

Love and Marriage – Jerry Arnold, November 19, 2005

Father in Heaven, we want You to educate us as to how we should think, how we should feel, how we should act. We want You to tell us who we are, who You are, how we relate to one another about salvation, about life. All these things, Lord, without You this whole experience of being in church would be nothing, and we are pleading that it will be everything because You are here. We have expectations, we are hope filled, Lord. We are asking that You would be strong in our midst, that you would teach us, that your very presence would be known and experienced while we open Your word and, Lord, that our hearts would be changed for eternity. That is our prayer in Jesus name, amen.

Diana Abad was not in a Christmas mood that December 1999. She loved Christmas. It was her favorite time of the year. She liked to go down to Rockefeller Center in New York City and see the beautiful Christmas tree there and the decorations. But this year she was not in the mood. She had been diagnosed with Leukemia. This 33 year old lady from Staton Island, NY was told she had 9 months to live. So instead of a Christmas list that year, she was writing her will.

The doctor told her there was a slim chance that they could find a matching donor of bone marrow, a slim chance that it may help her. They did all the investigation through family and relatives and there was no match. They contacted the national marrow donor program registry. Four million people had volunteered to donate their bone marrow. Of those 4 million people there was one match that was found in February 2000. In March of that year the donor agreed. So the doctor on the day of the procedure, he forewarned Diana that in her weakened condition, if they do this and it doesn't take, there was a good chance she would die right there. She would not live. So she brought her priest in, he gave her the last rights, and the procedure began. Two hours later it was clear that she was feeling better and it was understood that it was working. She ultimately was healed.

She wanted to thank the donor. The donors in this registry are anonymous. But she wanted to say thank you to the person. She wrote a letter, sent it to the national marrow donor program registry, and they forwarded it to the donor. One of the sentences said this; "I hope that one day we can meet and I can thank you in person." Several months past and the donor responded and didn't give the ir name. Undaunted, Diana pursued contacting this individual. Somehow over time, phone numbers were exchanged and phone calls began. On December 23, 2000 Diana was paid a surprise visit by 34 year old David Mason from Massachusetts. He arrived unannounced at her door. He was the donor. When she opened the door she said, for her, it was love at first sight. He said it took two days. A couple of years later during the Christmas season he proposed and she said, "Yes." The article in the Reader's Digest is simply entitled "Perfect Match." What a beautiful true story. Perfect match.

There are beautiful love songs, love poems, stories that have been written, movies that have been made about love. Have you ever noticed that most of them are about the two individuals becoming acquainted and the movie ends with the beautiful scene of them getting married? That's it. It ends with the wedding. How prophetic. Unfortunately,

fifty percent of all first time marriages do end in divorce. Sixty percent of second time marriages end in divorce.

Today we are beginning a new series called Love and Marriage. We are going to talk about the issues regarding marriage and love—how to find someone, and how to know if that's the person and how to keep them if it is. I suppose if you asked enough people you could get married fairly easily. But staying married is a different matter.

So today as we begin this study, I'd like for you to look at the Bible with me in 1 John chapter 4. We are going to read verses 7-11. There will be bits and pieces of this passage that you are very familiar with. "Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

When you look at verse 7 it says, "Let us love one another for love is from God." In the NIV it says, "Love comes from God." In the Amplified version, "love springs from God." The first thing we need to learn about love is that God is the source of love. Without God in our lives we will feel, and we will have strong feelings, but we will not have love. God is the source of love. If we are going to have love, a scriptural based love, it will come from God.

Here in verse 7 it says "Beloved let us love one another for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." It is not saying that if you love you know God. It is saying if you know God, you love. There's a difference. Hold your hand here and turn to John's gospel chapter 17. The same author of this letter wrote in John 17:3, he's quoting Jesus. It simply says this, "This is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Jesus is talking to His father and He says, "Eternal life is knowing You, Lord."

