**DISCERNMENT 31** (6-7-16) DISCERNMENT, pg. 56

Our inalienable rights precede the formation of government, “so first come rights and then comes government.” And because of that, the Constitution is the law that governs those who govern us.

*The New American, 6-6-16, p. 33*

***9th Amendment*** *The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others* ***retained*** *by the people.*

It is quite clear that the use of the word **“*retained*”** means that our rights preceded the adoption of any enumeration or listing of rights.

***Declaration of Independence***

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their* ***just powers*** *from the consent of the governed…*

*“****Just powers****”* suggests that only some powers are ‘justly’ held by the government, while others are beyond its proper authority.

The balance of power between the branches of our government has disappeared. What is happening today is that each branch defers to the other branches which of course, results in the expansion of government and the contraction of freedom.

A good example of this is when President George W. Bush thought that the Mc Cain Feingold bill, limiting political speech, was unconstitutional, but he was going to sign it anyway and let the courts decide. Then of course, the courts deferred to Congress and the President.

FOX NEWS: **11 States Sue Over Obama Administration's Transgender Directive**

*Texas and 10 other states filed suit Wednesday against the Obama administration over its directive on transgender student access to public school facilities, firing the first shot in what is likely to be a protracted and messy legal battle over that guidance.*

*The suit was filed in a Texas federal court in response to the directive handed down to schools earlier this month that said transgender students should be able to use bathrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identity.*

*Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton announced the lawsuit at a Wednesday news conference, saying the directives represent an attempt by the administration to rewrite the law.*

*“This represents just the latest example of the current administration’s attempts to accomplish by executive fiat what they couldn’t accomplish through the democratic process in Congress," Paxton said.*

*Joining Texas in the suit were: Alabama, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Tennessee, Arizona's Department of Education, Maine Gov. Paul LePage, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Utah and Georgia.*

*“Defendants have conspired to turn workplaces and educational settings across the country into laboratories for a massive social experiment, flouting the democratic process, and running roughshod over commonsense policies protecting children and basic privacy rights,” the lawsuit says.*

*Conservative states had vowed to defy the federal directive, calling it a threat to the safety of students. Texas' lieutenant governor has previously said the state is willing to forfeit $10 billion in federal education dollars rather than comply.*

*"President Obama has excluded the voice of the people. We stand today to ensure those voices are heard," Paxton said.*

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*The directive from the U.S. Justice and Education departments represents an escalation in the fast-moving dispute over what is becoming the civil rights issue of the day.*

*While the letter does not have the force of law, it does warn that schools that do not abide by the administration’s interpretation of civil rights under the Title IX law may face lawsuits or loss of federal aid.*

*"There is no room in our schools for discrimination of any kind, including discrimination against transgender students on the basis of their sex," Attorney General Loretta Lynch said in a statement when the guidlines were announced earlier this month.*

*The guidance [extortion] was issued after the Justice Department and North Carolina sued each other over a state law that requires transgender people to use the public bathroom that corresponds to the sex on their birth certificate. The law applies to schools and many other places.*

*Supporters say such measures are needed to protect women and children from sexual predators, while the Justice Department and others argue the threat is practically nonexistent and the law discriminatory.*

**Feds Order Colleges to Stop Checking Criminal/School Discipline History**

*The Obama administration has ordered the nation’s colleges and universities to stop asking applicants about criminal and school disciplinary history because it discriminates against minorities. Institutions are also being asked to offer those with criminal records special support services such as counseling, mentoring and legal aid once enrolled. The government’s official term for these perspective students is “justice-involved individuals” and the new directive aims to remove barriers to higher education for the overwhelmingly minority population that’s had encounters with the law or disciplinary issues through high school.* [*Judicial Watch*](http://www.judicialwatch.org/blog/2016/05/feds-order-colleges-stop-checking-criminalschool-discipline-history-discriminates-minorities/)5-20-16

