

PREPARE TO BECOME THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

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SO OFTEN — BECAUSE WE IN GOD'S MINISTRY ARE MEN — WE THINK OF THE MILLENIUM AND SOMETIMES EVEN DESCRIBE THE REWARD OF THOSE WHO QUALIFY FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN MASCULINE TERMS. I SUPPOSE THAT IS INEVITABLE.

ONE GIRL SAID TO ME NOT LONG AGO, "I KNOW I AM NOT GOING TO WIN ANY BEAUTY CONTESTS, BUT AT LEAST IN THE MILLENIUM, I WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE EVERYTHING A MAN COULD WANT." THAT KIND OF DEMONSTRATES THAT WE DO SOMETIMES TEND TO THINK IN TERMS OF THE REWARD THAT GOD WANTS TO GIVE THOSE OF US WHO QUALIFY, IN TERMS OF THINGS THAT A MAN COULD WANT.

BUT THERE IS ONE ANALOGY IN THE BIBLE WHICH WE HAVE HAD OUR ATTENTION DIRECTED TO SO MANY TIMES IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, WHICH ACTUALLY IS EASIER FOR WOMEN TO IDENTIFY WITH. IT IS EASIER FOR WOMEN TO SAY, "YES, I THINK I CAN WORK ON THAT." MR. ARMSTRONG HAS TURNED TO IT MANY TIMES IN EXHORTING US. IT SAYS IN REVELATION 19:5-7, "AND A VOICE CAME OUT OF THE THRONE, SAYING, PRAISE OUR GOD, ALL YE HIS SERVANTS, AND YE THAT FEAR HIM, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT. AND I HEARD AS IT WERE THE VOICE OF A GREAT MULTITUDE, AND AS THE VOICE OF MANY WATERS, AND AS THE VOICE OF MIGHTY THUNDERINGS, SAYING, ALLELUIA: FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH. LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE, AND GIVE HONOR TO HIM: FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY."

MR. ARMSTRONG HAS SHOWN US THAT WE, AS THE CHURCH OF GOD AND THE AFFIANCED BRIDE OF CHRIST, MUST BE READY AND PREPARED FOR THE WEDDING DAY WHEN WE — THE CHURCH OF GOD — MARRY JESUS CHRIST. MANY SCRIPTURES SHOW THAT THE CHURCH OF GOD IS THE BETROTHED BRIDE OF CHRIST. NEW TESTAMENT CUSTOM DID NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A WIFE AND A BETROTHED BRIDE IN QUITE THE SAME WAY WE DO TODAY. FOR EXAMPLE, MARY WAS CONSIDERED THE WIFE OF JOSEPH IN SOME ASPECTS, BEFORE THEY WERE ACTUALLY MARRIED.

WE MUST BE PREPARED TO BE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST WHEN THE TIME COMES. WE ARE TOLD TO USE THIS TIME TO MAKE OURSELVES READY. WHEN I THINK OF A BRIDE MAKING HERSELF READY, I THINK OF PICTURES OF MY WEDDING DAY OF MY WIFE BEING WRAPPED IN A VEIL AND BEING GIVEN SOME

ROSES. I HAVE A LOT OF TROUBLE IDENTIFYING WITH THAT BEING DONE TO ME! MEN GENERALLY DO NOT IDENTIFY WITH BECOMING A BRIDE. IN THAT SENSE, MAYBE THE WOMEN IN THE CHURCH FIND IT EASIER TO IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST BE LIKE TO PREPARE TO BE A BRIDE.

I REALIZE THAT IT MUST BE A LOT HARDER TO BE A WIFE THAN I THINK IT IS. THERE IS OBVIOUSLY A LOT MORE TO MAKING YOURSELF READY TO BE A BRIDE THAN JUST DRESSES, VEILS, HOPE CHESTS AND COLLECTING RECIPES.

THE TROUBLE IS, THAT IN SATAN'S WORLD — WHICH IS IN SO MANY WAYS VERY WRONG — HE HAS MESSED UP THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN, AND THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE. IT HAS BECOME ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT IS MORE ROMANTIC THAN PRACTICAL. MARRIAGE IS A SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP.

IT IS INTERESTING THAT, ALONG WITH THE FACT THAT GOD SAID WE WOULD BE GARDENING WITH THE SWEAT OF OUR BROW, HE SAID TO EVE IN GENESIS 3:16, "...I WILL GREATLY MULTIPLY THY SORROW AND THY CONCEPTION: IN SORROW THOU SHALT BRING FORTH CHILDREN: AND THY DESIRE SHALL BE TO THY HUSBAND, AND HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE," GOD SAID THIS LIKE IT WAS A KIND OF PUNISHMENT: LIKE IT WAS A CURSE, YET, IT NEED NOT BE, THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING SUBJECT TO A HUSBAND IF THE RELATIONSHIP IS RIGHT. JESUS CHRIST AND THE FATHER LIVED TOGETHER FOR ALL ETERNITY, ONE SUBJECT TO THE OTHER, WITHOUT IT BEING CONSIDERED A CURSE. CHRIST SAID THAT HE WAS DELIGHTED TO DO WHAT GOD THE FATHER WANTED HIM TO DO.

