

Relation Between Husband and Wife

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by Edwin C. Schmelzer

“...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” These words were spoken to the children of Israel by Joshua shortly before his death. The determination of Joshua is commendable. It was the determination of a child of God. The response of the children of Israel is also commendable. They responded by saying; “The Lord our God will we serve and his voice will we obey.” This is the response of children of God. (Joshua 24, 15. 24)

“As For Me and My House” is the theme of this convention. Joshua’s determination is our determination. The response of the children of Israel is our response, for we, too, are children of God. Only children of God have this determination and response. “It is a great and serious thing to serve the Lord, a matter which no man can perform in his own reason and strength, but only in the strength of the grace of God.”ⁱ

This, essay will deal faith the “*Relation Between Husband and Wife.*” In presenting this relation, we will follow this outline:

- A. Husband and Wife Should Serve the Lord by Honoring the Lord’s Institution of Marriage
 - I. Husband and wife should honor the Lord’s institution of marriage by observing the Lord’s regulation of marriage.
 - II. Husband and wife should honor the Lord’s institution of marriage by appreciating the Lord’s intended blessing of marriage.

The Lord instituted marriage. We have the account of the institution of marriage in Genesis 2, 18ff. “This account (Gen. 2, 18ff.) as given in the inspired Word of God establishes the truth about the origin of marriage. Marriage is not a human custom, conceived in ancient ignorance and error. It is not a historical development whose nature and terms are subject to revision and improvement, as human experience increases. It was conceived in the infinite wisdom of the Divine Creator of the man and the woman.”ⁱⁱ Leupold quotes Genesis 2,22, “...and brought her unto the man,” and adds: “When God brings her unto man, this act of his is the institution of marriage, and stamps marriage as a divinely willed and approved state.”ⁱⁱⁱ Luther gives this definition of marriage: “This is a true definition on of marriage: Marriage is the God-appointed and legitimate union of man and woman in the hope of having children or at least for the purpose of avoiding fornication and sin and living to the glory of God.”^{iv} (Cf. also ^v, ^{vi}, ^{vii}, ^{viii}, and ^{ix})

Being instituted by God, marriage is for the good of husband and wife, and for mankind in general. “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” “God did not create man an unsocial being. ...In every way the normal thing for man is to go through life in fellowship with a wife.”^x Wegner writes: “Like all else that God created, marriage is a good gift of the Creator for the well-being of mankind.”^{xi} The wife is to be complementary to the husband, a “help” for him.^{xii} The fact that marriage is for the good of mankind can be observed from the blessings which God bestows on marriage, the happiness of home life, the precious gift of children, and the chastity of man and woman. These blessings will be considered in greater detail in the second part of this essay.

Although marriage was instituted by God and is blessed by God, some would set aside God’s institution of marriage. “There are some Communistic theorists who have convinced themselves that marriage is but a burden and a source of misery and trouble, and who advocate ‘free love’ between man and woman, leaving it to the State to take care of whatever children may

be born to them.”^{xiii} “Thousands of doctors, professors and college students are insisting today that ‘love’ is the only criterion for sexual intercourse.”^{xiv} Some ridicule marriage and contemptuously dismiss it as a “piece of paper.”^{xv} Steinmetz issues a warning when he says “If enough people we know and like come to believe that marriage is a little bit silly, and that ‘mature’ people take their love where they find it, we’re going to find it hard to hang on to our own beliefs.”^{xvi} The extent to which some would go in their opposition to marriage is brought out in an article appearing in Time magazine. “Women argue that through the science of eugenics, the genetic code could be altered to produce a different kind of man and woman. Short of that, the extremists demand a complete withdrawal from dependence on men, including sexual ties.”^{xvii} This is the position of extremist in the woman’s liberation movement. Although the Roman Catholic church does not set aside the state of matrimony for the laity, yet it still officially praises the celibate life as purer and holier than married life and forbids priests and nuns to marry.

