

Devotions for Enoch and Julia



Danutasn Brown

Devotions for Enoch and Julia's Wedding

By Danutasn Brown

Preface by Enoch Khandagale



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Preface – How Learning the Character of God Blessed my Courtship

Enoch Khandagle

Dear Reader,

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD. - Proverbs 18:22.

Blessings in the name of our Father and His Beloved. I thank our Heavenly Father and His dear Son for giving me the privilege to write a preface to this book. As I write this preface I ask the Lord to fill me up with His Holy Spirit and also to bless you, dear reader.

My name is Enoch Khandagle and I am a 34 years old Seventh-Day Adventist from India. This marriage-oriented booklet by God's grace found its origin around my wedding which took place on 29th January 2023. The author of the booklet - Brother Danny Brown – is my dear God-loving friend in Christ. Before I tell you more about the author and the booklet, let me tell you how I came to marry my beautiful wife Julia and the struggles I had on my path.

As I and Julia are closely family related, we knew each other ever since we were kids. We both almost had our upbringings in a nominal Adventist home. I say almost because Julia's Dad is a lovely Polish Catholic and her mom is a God-fearing Adventist. On the other side, my father is 3rd generation Adventist and my mother had her upbringing in a faithful Sunday church-going family.

Now here comes the bad part: no matter how well our parents strived to keep the family together, they couldn't make a good family. In all this, the good part is that Julia and I from an early age chose to nominally follow the

Adventist faith. However, we grew in Christ at different paces and in different ways.

As I lived on an Adventist Campus, I was very well aware of the Adventist faith. As a good Adventist, I strived to please the Lord in every way. I prayed and read my Bible morning and evening, and kept the Sabbath from sunset to sunset. I also paid my tithe regularly and fasted occasionally. At the age of 24 (the year 2013), I was convinced I knew God well. But the truth is, I didn't know the true God as He is. I was sick, miserable, heavily spiritually burdened, and filled with self-righteousness to the brim of my soul.

I lived this life for at least 3 years until in 2016 I found the Character of God message (COG) with the help of an American missionary. As I studied this message and received it with all my heart, my life was drastically changing for the true Glory of God. Actually that time I thought I was completely changed. But as they say, "EASIER SAID THAN DONE". I still had to learn many right things about God's character and unlearn tons of my wrong beliefs and habits. Little did I know what was coming my way and how I would be tested and reformed in the image of God.

I met Julia in India in the summer of April 2016. Julia, her cousin, her brother, and her mom were visiting our family for two short weeks. I was 27 years old and Julia was 25. We knew each other as kids, but that summer we got to know each other as adults. We soon learnt that we really enjoyed each other's company and, to our surprise, in the second week we were in love. Soon Julia and her family's trip came to end and they had to return back to her home in the United Kingdom (UK). Though apart, we chose to love each other sincerely. But that was not enough. We both had many things to learn about each other.

As a typical Indian man, thinking about a girl who lives in the west I feared that Julia was not God-fearing. Yes, Julia did have a western side to her but she was not Godless. Like any nominal Adventist, she went to church on

the Sabbaths, supported her mom and siblings, and also virtually took care of her late dad who then lived in Austria. She is one of the nicest souls you can be around. However, in my mind, she was a bit far from my Indian traditional ideas of how a woman should be. That distressed me and this is what followed.

As we talked over the phone daily I started to learn about some strange Anti-God UK lifestyle practices. I feared this lifestyle had a deep impression on Julia. As she mostly spent her time with her non-Christian colleagues after work, I greatly feared that they would lead her away from God. Deep down in my heart, I had purposed to break up with Julia if I didn't see her follow the Lord as I did.

But the truth was I never wanted to part ways. It was just the beginning of our relationship and I knew little about Julia. Therefore, continuing a relationship with her felt like aiming in the dark. There was nothing wrong with Julia. My fears and assumptions led me to doubt if I was with the right person. I feared that this relationship would draw me away from God. Therefore, I made it my life's mission to lead her closer to God. I dominated and micro-controlled Julia's life affairs to bring her closer to God. I forced her to have a devotion with me, morning and evening.

Poor Julia at times felt so overwhelmed that she busted out crying. Many times she would angrily ask me to stop controlling her. I use to feel she is angry because she doesn't want to pray. But to my surprise, she used to pray with me every day and obey me regarding every good thing I told her to do.