BUT AS A RESULT OF THE BREAKDOWN IN RELATIONSHIPS, AND NOT HAVING ACCESS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT MADE RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS POSSIBLE, THAT ROLE OF BEING SUBJECT TO A MAN HAS BECOME A CURSE TO WOMEN. IN THE UNITED STATES WOMEN ARE TRYING TO GET THEIR RIGHTS. BUT WE DO NOT ALWAYS SEE THE REAL TRAGEDY OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD AS A WHOLE. THE TRAGEDY OF WOMEN IN THE THIRD WORLD IS THAT THEY ARE SO OFTEN REGARDED SIMPLY AS BELONGINGS; SOMETHING THAT THE HUSBAND OWNS, NOT REALLY HAVING A SEPARATE IDENTITY. THE INDIAN SOCIETY IN GENERAL DOES NOT THINK IT IS WORTHWHILE TO EDUCATE WOMEN. THE CHINESE ARE HAVING TROUBLE NOW, BECAUSE THEY

ARE ONLY SUPPOSED TO HAVE ONE CHILD PER COUPLE. THEY ARE WORRIED THAT SOME OF THE MORE BACKWARD PEOPLE ARE SIMPLY KILLING THEIR GIRL BABIES, AS IF THE GIRL DOES NOT COUNT. IN SOME PLACES IN AFRICA, THE AVERAGE I.Q. OF A FEMALE IS 68, WHEN THE AVERAGE I.Q. IS SUPPOSED TO BE 100, AND BELOW 80 YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO PASS ON MEASURABLE SKILLS TO OTHER PEOPLE, WHAT WE HAVE IS WHOLE NATIONS IN AFRICA WITH A MENTALLY RETARDED FEMALE POPULATION. IT IS TRAGIC THE WAY THOSE WOMEN THINK OF THEMSELVES.

WHETHER YOU ARE A YOUNG LADY LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING MARRIED, OR A GRIZZLED OLD MAN, CHRIST THOUGHT IT WOULD BE PROFITABLE FOR US TO USE THIS ANALOGY OF PREPARING TO BE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. OBVIOUSLY, LIKE ALL ANALOGIES IN THE BIBLE, YOU CAN ONLY TAKE IT SO FAR. OTHERWISE IT WILL BREAK DOWN AND BECOME RIDICULOUS. HOWEVER, TO USE THE ANALOGY OF A BRIDE PREPARING TO BE A WIFE IS A GOOD ANALOGY FOR THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME.

WHAT DOES JESUS CHRIST NEED A WIFE FOR? WHY DOES HE SAY THAT BEING A WIFE IS A GOOD WAY TO DESCRIBE THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH WHEN HE TAKES OVER THE RULERSHIP OF THIS WORLD? WELL, HE CREATED WIVES, SO HE SHOULD KNOW!

IN GENESIS 2:18 WE SEE THAT GOD REALIZED THAT ADAM WAS GOING TO NEED SOME HELP, SO HE TAUGHT ADAM A LESSON. HE SAID, "...IT IS NOT GOOD THAT THE MAN SHOULD BE ALONE; I WILL HIM MAKE A HELP MEET FOR HIM." HE WAS GOING TO MAKE SOMEONE SUITABLE FOR ADAM — SOMEONE TO HELP HIM. SO THE FIRST THING HE DID WAS TO SHOW ADAM THAT THERE WAS NOTHING CREATED THAT WAS YET SUITABLE TO BE HIS HELPER. HE SHOWED HIM ALL THE ANIMALS, AND ADAM DID NOT FALL IN LOVE WITH ANY OF THEM! ADAM REALIZED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING THERE THAT COULD REMOTELY MATCH HIM AND HIS INTELLEGENCE, UNDERSTAND HIS GOALS, OR COULD REALLY HELP HIM. THE DOG COULD FETCH THE NEWSPAPER, BUT THAT IS ABOUT IT. THE PARROT COULD TALK, BUT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF BEING A HELP MEET, THERE WAS NOTHING SUITABLE.

SO THEN GOD TAUGHT ADAM A LESSON BY CREATING EVE FROM ADAM'S OWN BODY, ADAM REALIZED THAT SHE WAS HIS HELP MEET RIGHT THEN AND SHE WAS MADE OF THE SAME KIND OF MATERIAL THAT HE WAS. HE COULD NOT TURN AROUND AND SAY THAT HIS WIFE WAS MADE OF INFERIOR STUFF, BECAUSE THAT "STUFF" WAS HIM! HE WAS THE MATERIAL FROM WHICH SHE WAS MADE. SO HE COULD NOT SAY THAT SHE WAS A LOW-GRADE HUMAN BEING.

UNFORTUNATELY TODAY, IN A WORLD THAT HAS BEEN MISEDUCATED BY SATAN'S RELIGIONS AND SATAN'S WAYS, BILLIONS OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD ARE TAUGHT TO THINK OF THEMSELVES AS BEING INFERIOR HUMAN BEINGS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN INDIA, SUTTEE IS BEING PRACTICED AGAIN, AS THE FUNDAMENTAL RELIGIONS IN INDIA TAKE HOLD AGAIN. ACCORDING TO THIS RELIGION, WHEN THE HUSBAND DIES, THEY JUST SIMPLY BURN THE WIFE ALIVE ON THE FUNERAL PYRE WITH HIS BODY ALONG WITH HIS BELONGINGS. THEY CONSIDER THAT SHE SHOULD BE THROWN AWAY TOO, BECAUSE SHE IS NOT WORTH ANYTHING WITHOUT HIM. OF COURSE, THAT IS A HORRIBLE CRIME.

I PETER 3:7 SAYS THAT WOMEN ARE HEIRS TOGETHER WITH MEN; THAT THEY HAVE THE SAME POTENTIAL. THE LESSON THAT ADAM WAS TAUGHT — AND THE LESSON MANKIND SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAUGHT — ABOUT THE WIFE IS THAT SHE COULD NOT BE OF INFERIOR MATERIAL OR INFERIOR KIND. IF SHE WAS TO BE A SUITABLE HELPER, SHE HAD TO BE OF THE SAME SUBSTANCE AS HE WAS. ADAM LEARNED THAT LESSON, AND THERE IS SOMETHING IN IT FOR US TOO, AS THE AFFIANCED BRIDE OF CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST DOES NOT WANT HIS BRIDE TO BE SUBSTANDARD. HE IS NOT GOING TO BE SATISFIED WITH AN INFERIOR BRIDE. HE IS NOT GOING TO TAKE SECOND BEST ANY MORE THAN ADAM COULD NOT REALLY HAVE SELECTED A HORSE, A GORILLA OR A PARROT TO BE HIS LIFETIME COMPANION. SO JESUS CHRIST WILL NOT TAKE ANYTHING LESS THAN HIS KIND TO BE HIS HELP MEET TO RUN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

