

MARRIAGE

PART 1

Don Krow

Today we're going to talk about marriage. First of all, I want to give you some statistics: 75 percent of all family units are going to need some kind of marriage counseling. One out of two marriages will end in divorce. In fifty percent of marriages, a mate will be unfaithful within the first five years. Even in the Christian realm, they say as high as thirty percent of ministers will be involved in an inappropriate relationship with someone in their church. It appears to me that we obviously haven't understood the principles of the Bible if those statistics are anywhere close. We're going to look at the subject of marriage and see some of the things God says about it—how you might be able to strengthen your marriage relationship.

First of all, I want to say this: Marriage was God's idea; He designed it. Genesis 2:18 says, "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Also Genesis 1:31 says, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." You have to remember that this was a perfect creation. God came and fellowshiped with man, had a wonderful relationship with him. Each day He would come in the cool of the evening and fellowship with Adam.

Sometimes we think if we had a perfect relationship with God, we wouldn't really need anything else, but that's not true. God said in Genesis 1:31 concerning the creation He made, "And behold it was very good." The first thing that He said was "not good" was in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good that the man should be alone." So marriage was God's idea to meet the need that man had, to give him a help-meet to deal with the problem of loneliness he might experience in his life. Marriage, if we follow the instruction manual and put into it what God wants, was meant to bring happiness not misery.

Genesis 2:24 is the first time the Bible really talks a lot about marriage. It says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Marriage is leaving all other relationships to refocus your life on another individual, and God designed it that way. It's like a tri-unity relationship. I don't know if you understand what I mean, but in the marriage relationship when God called Adam and Eve together, it wasn't just Adam relating to God or Eve relating to God. It was now Adam and Eve as a unit, in oneness of purpose relating to God. The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:7, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them [our wives] according to knowledge . . . that your prayers be not hindered." Genesis 5:1-2, a really a great Scripture, says, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." Notice that Adam named his wife, Eve, but God called Adam and Eve, together as a unit, Adam. So in the marriage relationship, it's no longer God and me or God and that woman—it's me and my wife in oneness, heirs according to the grace of life who have been called to serve God in purpose, to walk in oneness and unity.

Genesis 2:24, which we just read, says a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh. The word “cleave” means: to stick or adhere to, to become one, to be one in purpose. If you’re having a problem in your marriage relationship today, let me ask you a few questions: Are the things you’re doing, the way you’re acting toward your wife, the things you’re saying to her, causing you to come closer together as one? Or are they causing a breach or separation? The commandment of Scripture for marriage is to cleave, to stick to, so are the things you’re doing building your relationship or tearing it down? We need to look at some of these things.

People think love is just an emotional feeling: “I used to love you, but I fell out of love—I don’t love you anymore.” Suppose you come from a dysfunctional family. You go before a minister or judge to be married; you commit to give your life to that individual; you really want this to work till death do you part. But because of your dysfunctional family, you’ve never seen love, never seen it expressed in your family, never seen your parents share any warm expression of love. She may have come from a family that expressed a lot of affection, and you don’t know how. Even though you want to love this person you’re committing yourself to, because you’re so dysfunctional yourself, having never seen love expressed before, you probably will fail. Chances are that within a few years you will go in for counseling and say, “We’re just not getting along. I don’t love her anymore.” Well, I’ve got good news for you today: If you’re having problems in your marriage, there’s something that can correct it.

When you buy a new refrigerator and have a problem with it, you know to go to the manual. The manual will tell you if it’s doing this, this is probably what’s wrong, or you can take it to a serviceman. There is a manual to work on your marriage, to fix it. It’s called God’s Word, and the Bible tells us in Titus 2:4 that love is something that can be taught, something that can be learned. If you came from a dysfunctional family and don’t really know how to love your wife—your marriage is falling apart—there’s good news. In 1 John 5:3 it says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” Through the commandments of Jesus Christ, who shows us how to love, how to express kindness and generosity, and how to seek the welfare of the other person in your marriage relationship, God can turn that situation around for you.

This is just an introduction to the subject of marriage. We’re going to continue another lesson on it and I just want to say, “God bless you today as you continue in your study.” We believe God wants to impart more wisdom and knowledge as you look into this subject.