As months passed, I began to see that there was much more wrong with me than with her. Firstly, I never allowed God to take care of my doubts and fears. I trespassed his unforceful gentle ways to be the master of my destiny. Secondly, when there was no reason to, I doubted Julia and also misjudged her. I was judgmental, controlling, dominating, and very self-righteous.

When God helped me realise my sin, I repented of it. I saw great blessings and happiness flow into our relationship. Julia lovingly submitted to my leading without force and she cared about my well-being. Prayerfully and by regularly talking about the initial misunderstandings, Julia and I worked on setting her off from the trauma I got her into. By God's grace, I learnt that freedom of choice is a fundamental right of a person. Nobody is perfect and therefore things can get really bad in a relationship if we don't submit our fears and doubts to God. There are great blessings where God's ways are practised. There is only one way and that is Jesus Christ.

We were so blessed to have Brother Danny Brown at our wedding. He is truly filled with the Spirit of Christ. Our families, friends and my dear wife really liked brother Danny as a person. He had prepared these messages to share with the bridal families, relatives, and friends five days before our wedding. We are truly thankful that brother Dany made it all the way to Pune, India and shared In this message with us. In this booklet, he presents precious truths that are fundamental to spiritually preparing one to enter into a happy married life. It's really kind of him to make these messages available in the form of a booklet. May God bless him and his family and the ministry.





Day 1 – The Reason for Marriage

Marriage has lost most of its glamour in our day and age. It's importance seems to have decreased due to the advent of birth control, which made it so we can engage in sexual behavior without worrying about having children. Before birth control, marriage was how society regulated sexual behavior to ensure children had parents.

My sister got married recently to her boyfriend. They are both not religious. They had been living together for ten years, and they had already been sleeping together. "So what difference does it make to get married?" my mom asked. Of course there is an answer, for society always has its rules, even a wildly open society like America. Marriage makes the relationship more secure, because it becomes harder to break up – legally and socially. My sister's mother in law even told her it was unwise for her to not marry for so long, seeing as the risk is more on the woman because she is less valued as she gets older. And though we can live and sleep together now without getting married in secular society, having a baby without being married – that is too far.

So why does society say we should marry? We do it because we think it is necessary to say we are married to have kids. Or we feel embarrassed to be single when those around us are already married (that is how I feel sometimes). Or our relatives pressure us and arrange for us to be wedded to someone. Or we do it to show our commitment to our boyfriend/girlfriend, a mark of loyalty that we won't look for another romantic relationship.

These are shadows of the original reason for marriage, for marriage was the glorious capstone of the original creation of man. Marriage was more than about Adam and Eve being happy. It was crucial to how God would defend Himself against the accusations of Satan. It would show the union that he wanted, a pure, holy relationship, and how He saw a family should function. God would show the beauty of how He governed in miniature.

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. (Gen 2:18)

Did God create Adam and Eve at the same time? Did He tell them both to keep the garden? No, He created Adam first. He didn't immediately make Eve and tell Adam: "Marry her and make babies." He isn't that kind of Father. I feel so blessed that my parents don't pressure me to give them grandchildren (though my grandmom does). Not saying it is wrong to want grandchildren! But life is already tough enough without the pressure of creating kids! Should I marry just to have kids? That wouldn't be fair on my wife, because I should marry her because I love her! Because what if she doesn't get pregnant? Will I toss her aside like King Henry VIII?

So what happens after God says, "It is not good that man should be alone..." God brings all the animals to Adam and has Adam name them all. Why? Naming animals ensures he will take responsibility over them; when we name our pets they become much more a part of our family. Through this process Adam also realizes that he is alone; he can't properly and deeply communicate his inmost thoughts with the animals. Maybe he even sees some of them in pairs. He wants to have someone to whom he can have deep relational fulfilment.

"And Adam gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him." (Genesis 2:20)

Now he is ready for marriage. If God had just made Eve of the ground without Adam going through this process with the animals that made Adam realize his lack, he may have seen the woman and been like: "Who is she? I was fine alone, thanks." But now Adam has a heartfelt desire for a partner, so he is ready to marry. He recognizes how valuable a partner is. I hope we also can recognize how valuable a God-given partner is – *before* we marry.

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD. (Proverbs 18:22)

But just like when we are young, we often don't value Jesus, sometimes we need to grow up and mature a lot before we realize how valuable a spouse is. As I get older, I start to realize how precious stability is. Let us look at the people who have aged gracefully. Let us realize how much of it is due to a strong marriage. Let us not take it for granted, like people who had gold and didn't realize its value.

The harmonious bond between husband and wife is the foundation for all the children to grow and bear fruit. Adam and Eve would be given the power to shape the destiny of their children, and thus they were in the image of God and His Son who watch over the growth of their created children.