IT IS INTERESTING, THAT ONE OF THE FIRST INSTRUCTIONS HE GAVE THOSE WHOM HE HAD CHOSEN TO BE CAST IN THIS ROLE OF HIS BETROTHED BRIDE-TO-BE, IS FOUND IN MATTHEW 5:48. HERE HE LAID OUT BASICALLY WHAT HE WOULD EXPECT. HE SAID, "[BECOME] YE THEREFORE PERFECT, EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT." HE WANTS PERFECTION TO BE OUR STANDARD; CHRIST DOES NOT WANT A WIFE WHO ACCEPTS LOW STANDARDS. WE ARE TO BE JUST AS MUCH GOD AS CHRIST IS GOD; JUST AS EVE HAD TO BE JUST AS MUCH HUMAN AS ADAM WAS HUMAN.

SO GOD MADE ADAM A WIFE OUT OF HIS OWN KIND. IT IS INTERESTING THAT JESUS CHRIST AND GOD THE FATHER ARE FASHIONING US ALSO, SO THAT ONE DAY WE WILL HAVE BODIES MADE OF THE SAME MATERIAL THAT HE IS MADE. HE IS STARTING WITH OUR MINDS, AND WHEN WE ARE READY, WE WILL HAVE THE BODY OF GOD AS WELL AS THE MIND OF GOD, SO, CHRIST IS NOT GOING TO ACCEPT SECOND BEST JUST BECAUSE WE ARE THE BRIDE.

WHAT ELSE DOES CHRIST LIKE IN A BRIDE? WHAT DOES HE APPRECIATE? I PETER 3 TALKS TO THE WOMEN IN THE CHURCH ABOUT THE KIND OF CHARACTERISTICS HE LIKES, VERSE 4, "BUT LET IT BE THE HIDDEN MAN OF THE HEART, IN THAT WHICH IS NOT CORRUPTIBLE, EVEN THE ORNAMENT OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT, WHICH IS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OF GREAT PRICE." THIS DESCRIBES A CHARACTERISTIC OF A WOMAN THAT GOD LIKES. GOD APPRECIATES A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT. IN OTHER WORDS, WHOSE ADORNING IS NOT SIMPLY THE APPAREL THAT MONEY CAN BUY — THE JEWELRY, THE FURS, THE EXPENSIVE FABRICS AND THE EXPENSIVE HAIRDOS — THIS IS NOT WHERE THE REAL BEAUTY HAS TO BE. GOD WANTS QUALITY INSIDE. HE WANTS A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT.

LET'S LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE BIT MORE. MEN HAVE NOT GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO DEVELOP A MEEK, QUIET AND DEMURE SPIRIT, AND THEY SHOULD NOT. WE HAVE SPOKESMAN CLUB TO BRING OUT MASCULINITY. SO HOW DO MEN IDENTIFY WITH THAT A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT?

I AM NOT SAYING THAT MEN HAVE TO DEVELOP FEMININE CHARACTERISTICS: I EMPHATICALLY DO NOT MEAN THAT, NEITHER DO I MEAN THAT THE WIFE SHOULD HAVE NO PERSONALITY; NOTHING TO OFFER, A WIFE BRINGS SOMETHING TO A MARRIAGE, A WIFE ADDS TO A MARRIAGE, SHE BRINGS — IF SHE IS EDUCATED AND HAS PREPARED HERSELF PROPERLY — SKILLS, ABILITIES AND TALENTS TO THE MARRIAGE. SHE ADDS A LOT TO HER HUSBAND.

THE HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE NOT EXACTLY THE SAME; NO TWO HUMAN BEINGS ARE EXACTLY THE SAME, IF PEOPLE HAVE MATCHED THEMSELVES PROPERLY, YOU CAN EXPECT SOMEONE WHO IS GOING TO ADD A LOT TO THE RELATIONSHIP, SO ACTUALLY YOU ARE BREAKING THE PHYSICAL LAW, BECAUSE THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE INDIVIDUAL PARTS. WHEN THE FAMILY WORKS TOGETHER WELL — WHEN EVERYONE DOES THEIR PART — THEN THE TOTAL EFFECT OF THOSE TWO (PLUS THE OTHERS THAT COME ALONG) CAN BE GREATER THAN THE EFFECT OF ANY ONE OF THEM OPERATING INDIVIDUALLY.

I THINK THAT THIS IS THE SAME WITH THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. HE REGARDS THE WIFE AS A HELP MEET; SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP. NOT JUST SIMPLY SOMEONE TO DO AS SHE IS TOLD; SHE IS NOT AS A SERVANT. IF CHRIST USED THE ANALOGY OF A SERVANT OR A SLAVE, WE WOULD UNDERSTAND THIS ALL DIFFERENTLY. BUT THE ANALOGY THAT HE GAVE US IS OF A BRIDE PREPARING TO BRING SOMETHING TO THE MARRIAGE. THAT IS WONDERFUL WHEN THAT HAPPENS, AND EVERY MAN DEEP DOWN WOULD LIKE A WIFE LIKE THAT. HE DOES NOT WANT A COMPETITOR, BUT A SUITABLE HELPER WHO CAN

DO THE RIGHT THINGS, IN THE RIGHT WAY, AT THE RIGHT TIME; ONE WHO COMPLEMENTS, ADDS TO, AND INCREASES THE HUSBAND'S EFFECTIVENESS.

NOBODY WANTS AN ARGUMENTATIVE, OPINIONATED, SHALLOW, FRIVOLOUS WOMAN. IT IS EASY FOR US MEN TO TELL THE WOMEN THAT — WE ARE ALWAYS DOING THAT! BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MEN? THIS MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT — HOW DO WE APPLY IT TO US? WE ENCOURAGE OUR MEN TO BE LEADERS, AND TO BE ASSERTIVE. WE ADMIRE AGGRESSIVENESS IN MEN, BUT THOSE ATTITUDES HAVE TO BE TEMPERED. THIS MASCULINE FIRMNESS AND STRENGTH MUST BE TEMPERED WITH CHARACTERISTICS THAT WE MIGHT SUPERFICIALLY THINK ARE MORE FEMININE.