The new morality is a threat to the Holy state of marriage. Concerning the new morality Dr. Kirsten makes a correct observation when he says that the new morality is the ethics of the Old Man of the Bible, the ethics of the man who will not only be free from the Ten Commandments but who wants to live according to his lusts.^{xviii} He says that it is remarkable that the new morality always very quickly bumps up against one point that is, the sixth commandment.^{xix}

It is reassuring to read that attempts to set the family structure aside have resulted in failure.^{xx} Lillegard also remarks, “God’s institution (marriage) still stands in spite of the sins of men, and no civilized society is possible without it.”^{xxi} It is comforting to read what our Lutheran Confessions say about marriage, namely that Paul in 1 Timothy 4, 3 calls that a doctrine of devils which forbids marriage,^{xxii} that the right to contract marriage cannot be removed by statutes or vows,^{xxiii} and that married people are joined together by God, and that accordingly, it (marriage) is a pure, holy, noble, praiseworthy work of God.^{xxiv}

I.

The question arises how in their relation to each other husband and wife can honor the Lord’s institution of marriage. One way is by observing the Lord’s regulation of marriage. God regulates marriage by decreeing that it be a life-long union. Romans 7, 2 states: “The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth.” Schuetze remarks. “‘He shall cleave unto his wife.’ Jesus points out that this is to be a permanent cleaving. This new bond is not to be broken as long as both live.”^{xxv} The Word of the Lord is clear: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Mt. 19,6)

Kirsten speaks of marriage as a “life-long union.” Holy Scriptures teach the indissolubility of marriage in the same way as the inviolability of life.^{xxvi} Feucht says: “...marriage...must be kept sacred and unbroken.”^{xxvii} In another place he says: “...the phrase ‘till death us do part’ belongs in the Christian marriage ceremony.”^{xxviii} Caemmerer adds: “Marriage is to be permanent. (Mt. 19, 3-9; 1 Cor. 7, 10-15) Human beings are not simply to mate like tuna animals but are to enter into a permanent union that holds up against every shock until God Himself signals its end through death.”^{xxix} In an editorial I. Frey states: “For one thing, marriage is a lifelong union rather than a casual liaison to be maintained only as long as romantic feelings between the couple endure.”^{xxx}

In spite of the Lord’s regulation concerning the length of marriage, divorce rates are increasing. Schuetze observes: “Official records for a county which includes one of America’s

larger cities reveal that in several recent years the number of divorces has actually exceeded the number of marriages in this particular metropolitan area.”^{xxxii} “Divorces granted in the U.S. rose from 393,000 in 1960 to 479,000 in 1965...”^{xxxiii} “The provisional estimated annual total divorces and annulments in the United States in 1970 was 715,000... The 1970 figures show an increase of about 12 per cent over the number granted in 1969.”^{xxxiii} “Including desertions and annulments today 40 per cent of American marriages break up. ‘This is the country’s no. 1 social problem,’ says the Family Service Association of America.”^{xxxiv} Time magazine makes this observation: “Because of the instability of marriage and a growing divorce rate, women head more and more households; 20 million people live in households depending solely on women for support.”^{xxxv}

What is the cause of the increasing number of divorces? Emotional immaturity is given as the cause.^{xxxvi} We are inclined to agree since by this expression spiritual immaturity is included. An enduring marriage needs a firmer foundation than sex.^{xxxvii} Spiritual kinship is “the glue that holds the relationship together.” “Husbands and wives who love the Lord most, love each other best.”^{xxxviii}

Husband and wife, united on a spiritual basis, and determined to serve the Lord by observing his regulation of marriage, will find it helpful to think highly of marriage. “...if we think of marriage as indeed made in heaven, so that the husband prizes his wife as a gift from God, and the wife honors her husband as God’s gift to her, then we will enjoy all the happiness that sinful men could expect in this world of corruption and death...”^{xxxix} “Let us, then, ask God to help us hold the marriage estate in high esteem and to honor it in word and deed...”^{xl} That means that we regard marriage as God’s institution and therefore a holy estate. “Yes, the love between husband and wife is worthy to be compared with the love of Christ to His bride, the Church (Eph. 5, 25.26).”^{xli} Those who do not marry do not achieve a greater degree of holiness than they who marry. “Let marriage be held in honor among all...” (Heb. 13,4) (NASB) Those who are single are not to be envied by those who are married. In their thinking husband and wife should regard marriage as a blessed estate.