The angels cannot have children. This power to create new life God gave to us through the union of marriage. Angels, through their being tasked to be our guardians, would see exactly how a family works. The angels would learn the deep underlying principles to what gives a family happiness, principles which they had not realized beforehand. This is the great lesson God wants them to learn – how serious and difficult, yet beautiful and fulfilling, having a family is. That God's role as God is as a Father, not as a dictator, and a dictatorship is never the right way to run a family. The man forcing his family in a imperious manner will not give the perfect happiness that the angels have under God. This is how God will win the Great Controversy: by the human family being a lesson to the whole universe that all will understand, and thus:

...God will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. (Nahum 1:9)

Day 2 – One Flesh

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. (1 Corinthians 13:11)

When I was young, I took stability for granted; I admired more the fleeting flash of creativity and the uncontrolled passion for life. I admired freedom and independence, raising a family I considered boring and dull – what you do if you can't succeed in life. Like what people say regarding artists: “those who can't succeed at their craft – music, painting, etc. – become teachers” – and thus teachers are disrespected and seen as failures (especially teachers of the arts). A person who thinks this way, whose value is all in works and performance and glory in this world, won't value a family, and probably isn't ready to have a family – thus all the divorces in the world.

But we can't just force people to grow up. You can't tell people everything and expect them just to get it. Would that those under us would trust us when we tell them, like I did recently to a young girl in NE India, that “if you eat lollipops all day long you will get cavities in the future!” But she needs to experience firsthand some cavities for herself, and hopefully she won't be angry at God about it. In the same manner the human race has had to realize the utter truth of Christ's statement: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” And hopefully we won't be angry at God for all the suffering we've gone through from ignoring His words to us.

So God knows we have to experience things first, and that is what God did for Adam. He would give Adam the feeling of needing a wife, through his experience realizing he was not fulfilled in his relationships with the animals (he was given opportunity to try!).

And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was

not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam... (Genesis 2:20-21)

So God put Adam to sleep...a euphemism for death. To marry is to die to the old self and be born again connected to another. We need to die to selfishness and be reborn again to having our priority be the other.

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” (Philippians 2:4)

We need to practice doing that until it becomes part of our nature, something that we realize is good for us! And by learning how to live with the others in our family, we would learn how to live for others in our schools, our community, and finally for all man – then we will be like Jesus, “who gave himself as a ransom for **all**...” (1 Timothy 2:6)

So, God takes the rib from the rib cage that protects Adam’s heart, meaning he has to protect her heart (and she his heart). Ellen White adds to this also:

“God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “a help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.” (PP 46.2)

Then Adam sees her and what does he say? She’s so pretty! She will give me children! This is the one that will help me work! No, he says this:

²³ And Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

They are one flesh. Adam would take care of her like he was taking care of himself. Eve would love Adam like she was loving herself. In their marriage they were bound in one spirit.

A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it." Ephesians 5:29. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one." (PP 46.2)

No man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it! Do we think of our wife as our own flesh? Do we see people cutting off their arms or their legs and saying "I don't want to live with this body part anymore"? No... and so should it be with marriage. Furthermore, this lesson should be extended to not cutting off any of our fellow man. A marriage is where we see the principles of self-sacrifice in practice, and then we can imitate those principles in other areas of life. By living for others, we follow Christ our head and how He lives for the whole human family.

...Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. (Ephesians 5:23)

Because of the high regard and purpose God has for marriage – it being the example for all other relationships – God has protected it so that its considerations must be above all other human relationships, even that of parent-child. In like manner, our relationship with Christ should be above all others, even that of state-citizen.

²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: (Genesis 2:24)

I shared this verse with my Buddhist student once, and she asked why must we leave father and mother? But the point is not that we forget our parents, it is that the considerations of the wife or the husband, their

influence, should be greater than the father or the mother. That is how important God sees marriage. Parents should really pray a lot before they give advice to a married couple, and should never undermine the spouse of their child. We tragically have too many jokes in English about hating your in-laws. But it isn't only in Western culture: both my Thai grandmom and my Indian Hindu friend bitterly blame their husband's regard for the word of their relatives over the word of their wife as hugely to blame for their divorces. So let men remember to "cleave to their wives," and women to help and support their husbands.