TITUS 3:2 DESCRIBES THE WAY GOD, THROUGH PAUL, SAID HE WANTED SOME OF HIS MINISTERS (AND ALL MEN) TO BE. "TO SPEAK EVIL OF NO MAN, TO BE NO BRAWLERS, BUT GENTLE, SHOWING ALL MEEKNESS UNTO ALL MEN." THAT WORD "MEEKNESS" KEEPS COMING UP. HOW DOES MEEKNESS GO WITH OUR CONCEPT OF MASCULINITY? THE GREEK WORD THAT IS USED FOR "MEEK" IS A WORD THAT YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE A BIG WORK HORSE, PULLING A CART OR A PLOW. NOW, THERE IS NOTHING WEAK ABOUT A BIG WORK HORSE — MUSCLES STRAINING, SNORTING, STEAMING — USING A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF ENERGY TO WORK. THERE IS NOTHING WEAK ABOUT THAT. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, ALL THAT ENERGY IS FOCUSED, CONTROLLED AND DIRECTED TO SERVE OTHERS. THE GREEKS WOULD DESCRIBE THIS KIND OF STRENGTH AS MEEKNESS. SO THE SCRIPTURE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT A WEAKNESS THAT CHRIST WANTS IN HIS AFFIANCED BRIDE. IT IS SAYING THAT THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT MEN ARE SUPPOSED TO BE DEVELOPING ARE LEADERSHIP AND ASSERTIVENESS BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY, THEY MUST BE KEPT UNDER CONTROL, BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST WANTS TO DIRECT THAT ENERGY IN HIS BRIDE. HE WANTS IT UNDER CONTROL.

THAT IS WHY CHRIST NEEDS IN A WOMAN WHO IS UNDER CONTROL, LIKE SARA, WHO WAS NO AIR-HEADED DING-A-LING — SHE WAS A VERY CAPABLE WOMAN! NEVERTHELESS SHE WAS WILLING TO SUBMIT HERSELF TO HER HUSBAND AND CALL HIM LORD. CHRIST LIKES TO SEE THAT CHARACTERISTIC OF A HELP MEET WHO ADDS, WHO DOES NOT DETRACT, WHO IS NOT AN EMBARRASSMENT, WHO IS UNDER CONTROL, WHO WILL BEND HER ENERGIES AND TALENTS TO HELPING OUT HER HUSBAND INSTEAD OF GOING OFF IN ALL SORTS OF STRANGE DIRECTIONS.

CHRIST LOOKS FOR GENTLENESS. BUT GENTLENESS AND MEEKNESS ARE NOT SOFTNESS AND WEAKNESS. THEY NEED NOT BE. WE TEND TO ASSO-

CIATE CHRIST WITH AN AGGRESSIVE PERSONALITY, WITH STRENGTH. HE WAS THIS WAY, BUT THERE WAS ALSO THIS OTHER ASPECT OF HIM.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE MARRIED TO SOMEONE, IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE LIKE. MATTHEW 11:28-29 SHOWS ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR FUTURE HUSBAND. "COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOR 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..." WHAT DID CHRIST MEAN BY THAT? THAT IS WORTH SOME STUDY. WHAT DOES MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART TRANSLATE INTO, IN TERMS OF WHAT YOU MEN SHOULD BE DOING TO PREPARE TO BE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST?

VERSE 30, "FOR MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT." A BETTER WAY TO TRANSLATE "EASY" IS KIND, CONSIDERATE, THOUGHTFUL. THESE ARE CHARACTERISTICS THAT WE DO NOT ALWAYS ASSOCIATE WITH MEN.

A HELP MEET HAS GOT TO HELP. CHRIST DOES NOT WANT TO BE DISAPPOINTED IN HIS BRIDE. HE DOES NOT ALWAYS WANT TO BE APOLOGIZING FOR HIS BRIDE. HE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING US WITH HIM. HE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO THAT WEDDING DAY, AND IT WILL BE A VERY GREAT MOMENT FOR HIM AND FOR THE WORLD. HE DOES NOT WANT THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MAN IN PROVERBS 21:9 WHO SAID, "IT IS BETTER TO DWELL IN THE CORNER OF A HOUSETOP, THAN WITH A BRAWLING WOMAN IN A WIDE HOUSE." CHRIST DOES NOT WANT TO HAVE TO GO ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE UNIVERSE, RATHER THAN BE AROUND THIS LOUD-MOUTHED, OPINIONATED, AGGRESSIVE, MISERABLE WOMAN THAT HE HAS MADE THE MISTAKE OF MARRYING! HE IS NOT GOING TO MAKE A MISTAKE!

THIS IS WHY WE HAVE THE INSTRUCTION TO THINK ABOUT THAT. THE MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT THAT IS UNDER CONTROL, THE ONE THAT IS WILLING TO BE ABLE TO SAY, "YES, I WILL DO IT YOUR WAY. I WILL DO THE BEST I CAN" — THAT ATTITUDE IS VERY VALUABLE TO GOD.

