

## Sermon: The Road to Marital Happiness

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Greetings dear members and guests, how are you? Nice to see you! The azaleas that painted the hillsides in magenta earlier this month are dropping their petals and the whole world is covered with waving, fresh greenery. We naturally feel our souls renewed.

Today is the 4th Sunday of May, the month of the family. Children's Day, Mother's Day, and Teacher's Day have come and gone. Yesterday, May 21st, is also the day of 2.1, that is, "Couple's Day," honoring two becoming one.

So today's sermon is titled "The Road to Marital Happiness."

Today, I'd like to talk about marital happiness, which is the most important axis of family happiness. In fact, the internet is so well developed these days that we live in the era of information flood, so maybe you folks have more information or knowledge than your pastor. Therefore sometimes I have to be careful in my preaching. There are many times when I ponder, "What shall I do when I can't feel any emotion and no grace at all, even though I know all this content?" Therefore, as a pastor, I have no choice but to prepare for the sermon by thinking more deeply, meditating more deeply, and praying more deeply.

First let me share an anecdote with you. This case might be titled: "How married couples fight."

The nagging of the wife, who was perennially depressed by her husband coming home late every night, culminated in a marital quarrel. The wife, very angry at her husband for not acknowledging his neglect, shouted at him to get out of the house immediately. Then her hubby kicked the front door open to stalk off, but then turned back and added, "I was about to head out the door, but suddenly I decided first I'll take along my one most valuable thing." Still upset, the wife shouted again, "Just take it and get out!" Then the husband grabbed his wife's hand and said, "The most precious thing to me is you. So you're coming along with me!"

Well, perhaps we can laugh at that one.

That's how it is. Husband and wife are each other's most precious "belongings." In fact they are the most indispensable treasure in the world. So even if you do walk out, at least you have to come back. However, the problem is that when you get angry, you forget all about it and your emotions burst out first. Most couples grumble, "No matter how hard I try, nothing works with him (or her)." Admitting that no matter how hard you try, it doesn't work - one cannot help but think that the approach might be wrong. It's because you didn't identify the source of the problem, couldn't come up with a workable solution and dealt with it the wrong way. As the quote goes, "There is one disease but a hundred cures," the types of marital quarrels are similar, but the solutions are different. This is because the countermeasures to take are inevitably going to be different depending on each's character, habits, and personality type.

That is why we need an expert on marital problems, and we need specialized knowledge and skills in psychology, counseling, and communication techniques. Experience and expertise are essential in dealing with marital quarrels. Some knack and skills are required for handling marital disputes. Spirit and skills are necessary.

At this point I'd like to introduce another interesting anecdote. It's the story of a couple known for their exemplary faith.

"A farmer, with his wife's consent, took his horse to the market to trade it for a better one. On the way he was charmed by a fat cow and exchanged his horse for it. Then along the way, he traded the cow for a sheep, and a little further he traded the sheep for a goose, then the goose for a rooster with a red crest, and finally he traded the rooster for a sack of rotten apples. Two nobles, who happened to meet him at the inn at the end of the day, heard the farmer's story and said, 'When you get back home, your wife will surely be angry and won't let you in the door.' But the farmer countered, 'No, she'll say it was a very good bargain!' The well-off fellow then offered to give him all his gold coins, if that turned out to be the case. So they made a deal. After returning home the next day, the farmer's wife, hearing the story of how their horse was turned into rotten apples, wasn't at all upset and said, 'Actually, I needed rotten apples to make vinegar, so it worked out just fine.' She was perfectly happy. So in the end the farmer won the bet and became handsomely rich."

Of course I'm not sure this really happened, but I think the story has a lot of helpful implications for us. Dear brothers and sisters, members!

It goes without saying that happiness of a loving husband and wife is when they become a good couple. Family members! So the question is how can we become a good couple? So let's say you have plenty of money, your house is the envy of the neighbors, and you dine on sumptuous food - does that mean everyone gets along happily ever after?