This importance of the marriage relationship over other relationships is the way Jesus wants to be with his church. He wants His church to realize its need of being fully united with Him. He wants us to marry Him and realize the ramifications of what it means – 1 flesh, let no man break apart – but also the great glory and actualization that comes from a beautiful marriage. The things that symbolically were our former parents in this world – the philosophers, the businessmen, scientists, the Instagram influencers – we should leave them like we leave our parents, and be united to Christ. This doesn't mean to never listen to them again! But that the relationship to Jesus is supreme and His cares should be foremost on our minds, like we are foremost on His mind. And what is foremost on His mind is how sin is destroying His children and hurting Him.

Jesus has made a serious commitment to us, and He asks for a serious commitment from us to Him. He says He will take care of us, but can we trust Him? We need to make a choice, we need to make a "judgment call."

Revelation 14:7 Saying with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters".

God had courted humanity for 6000 years, and now the hour of judgment has come – what will we decide? God wants us to look at our relationship

with Him and decide if we want to live with Him forever. Deep in our hearts, do we want to unite with God and be part of His family?

If we are to parallel this with marriage, it would be to the woman when the man asks her to marry him...give serious fear and reverence to the situation, for the hour of judgment has come... will you say yes? Will you accept this man for marriage? Have you studied his character enough to know he will be solid and true and kind and gentle..."until death do us part?"

Cause if we have any doubts about Jesus, they will come out in crisis time and stop us from living with Him forever. So let's do our courtship seriously!



Day 3 – Believing the Promises of the Other

And Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Genesis 2:23)

Both Adam and Eve had to believe God that Eve came out of Adam. And when Adam said these words – “bone of my bone” – they meant “I will take care of you,” and Eve had to believe Adam would do so.

We often promise things at weddings. “I will love you forever. I will always be there for you. I will think of you before thinking of me. I will never make you cry. I will feed you when you are sick, and comfort you when you are in pain. I will never leave you or forsake you.”

I was at a wedding once where a man cynically told me, “It’s all talk. You can’t promise all that. You think you can now, but when things get tough, reality will set in.” Is he right? It does often seem to be the case, considering how many divorce. The Bible, in a sense, also tells us not to make promises and vows.

But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. (James 5:12)

I don’t think the Bible has any examples of promises from husband to wife, or wife to husband, the way we do in modern weddings. It seems to be taken for granted what is expected from both sides. So is it wrong to say we will do things for our spouse?

I don’t think so. But I think we should think carefully about what we offer to do, and then believe that God will help us do it. If God says, in Ephesians 5, that the emphasis for women is “to respect and submit to their husbands, and for men to love and sacrifice for their wives” (like Christ for the church), then surely God will give us the means to do so. But we want

specifics, and so we say we will do this and we will do that. God gave specifics to Abraham of what He would do for him:

And God brought Abraham outside, and said, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

And Abraham believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:4-5)

The crucial part here is that **Abraham believed God**, and that made him righteous.

Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way.
(Proverbs 13:6)

Our believing the promises of our spouse, what he/she offers to do and that he/she can do them in God, *will be counted as righteousness to us*. We must make an effort to sincerely believe what they say. That belief in the other will keep us "upright in the way;" it will be a rock and that keeps the marriage steadfast. If we believe and take seriously the words of the other, they themselves will also take more seriously the words they speak.

And what if they are not doing what they said they would? Should we nag? Should we scold? Should we shout? Should we hit? Should we divorce? No, we must remember where the power in the marriage comes from, where the power to do good comes from – God. So we must pray, and we must draw closer to His word, and we must sanctify ourselves. If "the goodness of God leads man to repentance," the goodness of the spouse can lead the other to repent also.

So let us remember that while there is power in the "I do" in God – "Do you promise to take care of your spouse, in sickness and in health?" "I do." There is equally, profoundly, and more subtly a power in the "I believe" – "Do you believe your spouse will take care of you?" "I believe." And sometimes, the "I believe" will need to help support the "I do." And let us

remember the power of assurance – for it was the reassurance of the relationship to His Father that enabled Jesus to overcome Satan: “You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” said the Father. And thus, the parallel for us is:

“You are my beloved spouse, in whom I trust.”

And having that assurance of being loved by “our second self,” our faithful companion, we can go out and face the world and all the things Satan throws at us. Hallelujah.



Day 4 – The Divine Model for Marriage

When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature. (PP 46.3)

The husband-wife relationship is the first and foremost relationship in the human world. Before there is parent-child, brother-sister, teacher-student, boss-employee – there is husband-wife. By looking at the husband and wife, all other humans would learn lessons to take into their other relationships. A child with good parents who love each other, and function well, will be much better adjusted to living in a world of relationships, because he has seen a healthy relationship in his parents.