MARRIAGE - PART 1

(Outline)

THE BAD NEWS

Seventy-five percent of all families need counseling.
Fifty percent of all marriages (one out of two) end in divorce.
Fifty percent of married individuals are involved in infidelity.
Thirty percent of ministers are involved in inappropriate relationships.

MARRIAGE—GOD’S IDEA

Genesis 1:31 says, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” And Genesis 2:18 says, “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Even in the garden, in a perfect relationship with God, man needed a helpmate, a companion.

Marriage was intended to be a happy relationship.

Genesis 2:24, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Marriage is intended to be an exclusive relationship where a man or woman leaves all other relationships to pursue a oneness with his/her mate—a tri-unity with God and your spouse.

Genesis 5:1, “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.” God calls Adam and Eve by one name: Adam. They are a unit. “To cleave” means “to adhere to, cling to, or stick to.”

1 Peter 3:7, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

Is what you are saying and doing to your spouse building your relationship, or tearing it down? If you came from a dysfunctional family, you may need to learn how to participate in a relationship.

THE GOOD NEWS

God gave us a marriage manual that works—The Bible. Just obey it! Titus 2:4, “That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.” Love can be taught. 1 John 5:3, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” Through Jesus, God can turn the worst situation around.

MARRIAGE
PART 1
(Teacher's Guide)

1. Ephesians 5:31 is a quotation from Genesis 2:24. According to Ephesians 5:32, what is God really talking about in this passage?

A relationship between Christ and His church (likened to marriage).

2. What is James 4:4-5 teaching?

God is jealous over us and wants us to be true to Him.

3. Why should I walk in unity and love toward my wife? (1 Peter 3:7)

So that my prayers will not be hindered.

4. According to John 15:5, what can be accomplished without Christ in our lives?

Without Christ we can do nothing.

MARRIAGE
PART 1
A MODEL OF GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE
(Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

¹ In marriage there is an exclusion of all others. The Bible says, “they two shall be one” (Ephesians 5:31). It doesn't say, “they three,” “they four,” or “they five.” It says, “they two shall be one flesh.” In the same way there is an exclusion of all others in a marriage, there is to be an exclusivity in our relationship with God. He alone is our God, and we alone are His people.

² In the physical relationship of marriage, there is a oneness and a closeness that brings you back together and keeps strengthening that covenant. There is a spiritual counterpart to that in our relationship with Christ and our exposure, oneness, and openness to Him. You see, He wants us to be His, and He wants to be ours, to the exclusion of all others. That's why if you do a word study on the word “fornication” in the Bible, and you trace it back far enough, the root word of “fornication” is “idolatry.” It's “idolatry”—not “adultery.”

Do you know what idolatry is? Colossians 3:5 says, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” I believe that God gave this definition of idolatry because our relationship to Him is just like a marriage relationship. When a person has been untrue in his marriage relationship, it causes the spouse to experience the deepest depths of pain. When someone has been unfaithful to the covenant – the exclusion that should have been there, the oneness in love and exposure that was not to be shared with anyone else, is devastated. God says that is a small illustration of what it's like when His people are unfaithful to Him. When you do a study on idolatry, you can't escape the spiritual context of how God uses it. He says, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” (James 4:4-5). What is He saying here? He's saying that He's jealous over you. He wants you, to the exclusion of all others.

¹Ephesians 5:31 is a quotation from Genesis 2:24. According to Ephesians 5:32, what is God really talking about in this passage?

²What is James 4:4-5 teaching us?

³First Peter 3:7 says, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them [your wives] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” In this union, God has called both the male and the female to be heirs together of the gracious gift of life.

Have you ever taken the attitude of, “I don’t care what my husband (or wife) does, I’m going to do this or that,” or “I’m going to follow God”? That’s fine, but God doesn’t see it that way. The way God sees it is that you’re heirs together of the gracious gift of life. If you don’t understand that principle, and you try to be independent and do your own thing, your prayers will be hindered.

⁴The counterpart to this truth is that when God has called us into union with Him, into what He even calls a marriage relationship, we become heirs together with Him of the gracious gift of life. Just as I’m not to do anything independently of my wife because of our relationship, so it is with my relationship in the Lord—I’m not to do anything independently of Him.

³Why should I walk in unity and love toward my wife? (1 Peter 3:7)

⁴According to John 15:5, what can be accomplished without Christ in my life?