Moreover, husband and wife should put their noble thoughts about marriage into spoken words. “As we face up to the necessity of good conversation, we have to remember that a truly mature marriage should be talking about everything.”^{xlii} Husband and wife should speak to each other. Relationships between husband and wife deteriorate when there is a lack of communication. Relationships deteriorate also when marriage is ridiculed. “It is no less destructive of moral morality and everything good to take a frivolous, cynical view of marriage...”^{xliii}

Another regulation of marriage is that it be a union of one man and one woman. When God instituted marriage, he brought one man and one woman together. “Marriage is intended by God to be and remain monogamous.”^{xliiv} “For the Christian the interpretation given by Jesus in Matthew 19, 3-9 is definitive.”^{xlv} “The Story of Jacob shows us the many evil consequences that flowed from his marrying two wives, so that we can see polygamy was morally wrong...”^{xlvi}

Another regulation of God concerning marriage is that man and woman live together only according to this holy ordinance. “Each is to remain faithful to the other. This means, to quote the words frequently employed in marriage ceremonies, ‘...forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her/him so long as ye both shall live.’ The husband and wife give themselves to each other exclusively; and they are to remain true to each other.”^{xlvii} “God has restricted the exercise of the sex function to the state of marriage...”^{xlviii} “Fidelity in the marriage relationship is explicitly commanded in warning against adultery and fornication. (Ex. 20, 14; 22, 16; Lev. 20, 10-14;

Deut. 5, 18; 22, 13-30)^{xlx} Concerning the adultery of David we read in 2 Sam. 11,27: “But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.” Schuetze is correct in stating: “To become ‘one flesh’ under any other circumstances is adultery. Cf. 1 Cor. 6,15. 16”^l And again: “God condemns unchastity...”^{li} Joseph regarded adultery as sin against God. (Gen. 39,9)^{lii} “...but it is a sin to seek sexual satisfaction through premarital tool or extramarital intercourse,” says Kirsten.^{liii}

Of course, the world thinks and acts otherwise. “They find it dangerous to the development of one’s character to be afraid of God’s wrath against sin or to suppress one’s desires and appetites.”^{liv} “To such freedom means...that everybody...desires his neighbor’s wife, destroys his marriage if he wants to...”^{lv} “According to Fletcher (Joseph F. in his “Situation Ethics”), neither the thief nor the adulterer is sinning if love was the motive of his deed.”^{lvi} May these devilish attitudes never be held by us. May we always honor the Lord’s institution of marriage and thereby serve Him by observing His regulation of marriage.

We may speak also of the following as a regulation of marriage. The husband should honor and love his wife as his God-given helpmeet; the wife should honor and love her husband as her God-given head. Luther explains the sixth commandment by saying: “...and each honor and love his spouse.”

One of the basic passages to consider in this connection is Ephesians 5,21ff. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church and he is the saviour of the body.” The significant feature of this submission on the part of wives to their own husbands is that it is to be regarded as being done to the Lord. Such a consideration should evoke a willingness on the part of wives to submit themselves to their own husbands. Remember Sarah who “obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.” 1 Peter 3,6. “The relationship between husband and wife is compared to Christ to His Church. Since Christ is its head, the Church submits to Him.”^{lvii} The Church does this willingly, appreciating the salvation which Christ won by his self-giving love. Similarly, wives should willingly submit themselves to their own husbands. They should respond to the love of their husbands for them. “So in a limited way it is the self-giving love of the husband that draws the wife to him. She responds.”^{lviii}

The directive to husbands is the following: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...” (Ephesians 5, 25) “The husband is not told to demand obedience of his wife.”^{lix} He should concentrate on love, a love patterned after the love of Christ for His Church. “The wife is the object of his (the husband’s) Christ-like love.”^{lx} The husband should treat his wife with “tenderness and reason,” says Luther. “You are her husband in order to help, support, and protect her, not to destroy her.”^{lxi} “The greatest treasure on earth is a dear wife.”^{lxii} A husband should show his good will toward his wife also by his manners.^{lxiii} “Men are not to take advantage of their position but to use it responsibly.”^{lxiv}

Men have not always used their position responsibly and neither have women. “Americans...seem to assume that subordination is somehow evil in itself...Woman, must be the complete equal of her husband in every sense of the word.”^{lxv} “Many of them (American women) are in search of a new role that is more independent, less restricted to the traditional triangle of Kinder, Küche, Kirche (children, kitchen, church).”^{lxvi} Dr. B. Spock believes we have neutralized the sexes so that all role distinctions are disappearing. The husband’s reference to his wife as the boss and his need to call her “mother” are “indicative of the shift in authority from husband to wife.”^{lxvii} “The roles in the home tend to become reversed. Woman emasculate their men and then despise them because they are emasculated. Men defeminate their wives and then

hate them because they are defeminized.”^{lxxviii} “Cultural analyst Russell Lynes says that America has replaced the household servant with the teenage babysitter and the domesticated husband. ... One definition of the suburban husband is ‘groundman with sex privileges.’”^{lxxix} But this rejection of God-appointed relationships between husband and wife is as old as sin. “In Canterbury Tales Chaucer tells how the women of the Queen’s court agreed that what women want most of all is to dominate their men.”^{lxxx} Luther remarked: “The men are almost lions in their homes, hard toward their wives and servants. The women, too, everywhere want to domineer and have their husbands as servants.”^{lxxxi}