A FUTURE BRIDE SHOULD ALSO TAKE THE TIME TO EDUCATE HERSELF TO BE COMPETENT. PLEASE TURN TO PROVERBS 31. WE NEVER APPLY THESE SCRIPTURES TO MEN. THINK ABOUT IT IN TERMS OF THE WIFE'S ROLE. VERSE 11, "THE HEART OF HER HUSBAND DOETH SAFELY TRUST IN HER..." HE HAS ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE IN HIS WIFE, HE DOES NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT SHE IS DOING WHEN SHE IS OUT OF HIS SIGHT. A SUCCESSFUL MAN NEEDS A SUCCESSFUL AND COMPETENT WIFE — SOMEONE WHO IS ABLE TO DO THE JOB OF SUPPLEMENTING, COMPLEMENTING AND HELPING HIM.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST HAS GOT TO BE VERY COMPETENT, BECAUSE HER'S IS THE MOST RESPONSIBLE JOB EVER — TO RULE WITH JESUS CHRIST AND TO MEND A BROKEN PLANET. THIS WORLD HAS GOT TO BE RE-EDUCATED, AND IN SOME WAYS EVEN RE-CREATED. IT IS GOING TO TAKE SKILL. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS TELLS US THAT GOD FOUNDED THE EARTH BY WISDOM. HE PUT IT TOGETHER CAREFULLY. SO IT WILL TAKE A LOT OF WISDOM TO MAKE IT A FIT PLACE FOR HUMAN BEINGS TO LIVE. THEN THE PEOPLE WHO WILL BE GROWING TOWARDS, OR BECOMING WHAT WE HAVE BECOME ARE GOING TO HAVE TO HAVE A MASSIVE REEDUCATION PROGRAM.

IN ISAIAH 30:20-21 IT SAYS, "AND THOUGH THE LORD GIVE YOU THE BREAD OF ADVERSITY, AND THE WATER OF AFFLICTION, YET SHALL NOT THY TEACHERS BE REMOVED INTO A CORNER ANY MORE, BUT THINE EYES SHALL SEE THY TEACHERS: AND THINE EARS SHALL HEAR A WORD BEHIND THEE, SAYING, THIS IS THE WAY, WALK YE IN IT, WHEN YE TURN TO THE RIGHT HAND, AND WHEN YE TURN TO THE LEFT."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES MUST BE ABLE TO TRUST HIS WIFE. SHE MUST REPRESENT WHAT HE REPRESENTS. SHE MUST KNOW WHAT HE IS THINKING, SHE MUST KNOW HIS POLICIES, BECAUSE OCCASIONALLY THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE IS ASKED TO TRAVEL INDEPENDENTLY OF HER HUSBAND. WOULDN'T IT BE AWFUL FOR THE PRESIDENT IF, WHILE HIS WIFE WHO WAS VISITING ANOTHER COUNTRY ON HIS BEHALF, SHE WAS GOING DISCO DANCING WITH A JUNIOR OFFICIAL AND GOT DRUNK, GAVE AWAY STATE SECRETS AND TOLD EVERYBODY WHAT SHE REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT HIS ADMINISTRATION? THAT WOULD BE A TREMENDOUS EMBARRASSMENT!

A MAN WOULD BE VERY DISAPPOINTED IN A WIFE WHO SIMPLY HAD NOT EDUCATED HERSELF, AND TAKEN THE TIME, TO FIND OUT THE WAY HE LIKES THINGS DONE, SO THAT WHEN THE TIME CAME TO SAY, "THIS IS THE WAY, WALK YOU IN IT", SHE COULD DO IT THE WAY HE LIKED IT DONE. WE ARE TOLD IN THIS PREPARATION TIME THAT WE MUST STUDY TO SHOW OURSELVES APPROVED UNTO GOD (II TIMOTHY 2:15); A GOOD WORKMAN NEEDS NOT BE ASHAMED. SO WHEN CHRIST ASKS YOU TO DO SOMETHING IN THAT TIME WHEN THE MARRIAGE WILL BE CONSUMMATED IN THE MILLENNIUM, YOU WILL NOT SAY, "I AM SORRY, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO THAT. I NEVER LEARNED THAT; I DON'T UNDERSTAND."

NOBODY WANTS A WIFE WHO CAN'T COOK, CAN'T SEW, ISN'T INTERESTED IN HOUSEWORK AND DOESN'T LIKE CHILDREN. IN A VERY REAL SENSE, CHRIST IS TRUSTING THE REARING OF HIS SPIRITU-

AL CHILDREN TO THE FAMILY OF GOD. GOD WANTS TO INCREASE HIS FAMILY, AND HE IS GOING TO LET JESUS CHRIST AND HIS WIFE — THE CHURCH OF GOD — WORK ON THE EARTH, REARING SPIRITUAL CHILDREN. WE HAD BETTER KNOW WHAT WE ARE DOING, SO WE CAN TEACH THOSE SPIRITUAL CHILDREN THE SPIRITUAL WAY THAT IS GOING TO MAKE SURE THEIR LIVES ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE PROPERLY,

SO THIS PERIOD OF EDUCATION CAN BE LIKENED TO A BRIDE PREPARING TO BE MARRIED. YOUNG LADIES WHO ARE HOPING TO MARRY A MAN WHO WILL BE USEFUL TO GOD IN ONE CAPACITY OR ANOTHER, SHOULD TAKE THIS VERY SERIOUSLY. WE TAKE MARRIAGE COUNSELING VERY SERIOUSLY. WE WANT YOU TO THINK VERY CAREFULLY ABOUT IT. WE KNOW HOW DISASTROUS A MARRIAGE COULD BE, IF THE WIFE SIMPLY LACKS THE EDUCATION, THE ABILITY, AND THE COMPETENCE TO MATCH WHERE HER HUSBAND WANTS TO GO.

ANOTHER THING WE DO IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE YOUNG LADIES IDENTIFY WITH THE GOALS OF THE HUSBAND. WE TRY AND MAKE SURE THAT SHE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS OUT OF LIFE. SO OFTEN YOUNG PEOPLE THINK IN TERMS OF HAVING A COTTAGE IN THE COUNTRY WITH HONEYSUCKLES GROWING AROUND IT. SOMETIMES THAT IS THE LEVEL OF DISCUSSION THAT GOES ON. NOW, THINK ABOUT THIS. WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF DISCUSSION WITH CHRIST ABOUT OUR MARRIAGE TO HIM? DO YOU JUST THINK OF HAVING A LION FOR A PET AND A ROD OF IRON? THERE IS MUCH MORE TO IT THAN THAT!