WHEN GOD SAYS, "I DO" GOD'S MYSTERY IN MARRIAGE REVEALED (Additional Information)

During the time of Jesus there were several ideas and opinions about divorce just as there are today. Jewish leaders were divided on this issue. Some believed a person could divorce for any reason. Others believed divorce had to involve fornication. It was such a controversial subject that the Pharisees decided to ask Jesus a question concerning divorce, because no matter which side Jesus took, He would be on someone's wrong side.

We read in Matthew 19:3, "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The phrase, "put away" actually means "divorce." These Pharisees were asking Jesus a trick question concerning divorce. We know this because verse 3 tells us they came tempting and testing Him, asking if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every reason.

Notice how Jesus answered the question about divorce. Verse 4 says, "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female." His answer to the Pharisees was a reminder that marriage was God's idea—not man's.

Jesus got to the heart of the matter concerning divorce—
God's heart for marriage.

When He told them that in the beginning God made them male and female, He was referring them to God's original design for marriage. It was God who designed marriage and gave it purpose and meaning. Genesis 1:26-27 states, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

I believe these scriptures tell us something else about God's original design for marriage: The complete likeness of God is found in the combination of male and female together. God said, "Let us make man in our image," and then He said, "let them have dominion." Genesis 5:1-2 says, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created."

Notice what God's divine and original idea concerning this subject of oneness in marriage was. He created the male and the female to be one being together and He called their name Adam. I always assumed that God created Adam, and then later on He created Eve; so first there was Adam, and then there was Eve. What God did through the creation (when He created male and female), was He created them in His own likeness, and He called them Adam. God named them

Adam. Adam was a “them.” In God’s eyes Adam was the combination of male and female. This is speaking within the context of the original union of marriage.

Now go back to Matthew 19, verses 4-6, where Jesus is answering this question concerning divorce. “And he answered and said unto them [the Pharisees], Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain [the two] shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain [or two], but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder [or separate].” This is saying that not only was marriage God’s idea but God does the joining. Divorce is separating something God has joined not “undoing” something we’ve done.

Why Did God Create Woman?

Genesis 1:31 says, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” Then in Genesis 2, God tells us the very first thing He noticed after creation that was not good. We’re talking about a perfect paradise where no sin existed before Genesis 3. God had created all things good (Gen. 1:31), but there was one thing missing in His creation. Adam had a perfect relationship with God, he walked with Him, and apparently did not need anything. But there was one thing that was lacking in Adam’s life; it’s described in Genesis 2:18, “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Once again it’s God’s idea for man to have a helpmate not man’s).

All of the animal creation had a counterpart, but Adam was by himself. God saw what was lacking in Adam: He was alone and loneliness was a problem. He was alone even though he had a perfect relationship with God. Some people say, “If I had a perfect relationship with God, I would not have any other needs.” While this is essentially true, as a norm God has created man to need a counterpart, a helpmeet, a woman.

What is a woman’s purpose? It’s to be a help, an aid, an assistant to the man. That is her ministry. So much talk today involves trying to make men and women independent of each other. But God created the woman to “help,” or assist, the man. God said the man needed a helper. In today’s language and culture, being a “helper” is not associated with any significant ministry or position of importance. However, the “role” of helper in the Bible is a vital one. It means you can accomplish something with a helper that you cannot do alone.

An example of this helper role is found in Romans 8:26-27 where it says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” The word “helpeth” was translated from the Greek word “sunantilambanomai” meaning “to take hold of opposite together, i.e. cooperate (assist).” It’s describing a union in which the Holy Spirit is not interceding for us but through us. The word “infirmities” is translated as weakness in five other places and is used here to describe a mental and moral weakness not sickness. In this passage our weakness is not knowing how we should pray. We need the Spirit’s “help” to pray effectively.

Marriage: A Model of God's Relationship with His People

Have you noticed that nearly everything we're seeing about the marriage relationship has a spiritual counterpart? Did you know that God actually talks about three different kinds of marriage in the scriptures? He talks about marriage between a man and a woman, our marriage to Him, and our marriage to the Law.

God compares the marriage union between a man and woman to the relationship that He Himself has with us, His people. In a sense He says, "To help you understand the relationship that I'm calling you to, I'm going to give you a little scale model to show you what I'm talking about." Everything that we can say about a good marriage—one that's all God has designed it to be—is a model of what our relationship with God should be.

