

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session XXXIV

June 19, 2011

“The Christian Family”

Part Three: “God’s Weapons For Healing A Marriage”

Introduction:

In His creative wisdom, God designed the marriage relationship to be “**good**”! It is basic to the preservation of the human race and basic to the preservation of true meaning and purpose in life!

We pictured these “**good**” things designed by God by putting them on the fingers and thumb of our hand. They are . . .

--the “Good Hand”!

1. Companionship – emotional intimacy (being “best friends”!);
2. Physical Union – physical intimacy (reserved for the marriage commitment!);
3. Teamwork – mutual contribution to the success of the marriage relationship;
4. Spiritual Unity – mutual agreement about the “work” and “will” of Jesus Christ;
5. Basic Need – of a woman (“**security**”); of a man (“**self-worth**”).

But, just as God has designed that which is “**good**”, so Satan, our spiritual enemy, has “schemed” to undermine the good with that which destroys! To picture what Satan attempts to do in marriage, we suggested using our other hand to chart his progression of destruction. We called it . . .

--the “Bad Hand”!

--Every man and woman brings an “unwritten list” of **Expectations** to their marriage. Satan uses these expectations as the backdrop of his progressive destruction.

1. Unfulfilled Expectations – the “disappointment” of hopes, dreams, agreements;
2. Hurt – the “emotional response” which follows the recognition of ongoing problems;
– “In light of what has happened, how can you say you love me?”
(Note: Most marriages experience some degree of steps “one” and “two”!)

--Turning Point: God wants me to “cast my care upon Him”, I Pet. 5:7.

Satan wants me to “hold on to my hurt”, Eph. 4:26-27.

3. Anger – The “unavoidable result” of holding on to my hurt (Satan has “foothold”!)
 - a. The stage of verbal abuse, Prov. 12:18;
 - b. The stage of physical abuse, Titus 1:7, a “striker” (KJV).

4. A Wounded Spirit – the “death” of the relationship and emotional feeling (even if the marriage and outward harmony continue), Prov. 18:19.
5. A Root of Bitterness – long-term bitterness produces rejection and violation of the Word and will of God and is “justified” by focus on the pain, unfairness, and damage in the relationship.
 - Note: The “**But**” of Bitterness! “I know what God says, **but** I am going to do what I think is right!”
 - Key Question: “Who” or “What” is in final control?

These are “Satan’s Weapons” for Destroying a Marriage!

What are “God’s Weapons” for Healing a Root of Bitterness?

In His "grace" God has provided all that we need to defeat the control of a "Root of Bitterness". Remember, only spiritual weapons are powerful enough to defeat Satan's weapons!

“ . . . greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world,” I John 4:4

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

II Corinthians 10:3-5

I. First Weapon: “ _____ ”!

A. The Instruction: Ephesians 4:32.

"And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

1. The Christian is commanded to "be kind" when we would want to be "unkind".
2. The Christian is commanded to be "tender-hearted" when we would want to be "hard-hearted".
3. The Christian is commanded to be "forgiving" when we would want to be "unforgiving".

B. The Meaning: What does it mean to "forgive" the way we were forgiven?

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8

1. Jesus Christ died for us when we **did not deserve it!**
2. Jesus Christ died for us **before we could ask for it!**

C. The Application: The Christian is to "forgive" in the same way!

1. I am to "forgive" when it is **not deserved!**
2. I am to "forgive" when it has **not been asked** of me!

II. Second Weapon: To "_____"!

A. The Instruction: Galatians 5:16.

*"But I say, walk by the Spirit,
and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."*

1. The Christian's life is not under his/her own control -- we are under Someone else's control -- the **Holy Spirit**.
 - The word "walk" is the Greek word peripateo.
 - It literally means "to walk about".
 - It figuratively means "to live your life; to conduct your life".
 - The command is: "Conduct your life" by the Holy Spirit!
2. The Christian is promised that he/she can avoid the control the "desire of the flesh" -- the sin nature or "old man".
 - The word "**desire**" is the Greek word epithumia.
 - It means "a strong desire or longing".
 - The promise: "The strong desire of the flesh" will not control us!

B. The Meaning: What does it mean to "Walk by the Spirit"?

1. The Christian must know that the Holy Spirit "**lives**" within him/her.

*"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit,
who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own."*
I Corinthians 6:19

2. The Christian must make a choice, moment by moment, day by day.

--Will I control my own life?

Or . . .

--Will I be controlled by the indwelling Holy Spirit?

C. The Application: What happens when the Christian "walks" by the control of the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit produces the very life of Christ in us!

--We do what we would not do on our own!

--We do what we could not do on our own!

2. The Christian avoids the consequences of being controlled by "self"!

--Selfishness does not enslave me!

--I avoid the progression of "hurt" → "anger" → "wounded spirit" → "root of bitterness"!

III. Third Weapon: "_____!"

A. The Instruction: Galatians 2:20.

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me."