THERE IS ONE YOUNG LADY, WHO WAS PREPARED TO MAKE A VERY BIG COMMITMENT IN HER LIFE. SHE MADE A BEAUTIFUL STATEMENT THAT USUALLY, SOMEWHERE IN THE LINE OF MARRIAGE COUNSELING, IS BROUGHT UP. I THINK YOU KNOW THE STORY OF YOUNG RUTH, WHO HAD THE TRAGEDY TO SUFFER EARLY WIDOWHOOD, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE ALSO HAD MADE A COMMITMENT TO AN ISRAELITE FAMILY, ALTHOUGH SHE HERSELF WAS A MOABITE. SHE SHOWED A REMARKABLE ATTITUDE OF LOYALTY TOWARDS HER MOTHER-IN-LAW, NAOMI.

NAOMI SAID, "I THINK YOU HAD BETTER GO HOME NOW GIRLS, FATE HAS NOT BEEN KIND TO ME; GOD DOES NOT SEEM TO BE SMILING ON ME. DON'T JOIN YOURSELF TO A LOSER. GO HOME." ONE OF THE GIRLS SAID SHE WOULD GO HOME, BUT RUTH WAS DIFFERENT. RUTH SAID IN CHAPTER 1, VERSE 16, "...ENTREAT ME NOT TO LEAVE THEE, OR TO RETURN FROM FOLLOWING AFTER THEE: FOR WHITHER THOU GOEST, I WILL GO; AND WHERE THOU LODGEST, I WILL LODGE: THY PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE, AND THY GOD MY GOD."

THAT IS THE RIGHT ATTITUDE FOR A BRIDE TO HAVE. SHE MUST IDENTIFY VERY CLOSELY WITH THE GOALS OF THE HUSBAND. WE SAY TO YOUNG WOMEN WHO WE COUNSEL TO FIND OUT WHAT HE WANTS IN LIFE. IF YOUR GOAL IS TO HAVE A LITTLE COTTAGE SOMEWHERE UP IN THE MOUNTAINS AND YOU FIND OUT THAT HIS GOAL IS TO BE A CIVIL ENGINEER IN TANZANIA, OR A POLICEMAN IN NIGERIA, YOU HAD BETTER DISCUSS IT. BECAUSE IF THERE IS NO COMMON GROUND, AND ONCE THE BLOOM OF ROMANCE HAS WORN OFF THE MARRIAGE, YOU ARE GOING TO BE UTTERLY MISERABLE.

JESUS CHRIST HAS NOT LEFT US IGNORANT OF WHAT HE EXPECTS, HE HAS NOT LEFT US IGNORANT ABOUT HIS GOALS. IT WOULD BE TERRIFIC TO HAVE WRITTEN OUT FROM YOUR HUSBAND TO BE, WHAT HIS CONSUMING PASSION IN LIFE IS, WHAT HIS GOALS ARE AND WHERE HE WANTS YOU TO GO TOGETHER. IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE IT IN WRITING SO THERE IS NO QUESTION OF NOT HAVING BEEN TOLD IN ADVANCE. WELL, WE HAVE JUST THAT, IN MANY PLACES IN THE WORD OF GOD.

FOR INSTANCE ISAIAH 42:4 SAYS, "HE SHALL NOT FAIL NOR BE DISCOURAGED, TILL HE HAVE SET JUDGMENT IN THE EARTH: AND THE ISLES SHALL WAIT FOR HIS LAW," THAT TELLS ME A LOT ABOUT JESUS CHRIST. IN MATTHEW 25 IT TELLS ME THAT HE EMPATHIZES WITH THE NEEDS OF THIS DESPERATE WORLD, AND THE MISERY OF HUMAN BEINGS WHO DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT GOD, LET ALONE OF THEIR HUMAN POTENTIAL. HE EMPATHIZES WITH THEM TO THE POINT THAT WHEN A KINDNESS IS DONE TO THEM, EVEN THE LEAST OF THEM, HE IDENTIFIES WITH IT. GOD NOTICES THE ACTS OF KINDNESS AND CHARITY. EVEN THOUGH IN THIS WORLD IT IS NOT GOING TO MAKE THAT MUCH DIFFERENCE, BUT IT SHOWS GOD SOMETHING ABOUT YOU, AND GOD LIKES THAT WHEN HE SEES IT.

IF GOD SEES THAT WE DO NOT CARE ABOUT THE NEEDS OF A SUFFERING HUMANITY, IF WE DO NOT SIGH AND CRY FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD, IF OUR ATTITUDE IS BLASE, HE WILL WORRY THAT WE MAY NOT IDENTIFY WITH WHAT HE IDENTIFIES WITH, BECAUSE, WHAT IS HIS CONSUMING GOAL? IT IS TO ESTABLISH THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD ON THIS EARTH, NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES!

IN I CORINTHIANS 15 HE TELLS US A BIT MORE ABOUT THE WAY HE THINKS, ABOUT WHAT HE WANTS TO DO, AND WHAT HE WANTS TO ACCOMPLISH, AND HOW HE EXPECTS US TO BE ALONG SIDE HIM. IN VERSES 24-25 PAUL DESCRIBES THE RESURRECTION, "THEN COMETH THE END, WHEN HE SHALL HAVE DELIVERED UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD, EVEN THE FATHER: WHEN HE SHALL HAVE PUT DOWN ALL RULE, AND ALL AUTHORITY AND POWER. FOR HE MUST REIGN, TILL HE HATH PUT ALL ENEMIES

UNDER HIS FEET.” SO, JESUS CHRIST’S ATTITUDE IS THAT HE IS GOING TO STAY WITH THIS JOB UNTIL IT IS DONE. NOT BECAUSE HE IS PERSONALLY AMBITIOUS TO BE “NUMBER ONE”, BECAUSE CHRIST IS HAPPY TO NEVER BE “NUMBER ONE”.