Now go back to 1 John 4:7. "Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." We are being taught here that the only way that we can have this love is we must know God. And that is in the context of the faith saving relationship with Jesus Christ. We have to have Jesus as our Savior in order to have God's love in our lives. What holds a relationship together is spirituality. You take a man and a woman. This man loves God because Jesus is his Savior. This woman loves God because Jesus is her Savior. That couple can love one another. But if you take two people and neither of them know God, they can have feelings for each other, they can have strong feelings for each other.

They can be like the high school boy. He saw this girl and it was over the top for him. In fact over the next couple days every time he saw her he broke out in a sweat until his shirt was ringing wet and his palms were kind of clammy. It seemed like he had a fever.

Even a day or two later when he saw her he would even vomit. His mother took him to the doctor, and they decided it wasn't love. He had the flu. But he couldn't tell the difference. You can have feelings, strong feelings. But you can't have the love from heaven unless you have the God of heaven in your heart.

I've never been to a wedding where it was said publicly, well if it doesn't work out, so what. Till death do us part—my love only unto you. They believe it. But I'm telling you right now, no relationship on planet earth can be sustained over a long period of time, especially a relationship of marriage, unless it's built on the platform of spirituality and that is two people know God. As they know him then we read verse 8, "He who does not love, does not know God for God is love." The people who are not loving don't know God. The people who do love, do know God.

Notice this love. It says this, "The love of God was manifest toward us in that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world." It does not say that God's love was manifested toward us because He felt so warm and fuzzy and cuddly towards us, thought we were so cute He just wanted to be with us. No, it is a principle based love. He demonstrates His love by doing something. That is heaven born love. Heaven born love is principle based. You do for another person. And Jesus is sent before we even cared about Him. In verse 10 it says, "This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation of our sins." Heaven born love is an initiator in what is right. It is not the attitude of the crossed arms and the tapping foot saying "I was nice the last time, it's your turn." It is an initiator.

This type of love in the heart of two individuals will draw them together. This is the type of love that seeks to do for the other. It is principle based so that in the morning the competition in the house is to see who can outdo the other in making the other one happy. They are in a race to be the first one to show love. That household will be a place of happiness. That's how God will dwell in that house.

Most of our homes aren't that way. God wants to fix them. The way that he fixes them is one heart at a time. Don't pray for her to be fixed. Don't pray for him to be fixed. Pray for you to be fixed. And then you begin to love the way you are suppose to love and see what happens. You must understand this is so basic and powerful that when two people get married the average couple marries for one reason. They like how they feel around the other person. They like what that person does for them. I'm telling you, those feelings can change. Those feelings in the stresses of life will change.

I've jokingly told people what it's like to be a pastor is this: You show up in a church and you come down there with your beautiful wife and children and everybody says "How handsome is the pastor and look at his lovely wife and his beautiful children." When love leaves, when those feelings change, you'll hear comments like this. "Even his dog is ugly."

Feelings change. In relationships that are built on feelings, they have no solid ground. They are quicksand. They are destined for failure. When you understand this, if any of

you come to me and say, "Pastor, I'm getting a divorce." If I ask you why and you say, "I no longer love them," you know what I'm going to say? "When did you stop serving God?" That's what it means. This, brothers and sisters, is a salvation issue.

You see, in the Garden of Eden two things were developed there—the home and the Sabbath. We talk a lot about the Sabbath. But it's the home that is under attack. Why are our churches in such a weakened state? It's the home—people living as inmates rather than as lovers, people not doing for the other but resentful because nothing is being done for them. If any of us say we no longer love another person, if you have a Biblical world view you are saying, "I refuse to do anything for them anymore." This is a salvation problem.

I want to show you the supernatural nature of this type of love. Look at Galatians 5:22. It says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love." What is the next thing? Joy. It would be interesting across America to question Christian homes and see how many homes have joy. Probably we would be saddened by the report. Why? Because it is the fruit of the presence of God living in your life. You can't create it as you cannot create love. And you can't create peace. It's a gift from God. It's supernatural. This love that we're talking about is described in I Corinthians 13. It's a familiar chapter to you. Let's look at it in the context of today's presentation .