1. When Jesus Christ died and rose again, not only did He free us from the "penalty" of sin (justification), He also freed us from the "power" of sin in our lives (sanctification). Every Christian has been "crucified with Christ" -- the power of the old nature (received from Adam), which makes us a slave to sin, has been broken! **The Believer's relationship to 'Adam' has been broken!**

2. Jesus Christ, Himself, now "lives in me" -- I have a new "source" of life! I don't get my "life" from me any more -- I now get my "life" from Jesus Christ. My life is no longer "in Adam" -- it is now "IN CHRIST"! He is the "source" of my life!

3. The Apostle Paul states that his life on earth after being saved was a "faith" life. Day by day, moment by moment, he "believed" what God says -- that He has freed the Christian from the power of sin in human experience.

B. The Meaning: What does it mean to have Christ "living" in me?

1. The Christian does not live out of who he/she is → the "old man" (nature)! The Child of God lives out of Who Christ is → the "new man" (nature), II Cor. 5:17!
2. The Christian must learn a "faith" life -- one of taking God at His Word. He says He has delivered us from the "power" of sin as well as the "penalty" of sin!

C. The Application:

1. I am no longer a "slave" to sin! It has no right to "control" me.
2. There is no person or experience that is more powerful than the "victory" God has provided in Christ!
3. When I experience "hurt" in my marriage, I will feel as though I am "powerless" to resist the "hurt" progressing to "anger", then to a "wounded spirit", then to a "root of bitterness".

--But, I am not powerless! In Christ (as my "source" of life) I can "cast" my hurt upon Him; I can stop the hurt from becoming sinful "anger"!

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13

Illustration

The Word of God contains a helpful illustration of how "hurt" in a family relationship will grow to a "root of bitterness" and cause "trouble" for everyone involved.

The illustration is that of **Jacob** and **Esau** in Genesis chapter 27.

You will remember that these two men were not only brothers, they were twin brothers. At the time of their birth to Isaac and Rebekah, God made it known that the "older would serve the younger." (Gen. 25:23) This was a reversal of the pattern of that day -- the younger brother was normally required to serve the older.

At their birth, the younger brother was holding his older brother's heel. As a result, he was named "Jacob" which means, "heel-catcher" or "one who supplants" -- indicating his future character.

Remember, God had prophesied that "the older would serve the younger". We know that when God promises something, it will always prove to be true. So we might ask, how would God have fulfilled this prophecy in His time and way? We do not know, because Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, did not wait on God -- they did it their way! They did not exercise faith. Therefore, they suffered the consequences of unbelief!

Two events occurred between these twin brothers which caused deep "hurt". First, Jacob "stole" his older brother's "**Birthright**", Gen. 25:27-34. The Birthright was very valuable in a Hebrew family. The oldest boy received: 1) a double portion of the family inheritance; 2) he became the "ruler" or "leader" of the whole family; and, 3) he became the one through whom the covenant promises of God would be fulfilled. Esau did not seem to value these material and spiritual blessings – so he traded his Birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentil soup!

Second, Jacob "stole" his older brother's "**Blessing**", Genesis 27:1-45. The Blessing was also very valuable. It was given at the end of the father's life. He would call all of his children to his side and make a "prophecy" to each about the future.

In God's dealing with the Nation of Israel, this Blessing was very important because it was a predication which God Himself would cause to be fulfilled! Esau did value this! He wanted it very much!

When the time came for Isaac to "bless" Esau, Rebekah instructed Jacob to steal the Blessing by deceit. The second son carefully carried out his mother's plans. They worked to perfection – the Blessing was given to Jacob by his father Isaac!

Almost immediately, Esau came in with fresh game for his father to eat and to receive his Blessing! In horror and disgust, he learned that his younger brother had craftily stolen what was his! He pleaded with his father to reverse the blessing or to give him something in its place. The father acknowledged that the Blessing was irreversible, it now belonged to Jacob, but did pronounce a lesser blessing on Esau, Gen. 27:39-40.

What was Esau's response?

"When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, 'Bless me, even me also, O my Father!' . . . And Esau said to his father, 'Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.' So Esau lifted his voice and wept. . . . So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.' Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, 'Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you, by planning to kill you.'"

Gen. 27: 34, 38, 41, 42

In these events, "Satan's Weapons" for destroying a marriage and family are clearly seen:

"Unfulfilled Expectations"----->"Hurt"----->"Anger"----->"Wounded Spirit"----->"Root of Bitterness"

Notice how quickly the "Bitterness" developed! Notice how "natural" it was to Esau! His only "consolation" in the events was to plan to kill Jacob! When you are "deeply hurt", the only thing that feels "right" is to be "Bitter"!

God brought a **Gracious** end to this story by reconciling the two brothers after twenty years. "Bitterness" does not go away – even after twenty years! It is removed only by God's love! When God brought Jacob back to Canaan from Haran, Esau was coming with 400 men to kill him! (Genesis 32:6) During the night, Jacob "wrestled" with God, and God changed his name and his character! (Genesis 32:24-32) By dealing with Esau in a new way --by giving rather than taking -- Jacob was reconciled to his brother.

The unconditional love of God conquers "Bitterness"!

Summary

A. God's "**Forgiveness**" → opens the _____ to _____!

B. "**Walking by the Spirit**" → brings new _____ of the _____ (_____, _____, and _____)!

C. "**Christ in You**" → makes possible restored _____ and _____!

"Christ"

"Husband" <-----> **"Wife"**