Although many husbands and wives have not used their positions responsibly, in our desire to honor God’s institution of marriage and thereby to serve Him, we will strive to serve the Lord’s regulation of marriage. Husbands will love their wives. “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.” (Ephesians 5,28) A person naturally nourishes and cherishes his own body. Then a reference is made to Christ. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nouriseth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” (v. 29) Husbands ought to show the same tender love toward their wives which Christ displays to the church. What a powerful incentive and example husbands have for loving their wives!

At the same time the wife should “not sabotage her husband’s leadership or usurp it. ... The wife’s role is to encourage and strengthen rather than eliminate it.”^{lxxxii} Feucht makes a strong point when he says: “The subordination of the woman to the man, as established in the Old Testament, was not revoked in the New Testament rather it was substantiated by the Holy Spirit through the pronouncements of the apostles.”^{lxxxiii} Luther gives good advice: “Another very fine factor one that contributes much toward harmony in the home, is the concerted effort of the wife to regard her husband’s will, to do what she knows he likes, and to avoid what she knows he dislikes. By such conduct she wins the heart of her husband so that it is a pleasure and a delight to him to return to his home and his wife. On the other hand, if wives are disobedient, self-willed, and domineering a man hates his own home and feels as if he is going to war and entering the enemies’ camp when he steps into his house.”^{lxxxiv} May we ever honor the Lord’s institution of marriage by observing the Lord’s regulation of marriage and thereby serve him.

II.

Let us now see that husband and wife should honor the Lord’s institution of marriage by appreciating the Lord’s intended blessing of marriage. These blessings are the happiness of home life, the precious gift of children, and the chastity of man and woman.

Concerning the blessing of the happiness of home life Lillegard writes: “We say, therefore, that marriage is a divine institution, given for the good of mankind, and that there is nothing more important for the welfare and happiness of a people than that they hold marriage in honor and use it in accordance with God’s intentions.”^{lxxxv} Luther says: “But he who understands it (marriage) finds in it delight love and joy without ceasing, as Solomon says: ‘Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing.’”^{lxxxvi} He mentions that if a person is married, it is easier to bear injuries, such as to honor and possessions, mentioning, “such suffering will be more difficult for you to bear if you are unmarried and alone, as Scripture says: ‘Woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.’”^{lxxxvii} In marriage, “one person becomes responsible for another.”^{lxxxviii}

There is a blessed companionship established in marriage. Wegner says that “companionship... is of the essence of marriage,”^{lxxxix} and Kirsten agrees with him, stating: “Its

first meaning is ‘fellowship...companionship.’^{lxxx} Schuetze states: “Marriage supplies loving companionship, a partner with whom to share life’s joys and successes, a sympathetic hearer and co-sufferer in time of distress.”^{lxxxii} In mentioning three purposes of marriage Feucht states: “In marriage God provides a deep and lasting companionship between husband and wife, for their mutual enrichment, happiness, and welfare (Gen. 2, 20-24)”^{lxxxii} Companionship is an important feature of marriage. It needs to be cultivated. Hulme states: “The couple needs diversions together to revive their companionship.”^{lxxxiii}

But not merely diversions. A spiritual union between husband and wife is essential if the happiness of home life is to be enjoyed fully. Lillegard gives good advice when he says. “Thus we should make the Gospel of the only Savior the very basis and foundation of our homes.”^{lxxxiv} Feucht quotes Frenk who writes: “Religion is the undergirding of the family, the moral timbers on which the home rests.”^{lxxxv} Feucht again refers to a common faith as the “necessary undergirding” to marriage and adds: “It is related to marriage as the keel is to a ship.”^{lxxxvi} Schuetze quotes Leupold who speaks of spiritual harmony as the “deepest of all harmonies in the home.”^{lxxxvii} Lillegard draws our attention to what happens when this spiritual harmony is lacking: “The result of the sons’ of God marrying godless women was that all became ungodly.”^{lxxxviii} Family altars should be established and maintained.^{lxxxix} Unfortunately, as someone has said, the family altar has become as outmoded as the heating stove in the average American home.