But the question is, if other relationships are to be informed by the husband-wife relationship, what should be the model for the husband-wife? 1 Corinthians 11:3 makes it clear:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; **and the head of Christ is God.**

This verse is worthy of deep contemplation. Firstly, it directly addresses a complicated idea – headship and submission. When we say the man is the head of the woman, many of us get nervous – especially women. That is because humans hear headship and think power, domination, control: “you do as I say!” This is scary, to let a man run your family, especially when many women think they are smarter than their husband (or know what's better for the children than their husband) and think they should be the head.

But Paul, *before* saying man is head of the woman, says “the head of every man is Christ”. So the man needs to be submitted to Jesus. Through His own submission to Jesus, and Jesus's headship over him, the man realizes how

he should exercise headship over the woman, and what is expected of her in her submission. A woman who is unhappy with her husband should always pray to his head – Jesus – just as a customer complains about the service by saying: “I would like to speak to your manager!”

But furthermore, how does anyone know what it means to have Jesus as a head, or anybody as a head? Am I relating to Jesus as my head properly? Am I relating to all those above and below me properly? Because we have headship and submission in so many aspects of our life. As a teacher I am head of my students, but I must submit to my administrative supervisor. I submit to the police officer, but I am (sort of) a head of my younger sister. Are we performing our roles here correctly? So many different types of relationships, it is so complicated. So let us look at the ultimate relationship:

The head of Christ is God.

The relationship between the Father-Son is the foundational relationship. In eternity, before anything was created, they were one in Spirit together, knowing each other. How does the Father exercise headship? How does Christ exercise submission? Purely out of love and understanding for each other, NEVER out of force. God doesn't dominate His Son. He takes care of His Son, and the way He takes care of Jesus, so Jesus takes care of us, and so we take care of those under us. And how does Jesus submit? He loves to do His Father's will, in fact He is the representative of the Father – His word. It is all voluntary, all a flow of blessing from God down to us.

But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. **“I do nothing of Myself,” said Christ; “the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father.” “I seek not Mine own glory,” but the glory of Him that sent Me.** John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. **All things Christ received from God, but**

He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life. (DA 21.2)

So as men, we are called to be head of the household. Let us look at how God was Christ's head. He gives "all things" to Christ, protects Him, blesses Him, supports Him, believes in Him, honours Him, lets Jesus represent Him.

For Jesus received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
(2 Peter 1:17)

And at the transfiguration, when Jesus was glorified and Moses and Elijah came down, God the Father said:

This is my beloved Son: hear Him. (Mark 9:7)

Who do we feel closer to, God or Christ? Jesus generally, for we have seen more of Him, God seems further away. So in this analogy – God is the head of Christ as a husband is head of the wife – the Father is equivalent to the husband, and the Son is equivalent to the wife. And is it not true that children feel closer to their mother than their father? Yes, because children spend more time with her, she tends to be at home while father is working, they are breastfed by her, they hear her voice more. So children look to their mom to see how to relate to their dad. How will mom relate to dad? We will copy her! Just like we look to Jesus to see how He relates to God, and we copy Him.

Thus everything is in accordance to the pattern laid out, and the flow from God to Son to man to woman to child is set up. It is this pattern that Satan

tried to usurp. Lucifer said I would be like the most High. Isaiah 14:12. He wanted to be a father like God (only He didn't see the role as Father, He saw it as ruler). But could he create? No he couldn't. So he didn't really know what it was like to head a family. He didn't know what it was like to be a Father, and only thought he did.

Actually Satan was highly honored, but he wanted to be higher. This would be like the eldest son telling the other children, I am actually just like dad. You should honor me as dad, and it would be better to have two dads. And why should we listen to mom anyways, she is under dad. Can we see how toxic this would be? Would this not confuse the whole family?

There is a mysterious verse in 1 Corinthians 11:10 that says this:

For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

The angels are to learn from the human family. Angels cannot have children. They will see that how God has structured everything is for the good of the universe. Alternate family models are not ideal. And God is letting us play that out at the end of time so we may see the consequences. Husband-husband, polyamory (which is a 3+ people marrying), single parents (I have a cousin who recently went to a sperm bank to have a child as a single mom, there was a choice she signed that her child will never know who the dad is – even though she chose him, by picture and IQ), the government raises kids instead of families, etc. But will these alternate models work out?

Thank God for His mercy and grace that He can make the most out of even a problematic situation, but these families will face great difficulties. There is a clear ideal: a man and women under Christ. In Ephesians 5:22-25 it makes it clear:

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.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...