If Corinthians 13. Paul is writing this. "Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angel but have not love I have become as a sounding brass or a clanging symbol. I might have speech that angels wish they could give but if it's not born in the lips of love it's just a bunch of noise," he goes on to say, "And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing." Now listen to me dear brothers and sisters in this church that we all love. That is a message to God's last day people if there ever was a message to God's last day people. The gift of prophecy, understanding mysteries having all knowledge, we got the truth, we've got it all figured out. Here we are, here we sit, but without love we are going to hell.

We say, "Well, you know we keep that 4th commandment." We even fight among ourselves how to keep it. But we neglect a lot of other things. When I was a student at Andrews University I overheard a Baptist minister say that SDA are interested in that 4th commandment but they don't keep the 7th. Do you know what that is? Don't commit adultery.

I will tell you in the context of God in the heart and God in the home, there are 5 commandments we struggle with. Honor your father and your mother. Do you realize when you enter into a relationship of marriage you take on the parents of that individual? The way you treat your wife, the way you treat your husband is a direct reflection on whether you're keeping that commandment to honor your parents or not. And if you say "Praise God they are dead," trust me, there is a Father in heaven who is not dead. That is His daughter or His son and the way you treat them is a direct reflection on your attitude towards Him. It's a salvation issue.

Thou shalt not kill. The tongue is a lethal, lethal weapon. The tongue performs surgery without anesthesia. It lacerates and rips and tears. Our homes are being wrecked by a spirit of hatred and vengeance and lashing out. Thou shalt not commit adultery—purity of heart, staying true to one person. Don't think for a minute that isn't a problem.

I'm not going to tell you how many, but I'm going to say this, too many people have come to me and wife because of the problem of pornography in their home and what it is doing to their marriage. One of the most selfish and destructive things that has ever happened to humanity is the male populous being drawn to and addicted to pornography on the internet. It is absolutely ruining homes and ladies if you have any doubt about it, let me clear it up for you. It is adultery. And fellows don't think it isn't. It is an affront to God and an affront to your wife. If you are single it is an affront to the person you may marry some day. In fact, if you do a study you discover why men are not marrying now is, why should they? They can please themselves with women who are always interested in them. Why bother with a girl who can't measure up to the airbrushed look.

The eighth commandment says "Thou shalt not steal" We steal from each other all the time—giving each other rightful place and honor. God his glory, His will. We are thieves.

The ninth commandment says that you are not to bear false witness. There's not one couple in marriage that does not struggle in that area. Because if the issue is over here, they like to make it a little bigger, add a little more. They bear false witness one to one another. It's tearing and breaking the homes up. Why? Because it's an ungodly thing to do.

Thou shalt not covet. Simply being unthankful. Are you thankful for your spouse? Are you a thankful person? Let me tell you, if you're single, the purpose in your life should be to walk so closely with God that when He brings another person into your life who is walking closely with God, you can walk together with God. But don't ask God for a wonderful person if you're not seeking to be a wonderful person. You'll get what you are. It's true. I married up but I'm rare.

Ten Commandments: Think you have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries and all that stuff, but you don't have love? You are lost and you are going to remain lost until you get on your knees and ask Jesus in your heart and start treating people the way God says to treat them, especially the one he has gifted you in marriage. Love suffers long. That's an old English expression for what patience is. It means you suffer. I have no illustration.

Love is kind. You want to know fellows, ladies, when you are married, you're in conversation, you know what the rule of thumb is? Being kind and courteous? Simply ask yourself this. "Would I say this, this way, if we were dating?" If the answer is no then don't say it that way. You should be on a forever date. The courtship should never end. Those little kind affections should continue and being polite and courteous.

It's amazing. You see guys dating a girl and they just run to that door to open it for her. She's got a little snuffle. They just run "Oh, do you think we need to go to the hospital?" A few years into marriage they pull up somewhere and she sits there in the car. She says, "What's wrong with you, your arms broke?" She's got a bad cough. He says, "Knock it off. You're honking like a seal." You wouldn't treat her that way if you were dating. Let that be a rule of thumb. Kind.