Let's take a look at Proverbs 15:17: "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

Is there any family here where some members felt hatred toward one another this morning, or they had a recent quarrel between husband and wife or between parent and child over some trivial matter? The fact is, marital problems and family disputes are not just problems of our day. The story started with Adam and Eve, our first ancestors in the Garden of Eden at the beginning of human history, so it's a very difficult problem that cannot be easily remedied. It's as if a hundred pills didn't work, no matter what solutions were recommended by numerous experts, including even the teachings of the saints throughout history. Family problems are so serious and touchy that even God Himself is hard put to deal with them.

We might conclude it's practically impossible to solve unless people fundamentally change. That's why each denomination is developing various family home healing programs, and experts are turning out lectures and textbooks. However, no matter how effective the prescription is, if you do not have the will to heal yourself and don't try to follow directions, no solution's going to work. So from here on in, I will give some pointers on the road to marital happiness. Since I cannot tell you everything in the short time we have, I will prepare parts 2 and 3 if we have a chance in the weeks to come.

I have searched for a few of the many words addressing happiness and love between husband and wife that Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, who is the true teacher and true parent for mankind, and Dr. Hak Ja Han have taught for the sake of all people.

I will read a passage from Cheon Seong Gyeong:

"While looking at a mountain, a husband and wife might ask for whom the mountain exists, and while thinking about the whole universe, they might ask for whom this universe was created. They would surely answer by saying, 'It is for me, and at the same time it is for you.' This is what a married couple is like. The way for a husband and wife to unite is by valuing God's central purpose and fulfilling the purpose for which this universe came into existence. The husband and wife communicate with each other based on heart, love and personal character, walking the same path." (29-142, 1970.2.26)

Like this, when a married couple gazes at all nature and the universe, how grateful and happy Heavenly Parent for being able to create such wonderful and beautiful things for us. This is the sort of conversation that ought to be exchanged. True Parents said that couples are walking the same path.

Among the popular songs, isn't there one that goes, "That star is my star, that star is your star, until the morning dew falls...?"

Sun Myung Moon and Hak-ja Han have both taught us to let our brothers and sisters know that they will live the same forever in the spirit world just as they lived on earth between husband and wife. Therefore, even if it is difficult for each other during this short 100 years on earth, as long as we live with patience, understanding, yielding, forgiving, and loving each other, do not forget that eternally happy life in heaven awaits us in the spirit world. Ultimately, Heaven and Hell are not determined by God when we go to the spirit world, but depend on how we live in the present moment.

And then we have another passage from Cheon Seong Gyeong:

"Why do we need to marry? It is to experience the love of a parent, the love of a couple, and the

love of children. Why is this necessary? You need to marry and form a family in order to train yourselves to resonate in rhythm with the spirit world." (92-182, 1977.4.3)

In other words, he clearly stated that marriage is to experience parental love, marital love, and children's love, and the reason for this is to train ourselves to match the rhythm of the spirit world.

If you search the internet, you will find a variety of ways to improve your marital relationship. These are points that are commonly known, but first I will introduce some of the 20 ways to be a good husband.

1. and 2. Get used to giving compliments. The first thing on the list that my wife wants to receive is a compliment.
3. Listen carefully to your wife. Listening is a wonderful art that creates happiness.
4. Help your wife with her work. Your wife didn't come here to get a job as a housekeeper.
5. Whatever your wife's grievances are, do your best to assuage them. Don't even think of stifling her complaints.
6. Let your wife watch the TV program she wants. There is a couple who divorced after fighting over the remote control.
7. Do not complain about your wife's cooking. A husband who eats deliciously even if it is not tasty is a good husband.
8. Tell her "I love you" often. Even if she hears it, she wants to hear those words again.
9. Don't try to correct your wife's mistakes. To catch the horns of a cow you must catch the cow.
10. Take pains to manage your wife's image.
11. Don't attempt to slip out of it when you make a mistake. If you get in the habit of sneaking by, the light will leave you.
12. Be the husband of the wife, by the wife, for the wife. This is guaranteed to hold for a lifetime.

Yes: even if you're able to practice just 50% of these, you'll be the best husband in the world. Next, I'll introduce some of the 20 commandments for first-class wives.