**Transgender Teacher Gets $60k After Co-Workers Won’t Call Her ‘They’**

*The Daily Caller News Foundation, 5-25-16*

*A “transmasculine” teacher at an Oregon elementary school has been awarded $60,000 by her school district as compensation for harassment she claims to have suffered on the job, including being referred to by the wrong pronoun.*

*According to The Oregonian, Leo Soell was born a woman, but now prefers to identify as “transmasculine” and “genderqueer,” meaning she does not consider herself to be male or female. After getting breast cancer in late 2014, she had her breasts amputated to create a more masculine appearance and changed her name to Leo. Once she returned from medical school in May, 2015, Soell was fully public with her gender-neutral identity.*

*Once she returned to work, Soell claims she fell victim to relentless harassment from her co-workers. She says employees persisted in calling her hurtful terms like “Miss Soell,” “lady,” and “she.” If a student asked Soell’s sex, she says she was ordered to reply it was a private matter not suitable for discussion at school.*

**WND: “Men, You, not the state, must protect your family”**

*Exclusive: Charl van Wyk stresses, on firearms, 'God's Laws trump human laws!'*

*When political leaders and lawmakers make it impossible for us as dutiful husbands and fathers to act, in the biblical sense, as protectors of those whom God has entrusted to our care, then we have no obligation to obey them.*

*When the ruling class further curtails our freedom, and makes it illegal for us to fulfill our duty to protect our families, by passing and implementing unjust gun laws, then they are no longer God’s*

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 58

*servant to do us good. Rather, they’ve become an instrument of Satan, whom we are commanded by God to resist.*

*We must actively work toward making sure the liberal anti-gun leaders and lawmakers are defeated electorally and replaced with godly leaders who respect and uphold basic human rights of self-defense.*

*A thug who wants to disarm a law-abiding citizen, leaving his life in danger and his wife or children vulnerable to assault, is a thug, whether a thug in government, or a thug on the street.*

**With all this “gun control talk”, I haven’t heard one politician say how they are going to take guns away from criminals, just law-abiding citizens.**

**Endnotes:**

Here are express references to God in our Declaration of Independence:

* …The Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God…
* …endowed by their **Creator** with certain unalienable Rights…
* …appealing to **the Supreme Judge of the world** for the rectitude of our intentions…
* …with a firm reliance on the protection of **divine Providence**…

Our Constitution at Art. VII, last clause:

* …in the Year of **our Lord** one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven…

**“LEX REX !” THE LAW IS ABOVE THE KING !**

NOT“Rex, Lex”, THE KING BEING ABOVE THE LAW

***Romans 13*** must be read *in parimateria* with **everything** the Bible says about civil government! The false doctrine of “divine right of kings” is based on ignoring the numerous Old Testament provisions addressing civil government. Romans 13 *actually* says that the civil authorities are God’s ministers and agents, and if we are “good” we have no cause to fear them; but if we do “evil” we do have cause to fear them.

So, when reading ***Romans 13***, ***Titus 3:1***&***1 Peter 2:13-14***, we must keep in mind that **it is *God* who decides what is “good” and what is “evil”**. God never gave civil authorities the power to define “good” and “evil”; and God never gave them autonomy. Bad theology is, and has long been, the cause of much evil.  And Pride keeps it going.

**Article I, §1** says:

“All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.”

Only elected Senators (Art. I, §3, cl. 1) & popularly elected Representatives (Art. I, §2, cl. 1) may exercise legislative powers. Our Constitution doesn’t permit unelected bureaucrats to make laws.

Federal judges have disgraced the Bench by permitting rule-making by executive agencies.

*PH.June 23, 2012*

**DISCERNMENT 32** (6-28-16)

**MARRIAGE**

We will start with the decision of God to make a mate for the first man, Adam.

***Genesis 2:18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."***

The helper God created would be human, like Adam, but different from him physically and psychologically.

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The helper’s body was female so it was different than Adam’s, but it was in sync with his. They were physically compatible.

Eve had a female perspective which complimented his male perspective. So they were mentally compatible.

So their differences physically and psychologically enabled them to complement one another. What the man lacked, the woman supplied, and what she lacked he supplied.

***Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.***

Adam and Eve were created male and female and everyone since has been born male or female. There is no choice involved. They say our gender is random; there is a 50/50 chance of being born a boy and the same chance for being born a girl.

That may be true from a human perspective but not from God’s.

He decides whether we will be born a male or a female and our gender is permanent since it is encoded in every cell of our body. So, our biological anatomy reflects which sex God has chosen us to be. People for over six millennia have recognized this truth. But that is changing these days.

**The 1 thing you can't call girls at girls' academy**

 *Term banned because it might cause offense*

[*Bob Unruh*](http://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *6-24-16*

*Teachers in the Girls’ Schools Association across the United Kingdom are being told not to call girls “girls,” because it might cause offense.*

*The U.K.’s Christian Institute noted that the single-sex schools in the association “have also been advised to create unisex toilets.”*

*The president of the GSA, Caroline Jordan, was quoted in an interview praising \* “****gender-neutral*** *language” and instructing: “In assemblies. Instead of saying, ‘girls,’ staff should consider saying, ‘pupils, or ‘students, the institute said.*

*\** [“**gender-neutral**” is an oxy-moron, there is no such thing.]

*The* [Christian] *institute said that earlier this year, concerns “emerged that people are being pushed into* ***\*transsexualism****, and that a belief in a binary distinction* [having only two choices] *between male and female is ‘being categorized as a form of* ***bigotry****'”.*

1. Stubborn and complete intolerance of any creed, belief, or opinion that differs from one's own.

2. The actions, beliefs, prejudices, etc., of a bigot. Bigot - a person who is intolerant of any ideas other than his or her own, esp. on religion, politics, or race. *from dictionary .com*

***\*transsexualism***

*1. A person having a strong desire to assume the physical characteristics and gender role of the opposite sex.*

*2. A person who has undergone hormone treatment and surgery to attain the physical characteristics of the opposite sex.*

*The statement reportedly is a result of contact from a campaign called* ***Gendered Intelligence****, whose chief, Jay Stewart, called the phrase “young ladies” sexist.*

*The institute notes that the campaign claims 1 percent of people are on a “\*****trans spectrum****,” but in reality, the number of people issued a \*****Gender Recognition Certificate*** *since the 2004 act totaled under 4,500, about 0.007 percent of the U.K. population.*

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 60

*\*****trans spectrum:***  *The gender spectrum perceives gender as having many options; it is a linear model, ranging from 100% man to 100% woman, with various states of* ***androgyny*** [having an ambiguous sexual identity]. in between. *The gender continuum or matrix is a multidimensional extension of the gender spectrum that includes additional gender identities outside of the spectrum.*

*\*****Gender Recognition Certificate:***  *The* ***Gender Recognition Act 2004*** *is an* [Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Act_of_Parliament) *of the* [Parliament of the United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_United_Kingdom) *that allows transgender people to change their legal* [gender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender)*. It came into effect on 4 April 2005.*

*Colleges also are faced with demands to open their sex-segregated dorms.*

**DISCERNMENT 33** (6-30-16)

***Genesis 2:18-25*** Read.

***Genesis 2:22*** God brought the woman to Adam to determine what she would be called.

***Genesis 2:23*** Adam said she will be called “Woman” (heb. *ishah)* because she was taken out of Man (heb. *ish).* Later he would give her the name “Eve” because she was the mother of all the living. ***Genesis 3:20***

***Genesis 2:24*** ***For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother…***

This point is so important that it was stated even before there were any in-laws.

 (NASV) ***and be joined to his wife...***

 (KJV) ***and shall cling to his wife…***

(ESV) ***and hold fast to his wife…***

 (NIV) ***and be united to his wife…***

The idea is that the husband and wife are intimately united in both body and soul in which they become one.

***Genesis 2:25*** The result of the husband and wife being one is that there is no embarrassment nor inhibitions between them, even when they are naked.

POINTS:

1. Marriage is a divine institution that predates any other.

2. Marriage is between one man and one woman united together for life.

3. God created humans to be sexual beings so that husbands and wives could procreate and give and receive pleasure from one another.