"Love does not envy, (verse 4,) doesn't parade itself, does not puff itself up, is not arrogant, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked." Some of your Bibles have "is not easily provoked." That's a mistranslation. True translation is "is not provoked." "Thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. Bears all things..." Bearing things, by the grace of God, yes bearing things, "...Believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. That kind of love never fails."

I tell you brothers and sisters, you take a man who loves Jesus Christ and is seeking to serve Him and take a woman who loves Jesus Christ and is seeking to serve Him, put those two together and if together they seek to serve God, those two hearts will be knit together in love. That will be a home. That will be a little bit of heaven right on earth. That is the single greatest most powerful witness to the gospel that there is on this planet. That's why the home is under attack. Because if two people living together in the stresses of life can still be kindly affectioned one to another and actually grow in their appreciation of one another, that is supernatural.

What is not supernatural is just letting my feelings take me where they will. If God is the source of love and He is, then if I'm sitting at the office desk and my wife is over here but she, whoever she is, is over here and man I can't she or her off my mind, maybe I'm thinking I'm really in love with this one. No, you are not. God gives love. He's not going to give you love to an impure situation. He's going to give you love for the one you are married to. That's what you need to work on. There is no such thing as love outside of God. There are strong, strong emotions. That is not love.

Love that works in marriage is principle based. It does for the other. It gets married for the purpose of seeking the happiness of the other person and in that context discovers happiness itself. What about feelings. Do not marry anyone who doesn't knock you off your feet. Don't get into this thing like a business. God has given us emotions. Let her be beautiful to you, let him be handsome to you. There's got to be some of that. But you balance it with the scriptural teachings. All this puppy love is not bad. But if you don't balance puppy love with the principles of scripture, you may live a dog's life.

I want to show you God's concept of marriage and relationships. If we liken the principle of love, in a meal if we liken it to the entrée, the potatoes, the gravy, all the vegetables and the drink, feelings are going to be dessert. God works this way. I don't know how he does it, but it happens every time. If you put your actions in the proper line he will bring your feelings. I've seen people who said they have no feelings any more for another person and they've been told, "Well, you act right," and God has brought their feelings right around.

Just let me show you the zing and the excitement God wants you to have. Song of Solomon chapter 1. While you are turning there, I want to challenge every married couple here this week go out and get an easy English Bible. Find the easiest English reading Bible you can, nothing with a thee and thou, then at the right place and the right time when you are going to be alone undisturbed I want you to read this book together, the Song of Solomon, and see if it reflects how you coo and goo at each other. This is what God wants you to have.

Chapter 1:2 (The woman is talking) Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth for your love is better than wine.

Verse 9& 10 (Man) "I have compared you my love to my filly among Pharaohs chariots. your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, you neck with chains of gold. Verse 15 "Behold, you are fair my love, behold you are fair. You have dove's eyes.

Verse 16 (Woman) "Behold, you are handsome, my beloved, yes, pleasant. Chapter 2 verse 5 "Sustain me with cakes of raisins. Refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. 2:8-14 "The voice of my beloved, behold he comes, leaping upon the mountains skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag Behold he stands behind our wall. He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice. My beloved spoke and said to me. 'Rise up my love, my fair one and come away, for lo the winter is past the rain is over and gone the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land, the fig tree puts forth her green figs and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away, oh my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff. Let me see your countenance. Let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet and your countenance is lovely'"—these people are in love!

4:1(Man) Now fellows, if you are single you're going to have to update these expressions a little bit. They're not going to work in our culture, but they are kind of interesting. "Behold, you are fair my love, behold you are fair. You have dove's eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Mt. Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one which bears twins (I thought my crooked tooth were bad) and none is barren among them." V 3 "Your lips are like a strand of scarlet and your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate. (This is one that is very curious.) Your neck is like the tower of David built for an armory on which hang a thousand shields, all shields of mighty men." I tell you that's quite a woman. I'm not going to read verse 5. Verse 7 "You are all fair, my love. There is no spot in you." Verse 9 "You have ravished my heart my sister, my spouse. You have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace. My, how fair is your love my sister, my spouse. How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices. Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb. Honey and milk are under your tongue and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon." I know you all talk this way don't you?