And thus the more we study the relationship between Christ and His church, the stronger our marriage should be – and the more of a blessing we will be to our children, our relatives, and the community around us. Hallelujah Amen.



Day 5 – Marriage as the Bedrock of Society

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

They [the Pharisees] say unto him [Jesus], “Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?”

He saith unto them, “**Moses because of the hardness of your hearts** suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. (Mathew 19:6-8)

How important is marriage? We tend to underestimate it in this day and age. But when we ask the question: How important is family? Then people say, “Oh it is really, really important.” But is not a marriage at the heart of a family?

I admit that I also underestimated marriage. It is easy to do so when people date and break up so often. It becomes easy to see marriage as just another relationship that can just end in a break up. When I was in university I dated a woman, and we had the usual problems of a relationship. I wanted to party, she wanted me to spend more time with her. It annoyed me. And what advice did my friend give me? “Just break up with her bro, you don’t need that.” And it made so much sense to me. And we broke up... and got back together again later... and broke up again, etc.

But it sticks with you, this mentality of quitting when things get tough. Of cutting someone loose and burning a bridge as the way of dealing with frustration. But that isn’t how Jesus is. And that is not how He wants us to be, and that is why He wants to dwell in our hearts.

The ancient Jews also would divorce easily. Men felt it their right to “put away” their wives, just like the heathen nations around them. God would not force those couples to stay together, so He gave divorce laws to at least soften the devastating consequences of divorce. But these laws of Moses

regarding divorce were given due to their HARDNESS OF HEART (like we wouldn't need laws saying don't drink and drive if no one drank alcohol – that law is given due to our hardness of heart in loving alcohol). It was in no way God's ideal plan for them. And all these broken marriages mean broken families, causing serious hardening of heart, and the fruit of it comes in its wake – both back then and now. And what is the fruit? Societal dysfunction.

I see now that stable marriages and families are the key to security, safety, and stability for the individuals themselves, for the children, and for society. When marriages are broken, it means increasing numbers of disturbed and unstable people out and about. That is what we see in a lot of poor areas in America, where almost all the children are growing up in broken and abusive homes, and it makes for a very unsafe environment which they bring with them into how they handle the outside world. If there is no love in the family and family members take advantage of each other, then why should there be any love for strangers that aren't even family... why not just rob them?

For example, almost 70% of African-American children grow up with a single parent, usually a mother. That means 70% have no fathers. And we see the result of that in the dangerous black neighborhoods across America. A toxic male culture where being the toughest is most important, meekness and gentleness are dismissed, and murder and violence is commonplace.

Every year as I get older, I realize how the stability of my parents' marriage not only was the foundation for their success and happiness in life, but mine also. Their love is stable, and thereby their love for me is stable, which keeps *me* stable and sane in the face of a crazy world. Satan tries to get us to think marriage is a burden, just like he gets us to think that uniting with Christ is a burden. But a marriage is, along with the Sabbath, the last holdovers from the Garden of Eden, before sin and suffering came into our world. It is a taste of the eternal. In Christ, a marriage is a little Jerusalem,

its walls holding out the evil forces of this world. It is a sanctuary, channeling blessings from God to those around us.

A man and a woman marry and become one flesh. A godly couple are a light to the world. They make people believe love is real and possible, and that is necessary because “God is love.”

¹⁴Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

A good harmonious family where parents and children love each other is an amazing light to the world that cannot be hid. People see that family and they will glorify God. Because raising children in our world is so hard today, when it is done right, it is a miracle – it can make a hardened non-believer reconsider the gospel. So let us continually remember love: From God to us, and us to those around us, and, most particularly, in holy matrimony.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor 13:13)

I had the pleasure of attending Enoch and Julia's wedding in the beginning of 2023. Their wedding was both very Indian and very Christian. I was treated as family by them, and got a chance to participate in all the functions of the family – a special, fulfilling, strenuous experience.

Each morning and evening we tried to have devotions as an extended family, busy as we were. Enoch would play guitar and lead out in singing. The songs were in English, Hindi, and Marathi. There was a lot of singing and dancing at this wedding.

Enoch asked me to do 5 devotionals, which are what is collected here. I didn't do them exactly like share them like they were written, nor did I get through them all. Still, it was a blessing that Enoch tried to establish his wedding and the family meetings on the blessing of God's word.

May God bless Julia and Enoch and their future together. And may God grant us more happy marriages in these end times, as patterns of His great love for us.

