

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
Study Sunday 10:00 AM
Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“Do all things
without grumbling
or disputing,”

— *Philippians 2:14*



Servants during May/June:

Songleader: Larry (5/28), Peter (6/4), Stanley (11), Larry (18), Peter (25)

Reading: Stanley (May); Mike M (June)

Announcements: Marty (May); Stanley (June)

Table: Larry, Kris, Peter, Mike M (May); Marty, Larry, Peter, Stanley (June)

Wednesday Lesson: Kris (5/31), Larry (6/7), Stanley (14), Kris (21), Larry (28)

Lawn Mowing (week starting): Stanley (5/28), Larry (6/4), Kris (11), Marty (18), Stanley (25)

Hays Mill church of Christ

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Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Marriage Counseling

by M. W. Bassford

I’m a simple man. I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God and that it is sufficient to equip us for every good work. My favorite hymn is “Give Me the Bible”. Consequently, whenever I encounter a problem that afflicts the soul, I presume that the solution lies in learning and following the whole counsel of God.

This also leads me to raise an eyebrow when I see brethren coming up with extra- Biblical cures for spiritual ailments. The phenomenon occurs in several different areas, but it is perhaps

most prominent in brotherhood teaching on marriage and family. Though marriage counseling based on secular wisdom varies greatly in quality, all of it pales in comparison to the word of God. If Christians want to treat such counseling as a side-dish, fine, but they must not mistake it for the main course.

That main course consists of all Biblical teaching about human relationships. Too often, we behave as though the only texts about marriage are the ones that mention marriage: Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7,

and the like. Indeed, this apparent paucity of Scriptural material becomes justification for the use of material from elsewhere. We can't just go on preaching the same three marriage sermons, can we?

For those with eyes to see, the list of relevant passages is far longer. In fact, thousands of verses of Biblical ethics apply with greatest force in our marriages. If we can't seem to manage treating our spouses in a Christ-like way, it calls into question the sincerity of our godliness in every other area of our lives. James would ask us if the same spring can send forth both sweet and bitter water. A bad marriage is a fundamental and potentially soul-destroying problem for at least one spouse.

Sadly, Christians in difficult marriages commonly use this truth as an opportunity to pin all the blame on the other spouse. I suspect that most of the time, brethren go to marriage counseling because they want to get their partner fixed. Almost always, they try DIY counseling and berate their husband or wife for perceived failings.

This is exactly backwards and dangerous besides. Christ does not call us to control others. He calls us to submit to His control.

He also warns us in Luke 6:37,38

that according to our standard of measure, it will be measured to us. We are on notice, then, that if we harshly judge our spouses, God will treat us the same way, only more so. Thus, unless we are James' hypothetical perfect person, able to bridle both our tongues and our bodies, our desire to improve our marriages amounts to the familiar call to improve ourselves.

At this, thousands of voices cry out in outrage, "But what about them???" What about them, indeed? Conveniently, the Bible gives us instructions for how to handle a spouse who is not merely engaged in questionable behavior but is clearly and actively sinning. They appear in 1 Peter 3:1.

The way for a wife to win over a disobedient husband is by submission and godly living, all without a critical word being spoken. It is the way, not an occasional break from a campaign of nagging. Neither does this text exist to provide moral cover for a "well, I tried that" refusal to obey in the present and future. The passage addresses women specifically, but it is excellent advice for men as well.

Along similar lines, consider the relevance of Philippians 2:14 to marriage. It is one of the shocking verses in the Bible. Surely when


Paul says, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing," he is using hyperbole! He doesn't actually mean for us to do that!

It is not hyperbole. It is a commandment, and its edge is sharp. If you want a better marriage, you know what you can do? Don't dispute with your spouse. If they invite you to a fight, decline the invitation. Don't grumble to your spouse. Don't grumble about your spouse. If you obey, your marriage will be better, if only because it will contain less shouting.

There are many, many other passages with equally sharp edges that concern our marriages too. They are not easy to follow. In fact, they are quite difficult, which is why many Christians do not honor them. It is, alas, much easier to complain that our husband or wife


is toxic, narcissistic, and gaslighting us.

Additionally, even if we do what is right, our godliness is not guaranteed to win over our spouse. Some Christians are married to people with hearts like rock. They will stubbornly pursue evil all the days of their lives to their ultimate destruction. If so, nothing we can do will change them.

We do not imitate Christ because it is effective in influencing others, though it is more effective than anything else. We imitate Him because it is right. Even if godliness does not lead to a better marriage, it invariably leads to glorifying God. When we are tested in our marriages, may He help us to steadfastly seek Him regardless! 

Remember in Prayer

Please continue to remember **Betty; Buddy; Carolyn; Dot; Joyce;**

Mike Beckman; and John and Sylvia Pollard's newborn, Paige. 

Theophilus

