

# The Old Paths

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## “The Beauty And Unity Of Marriage”

Jarrold Jacobs

**I**n Wednesday night’s Bible class (10/29), we studied from Genesis 15-16, and learned some lessons from the life of Abraham and Sarah. At this point in time, the promised child still has not been born, and this concerns Abraham. He asks God if he was to take Eliezer as his heir since he was childless. God’s answer: *“This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir”* (Gen. 15:4). The NKJ and NAS state, “...from your own body shall be your heir.” In other words, God is promising that the promised son would be his own. Abraham just needed to be patient, because God would fulfill His promise in His time. Of course, in Genesis 22, Abraham and Sarah had their promised son, Isaac.

This chapter teaches many things, but one thing I think we miss sometimes (I know I have missed it when I have read this chapter before) is the fact that a very basic principle concerning marriage is revealed in Genesis 15. As I have looked into this passage, I believe Genesis 15:4 takes its place alongside Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-33, and other similar passages as teaching vital truths concerning the relationship of marriage.

How can I say this? Read Genesis 15:4 again. Notice, that the Lord said that Abraham would have a son “from your own body.” What? How could it be that Abraham would have a child from

his body? A simple knowledge of biology tells us that human males don’t have babies! So, how could the child be from “his” body? Furthermore, in Genesis 16-17, we see that Ishmael was born to Abraham and Hagar. Yet, he was not the child God had in mind when He had promised Abraham a son, and said it would be from his own body! (Gen. 17:18-21, 21:12).

So, who was God talking about in Genesis 15:4? He was talking about the child conceived by Abraham and his wife, Sarah (Gen. 21:1-2)!! When God looked at Abraham and Sarah, he saw two married people who were one (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6). God promised that these two, this husband and wife, would have a child named Isaac. In so promising, God told Abraham the child would come from “your own body.” Yes, Sarah would carry the child and deliver the child, but the baby would come from “your own body.”

Does this not speak volumes concerning the relationship of a husband and a wife? Put another way, Paul said, *“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church”* (Eph. 5:28-29). Both Adam and Jesus said a husband and wife are “one flesh.” Does it not naturally follow then, that God could look at a husband (Abraham) and say that the child would come from “your body”?

In truth, we use similar language today, though we may not always recognize it. How many times have

we heard a married couple tell folks, “We’re having a baby.”? Excuse me, “We”?? I thought the wife was having this baby!! Yes, biologically, she is, but both husband and wife are in this together because they have been united in marriage by God. Therefore, a married couple is speaking the truth when they say, “WE are having a baby!” That is a unity and a closeness that is not seen nor experienced in any other relationship on earth.

When a man and woman marry, it is something special. It is a life-time commitment. It is a joining of two people, and now, two have become one. They have become “one” physically (Heb. 13:4), but also have become “one” in purpose/goals, “one” concerning their love for each other; they are to be best friends, each others’ support, confidant, strength, and refuge. They are to be “one” because they need to work together in making a life, raising children, and in serving God. One can be a support and help to the other.

In light of Genesis 15:4, may we better appreciate the beauty and the unity seen in marriage. At the same time, shouldn’t the unfaithfulness, the infidelity, of a spouse turn our stomachs? In the marriage relationship, we see beauty, purity, sincerity, and love (Phil. 4:8). In adultery/unfaithfulness, we see the wicked, the vile, the impure, the putrid, sadness, sorrow, weakness, and sin. May we pray that the Lord keep us from such temptations, and may we make decisions which will keep us from such temptations with those of the opposite sex (Rom. 13:14).

### Conclusion

Oh, that man would go back to God’s ideal and respect the home He instituted so long ago! How much better we all could be if we would just listen and obey God’s plan: for our salvation; for our day-to-day lives; for marriage; for raising children; and for it all! (Col. 3:17)

## Preaching - What Is It?

J.W. McGarvey

(From: *The Apostolic Times*, Lexington, KY, December 3, 1874)

**A** great many preachers have an entire misconception of their calling, and many more have no very definite conception as to what preaching really is. A writer in the *New York Observer* recently expressed his conception of it in the following words:

*"But, there is no sphere of life, no facts, no principles, no rights of men, which are not proper subjects of pulpit notice, and the scope of the preacher is absolutely unbounded, his sphere is as wide as earth and heaven. The kingdoms of this world, and the Kingdom of the Redeemer are his to treat and to expound; the realm of the mind, and the achievements of history and science, are all his."*

This is an extreme view, but it is the one toward which the current of public opinion has been rapidly drifting for the last ten or fifteen years. It is well to pause and consider whether this tendency is in the right direction.

Paul's conception of preaching was quite different. When preaching to sinners he determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified (I Cor. 2:2). Notice, he determined not merely to preach nothing else, but to know nothing else; that is, so far as men discovered what he knew by hearing his discourses he would appear to know nothing else. What he knew of science, of profane history, of everything not directly tributary to his one theme, this he allowed no place in his sermons. There could scarcely be a greater contrast than exists between his

conception of preaching, and that expressed in the extract given above.

To young, or comparatively inexperienced disciples, Paul gave milk—the pure milk of the word. He confined himself to imparting elementary instruction in the duties and privileges of the Christian life. To the "perfect," the disciples possessed of matured knowledge and experience, he spoke "wisdom," yet not the wisdom of this world, not the wisdom of human philosophy or science. In no part of his ministration, whether preaching to sinners or teaching the saints, did he have use for science or philosophy. "But," says he, "we speak the wisdom of God" - the knowledge which God alone had imparted (I Cor. 2:6-7).

According to the divine ideal, then, preaching is limited in its subject matter to the subjects on which God has seen fit to speak. It is also limited in regard to the manner in which these subjects are to be treated.

Many persons imagine that a sermon may be complete if it merely elucidates its subject; if it merely imparts instruction. But there is not a sermon nor an epistle in the New Testament which contents itself with this. Instruction is never aimed at as an end, but is always a change for the better in the life of the hearer. It is the reformation of the sinner and the more complete sanctification of the righteous. A sermon which has not this aim, is misdirected - it is a blank cartridge fired off into the air.

What is a sermon, then, but a discourse whose subject matter is derived from the word of God, and whose purpose is to effect some specific change for the better in those who hear it.

If you would decide whether your so-called sermons are real sermons, or mere lectures, or mere harangues, apply to them the test here indicated. Ask yourself, what specific change of life for the better do I intend to effect in my hearers by this discourse? If none, then reconstruct the discourse with a view to some such effect; and if you cannot thus reconstruct it, throw it away. Never go into the pulpit with a speech in your hand which is not a real sermon.

### Reminder:

This Friday, our gospel meeting will begin with **John Gentry** from Morgantown, KY!

#### Sermons He Will Preach:

- ◆ Our War Against Sin (Fri. PM)
- ◆ The Social Gospel (Sat. PM)
- ◆ Not Forgetting Our Former Cleansing; Gambling (Sunday)

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#### MEETING TIMES:

**Sunday Morning Bible Study** \_\_\_\_\_ **9:30 am**  
**Sunday Morning Worship** \_\_\_\_\_ **10:20 am**  
**Sunday Evening Worship** \_\_\_\_\_ **6:00 pm**  
**Wednesday Evening Bible Study** \_\_\_\_\_ **7:00 pm**

Don't forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-9246 (WBIO)** with your Bible question.

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