4. God condemns any sexual activity outside of marriage.

5. In-laws are not to interfere with the marriages of their children.

6. Wives were designed by God to be a helper to their husbands. A wife is to complete her husband, not compete with him. The term “helper’ is not condescending, nor does it imply that the wife is inferior to her husband. The Bible calls God a helper:

***Psalm 54:4 Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul.***

***Psalm 46:1*** (NET) ***God is our strong refuge; He is truly our helper in times of trouble.***

***Psalm 70:5 I am oppressed and needy! O God, hurry to me! You are my helper and my deliverer! O LORD, do not delay!***

Satan knows that if he can destroy marriage, our society will crumble. To say that marriage is under attack today would be a major under-statement. Most of the attacks come from programs and policies that are meant to be beneficial to people but are in reality harmful because they are contrary to God’s Word.

Part of having discernment about marriage is recognizing the various things that are detrimental to this divine institution. The first one we will cover is governmental intrusion and interference with marriage.

**Government Welfare for Single Moms** DISCERNMENT, pg. 61

There are a few problems we should notice with this right away.

a. The government has no constitutional authority to dole out money to single moms or to anyone else for that matter.

b. It must take funds from citizens without their consent to give to others it decides to give it to.

c. The government stipulates the conditions that must be met in order to qualify for government funds and those conditions couldn’t be worse for marriage.

1) A woman must not be living with a man.

2) She cannot have a job

This of course motivates women to not have a husband and to not have a job. Furthermore, the more children these un-married women have, the more money they will get from the government. There are women who have lived their entire adult life complying with these qualifications in order to receive government funds.

Of course this fosters an attitude of dependency and kills any vestige of self-esteem. Children in such an environment can never learn what it means to be self-reliant. They don’t know the joy of working hard or feeling the pride of accomplishing something for themselves or their family. They grow up thinking that the world owes them a living. The boys don’t learn that you can’t be a man if you shun responsibility. The girls don’t learn the importance of being married nor do they learn to respect and depend on their fathers because their fathers are missing. They have been replaced by a government check.

**Black Illegitimacy Rate of 75% Due To Politicians, Civil Rights Groups Serving Powerful Interest Groups Rather Than African-Americans, Professor Says:**

*Walter Williams: "Today the overwhelming majority of black children are raised in single female-headed families. As early as the 1880s, three-quarters of black families were two-parent. In 1925 New York City, 85 percent of black families were two-parent. One study of 19th-century slave families found that in up to three-fourths of the families, all the children had the same mother and father."*

*"Hustlers and people with little understanding want us to believe that today's black problems are the continuing result of a legacy of slavery, poverty and racial discrimination. The fact is that most of the social pathology seen in poor black neighborhoods is entirely new in black history,"*

*Williams goes on to claim that today's pathology seen in much the black population is a result of a growing welfare state "that has made self-destructive behavior less costly for the individual."*

*For example, it's much less burdensome for a mother to raise a child "without the benefit of marriage" if she receives welfare payments, housing subsidies and food stamps. "Plus, the social stigma associated with unwed motherhood has vanished," Williams adds. "Female-headed households, whether black or white, are a ticket for dependency and all of its associated problems."*

*Walter Williams, professor of economics at George Mason University, writes for CNS News,.5-20-2015*

 **AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN: THE LEGAL HISTORY**

***Aid to Dependent Children*** *or* ***ADC*** *(later* ***renamed Aid to Families with Dependent Children, AFDC****) was Title IV of the Social Security Act of 1935. At first it functioned mainly to provide federal grants to help the states maintain their mothers’ aid laws that had been passed in 40 states between 1910 and 1920. With the federal government providing 1/3 of costs, the program offered aid to poor parents, imagined at that time to be always female, caring for children without a husband.*

*The goal was to provide aid to all children whose mothers lacked the support of a breadwinner, no matter how they got to that position. Moreover, it was designed to operate with the highest social work standards, offering personal casework services to lone mothers as well as cash*