There are many crises, many problems that arise in marriage.^{xc} “All marriages are made up of two sinful, imperfect human beings. Both inevitably make mistakes, and commit wrong. Both, at least to a degree, have different preferences...”^{xcii} One of these problems often involves money and family finances.^{xcii} However, all crises and problems can overcome with the Word of God and prayer.^{xciii} Luther attributes the lack of harmony between husband and wife to a lack of prayer.^{xciv}

If we are sincere in our prayers, and if we lay hold on the strength that God offers us in His Word, we will work at making marriage work. Not merely *ora* (pray), but also *labora* (work). “If a wife would put as much thought into making her marriage work as she puts into the selection of her Easter outfit; or if a husband worked as hard at improving his marital life as he works at his golf game, few marriages would fail.”^{xcv}

Some would argue in favor of marital quarrels as a way of making marriage work. “The key to constructive quarreling is to slug it out until this state of exhaustion is reached.” “The quarrel may clear the air as well as heat it.” “The reconciliation that follows the quarrel may bring the couple closer together...” “Yet hate is a form of caring and anger is an expression of vitality.”^{xcvi} Steinmetz advocates getting things out into the open “at the top of our voices.” He says: “A good fight has to place in every home...”, and advises “...let the adrenaline pump as long as it wants to pump.”^{xcvii} He speaks highly of the woman who stands up against her husband, spits in his eye and tells him exactly who she is, how she feels, and what he can do about it if he doesn’t like it. However, this seems to me like playing with fire. How much better the counsel of Schuetze who refers to 1 Peter 3, 3.4. and the mention of the “inward man” as the woman’s true adornment, which is a “meek and quiet spirit.” Schuetze comments “A ‘meek spirit’ is one that is gentle, considerate, unassuming. A ‘quiet spirit’ is one that is peaceful and peace loving.”^{xcviii}

In working to make a marriage work, each spouse must be willing to contribute to the marriage. Hulme observes concerning Rebekah: “Here was a girl who showed her feminine inclination toward marriage by being a *giving* person.”^{xcix} Jacqueline Kennedy is quoted as

having said: “I think that a wife’s happiness comes in what will make her husband happy. I’ll be a wife and mother first, then First Lady.”^c Husband and wife contribute to their marriage by assuming a proper attitude toward money. Such assumption involves a spirit of contentment.^{ci} Furthermore, one must learn early in marriage to make concessions and adjustments for the sake of peace and harmony.^{cii} Love for one’s spouse will induce him to act accordingly. “True love..is something to be cultivated and nourished, as with every other good and noble thing in life... For husband and wife owe each other love and affectionate service as a marital duty...”^{ciii} Displaying love, Christians “should follow the example of Jesus and be forbearing and forgiving.” “Daily they will repent of weaknesses, unkind words, and mutually ask for forgiveness.”^{civ}

Another of the Lord’s intended blessing of marriage is the precious gift of children. Fritz mentions, as one of the things that a pastor should impress on married people, that God would bless their marriage with children.^{cv} Marriage “is ordinarily blessed with children in fulfillment of the natural desire to ‘be fruitful and multiply.’”^{cvi} In speaking about Rachel’s giving birth to Joseph, Lillegard remarks: “We note in this whole account that children are regarded as a gift of God.”^{cvii} One of the very purposes of marriage is to “bring children into the world and to provide adequately for their care.”^{cviii} Schuetze comments: “Husband and wife are to look upon children as a blessing God gives to their marriage.”

In what way are children a blessing? First, this is God’s means for continuing the human family.^{cix} Second, this is an opportunity for spiritual growth on the part of husband and wife.^{cx} Consider also the happiness which children bring. “The Psalmist (127, 3-5) goes on to speak of the happiness which children provide, comparing the father with a warrior who is indeed well prepared if he has a quiver full of arrows. Christian children will care for their aged parents, even protect them if necessary. What happiness faithful children can provide!”^{cx} Maybe from your own experience you know the joy of having your children say to you: “Daddy, I love you.”

