



## S. O. S. FAMILIES

The arch-deceiver, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, is majoring in destroying families more than at any other time in history. To narrow down the theme of this writing, Satan is attacking ministers and their spouses with greater intensity than ever before. Definite defensive actions must be taken against his lethal attacks. It is time for ministers to awaken out of lethargy, shake off their swollen egos and realize that a raging battle for the preservation of their families is currently going on.

THREE DEFENSIVE MEASURES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE FAMILY WILL BE CONSIDERED.

TO CULTIVATE:

"Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15).

Genesis 2:15 deals with Adam's responsibility to cultivate and keep the garden of Eden, and that also included his wife, Eve. The love response from the wife must be cultivated continually and tenderly by the husband. When a garden is not cultivated for long periods of time, the soil will harden, preventing the necessary moisture flow to the roots and allowing the weeds to eventually choke out the existing life of the plants. The same can happen to a marriage relationship.

Also Adam was to "keep" the garden or guard the garden from any intruder. Protection for the wife must be provided for by the husband. When outside circumstances begin to weaken the love relationship, the husband must take charge in such a way as to prevent any loss. Even as it is God's purpose to save people from the eternal torment to come, husbands should be active in saving their wives from the agony of feeling unprotected and unloved.

TO COMMUNICATE:

"And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2:25).

Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed. This passage speaks of an existing transparency between them, a perfect example of communication. Why do marriages fail? The largest percentage of them end in divorce or separation because of a breakdown in communication. The art of communication is not developed overnight, rather it is tediously learned through discipline and determination. The communication system of the world has progressed from smoke-signals to orbiting satellites. Husbands, you must develop a better communication system than "smoke signals!" Wives, you must do the same! If we are to have strong families bonded together by love, communication must be on the same wave length. Because of crowded schedules, a major breakdown in communication can occur between the husband and wife. A special effort should be made to compensate for this unhealthy situation. Talk it over and decide what can be done to improve personal and intimate communication. If it is necessary to slow down, your marriage is more than worth it! Transparency is developed through hard work and dedication, sometimes even at the risk of personal

embarrassment.

## TO COLLABORATE:

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate: and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (Gen. 3:6).

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world" (1 Jn. 2:16).

The woman considered the forbidden tree at the suggestion of the beguiling serpent. The devil stands ready to get the attention of the wife, even as he led Eve to Eden's GARDEN CENTER MALL! Husbands, it is imperative to guard and shield your wife from the influences of the devil. She is not called to stand alone, rather one called alongside. The wife should not engage the devil in direct confrontation, but always include the support of her husband. Eve should have first called Adam, not after the fact. The combination of failure is clearly seen in this passage. Adam should have been near Eve and Eve should have never engaged Satan in verbal a exchange, one on one. Adam was not where he should have been and contrari-wise, Eve should have called out to Adam before any final decision was made.

The world can be divided into three categories according to Apostle John, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. 1 Jn. 2:16 corresponds to Gen. 3:6. The woman saw the tree was good to the taste, but she did not realize it contained nothing to prolong life, only to shorten it. It can be compared to modern day FAST FOODS! She saw that sinning could be a pleasure, but did not realize it would only be for a short season. She wanted to be wise, respected, superior, independent and elevated in the eyes of all, but did not realize that pride is what God hates and it comes before a fall.

The casualty rate in marriages is increasing at an alarming rate. Homes are being torn apart and destroyed because of these problems: the lack of cultivation of love and relationship, the lack of protection, the lack of adequate communication and the desire to be elevated in the eyes of others.

Husbands, let us come to the defense of our homes by getting our priorities corrected. Wives, focus on your marriage relationship as the most important objective in your natural life, not just careers, social status, or material wealth. If both the husband and wife agree together on these above issues, the rate of divorce and separation will significantly decrease and the rate of happiness will increase.

Ministers, just because God anoints you to preach the gospel and pray for the sick, does not mean your marriage relationship is automatically secured. Being a minister, I have realized some of the pitfalls on the road to that high prize of the heavenly calling. Through the help, patience and love of my wife, my eyes are more opened to the dangers than ever before. There is a desire that drives one continuously onward, fighting against every kind of opposition, but if your family is blurred by the struggle upward, then possible you could be running in vain. Because of this intense desire to ministerially succeed, many times the wife is taken for grant it, unprotected and not consulted, consequently the devil takes advantage of the situation with his subtle tricks. My encouragement is to take time to cultivate your marriage, guard it, and endeavor to keep your spouse's focus on that which is pure and excellent.

## SEVEN RULES TO LIVE BY:

1. Make quality time available for your spouse.
2. Talk about matters unconnected with problems.
3. Touch one another often.

4. Give one another inexpensive gifts unexpectedly.
5. Once a month, please your spouse by doing something he/she enjoys without considering your own enjoyment.
6. Think of ways to keep romance current.
7. Always speak well of your spouse before others.

The above list is not meant to be comprehensive or a cure all, but it can serve as a beginning to a better, satisfying and healthy marriage.

After many years serving in ministerial leadership, I have become alarmed at the number of marriages failing within the ranks of the clergy. Let us pray fervently for our spiritual leaders!

Leon C Willis