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*stipends. They sought casework both because they wanted to remove ADC recipients from the stigma of public assistance, and because they believed that mother-headed families were problematic and needed support and guidance.*

**DISCERNMENT 34** (7-5-16)

 *For its first three decades, AFDC operated much like a private charity, with its case workers given discretion in investigating clients, cutting off benefits to those determined to be unsuitable, and reducing benefits to those found in violation of any of AFDC’s myriad regulations. Starting in the mid-1960s the National Welfare Rights Organization, built primarily by African American women and functionally a part of the civil rights movement, began organizing to defend welfare recipients’ rights. Working together with lawyers in community legal aid offices, recipients filed hundreds of court cases challenging the administration of AFDC.*

*Such litigation had radical goals, which included creating a uniform federal standard for AFDC administration and eliminating the most degrading eligibility provisions. The overarching objective entailed establishing a federal constitutional right to a minimum adequate income.*

 *One of the first AFDC cases to reach the U.S. Supreme Court, King v. Smith (1968), challenged an Alabama regulation allowing for AFDC termination if a recipient “cohabitated” with a man. Numerous states defined “cohabitation” to include even casual relationships. (In Alabama this resulted in 16,000 children being dropped from AFDC.)*

*The Court struck down the provision as inconsistent with federal statutory definitions of “parent,” opining that the provision punished a woman for engaging in sexual relations and was unrelated to Congress’s intent to provide aid to needy children. Notably, the Court’s decision rested on statutory not constitutional grounds.*

*In Shapiro v. Thompson (1969), the Court found unconstitu- tional state regulations that required families to live in-state for a certain time period before becoming AFDC eligible. The Court ruled that such regulations infringed upon the constitutional right to travel and that the state’s interest in discouraging indigent family’s migration did not defeat this right. King, Shapiro, and their progeny reduced the ability of states to restrict AFDC eligibility and provided some ground for the argument that AFDC was not charity but a protected entitlement.*

*Goldberg v. Kelley (1970) challenged a state’s ability to terminate AFDC benefits prior to a hearing… The Court found that pre-hearing terminations violated the Due Process Clause, and strongly suggested that AFDC was a protected property right. Goldberg came as close as the Court ever would to finding a constitutional right to an adequate income.* The Social Welfare History Project.

[**http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com/public-welfare/aid-to-dependent-children-the-legal-history/**](http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com/public-welfare/aid-to-dependent-children-the-legal-history/)

These single moms also can receive food stamps, Medicaid, housing vouchers, grants for education, child care benefits, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in addition to food stamps to name a few of their benefits.

Huge government bureaucracies’ administer these programs and they are rife with fraud costing nearly 60 billion dollars each year.

There is an alternative, end government welfare of all kinds and allow the private sector will take over.

After all, that is the way things used to work until people started looking to government rather than to God to provide for their needs.

Families, friends, churches, and charitable organizations can take care of the truly needy better and cheaper than the government can. Employ the principle of ***2 Thess. 2:10****:*

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***2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.***

With the government out of the picture, husbands have an incentive to be responsible and take care of their families. Wives have an incentive to get married or to stay married when the government is no longer there to replace the husband.

**Co-habitation**

We now live in a godless society that sees nothing wrong with couples living together without being married. It is totally acceptable, even among many Christians.

The pattern for a large number of young people is to “hang out” (What ever happened to going out on a date?), “hooking up” (fornicating), and then “moving in” (unwed couples live together with no public commitment to lifelong fidelity)

***Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.***

***Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness…***

***Colossians 3:5-6 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6) Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience…***

***1 Corinthians 6:13 Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.***

***1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.***

**'The New Normal': Cohabitation on The Rise, Study Finds**

*byJoNel Aleccia, 4-4-13*

*Nearly half of women in what researchers call "first unions" with men, 48 percent, moved in with no wedding vows according to interviews conducted between 2006 and 2010, up from 43 percent in 2002 and 34 percent in 1995.*

