



Lively Stones

I PETER 2:5

Holding forth the word of life

Issue □, 2005

2 □ January 2005

The First Family

In this issue, we kick off the series of articles on “Building up the Godly Family”. Contrary to what most people think, the family unit is complete with man and wife. The children that comes along are God’s additions and blessings to the family. The children are not the final pieces of the completed family. If they were, God would have created them in the days of creation.

But to highlight one point. It also does not mean that being complete, a couple should be against having children. God specifically commanded Adam and Eve to go forth and multiply. However, children are a heritage to the Lord. It is God-given and also in God’s will. Those among us who are married must remember what marriage is in God’s sight and to live lives in God’s will.

Those who are single, do not dismiss this article. This short exhortation is also for you to note what God’s intent is in marriage so that you may be spiritually prepared for God’s will in your life.

So dear readers, the editorial team hopes that this article would have stirred up your interest for the rest that is to come. Prayerfully, may each article be of some blessing to everyone as we walk *coram Deo*, before the face of God everyday.

JK

Adam and Eve

We live in a time of breakdowns. And one of the most tragic breakdowns taking place in our society is the continued eroding of the family as its basic functional unit. The percentage of broken homes is rising incredibly. Commitment to the family unit is thought to be secondary to the fulfilment of one’s own desires.

Modern Christian parents speak about family values. Yet the truth is, few, if any, really advocate the biblical concept of family values. Many of the parents, knowingly or unknowingly, subject themselves to a social system that undermines the family unit. This system encourages parents to send their children to “Day-Care Centres.” In doing so, it removes children from their parent’s care and replaces parental duties in the teaching of moral values and upbringing of children. Thus it downgrades God’s design of the home.

Ever since God’s design for the family was marred by the disobedience of our first parents, the biblical concept of the family has been consistently and coercively demeaned and undermined. Its teaching on parental duties such as “*children honour your parents*,” is now seen as something that is out of date. In post-modern thinking, a “hi” to your parents will do. You do not need to address them as daddy or mummy. Unfortunately, many of our children are not aware of the teaching of Deuteronomy 27:16 which says “*Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother*.” Yes. That’s what the Bible teaches – “*Cursed is the man*

who dishonours his father or his mother.” When there is no respect for parents in the family, it is the beginning of a breakdown of the family unit. And consequently, it will affect the whole society made up of individual families.

The First Family Unit

We see God’s design for the family in the sequence of His creative process. First, God created Adam in His own image. And He put him in the Garden of Eden. He brought the created creatures for Adam to name them. Later He said that it would not be good for him to be alone. So He created Eve, also in His own image, to be his suitable helper and bound them together as husband and wife. Adam said, “*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be*

Genesis 2:21-23

(21) 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;

(22) And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

(23) 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.

(Continued on back page)

(Adam and Eve ...Continued from front page)

called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." This constituted the first family unit on earth (Genesis 2:7-25).

Right from the beginning God had designed Adam to be in leadership and Eve to be in submission to his leadership. However, this created order was radically marred by their disobedience. Consequently, their harmonious relationship with their creator, with the creation and with each other was greatly affected (Genesis 3). Sin has marred God's design for the family.

The family is the foundation of all social groupings. Our society is made up of individual families. Thousands of years ago, the psalmist asked a very pertinent question, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (11:3) Likewise, if the family unit continues to be eroded by liberal ideologies that stand in diametric opposition to God's design, what will the result be? Today, the sociologists have already begun to answer that question. If the foundations of the family unit were destroyed, then the result will be that the government will have to build more prisons for juvenile delinquents or lawbreakers.

A child born into a Christian family where parents disregard God's design for the family and adopt worldly model of the family is at a disadvantage from the day of his or her birth. However, a return to God's original institution is the best way to combat crime and juvenile delinquency, school violence, moral decay and social malaise. On top of that, it will bring back unity, love and respect to the family.

Parents, do not forget the command of the Lord spoken through Moses – "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children..." (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7a) and the wise words of Solomon –

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

The Intent of Marriage

People from all walks of life have many wonderful sayings, which need to differentiate between a wedding and a marriage. The divine design behind the union of a man and woman. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) observed, "A man without a wife is but half a man" (*Poor Richard's Almanac*, January, 1755). An Ethiopian adage says, "Woman without man is like a field without seed." In West Africa the older ones teach the younger: "One stone does not grind the meal." A noted psychiatrist, Irving Bieber (b. 1908), in an essay on living the single life, stated, "There is increasing recognition that bachelorhood is symptomatic of psychopathology." Martin Luther (1483-1546) expressed it best when he declared, "There is no more lovely, friendly and charming relationship, communion or company than a good marriage" (*Table Talk*).

However, I must say that some people are called to singleness for whatever reasons. Some of them do not have normal sexual desires because they were born eunuchs or were castrated. Others are able to control those desires for the furtherance of God's program on the earth (Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 7:7-8, 26). And not all are able to accept the single role (Matthew 19:11) and got married and carry out God's purposes, extending His work in the world.

Why did God create Eve? Genesis 2:18a says, "It is not good that the man should be alone." Personal fulfilment is only to be found in an abiding, intimate relationship with a suitable companion. Although the new world abounded with a wide variety of living beings, none of them were designed to fulfil the unique needs of man. That is why it was the intent of the Creator for woman to be man's special companion for life and no other. Yes companionship was God's intent for marriage. And through

Eve could find their greatest fulfilment in union with one another.

Marriage has been intended by God to be a lasting institution between a man and a woman. Marriage is a covenant relationship and therefore, it is for life. That is why there is a wedding and a marriage. The wedding is an event that lasts a day or a week or even a month; the marriage is a relationship that lasts for a lifetime (i.e. "Till death us do part"). When God joined Adam and Eve in marriage in the Garden of Eden, it was for life.

We read in Genesis 2:24, "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). Three terms are used here to illustrate God's intent for marriage. The word "leave" implies severance from previous relationships and "cleave" has the idea of being joined or glued to another. And the phrase "one flesh" expresses the sexual union two individuals enter into when they are joined in marriage. Elsewhere, God's intent of marriage is also stipulated and that is, the procreation of children to populate the earth (Genesis 1:28).

Since marriage is for life, the bond can only be broken by the death or adultery of one of the spouses (Romans 7:1-3; Matthew 19:3-9; Hebrews 13:4). Otherwise, divorce is disallowed, for God hates it (Malachi 2:16).

What is the thought for Today?

A return to God's original plan for family standards is a good move in the right direction for any family unit.

May God help us as we all strive to build our family according to His standard. Amen.

Rev Colin Wong

Editorial Team:
Mrs Julia Koh, Mrs Selina Lee