**"HELP FOR THE HOME"**

**TEXT**: Gen. 2:24 and Mt. 19:4-6

**INTRO**: A. Remember when... But now...She was beautiful, and he was handsome? She is older and he is bald! There were no children? The kids create tensions! Things went so smoothly. You know his/her faults! You could enjoy each other? You have no money to do anything! You couldn't wait to see each other? You wish you could get away! The kids were so sweet? Now they are teens! You used to talk to each other? Now you yell at each other! Kids, your parents were wonderful. Now they are your biggest problem! You had such wonderful dreams? They have become a nightmare!

 B. The Home which was your greatest hope in life has become your biggest headache! Don't throw in the towel! There is hope! God offers His help to anyone willing to work at it and follow His guidelines.

 C. My credentials for teaching on this subject are that I have been married for 34 years, have raised 4 children, have 2 sons-in-law and 2 daughters-in-law, 6 grandchildren and 2 more on the way. I can tell you from experience what works and what does not; where I have succeeded and where I have failed as a husband, father, Pastor and now as a grandparent. But beyond my experience, I have principles which are guaranteed to work from the Word of God! That will be the basis for this series of lessons on "HELP FOR THE HOME."

**I. TEN TABOOS (FOR SELECTING A MATE):**

 A. Beware the Unbeliever!

1. Marriage has been called "The Tender Trap" but it is more like "The Suicidal Snare" or "The Quintessential Quagmire" for the believer who succumbs to a life-long yoke with an unbeliever.

2. The sure-fire way to avoid marrying an unsaved person is never to date one.

 B. Never Marry Because of Social Pressure.

 C. Don't Run from An Unhappy Home Life.

 D. Don't Marry Out of Panic.

 E. Don't Do It Because of Pregnancy.

 F. Never Marry Until the Lord Leads.

 G. Do Not Marry A Divorcee.

 H. Do not Marry Because of Mutual Interests, Including Children.

 I. Don't Do So To Solve Problems.

 J. Never Marry Because of Physical Attraction.

**ILLUS**: Biblically, families often arranged marriages without the marriage partners having a great deal to say. This was done so that the parents, deemed to be wiser and having their children's best interests at heart, could make better decisions without being influenced by externals alone.

**II. PROVEN PREREQUISITES (FOR A GOD-BLESSED MARRIAGE)**

 A. Born Again!

 B. Love For Each Other (must be beyond physical attraction!)

 C. Desire to Make It Work:

 1. You must whole-heartedly believe there is no way out!

 2. There is no scriptural reason for a marriage to break up! (cf.v.6)

 D. Surrendered To The Lord.

 E. Believe God Is Able.

**III. TWO TESTS (FOR THE MARRAIGE UNION):**

A. Severance: "leave..."

 1. The parental cord must be cut before a couple can hope to have a lasting marriage.

 2. Both the children and the parents must understand and agree to this principle.

**ILLUS**: When the father of the Bride "gives away" his daughter in a wedding ceremony, the symbolism is powerful. The "cleave" aspect in the wedding is crucial.

 a. The door must be closed to the children's return to the home.

 b. The parents need to keep their nose out of their child's affairs unless asked for advice or

help and even then, they need to use great discretion.

 c. To "leave father and mother" means to break the parent-child bond, to sever the dependent strings that once provided security, protection, financial assistance and physical needs.

**NOTE**: If these ties are brought into a marriage it will hinder the bond of marriage from sealing. So, God mentions this first, even before He talks about "cleaving" to each other.

**ILLUS**: Chuck Swindoll whose book "Strike the Original Match" is recommended, with reservation, speaks of the old folk song "Billy Boy" to illustrate this point. Billy Boy and his girlfriend never married. The reason: "She's a young thing and cannot leave her mother." How old was she? 3 X 6 and 4 X 7, 28 and 11 or 85 years old! She couldn't cut the apron strings!

B. Permanence: "cleave..."

 1. Leave and cleave, sever and bond, loosen and secure, depart and attach to.

 2. The Heb. word translated "cleave" means "to attach to, to cling".

**ILLUS**: When couples vow "till death do us part" it has often no more strength than a mere wedding formality. What they mean is "till disagreement do us part."

 The sign in a Hollywood jewelry store says much about today's mentality regarding the permanence of the marriage bond: "WE RENT WEDDING RINGS"!

 The statistics are alarming: In 1960 one out of 4 marriages ended in divorce; in 1975 one out of every two; in 1990 one out of every 1 1/2! That's an alarming increase of 150 percent in one generation!

3. The word cleave is extraordinarily strong and deals with a bond which cannot be broken without great damage being done to both parties (and others who are a part of this union).

**ILLUS**: I heard a tragic story of former members of this church, now divorced, and one of the parents recently got remarried. The children couldn't handle this and ruined the wedding as they could not hold back the tears! They had parents who refused to abide by the "till death" portion of their vows.

 The have "put asunder" what "God hath joined together." It is not "till disagreement do us part" but till death!

**QUOTE**: "There are two processes that must never be started prematurely; embalming and divorce!"

4. Becoming "one flesh" is a joining not just in physical union but in spiritual oneness...it is unity as to goals, direction and dreams.

**ILLUS**: "One flesh" does not mean uniformity. "God brought Eve to Adam...not to be a female Adam but to be distinctly unique, obviously different from him." *Swindoll* But she did come "out of" Adam, so there should be a oneness. They shared the same flesh, bones, nerves, cells, DNA, and so all that she became, he had been. The whole idea of mutual acceptance, giving, listening, forgiving, belonging and direction was implied. It is two individuals willingly blending into each other's lives, sharing, and completing each other.

I Cor. 7:3-6

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise, also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise, also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. [Total unselfishness]

5. If there is any concept every Christian couple must grasp to make their marriage last it is that of unselfishness!

6. If there is no compromise in a marriage that marriage is doomed to failure; there is no "mine" and "yours" it must be "ours"!

**ILLUS**: If you cannot handle that it is better to stay unmarried!

**CONCL**: In this series we will deal not only with the married, but also with the never married, the not married, the divorced, the remarried, the widowed, the abandoned, the separated, and of course, the children. Sooner or later we will get to YOU! There is HELP FOR (EVERY) HOME!