destructive and undermines love.

‘Why did you do that?’ ‘Where are you going?’ ‘What are you doing?’ ‘When are you going to do what you promised?’ ‘Why don’t you act like you appreciate and understand what I say?’ There are innumerable circumstances in marriage where these questions, perfectly acceptable and understandable at times, may be answered either in a spirit of love that is characterized by confidence and belief in the spouse; or they may be answered in the spirit of unbelief or even ridicule.

We have, in Proverbs 31, the ultimate happy spirit that each couple should covet for their marriage. There we read in verse 11: “*The heart of her husband **confideth** in her, and he shall have no lack of spoil [riches]*” (JND Translation).

In 1 Peter 3:7 we also read: “*Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, **giving honour unto the wife**, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*” A spirit of constant suspicion of a spouse’s words, motives or actions soon undermines a happy marriage union.

Husbands, our spirit is also clearly touched on in Col. 3:19: “*Husbands, love your wives, and **be not bitter against them.***” Bitterness develops when a spirit of unbelief or suspicion is allowed in a marriage union. What a sad mistaken conclusion for a husband or wife to constantly misconstrue the spirit of their partner’s words and actions. Obviously, no spouse

is perfect, but divine love not only *believes all things*, it covers a multitude of sins. “*Have fervent charity [love]...for charity shall cover the multitude of sins*” (1 Pet. 4:8).

### June 2012

#### “*[Love]...hopeth all things;*” (1 Cor.13:7)

Here we have three tremendously powerful words forming a beautiful and important principle for a joyous, stable, lasting marriage.

Christian *hope* has sometimes been described as *deferred certainty* and this thought is found many times in Holy Scripture, specially in the New Testament. For example, we read in Col.1:27; “*To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*”. Believers do not hope for this as though it might or might not take place. For those who are saved by grace, washed and redeemed in the precious blood of Christ, believers by faith in Him, this glorious hope is an assurance—but one which all believers are still awaiting. There is no question whether it will take place, though God has not seen fit to tell us the exact time of this blessed moment.

Marriage is of God for mankind’s joy, blessing and satisfaction in the realm of nature—it is a precious God ordained and given union for this life. Marriage, however, is *not* lived in perfection due to the fall in Eden. We have fallen natures, and even after we are saved, we still have the *flesh* (the old sinful nature) which always tries to act. “*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would... And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*” (Ga 5:17,24). This is why, even the happiest of Christian marriages experience some bumps and rough times. So, where *love hopeth all things* (neither spouse always being perfect and always doing and saying just the right thing) there is still stability and joy because *hope* is the heart’s desire that inconsistencies and failures will be overcome.

Where true love exists in marriages, the *spirit of hope* which expects and desires the best for one another, will prove to be a wonderful and powerful force in maintaining a joyous, peaceful union.

We may reverently say that love *does not demand all things be perfect* rather, love *hopes all things will be well*—this is the spirit which expects peace and joy for both partners. Marriages which honor God will surely display the sweet spirit of hope, producing soothing, lovely union even as a fragrant ointment brings forth its sweet and desirable results.

### July 2012

#### “*[Love]...endureth all things*” (1 Cor.13:7).

How many marriages could be saved from tragic divorce if both partners made sure their love was an enduring love for each other—patient, longsuffering, kind, unwilling to give up no matter what the reason.

We are reminded of an account that took place in Japan perhaps 40 years ago. A man and a woman were engaged to be married—a marriage arranged according to a Japanese custom. The man and woman had never seen each other before the wedding night.

When they had entered the bridal suite after the ceremony, the bride removed her veil. To her new husband’s chagrin, she was very, very homely. He was so disappointed that he fled the bridal suite that night, leaving his new wife alone.

Because of cultural expectations they remained married, though he virtually never communicated with her. She quietly, without complaint, bore with his terrible attitude, rather being in all ways, everything and more that might be desired in an excellent housewife. Not a word of complaint for how her husband rejected and scorned her came from her lips.

Time rolled on and two boys were born to this ‘loveless’ union. Yet even that did not change his attitude. Having received terrible news from his doctor, the man’s attitude and treatment of his wife became even more appalling. He learned that he had an eye condition which would eventually cause total blindness. An eye transplant was the only hope, however, very, very difficult to obtain. His anger, frustration and fear was taken out on his wife, who heaped with indignity after indignity, still quietly bore the abuse without changing her faithful ways.

But all things have their limit. One day, returning from his work, the man found his house empty. His wife’s suitcase was gone and though bitter at her, coupled with the incredible frustration of his eyes, he was not surprised.