Oneness in Marriage

In marriage there is an exclusion of all others. The Bible says, "they two shall be one" (Ephesians 5:31). It doesn't say, "they three," "they four," or "they five." It says, "they two shall be one flesh." In the same way there is an exclusion of all others in a marriage, there is to be an exclusivity in our relationship with God. He alone is our God, and we alone are His people.

Concerning marriage, Genesis 2:25 says, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." There is to be an openness and nakedness in marriage that is to be shared between a man and his wife, and not shared outside of that marriage bond any other place.

Did you know that any time the Bible talks about nakedness in the Scripture, it talks about it in the context of shame? In one instance, while Moses was on the mountain with God, the children of Israel had Aaron make them an idol of gold, and they ate, and played, and committed adultery, and fornication, to their own shame. They showed their nakedness, and their shame was exposed (Exodus 32:25). There are scriptures in Isaiah that talk about nakedness in the context of shame (Isaiah 20:4; 47:3). Nakedness is also mentioned in the book of Revelation. John was instructed to write to the church in Laodicea and tell them, "You think you're in good shape, but you don't know that you're poor and you're wretched and you're naked" (Revelation 3:17). Revelation 16:15 speaks of being naked in the sense of humiliation and shame. There's only one place where nakedness is not spoken of in the context of shame, and that's within the relationship of marriage.

Genesis 2:25 doesn't say the man and the woman were naked and were not ashamed; it says the man and his wife were naked and unashamed. The word "ashamed" conveys the idea of guilt, condemnation, and humiliation. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." The marriage bed, according to the Greek text, is without defilement. The phrase "without defilement" means "pure." There is a nakedness, an openness, and an exposure. There is a oneness that's a oneness in body, a oneness in the emotions, a oneness of the deepest level. It's a spiritual oneness ordained by God for the marriage relationship. And it's a model of the relationship He's called us to with Him.

Notice that in 1 Corinthians 6, Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 when he's talking about a sexual union. He says in 1 Corinthians 6:16 that if you went into a harlot, you'd be one body with her. Then in that

verse he refers to Genesis 2:24: “for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.” Now notice what he says in verse 17; “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” First he presents a human, earthly illustration of a physical relationship where two people are one in body. Then he talks about a marriage union to the exclusivity of others, followed by the spiritual counterpart to that physical relationship. It’s as if God was saying, “When you come into union with Me, we are one, to the exclusion of others. We are one in love; we are one in exposure; we are one totally.” In the marriage relationship, it is a oneness in body. When we come into union with Him, we’re one in spirit.

I don’t have a complete understanding of all these things, but I do know this: When the physical union is being expressed in the marriage relationship, it’s an ongoing expression not something that only happens once. In the same way, our relationship with Christ needs to be an ongoing expression. That’s why the Bible says that if we’ve sinned, turned away, or gone a different direction, we need to come to our advocate, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. If we’ve sinned, let’s expose our hearts before him. Hebrews 4:13 says that “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Let’s expose ourselves totally to the Lord. Let’s come and intimately love Him. Do you know what happens when that occurs in your relationship with the Lord? You’ll find a strength in the relationship.

In the physical relationship of marriage, there is a oneness and a closeness that brings you back together and keeps strengthening that covenant. There is a spiritual counterpart to that in our relationship with Christ and our exposure, oneness and openness to Him. You see, He wants us to be His, and He wants to be ours, to the exclusion of all others. That’s why, if you do a word study on the word “fornication” in the Bible, and you trace it back far enough, the root word of “fornication” is “idolatry.” It’s “idolatry”—not “adultery.”

Do you know what idolatry is? Colossians 3:5 says, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” I believe that God gave the definition of idolatry because our relationship to Him is just like a marriage relationship. When a person has been untrue in his marriage relationship, it causes the spouse to experience the deepest depths of pain. When someone has been unfaithful to the covenant—the exclusion that should have been there, the oneness in love and exposure that was not to be shared with anyone else is devastated. God says that is a small illustration of what it’s like when His people are unfaithful to Him. When you do a study on idolatry, you can’t escape the spiritual context of how God uses it. He says, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” (James 4:4-5). What is He saying here? He’s saying that He’s jealous over you. He wants you, to the exclusion of all others.

First Peter 3:7 says this, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them [your wives] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” In this union, God has called both the male and the female to be heirs together of the gracious gift of life.

