



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Self-Control

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What is the value of self-control? Self-control is that which enables us to hold our tongues when we are tempted to viciously put someone in his place once and for all; or when we know a juicy bit of gossip that would be entertaining to the group and would turn us into the “life of the party”; or when an occasion almost demands that we betray a confidence that must not be betrayed under any circumstances.

Self-control is that which enables us to control our passions when another is provoking us to anger; that keeps the clenched fists in the pockets when the agitator is only half our size; that keeps the lips sealed when another is railing and swearing at us. Self-control is that which enables us to be like our Lord “who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (I Peter 2:23).

Self-control is that which enables us to maintain purity of heart and to thrust out evil thoughts before they can take root; that enables us to place the best possible construction on another person’s actions when unproven rumors could easily destroy our confidence in him; that helps us to maintain a cheerful disposition when everything around us has turned sour. Self-control is that which enables us to love the unlovable and to hate that which the world loves.

Self-control is that which enables us to rule our appetites; to say “no” when our lusts would lead us to sin or when that which is harmful to our health is placed before us. Self-control is that which enables the smoker to put down his cigarettes and the alcoholic to put down his drink and never return to it. Self-control is that which enables us to rule rather than to be enslaved.

The Bible does not glorify the indifferent and impassive. It is not our goal to be uncaring. To be like Paul, we must be able to have our spirit stirred within us when we are surrounded by evil (Acts 17:16). To be like our Lord, we must sometimes feel anger when surrounded by hypocritical self-righteousness (Mark 3:5); we must even react with occasional outbursts of goodness on occasions, as when the Lord cleansed the temple (John 2:13-17). But, all such outbursts must be tempered with self-control, that in our anger we “do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26).

God does not view our uncontrolled actions with amusement. Our temper tantrums and harsh, unbridled words are soul-threatening, a potential bar to the abundant entrance into the Lord’s everlasting kingdom (II Peter 1:5-11). We must not minimize the danger. We must not surrender to this evil.

What is the value of self-control? It is one of the qualities that enable us to go to heaven. The possessor of it is rich indeed.

## The Desecration of God's Marriage Law

Dee Bowman

God’s marriage law, it seems to me, is based on three principles. The three are: 1) the law of origins; 2) the law of harmony; and 3) the law of order.

Disregard for these three basic marriage regulations has ramified in many different directions wreaking havoc on the home and family as God has defined it in His word. Adultery, fornication, homosexuality, child abuse--all are related to a disrespect for these three basic principles. Many other deviations which are more subtle, but just as dangerous--things

like feminism, the uni-sex movement, gang violence--may well be related to a disregard for these three basic parts of God's marriage law.

### ***The Law of Origins***

"In the beginning" as Jesus used it in **Matthew 19** is significant. It is at the heart of the law of origins. "Have you not read," he said, "that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?" This is further amplified in the ninth verse when he said, after having been questioned about Moses' allowance of divorce, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." I have denominated this as the law of origins.

God had a plan for man and woman from the outset, one which He expected should govern the relationship for all time. Notice that at the beginning and from the beginning it was God's law that a man--one man--should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife--one woman. Why God allowed divorce during the time of Moses I don't know. I do know--and that for a fact--that from the beginning it was not so. Think of all the trouble which has been caused by unconcern for the law of origins.

### ***The Law of Harmony***

There is a basic difference between unison and harmony. Unison means being in agreement in exactly the same way (in music, singing exactly the same notes). Harmony means a simultaneous combination which makes for agreement. In music, it is the pleasing combination of notes which make a chord. It means to be "in accord."

We need to realize that God never demanded "unison," but He did command "harmony" in marriage. Men, together, are unison. Women, together, are unison. Men with men is not harmony. Women with women is not harmony. A man and a woman together in God's arrangement make harmony. Compare the idea of "they twain shall become one flesh." They didn't start out as one, they became one. That's harmony. Notice, too, "what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." They are con-joined in a harmonious relationship. Life consists of interlocking opposites. Marriage is the most beautiful one of them.

When Paul says, in I Corinthians 7:5, "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a season," he speaks to this harmonious relationship. The term translated "with consent" is from a Greek word *sumphemi* which is where we get our word "symphony," a together sound. The law of harmony is basic to God's marriage law.

### ***The Law of Order***

Paul states God's law of order in I Corinthians 11:1-2. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them unto you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." This is an ordinance--what has been ordained. God is the prior person, Christ next, man, then woman. You can no more mess with this order with impunity than you can violate the law of gravity. Punishment follows the disregard for either. It's just that the payoff is immediate in the latter and is delayed in the former.

In order for the marriage relationship to function as it should there must be respect for this role order. It's a law, not a wish, and a law always has some punitive measures attached to it or it isn't a law. Make no mistake about it, you violate this law and you'll pay.

The law of order is illustrated beginning at Ephesians 5:21, ("submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of the Lord") and amplified through the rest of chapter five and into chapter six. As it relates to man and woman it is briefly stated in such commands as "Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church...." And "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it." This is a practical commentary on I Corinthians 7:1-3. It's God's law of order at work.

### ***Conclusion***

To disregard these three laws is to invite sure disaster. The immediate punishment is seen in the loss of hearth and home and its ensuing detrimental effect on society. The eternal disaster will be even more devastating.