SOMETIMES A WIFE LATCHES ON TO HER HUSBAND’S SUCCESS, PUSHES HIM, AND WANTS HIM TO BE IMPORTANT. SHE PUTS UP WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TRAINING AND SUFFERING WHEN HE IS DOING THE TRAINING, BECAUSE SHE DREAMS THAT SOMEDAY HE IS GOING TO BE “IMPORTANT.” SHE USES THE HUSBAND AS SORT OF A WAY TO GET WHAT SHE WANTS IN LIFE. THIS IS A TRAGIC THING, BUT THERE ARE CASES LIKE THAT.

VERSE 28, “AND WHEN ALL THINGS SHALL BE SUBDUED UNTO HIM, THEN SHALL THE SON ALSO HIMSELF BE SUBJECT UNTO HIM THAT PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.” WHEN IT IS ALL DONE, EVERYTHING IS PUT DOWN, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ESTABLISHED AND EVERY HUMAN BEING THAT IS ABLE TO BE RESURRECTED IS RESURRECTED, JESUS CHRIST IS GOING TO GO BACK TO HIS FATHER AND SAY, “HERE WE ARE, NOW WHAT?” THAT IS AN ATTITUDE THAT CHRIST HAS THAT MAY BOTHER YOU IF YOU JUST WANT TO BE IMPORTANT!

A YOUNG COUPLE THAT I MARRIED MANY YEARS AGO CAME TO VISIT ME. THEY LOVED EACH OTHER, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG. I ASKED THE WIFE WHAT IT WAS ABOUT HIM THAT UPSETS HER. SHE SAID, “I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHAT HE WAS LIKE BEFORE I MARRIED HIM, BECAUSE HE IS ALWAYS SERVING! ALL THE TIME WE ARE HAVING PEOPLE OVER, AND TAKING FOOD TO PEOPLE. WHEN WE GO TO CHURCH HE IS AT THE DOOR, AFTERWARDS HE IS SWEEPING UP AND PUTTING AWAY CHAIRS. EVEN WHEN WE GO OUT WE TAKE A WIDOW WITH US, AND WHEN WE HAVE A CANDLELIGHT DINNER WE HAVE A BACHELOR WITH US, HE IS ALWAYS SERVING!” SHE STILL LOVED HIM, BUT SHE SAID THAT SHE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHAT HE WAS LIKE.

WELL, YOU MAY HAVE TO SAY THAT ABOUT JESUS CHRIST. BECAUSE, JESUS CHRIST IS ALWAYS SERVING. PHILIPPIANS 2:5 SHOWS US HOW CHRIST THINKS. “LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU, WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS: WHO, BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD, THOUGHT IT NOT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD: BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, AND TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT, AND WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN.” ALTHOUGH CHRIST FELT EQUAL TO GOD — HE IS AS MUCH A GOD AS THE FATHER IS GOD, ALTHOUGH LESSER IN RANK, BUT THE SAME KIND — NEVERTHELESS, HE FEELS QUITE COMFORTABLE WITH HIS ROLE AS A SERVANT. HE DID NOT FEEL IT WAS BENEATH HIM TO

DIE THE DEATH OF A COMMON CRIMINAL SO OTHER PEOPLE COULD HAVE WHAT HE HAD. THIS IS NOT JUST A TEMPORARY ATTITUDE, EITHER. IF YOU THINK HE ONLY DID THAT SO HE COULD HAVE HIS GLORY BACK, YOU ARE WRONG. IT GOES DEEPER THAN THAT, THERE IS MORE TO IT THAN THAT. IT IS KIND OF DISCONCERTING IF YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE POWER AND THE GLORY, AND THE DAY YOU CAN QUIT ALL THIS SERVING BUSINESS, AND GET YOUR ROD OF IRON AND REALLY GET DOWN TO WORK!

LUKE 12:37 SHOULD WORRY A PERSON LIKE THAT A LITTLE BIT. BECAUSE THIS SEEMS TO BE DISCUSSING THE MARRIAGE SUPPER. “BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS, WHOM THE LORD WHEN HE COMETH SHALL FIND WATCHING: VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT HE SHALL GIRD HIMSELF, AND MAKE THEM TO SIT DOWN TO MEAT, AND WILL COME FORTH AND SERVE THEM.” IT SEEMS THAT EVEN AT THAT MARRIAGE SUPPER, HE IS GOING TO BE LOOKING FOR SOME WAY TO HELP.

IT SEEMS A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE JESUS CHRIST THAT YOU AND I ARE GOING TO MARRY IS THAT HE JUST DOES NOT SPEND A LOT OF TIME THINKING HOW GREAT HE IS, HOW IMPORTANT HE IS, AND HOW FANTASTIC HE IS. IT SEEMS THAT WHAT IS ON HIS MIND A LOT OF THE TIME IS, “HOW CAN WE HELP? IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO? CAN WE SERVE SOMEONE? IS THERE SOMEONE THAT WE CAN MAKE HAPPIER? IS EVERYBODY COMFORTABLE?” WE ALL KNOW PEOPLE LIKE THAT, WHO NEVER ARE QUITE SETTLED BEING SERVED, THAT ARE SORT OF ALWAYS LAST TO SIT DOWN. IF YOU DO NOT LIKE THAT KIND OF THING, IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU FEEL THAT WAY, BECAUSE THIS IS NOT A TEMPORARY CHARACTERISTIC WITH CHRIST, IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT HE PUTS ON SO HE CAN GET BACK IN THE KINGDOM AND BE “NUMBER ONE.” IT IS NOT A TEMPORARY ATTITUDE OF VOLUNTARY HUMILITY. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO DAY, AND FOR EVER. HE DOES NOT SEEK HIS OWN GLORY. HE LIKES TO SERVE AND HELP.