But he quickly forgot her ‘desertion’ when a while later he was notified by the hospital to come immediately. An eye transplant was available. The surgery was very successful, and after a few weeks he returned home. As he opened the door his wife met him. One of her eyes was covered with a patch. Realizing what she had done, he fell on his knees before her asking—“why did you do that”? His wife’s answer was equally simple. “Because I love you”.

“*Love endureth all things*”

### August 2012

#### “*[Love]...never faileth*” (1 Cor.13:8).

The perfect example of this is seen in the Lord Jesus. His divine love—perfect divine love because He is God and “*God is love*”—shines in exquisite perfection throughout the Bible, but most markedly in the four gospels. How can we, mere mankind, fathom a love that when He was hanging in spiritual and physical agony on the cross, could utter in the divine, infinite reality of perfect love; “*Father forgive them for they know not what they do*”!

Under the most awful circumstances imaginable, our blessed Lord Jesus’ love was tested and it never wavered. Perhaps one of the most precious truths regarding His love for us is stated in Ephesians 5—the perfect example for married couples to follow—“*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ*

also loved the church, and gave Himself for it” (Eph.5:25).

Earlier in Ephesians the Apostle Paul gives us his heart desire for believers: “*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God*” (Eph. 3:17-19).

A love that never fails between husband and wife must be founded on this divine love, for indeed in 1 Cor. 13, the character and quality of *charity/love* is that of divine love—God’s love and it is seen perfectly in every blessed step of our Lord Jesus Christ in His pathway here.

The marriage union as given to man from God for joy and blessing is but a picture of the union between our Lord Jesus Christ and His body, the church—referred to as His bride. With what infinite, never-failing love He cares for her, guides her and longs to have her with Himself forever. This is the love that Christian husbands and wives are to display towards one another in marriage.

We are still in the world with the flesh ready to act at any moment. Let’s be warned by the momentary failures of Adam, Abraham, and Isaac who did not protect their wives; David who did not protect his heart, and many more. How it behooves both husband and wife in a Christian marriage to humbly be cast on the Lord each day in order that their love for each other will be the kind which *never fails*.

### September 2012 With Her

“*And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. (Judges 13:9,10).*”

Beloved husband and wife—would you like to know one of the most essential principles necessary to a growing, joyful, and wonderful marriage; a marriage that will not suffer the tragedy of shipwreck? It is found in this verse: ***be with each other!***

This principle goes far beyond the physical realm. For we realize that naturally speaking, in any normal marriage there will be many times of separation when one or the other spouse must work or carry out the normal responsibilities, running the many errands involved in a married life. No one can always be physically in company with their loved spouse.

Husbands and wives can, however, be with one another *in spirit* always. And this is the vital and important principle to not only understand, but to put to use each day of married life. That is, each partner should be interested in what is interesting to the other partner. Not only interested in, but concerned for what concerns a spouse, Each should strive to be of one mind *with* their spouse, specially in all spiritual matters. In the natu-

ral realm, of one heart and mind—with each other—as to living arrangements, finances, family, activities and a host of innumerable other things that make up the fabric of a happy marriage. And in a marriage where husband and wife are truly *with* each other, a oneness of mind as to individual interests and activities is the norm.

Samson’s father and mother, for whatever reason (Scripture does not reveal that to us) were ***not*** with each other when Manoah’s wife received the wonderful and important information about the son that would be born to him and his wife. Nor was he with her when, after asking the Lord to send the man again so he might know what they were to do, the Lord’s angel again came to the woman.

It seems that there is a sense given in this passage that perhaps the man was not as interested in the things of the Lord as was his wife. This is not a stable, firm, or healthy foundation for a happy marriage.

### October 2012

#### What Kind of Love?

“*...Michal...loved David...*” (1 Sam.18:20).

“*...Michal...saw...David...and she despised him in her heart*” (2 Sam.6:16).

What a sad commentary is recorded about the feelings and actions towards her husband of Michal the former King Saul’s younger daughter. Yet, the principle we find in this unhappy record in God’s Word has vital implications in marriages today—a day in which perhaps over 50% of all marriages in North America end in divorce.

We find the root problem with Michal’s love for David in the 30th verse of 1 Sam. 18: “*And the princes of the Philistines went forth; and it came to pass, whenever they went forth, that David succeeded better than all the servants of Saul; and his name was much esteemed*”—*succeeded* and *esteemed*. Fame and success was what won Michal’s love for David—she loved what he ***did*** and the glory and fame that David’s feats would bring her. She did not seem to care about what David ***was***, not his heart for the sheep, nor his person, nor his love for Jehovah and faith in the Lord.