5:8 (Woman) “I charge you oh daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved that you tell him I am lovesick.” She speaks again in 5:10 She describes him. “My beloved is wide and ruddy, chief among ten thousands. His head is like the finest gold, his locks are wavy and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves by the rivers of water, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are like a bed of spices, like banks of scented herbs. His lips are lilies dripping liquid myrrh. His hands are like rods of gold set with beryl. His body is carved ivory and laid with sapphires. His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold. His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet. Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.”

Chapter 6:4-5 (Man) “O my love, you are as beautiful as Terza, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners. Turn your eyes away from me for they have overcome me. Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead.” Chapter 7:1 Notice how much he notices. “How beautiful are your feet in sandals oh prince’s daughter. (Have you thanked your wife and said how pretty her feet were lately?) The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman. Your navel is a rounded goblet which lacks no blended beverage. Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies.” I’m reluctant to tell that to Karen. I’m sure it’s a good thing but I don’t think she would understand. I don’t either. Verse 4 “Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes like the pools of Heshbon by the gate. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus. Your head crowns you like Mt. Carmel and the hair of your head is like purple. The king is held captive by its tresses. How fair and how pleasant you are, oh love, with your delights.

Wow, dessert. What’s your favorite part of the meal, by the way? Me too. I like it so much I’d just as soon eat it first. God is the source of love. If we want love, we must go to him first individually then find another individual who is seeking God. Then Together seek him.. We will have love in our home. Love is principal based. Love is a miracle. It is supernatural. Love is not without feelings. It has powerful feelings. But those feelings come in line with service to another person. And God gives us feelings for the right person—the one we were married to or the one to whom we are suppose to marry.

My dad got out of the army and began college at Grand Rapids Business school in Grand Rapids, Michigan. One of the courses he was taking was typing. They call it keyboarding now but they had typewriters back then. When I was in high school we didn’t have electric typewriters yet. That was too high class for us. We had these big things you had to pound. My dad was in the typing class. He was only there a day or two and he had a bout with malaria. When he got that malaria he had to be away from school for two weeks. In the meanwhile a young lady, Rosemary Chance was her name, came to the school. She needed to use a typewriter. There was only one available. That was my dad’s and he was gone. So they put her at my dad’s desk with my dad’s typewriter.

As he says it, when he came back to school he saw the most beautiful girl in the world sitting at his desk. My dad didn’t worry much about typing after that. He began to court

Rosemary, married her, she's my mom. They lived together faithfully until death did them part. They had a good marriage. They had ups and downs. They had stresses in life. They had 5 kids. I was one of them. Lots of stress. They held on to each other. They held on. They had a good marriage. My mom became a Christian about the last 10 or 12 years of their marriage and it helped considerably. My dad became a Christian the last 5 years of their marriage before he passed away. What was a good marriage became an outstanding marriage. They almost embarrassed us by their cooing and gooing at each other. They were in love.

It is God's plan that you would find someone that you would live a lifetime with. And 35, 45, 55 years later you would be together with that person and that you would love them more than you ever did at any point. They would not only be your best friend, they would be your lover. They would be your companion. And your appreciation of them will have only deepened and grown more and more until you sound like a foolish 75 or 80 year old reciting the Song of Solomon to your wife or to your husband. That's God's plan. But it takes Jesus being in your heart and finding somebody with Jesus in their heart.

Today if you would like to have Jesus in your heart I'm going to ask you to stand, and today as well while you're standing if there is anyone here who wants to be baptized or be rebaptized I'm opening the doors of the church, just come on down and I'll meet you right here.

Father in Heaven, today we asking for Jesus to be our Savior. Please come into our hearts, Lord. We want to know you, we want to love you and through you we want to love others. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.