1. Don't let your husband worry about the house. If he worries about the house, he can't go out to work.
2. When your husband leaves for work, go out of the door and see him off. That's like the bare minimum.
3. Greet your husband warmly when he comes home from work. It makes sense to honor your top fan.
4. Don't hurt your husband's pride. A man's pride is his last bastion.
5. Be your husband's proud wife.
6. Do not order your husband to do this and that. A husband is a partner, not a subordinate.
7. Respect your husband's opinions as much as possible. Such a wife is beloved.
8. Be your husband's cheerleader. In difficult times, a single word from his wife can save a dying man.
9. Stand in the frontline of household affairs. He will firmly pledge to faithfully attend his worthy wife.
10. Quickly and decisively put an end to marital squabbles. Protracted war is war that kills people.
11. Show your cheerful face. A smiling wife is more beautiful than flowers.
12. Don't compare your husband to others. An ashamed husband will turn into a good-for-nothing.

If a wife practices even 50% of these, then she'll be the best wife in the world.

In addition to these, there are countless good articles on how to foster a happy couple, so it will be of great help if you search them out for yourself.

Beloved Members!

As such, it may be infinitely difficult to become one as a couple, but it is also an easy path depending on how you make up your mind. In fact, why can't a couple who have spent their entire lives sleeping together, giving birth to their beloved sons and daughters, and raising them with all their heart become one? If we change our mindset, we can become one in no time; then aren't we ready to sing of happiness?

If one person in a couple becomes ill and becomes bedridden until death, it is not easy for the children to continuously take care of their parents. Yet are a husband and wife not willing to endure any difficulties together until the end? After all, when you get old and lose your health, the only one you can really depend on is your husband or wife.

I remember that some years ago the movie "My Beloved, Don't Cross that River" left us all with a lot of emotion, tears, and empathy. It is a film about the beautiful life of an elderly couple living in a rural village in Hwaeng-seong County, Gangwon Province. They say the grandmother, who is approaching the age of 100, is still alive and well.

Let's take a look at that part of the movie again.

*Movie clip*

An elderly Korean couple in their 90s living in a small village

Woman: Today you look great.

Man: Oh yes....

Woman: You look even better than when you were young!

Man: Than back then?

Woman: That's interesting!

Man: How could that be?

Woman: I don't know. You're just handsome.

Man: Oh stop it.

Woman: Let's go out somewhere today.

Man: Sure.

(Walking hand in hand)

Narrator: They walk up a low hill nearby.

Woman: Grandpa. It's nice and sunny here isn't it?

Man: Yes of course. The Feng shui is great here. How could it be better?

Narrator: This is the burial place that grandpa has prepared for them to be interred at when they pass on.

Woman: I feel good and sad at the same time. It's good, but also a bit sad. My tears come. Why would an old person even cry?

Narrator: They say that life is but an excursion. These two people are looking at the end of that journey.

Man: Don't cry. I just feel good. [Tenderly, stroking his wife's face] Please stop crying.

Narrator: They can leave this world as they are so close in heart.

Man: It will be so easy for our sons to come and visit. Since there are cars now, they could just come up here by car. After we both die they will surely just pour some drink on our tombs and zoom off. (The two laugh.)

Woman: That would suit me just fine....

In my next life, I will live with grandpa again. Grandpa has been so nice to me; why would I live with another person? I won't live with them. I will absolutely live with our grandpa.

Man: We have sons and daughters, we could see our grandchildren many times, a lonely guy like me now has a family, how could it be better than this? I don't need anything else. So we will live together even after we pass on.

Woman: We are same as the birds in the woods. Just think, how old are we? How much longer will we go on living? That's why we never spoke harsh words to each other; let's live fun lives, helping and taking care of each other. Let's live like that.

Man: Yeah. Let's go on living like that. Grandma, let's hold hands. Oh your hands are beautiful... And wrinkled.

Narrator: Just like a bird resting in the woods, life is a transient thing. But two hearts loving each other can't be extinguished over time; it is a bond of destiny.