ON THE OTHER HAND, HE ENJOYS BEAUTY, HE ENJOYS QUALITY, HE ENJOYS FINE THINGS; HE IS NOT ASHAMED OF GLORY, HE DOES NOT RUN FROM IT. REMEMBER THAT JUST BEFORE HE WAS CRUCIFIED, HE ASKED HIS FATHER TO GIVE HIM BACK THE GLORY THAT HE ONCE HAD. HE WANTED EVERY OUNCE OF POWER AND AUTHORITY THAT WAS COMING TO HIM. WHY? SO HE CAN SERVE MORE; SO HE CAN HELP MORE. CHRIST WANTS EVERY BIT OF RANK THAT HE CAN BE GIVEN, BECAUSE WITH AUTHORITY IS POWER — THE POWER TO SERVE, THE POWER TO HELP AND TO DO A BETTER JOB. THAT IS GOING TO BE SOMETHING THAT HE WILL WANT, WITH HIS WIFE, TO HAVE.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME WONDERFUL MARRIAGES IN HISTORY, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE PHYSICAL. I THINK IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT ONE OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE UNIONS THAT WE KNOW OF WAS MR. AND MRS. HERBERT ARMSTRONG IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THIS WORK. MRS. ARMSTRONG SIMPLY COMPLEMENTED AND HELPED AND SERVED WITH HIM, A WIFE WHO IDENTIFIES WITH HER HUSBAND IS GOING TO BE A WONDERFUL ASSET.

REMEMBER THIS ATTITUDE OF JESUS CHRIST IS NOT A TEMPORARY THING, IT IS GOING TO GO ON AND ON. HE IS GOING TO LIVE FOREVER; WE ARE GOING TO LIVE FOREVER WITH HIM. WE ARE TO EMANATE HIS ATTITUDE OF LOVE, OF SERVICE, OF HUMILITY, OF BEING WILLING TO BE MEEK, OF LOOKING FOR WAYS TO HELP TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR OTHER PEOPLE. CHRIST WANTS OTHERS TO HAVE WHAT HE HAD, EVENTUALLY OFFERING SALVATION TO THE LOWEST HUMAN BEING, NOT REALLY BEING CONTENT WITH THE KINGDOM UNTIL THE LAST LITTLE ISLANDS HAVE HIS LAW, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT THEY WILL BE HAPPIER ONCE THEY HAVE HIS LAW. IT IS GOING TO BE A LONG LIFE AS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, AND A GOOD WIFE (PROVERBS 3:12) WILL DO HIM GOOD AND NOT EVIL ALL THE DAYS OF HER LIFE.

CHRIST WATCHES THE BRIDE THAT HE IS GOING TO MARRY. HE LIKES TO SEE THOSE CHARACTERISTICS. BUT YOU HAD BETTER NOT GET TIRED OF SERVING, BECAUSE WE ARE GOING TO BE DOING IT FOR A VERY LONG TIME YET.

CHRIST ALSO EXPECTS LOYALTY AND FAITHFULNESS IN HIS WIFE. TRAGICALLY TODAY THAT IS NOT CONSIDERED AN IMPORTANT PART OF MARRIAGE — “UNTIL DIVORCE DO US PART.” BUT, JESUS CHRIST PROMISED HIS BRIDE, IN HEBREWS 13:5, “...I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE.” CHRIST WANTS TO HEAR THE SAME THING FROM US, AND HE WANTS TO HEAR IT NOW BEFORE WE ARE MARRIED. HE WANTS TO SEE EVIDENCE OF THE SAME ATTITUDE OF TOTAL, COMPLETE LOYALTY AND COMMITMENT.

IN OUR MARRIAGE SERVICE, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT GO THROUGH THE PROMISES IN QUITE THE SAME WAY AS THE PROTESTANT SERVICES, IN OUR COUNSELING WE TELL THE GIRL, “HE IS HANDSOME NOW, ISN’T HE. BUT PEOPLE CHANGE. PEOPLE GET SICK. YOU HAVE TO REMAIN FAITHFUL IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD TIMES — HARD TIMES. IT IS NOT ALWAYS GOING TO BE EASY.” OF COURSE THE BRIDE, WHO IS WORTHY OF THE POSITION, AGREES.

NOW, THANKFULLY, THE STORY OF OUR MARRIAGE IS WRITTEN IN ADVANCE. WE KNOW THAT IT IS NOT GOING TO BE A MILLENNIUM OF SICKNESS AND POVERTY. WE KNOW THAT IT IS GOING TO BE EVER-

INCREASING PROSPERITY, EVER-INCREASING HAPPINESS, CHILDREN GROWING UP TO ETERNAL LIFE, ONE OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE AND HAPPIEST UNIONS THAT YOU COULD POSSIBLY THINK OF.

BUT THERE IS A BIT OF ROUGH WATER TO GO THROUGH BEFORE THEN. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT CHRIST IS ASKING IS, “I AM LOOKING AT MY WIFE RATHER CAREFULLY TO SEE HOW FAITHFUL SHE IS. WILL SHE ENDURE TO THE END?” ARE YOU WILLING TO STAY — ENDURE IN SICKNESS OR IN HEALTH, IN TOUGH TIMES AS WELL AS GOOD TIMES. IT IS NOT ONLY YOUR SALVATION THAT YOU ARE SHOWING JESUS CHRIST, BUT YOU ARE SHOWING HIM SOMETHING ABOUT HIS BRIDE TO BE.

SO, PREPARING TO BE A BRIDE IS NOT JUST SOMETHING FOR THE LADIES. IT IS AN ANALOGY THAT JESUS CHRIST THOUGHT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE IS EXPECTING OF US NOW. ALTHOUGH WE MEN WILL NEVER BE BRIDES IN THE PHYSICAL SENSE, TRY TO UNDERSTAND THAT TO PREPARE TO BE A BRIDE OF A SUCCESSFUL MAN, YOU HAVE TO WORK VERY HARD; IT IS NO SMALL THING. TO PREPARE TO BE THE BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST, TO BE READY TO BE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IS ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS AND DIFFICULT UNDERTAKINGS THAT HE COULD POSSIBLY HAVE GIVEN TO US.

END