Have you ever taken the attitude of, “I don’t care what my husband (or wife) does, I’m going to do this or that,” or “I’m going to follow God?” That’s fine, but God doesn’t see it that way. The way

God sees it is that you're heirs together of the gracious gift of life. If you don't understand that principle, and you try to be independent and do your own thing, your prayers will be hindered.

The counterpart to this truth is that when God has called us into union with Him, into what He even calls a marriage relationship, we become heirs together with Him of the gracious gift of life. Just as I'm not to do anything independently of my wife because of our relationship, so it is with my relationship in the Lord—I'm not to do anything independently of Him.

Married to the Law

The Bible tells us in Romans 7:1-6 that at one time we had a relationship with the law. What was that relationship with the Law? Romans 7 describes it in terms of a bad marriage relationship. The Bible is referring to the spiritual counterpart of being married to the Law. It says that we are bound by the relationship of marriage until death.

What was the Law? It was my marriage at one time to a really hard taskmaster. Nothing I did in my marriage pleased my husband. The Law was such a perfectionist that no matter how hard I tried, and no matter what I tried to do, it was never good enough in my marriage. I was married to this critical person who never, ever lifted me up, admonished me, or told me I was doing something right. All he told me was the things that I did wrong. Romans 3:20 says "by the law is the knowledge of sin." I was always under a sense of guilt and condemnation when I was married to the Law.

The Bible says that there was only one way that I could be free from that marriage relationship. I had to die, or he had to die. Do you know what? He wouldn't die, so I died, and thus ended my "marriage relationship" to the Law. How did this happen? Let's look at Romans 7:1-3, "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

Paul is really talking about a spiritual truth here. I don't want you to fall under condemnation if you've ever been in the situation described in these verses. God does recognize marriage, He does recognize divorce, and He recognizes remarriage. We can make that statement based on Deuteronomy 24:1-4, under the old covenant, which says, "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

We can also say that God recognizes divorce and remarriage based on Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well. When Jesus said to her, "Go get your husband," she said, "I don't have a husband." Jesus said, "That's right. You've had five husbands, but the guy that you're with right now is not your husband. It's just a live-in relationship. He's not your husband, but I recognize every one of those previous marriages you've had. I recognize the divorces you've had. But the one that you're living with now is not your husband." She said, "I perceive that you're a prophet" (John 4:16-19). God does recognize divorce and remarriage, but when He is talking about the institution of marriage, He always takes man back to the original idea—the original design—which should be a permanent relationship, because it's a spiritual counterpart to our relationship with the Lord. Even though those other standards are recognized in God's eyes, He's saying, "I'm talking about a relationship with Me, and I'm bringing it to the highest level, because I want you to see it as a spiritual counterpart to a relationship with Me."

Now let's look at Romans 7:4. It says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law." What is he talking about? He's saying that in order to break that old marriage relationship to the law there has to be a death. "By the [crucified] body of Christ." What does that mean? It means that I once had a union to a husband—the Law—but I could never please that man. All he ever did was point out my wrongdoings. That was the function of the Law. Romans 3:20 says that by the Law came the knowledge of sin. I really wanted to be free from that husband, but the only way I could be free was for one of us to die. Then I died, and I was free. How did I die? Romans 7:4 says that I became dead to the law through the crucified body of Christ. You see, when Jesus went to the cross, and I went to the cross with Him, He didn't just die for sins, but He also died to break my relationship with the Law.

What was a relationship with the Law like? Along with all the criticism, it never gave me a helping hand either. It's like the husband who tells his wife, "I want you to do this, and I want you to do that," while he sits down and watches television. Not only does he put demands on her, but he doesn't even lift a finger to help with any of those demands.

What else happened in the marriage relationship with the Law? The result of being under the Law was falling under a curse. Galatians 3:10 says, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." I was wretched and miserable under the Law. Not only did I have a standard that was spiritual, but Romans 7:12 says that the Law was spiritual, holy, just, and good; but the Law gave me no power to perform those things. I had to struggle in the resources of my own flesh and my own abilities to do those spiritual things that were demanded of me. I had no helping hand.

So what happened next? Verse 4 of Romans 7 says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The demands really haven't changed, but I am remarried to a wonderful husband now. And every demand that has ever been placed upon me, He Himself is the ability to fulfill that demand. Everything that was ever required of me, or will ever be required of me by God, my new husband, the One who was raised from the dead so I could be married to Him, is my ability to please my heavenly Father.

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