How wonderful it would be to live like this, caring for and loving each other right up until we die of old age! My wife and I also watched this video and we exchanged the sentiments, "Let's live long, healthy and fun lives like this." This is surely what God wants to see more than anything. If you go to the spirit world after living as a loving married couple, you are bound to live forever in heaven in that state.

I remember having tears in my eyes when I heard the testimony of a senior member a long time ago. The elder member's wife ascended to heaven when she was in her fifties. He gave the following testimony: "When my wife was alive, I lived my life saying that she was my other half, but not taking care of her well. When my wife died, the empty space was so big that I had no joy in living day to day. I realized too late that my wife was not just my other half; she was everything." It was a testimony that broke my heart. Just like the song Do Things Well While You're Here, we really need to build up a lot of fun and happy memories while we're healthy and when we're together.

Here, I would like to briefly introduce a poem about a wonderful couple. This is a poem from a collection

entitled So Good published by Mr. Lee Jong-sun from the 1800 Couples Blessing, who attended True Parents at their Hannam-Dong residence for a long time, and is currently working hard in charge of the Daemonim Memorial Hall. If you look at this collection of poems, there are indeed many moving poems that depict the love between him and his wife. His wife, Kim Hwa-seon, has been attending True Parents for many years at Cheon Jeong Gung. Since this good husband and wife have not seen so much of each other over a long period, his love and longing for her are buried in each and every word, and through poetry he may have comforted his longing for his wife. Among his works, I will introduce just one.

The title is "Praise from My Wife".

There is an old saying that praise makes even a huge whale dance.

My wife complimented me: "Very handsome, good at everything."

I felt I was in heaven at that single word of praise, knowing I was not really good at anything and just did what my wife told me. She praised me for being good at teaching the Principle, so day and night I worked at it. I became a Principle lecturer and taught at workshops.

She praised me for my writing, so I mapped out our history, became an essayist and published three collections of essays.

She praised me for writing good poetry, so I went deep into my feelings and became a poet, then published five books of poetry.

Thanks to receiving compliments from my wife, I became a Principle lecturer, a poet, an essayist, the director of the Dae Mo nim Memorial, and an elder pastor. I am full of thanks and appreciation to my wife.

Thanks to my wife's praise, I think I have danced like a whale.

Yes, even if these are not sophisticated and flashy lines, if you write something honestly as you think of it, you realize it has become a moving poem or essay. In this collection of poems, there are many expressions of the feelings felt while serving True Parents with deep longing and love.

Beloved members!

How much God, the parent of humankind, wants all of his children on earth to be happy! It is probably Heavenly Parent's most cherished wish to see the human race living as a happy and joyful family, as fun and interesting couples. Therefore, the true filial piety in front of the parents is to show such a happy image.

I would like to conclude my sermon by reading from page 231 of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's memoir [English edition], Mother of Peace.

"Discord between husbands and wives is one of the main reasons our world cannot be at peace. There are 7.9 billion people on earth today, but the creation of peace really depends upon two people - one man and one woman, that is, a husband and wife. People enter into various types of relationships and encounter different kinds of problems, but the root of all these problems is the same - the flawed relationship between man and woman. Peace will come when two people, a man and a woman, trust and love each other. If men and women can fulfill their mutual responsibility to trust and love each other, the world will become the happy place we all wish it to be."

Please would all of you join me in a prayer of peace:

Heavenly Parent, the origin of love and life: On the occasion of this holy Sunday, May 22, in this beautiful season, I sincerely thank you for the great love and grace you have bestowed on us during this time in calling us to come to this grand sanctuary of Cheon Won Gung, Cheon Won Church.

I would especially like to deeply thank you for guiding us to look back at our family again during this month of May - the family month - and for guiding us to realize in our hearts the preciousness of the love and happiness of a beautiful couple.

Please guide all the family members who attended this worship service today, whether in person or online, to always live centered on Heavenly Parent. I earnestly wish and pray that You will bless us to establish families overflowing with happiness and joy, strong families in our working situation and workplace, and families overflowing with health and material blessing, and I earnestly report and pray all these things in the name of Kim Hong-deuk of a Blessed Central Family. Aju.