Her love, we may say, was most selfish and self-serving in nature. Throughout the chapters of 1st and 2nd Samuel, Michal displayed no love for the Lord. Rather, being prominent in Israel’s seemed uppermost in her mind. We see this when David had to flee from Michal’s father, King Saul. Michal did not go with him, but rather put an ‘image’ of him in his bed and then lied to her father about David’s fleeing (i.e., she told her father that David threatened to kill her if she would not help him escape—see 1 Sam.19:17).

David unadvisedly tried to bring the ark back to Jerusalem in his own wisdom without consulting the priests and Levites causing Uzzah to be struck down by the Lord (see 1 Sam. 6:6). When he submitted to the Lord, the ark was brought back to Jerusalem in safety and he and all the people were

joyous—except Michal. She despised David for there was no glory for her in this wonderful time.

If a man and woman begin their life together thinking only what their spouse will bring them in success, fame and wealth, we greatly fear such a marriage will end in shipwreck. It might be very easy for a wife (or husband) to push her husband to *become somebody* and thus she gains a certain glory as well. But such an action allows for no real heart-love and is headed for marital disaster. May the Lord preserve each Christian marriage from displaying this spirit.

### November 2012

*Ed. Note:* We recently read this in a daily meditation written by a beloved brother and felt it would be profitable for our series on marriage. How precious for a husband and wife to find delight in sharing as is described in the following article. Such sharing contributes greatly to a solid, joyful and stable marriage!

#### Sharing

*“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but **nourisheth** and **cherisheth** it, even as the Lord the church”* (Eph.5:28,29).

□ We occasionally see a very tender sight out under our bird feeder. a male cardinal taking seeds off the ground and placing them in the beak of the female. It is very sweet and gentle—if you didn’t see the seed you would think they were kissing.

□ Many other times we see the female getting the seeds for herself, and that’s good too, of course. We all have to feed ourselves. But there is something so sweet and so special about sharing.

□ I so love it when my wife comes to me with some nugget that she has enjoyed. Actually, we often share precious truths and thoughts with each other that we’ve enjoyed from our Bible reading or from some Christian ministry or commentary that we’ve been reading. What joy that provides.

□ In that way we also are building one another up in our faith. Consider this verse: *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, [Holy Spirit]”* (Jude 1:20).

□ Dear fellow *brothers* in Christ, the above verse is truly directed at us to put to use daily in our marriages. God holds us responsible to be the spiritual leader—and the spiritual feeder—in our marriage and family. In order for the cardinal to give the seed to his female, he had to first get it for himself. We too need to have something to share with our families—our wives in particular—something we have enjoyed for ourselves.

□ God’s precious word is abundantly available to us dear men-brethren. Let’s avail ourselves of it, nourish ourselves first so we have something to share and nourish our beloved wives. What a joyful marriage doing such a thing will provide! Oh! That our loving God and Father would help us all to share freely the gems of truth from His precious Word that He may be pleased to reveal to each of us!

### December 2012

#### Oneness

*“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be **one flesh**”* (Gen.2:24).

*“Male and female created He [God] them [Adam and Eve]; and blessed them, and called their name **Adam**, in the day when they were created”* (Gen.5:2).

*“...he that is married careth...how he may **please his wife**...she that is married careth...how she may **please her husband**”* (1 Cor.7:33,34).

*“...a certain Jew named Apollos...he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord...when **Aquila and Priscilla** had heard, they took him unto them...”* (Acts 18:24-26).

*“Endeavouring to keep the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of **peace**”* (Eph.4:3).

It may be wondered how the verses quoted above are related in securing a strong, joyful marriage. *Morally* they are very closely and critically related. The central moral theme of these passages from God’s precious Word has to do with **unity** and **oneness**. And this spirit must be found characterizing happy Christian marriages. Besides love, there is no principle in marriage more critical than that of unity of spirit (agreement on moral/spiritual issues) between spouses.

The world often encourages husbands and wives to have opposing views, expectations and desires—assuming that this somehow gives a marriage more vitality and interest, with greater relationship equality. Our God clearly warns of the foolishness of such thinking; *“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”* (Amos 3:3). Of course the multitude of life’s ‘natural’ things such as personal preferences for food, clothing, colors and many others are not what our God is referring to here. What is so vitally important is the spirit of ‘moral’ unity (*“unity of the Spirit”*) between spouses in a Christian marriage.

The first husband and wife were one in God’s sight and this kind of oneness has never changed. How important that Christian husbands and wives today seek to maintain the same sweet moral and spiritual oneness in their marriages.

Dear Aquila and Priscilla present a lovely example of this very thing. *Together* they took in Apollos and *together* they helped his understanding of Christian truth. They were of one mind and spirit in their lives and were a blessing to many. May it be so today!