Of course, not all people appreciate this blessing of children. They carefully avoid parenthood and bring all sorts of excuses. One excuse that is usually heard is that children are too expensive. For example, Suzanne Sape is quoted in *Time* magazine as saying: “If I were to conceive, I would have an abortion...If a woman has a child, it should be a full-time occupation for at least the first year, perhaps two or three. Three years is an awful big bite out of a career, and I’ve spent a long time preparing for my career.”^{cxii} Luther says, that expense is no excuse for not having children. He says “Most married people do not desire children...because they are poor and do not have the wherewithal to support a family.” He says that this is true especially of those who are lazy. Then he adds: “But the purpose of marriage is not pleasure and ease but the procreation and education of children and the support of a family.” He even goes so far as to call people who do not like children “swine, dunces and blockheads, not worthy to be called men and women, because they despise the blessing of God.”^{cxiii} On the other hand, he has high praise for those who are “looking for children and enter upon this way of life to become parents.” He calls them “angels” in comparison with others.^{cxiv}

Another excuse that is offered is the overpopulation of this earth. However, Lillegard points out that we need not fear overpopulation, stating: “The fact remains, however, that the resources of the earth, the seas and the air have never been used to their full extent. ...And no man is wise or learned enough to determine when the limit actually will be reached. Whatever starvation and poverty there have been in the world must be attributed to the mismanagement, stupidity and selfishness of men, not to any real lack in the resources of the earth.”^{cxv}

Today there does not seem to be the disgrace associated with a childless marriage which prevailed in Sarah’s day.^{cxvi} Birth control of one form or another, simply for the prevention of

conception and childbirth, is almost universally advocated and practiced. Sterilization is often sought, and abortion is often condoned. Kirsten states: “While we recognize the highest value of marriage in itself, in the union of the wedded pair to one flesh, there dare be no doubt that God wills this companionship not only for its own sake but that he wills in and through it (and *only* through it) to provide for offspring.” He adds: “We cannot free ourselves and our church members,—if we are married—of the obligation to beget or bear children. To have or not to have children is not a matter of free choice for ourselves and for those committed to our pastoral care.”^{cxvii} Kirsten grants that problems can arise. “But a dilemma does arise when the size of the growing family and the productive capacity of the parents create a problem, and when the all too rapid succession of births threatens to overtax the physical capabilities of the parents, especially those of the mother.”^{cxviii} Scheutze, too, remarks: “There are times when good judgment should lead the husband to practice sexual restraint because of health considerations.”^{cxix} However, the general truth remains that children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. (Ps. 127, 3) Husband and wife should appreciate this blessing from the Lord. By appreciating this blessing, they honor the Lord’s institution of marriage and serve Him.

The final blessing of marriage which we wish to consider is the chastity of man and woman. The chastity of man and woman is the purity of man and woman. Luther explains the sixth commandment by saying: “We should fear and love God that we lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and each honor and love his spouse.” God wants both the married and the unmarried to be chaste. Kirsten is correct when he writes: “In the same connection the Holy Scriptures (and Jesus himself) teach that adultery is sin.”^{cxx} In 1 Corinthians 7, 2 we read: “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” We should remember that “originally God had not instituted marriage ‘to avoid fornication.’ But since the Fall, because of the sinful nature all men now have, mankind has perverted the relation of the sexes through fornication.”^{cxxi} Feucht probably has this in mind when he refers to the management of the “dynamic and explosive function of sex.”^{cxxii} In his *Large Catechism* Luther writes: “For where nature has its course, as it is implanted by God, it is not possible to remain chaste without marriage. For flesh and blood remain flesh and blood, and the natural inclination and excitement have their course without let or hindrance, as everybody sees and feels.”^{cxxiii} Luther also says that chastity will follow as a matter of course where husband and wife live together in love and harmony.^{cxxiv} Lillegard says that a God-fearing woman is man’s best protection against temptation.^{cxxv}

“...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” We repeat what we said at the beginning. Only children of God have the desire to serve the Lord. May we always have this desire because we are thankful for all blessings, but especially our spiritual blessings. “Now being made free from sin, and become *servants* to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness.” (Ro. 6,22) May we serve the Lord by honoring the Lord’s institution of marriage. And may we honor the Lord’s institution of marriage by observing the Lord’s regulation of marriage and by appreciating the Lord’s intended blessing of marriage.

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- ⁱⁱ Tract, *Marriage is Sacred* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1966) p. 6.
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