

On Leaving Children

Mark 10:6-9

Charlie Brackett

We have been considering the implications of a principle of good marriage stated by the Lord in verse 7. This principle is "leave and cleave". Listen to it: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife,..." I have previously suggested that this principle implies four things. First, it is natural for young people to leave parents in order to be joined together in a new, more intimate relationship. Second, both in the new relationship must refrain from running home to mamma when the going gets tough. They can't continue to cling to mother or dad for primary support; they must cut the apron strings and cleave to one another. Third, parents must allow them to go. There is no room in a healthy, happy marriage for meddling, domineering parents. Finally, there is another important implication in the thought of verse 7 which I would like to notice with you now.

Many a marriage that has survived the first three "leave and cleave" pitfalls has, over the years, succumbed to this last. Notice, the Lord said they leave and cleave that the two might be joined together. That joining is not temporary. As a marriage matures, other interests will vie for the couple's time and attention. Careers, friends, homemaking, and many other good and proper pursuits must be tended to. The list is almost endless. Church activities should be on the list, and children. Children take a tremendous amount of time which couples might otherwise devote to one another. But none of these other matters, including children and church activities, can be allowed so much time that it becomes a detriment to the marriage. Two people who came together to be joined as one must continue to work at remaining one. That oneness must be protected.

Sadly, I have known of several marriages which survived many years only to come apart at the seams when the children had grown and left home. Through the years, to outsiders, the marriage seemed strong, but it wasn't. He was busy being a good provider and father. She was right on top of being a good homemaker and mother. But neither worked at the marriage relationship. Over the years, unattended, the love which brought them together in the first place, slipped away. Perhaps too busy to realize what was happening to them, their love and interest in each other was replaced by love and interest in other things. Inevitably, when the house was paid for and the children were grown, there was no longer anything left to hold them together.

My friend, listen to the Bible! Leave other things to cleave to the mate of your youth. That's God's way. Follow it and later years will be blessed as well as all the years along the way. Friends will notice the richness of your relationship and be blessed by the example. Even the lives of your children will be enriched. They will receive a valuable lesson as they see their parents "leaving" them to cleave to one another. There is no question, God's way is definitely best.