

7 Keys to Happiness in the Home

by Stan Mitchell (Henderson, TN)

Introduction

- i. Found from the "National Marriage Project" at Rutgers University: Study on the effects of cohabiting before marriage:
 - a. The study asks: Does cohabiting prepare couples for marriage?
 - b. Findings: "Cohabiting unions tend to weaken the institution of marriage and pose clear and present dangers to women and children."
 - c. The Rutgers study suggests that these unions tend towards domestic violence toward both women and children, and the rate of depression is three times as high as those couples who "waited" till marriage.
 - ii. "The longer you cohabit," says David Popene, "the more tolerant of divorce you become. You are used to living in a low-commitment relationship, and it's hard to shift that kind of pattern" (From the *Huffington Post*, September 22, 2011).
 - iii. So the Bible way of doing marriage is still the best. What does the Bible say about happiness in the home?
- 1. Keep in Mind That God's Plan for Marriage and the Home Has Always Been the Best!**
 - a. God's original intention in marriage
 - b. "What God has joined together ..." (Mark 10:9).
 - c. When humans break the God-given pattern for marriage, sorrow and heartbreak are the result.
 - d. Hollywood and some social scientists have claimed that humans are not designed for monogamy. The Bible suggests the opposite: God designed marriage for the benefit of humans (Heb. 13:4).
 - e. The God who created human beings wired them for life-long marriage.
 - 2. Learn to Use Words Well!**
 - a. We tend not to give words enough credit for their power either to hurt or to heal.
 - b. Rash (poorly thought-out) words hurt the other (Prov. 12:18).
 - c. Words are ready to ambush the victim at any time (Prov. 12:6).
 - d. Use words designed to build others up (Eph. 4:29). So...are you a building contractor or a demolition expert?
 - 3. Learn to Become a Good Listener!**
 - a. Quick to hear, slow to speak (Jas. 1:19).
 - b. When you are talking...you must not be listening (Prov. 18:2).
 - c. Listen to the other side of the story; consider the possibility that there *is* another side of the story (Prov. 18:13).
 - d. The first principle of being a good listener is being quiet (Prov. 17:28)!
 - e. You have the responsibility to get what the other person said right. You do not have the right to fly off the handle on the basis of what you think he said, or suppose he said!
 - 4. Forgive!**
 - a. Forgiven people forgive (Eph. 4:32).
 - b. If only we had as high expectations for ourselves as we do for the other!
 - c. You have only two choices: forgive or have no relationships at all. There is no third option (Matt. 6:14-15).
 - 5. Ask Not What Your Marriage Can Do for You But What You Can Do for Your Marriage!**
 - a. The Golden Rule – "Do unto others" still works (Matt. 7:12).
 - b. Brecheen and Faulkner's chapter, "The Problem with Us Is Me," is still a pretty good way to approach the issue.
 - c. Why not rather be wronged? If the relationship is that important to you (1 Cor. 6:7).
 - 6. Before You Give Your Heart to Your Partner, Give Your Heart to God!**
 - a. Seek God's Kingdom first (Matt. 6:33).
 - b. We are all aware of the love triangle that destroys a marriage. Here is a love triangle that builds a marriage: You, your spouse and God.
 - c. Be involved in a congregation. Become an essential part of its work.

Heaven's Home-Improvement Workshop

16th Annual South Florida Lectureship

Palm Beach Lakes church of Christ

- d. Question a woman asked me: "If two people are genuine Christians, can they get married and be truly happy?"

7. Grow!

- a. We are commanded to grow (2 Pet. 3:18).
- b. On a day-to-day basis we should be changing into the image of Christ (Heb. 3:18).
- c. You cannot substantially change your outward appearance; you can however change the inside (1 Sam. 16:6-7).
- d. In Christ, there is the possibility of change, growth. This is the premise upon which all of Christianity is founded, and a better Christian becomes a better spouse.