

# *The honeymoon is over... or is it?*



## **Leaving and Cleaving**



Bruce Wilkinson says in his 25 plus years of counseling he has come to the conclusion that just about every marriage problem he has encountered has been the result of one or the other partners in a marriage being in violation of what he considers the most important verse in the Bible as it relates to marriage. That verse is found in Gen 2:24, which says: For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

Christ repeats almost the same words in Mark 10:6-8 which says: But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this cause a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

So this was God's idea in the beginning....He said it is not good for the man to be alone and created this 3-step process:

1. Man and woman must leave
2. They must then cleave
3. If they do these two steps they will become one flesh

So first of all who or what do we leave?

- Parents
- Friends
- Extended family
- Sometimes a sport or hobby or activity
- Our selfish ways
- Anything else that might come in the way of our ability to bond with one another

How do we leave?

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Financially
- Authority
- Security
- Direction

When do we leave?

- Actually starts at birth and should be a slow and gradual process
- When you leave for college
- When you marry
- Do you know if you have left yet? If you are unsure.....take the 5-min. test on the next page.

Reasons people do not leave

- Personal...selfish.....they don't want to
- Parental.....the parents don't want you to.....want you to be happy and protect you from any struggles

Understand that this is God's plan.....and Christ repeated it so we would be sure and get the message.

If you find that you have not left, it is YOUR responsibility to take action in a loving and kind way with your parents or whomever it is that you need to leave. Remember you are still their little boy or girl so don't be mean. Being a parent and letting go is very difficult. Try and imagine letting go of one of your children right now. It really does not get any easier, but it must be done so you will need to help your parents along.

Don't go to the other extreme and not want to associate with parents. Families that stay together are an incredible blessing. The trick is to get a good balance between having a healthy relationship with parents, family and friends, but not letting those relationships interfere with your personal relationship with each other. If you ever think about "going home", you have a problem. Your home is with your spouse. If your parents think you have left them or you have been taken away, gently remind them that when you stood before God and them on the altar, you were given away.

You need to start thinking about CLEAVING and you cannot do that if you are still in the process of LEAVING.

CLEAVING does **not** happen automatically. It takes a tremendous amount of planning, will power, and work. We will be spending the rest of the classes on marriage talking about how you can cleave.

7 Steps to Cleaving according to Dr. Bruce Wilkinson:

1. Leave everyone else **completely**.....including old friends of the opposite sex
2. Remain pure sexually...includes pornography
3. Love for the long term...till death do you part...no turning back no matter what...splitting not an option...Think of the 2 of you in a boat 3000 miles at sea. If a problem develops only option is to deal with it. You cannot swim to shore or jump ship.
4. Live at your standard of living and not your parents or someone else's. Learn the secret of being content and spending wisely. Debt is a monster and Satan loves to use it as a tool.
5. Work at marital happiness...Love languages...serving...romance...more later.
6. Forgive each other 70 times 70. Almost all affairs, according to Dr. Wilkinson, stem from unforgiveness causing a root of bitterness and a hardened heart.
7. Keep God in the center of your marriage. Let not man, or kids, or parents, or business, or friends or anything but God be with you as you allow Him to mold you into one flesh.

Psalms 67:1 May God be gracious to us and BLESS us and make His face shine on us.

Bless our marriage God so that we can be a blessing to others.

John Lovoy 3/22/2002

## TEST

If you are unsure whether or not you have "left", here is a test to see where you stand. Please take this with your spouse and answer questions with a scale of 1 to 7. 1= Very False 7 = Very True Here are the questions:

1. We were successful in leaving our parents when we got married.
2. Leaving family and other close relationships has been a harmonious process for us.
3. Even though we may have problems from time to time in our marriage, we resist the temptation to run home to our parents.
4. Both of us are free from manipulation of control by our parents.
5. Neither of us has tried to force our spouse to be like one of our own parents.
6. We have established our own residence away from our parents.
7. We are not financially dependent upon either set of parents.
8. While we may enjoy frequent talks or visits with our parents, our sense of emotional well-being does not depend on such communication.

Score 48-56 = We are not having any problems and have successfully "left".

Score 8-17 = You have not left and need to talk gently to each other and parents to work out a plan to leave. Note we do not need to beat up on the parents.....instead we need to understand that you need to take the initiative and let them know what is biblically correct IN LOVE. Please send comments.