*About 40 percent of those relationships became marriages after three years, but about 32 percent continued as cohabitations, suggesting an important new role for the arrangement once known as “shacking up,” says one researcher.*

*“It’s becoming more acceptable to be in a long-term, committed relationship without a legal document,” says Pamela J. Smock, director and research professor at the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.*

*By the time they’re 20, 1 in 4 women ages 15 to 44 in the U.S. have lived with a man, and by the time they’re 30, that ratio climbs to 3 in 4, the new study shows.*

*Melissa Melms, 25, of Hoboken, N.J., moved in with boyfriend Jonathan Mills, 29, 18 months ago said, “It was definitely a no-brainer for me. It was always something I planned to do.”*

*Cohabiting was a way to make sure they were ready for the daily rewards and challenges of marriage, says Melms, who adds that most of the young women she knows feel the same.*

*“I think it would be weird to me to have a friend who would wait to move in together until after they got married,” she said.*

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*Longer relationships include the nearly 20 percent of women who became pregnant in their first year of living with a man outside of marriage. Nearly a quarter of recent births among women ages 15 to 44 occurred while they were cohabiting, up from about 14 percent in 2002.*

*“One take on these data would be that cohabiting families are choosing to stay together, they are becoming more committed and they are seeing their families, many with children, as a legitimate family form and are feeling less pressure to marry,” Smock says. “It’s the new normal.”*

*"Cohabitation is a common part of family formation in the United States and serves as both a step toward marriage and as an alternative to marriage."*

*For Melms, as for many educated young women, living together was a logical progression on a path of increasing commitment.*

***Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.***

***1 Corinthians 7:2 … because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.***

***1 Corinthians 7:9 But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.***

***Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.***

***Matthew 19:5 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’***

***Romans 13:13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality,***

**4 Reasons Shacking Up Before Marriage is a Bad Idea**

*Cohabitation in the United States has increased by more than 1,500 percent in the past half century. In 1960, about 450,000 unmarried couples lived together. Now the number is more than 7.5 million. Here are a few of the reasons couples cite for cohabitation: 1) hoping it is a step toward a proposal, 2) want to see if they are compatible as roommates, and 3) to save money on rent.*

*Here are 3 reasons shacking up before marriage is a bad idea.*

***1****.* ***Your relationship will probably end.*** *An article on examiner.com states that 80% of shacking up relationships end before marriage or in divorce after marriage.*

*So, it is 80/20 against you getting married, or staying married, to that person. One reason is because there is not a commitment when you move in before marriage. A relation- ship without commitment will not last, and marriage is the biggest commitment you can make in life.*

***2****.* ***Your children will be negatively affected.*** *To the parents who have children, your kids are three times as likely to be expelled from school or get pregnant, they are five times more likely to live in poverty, and 22 times more likely to be incarcerated. All because you choose to live with someone you’re not married to.*

***3. It makes you lazy.*** *Living together removes the “being your best” part of your relationship. Kind of like most job interviews. You wore the suit to the interview, but once hired you show up in khakis and a polo. And, if you’re living with a woman and getting some of the “benefits” of marriage – sex, having someone to help around the house, sharing the bills – you can get lazy about taking the next step in your relationship.*

*If those statistics and info provided above are not enough, the Bible considers shacking up the opposite of a legitimate marriage. A legitimate marriage consists of a union between a man and woman who have made a covenant and commitment. Shacking up involves neither. Marriage was a union created by God, and is a union God blesses.*

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***4. It’s a sin.*** This one was not in the article above but should have been.

[**http://www.allprodad.com/5-reasons-shacking-up-before-marriage-is-a-bad-idea/**](http://www.allprodad.com/5-reasons-shacking-up-before-marriage-is-a-bad-idea/)

**DISCERNMENT 35** (7-7-16)

**Feminists Movement**

*The feminist movement (also known as the women's liberation movement, the women's movement, or simply* [*feminism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism) *refers to a series of* [*political campaigns*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_campaign) *for reforms on issues such as* [*reproductive rights*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reproductive_rights)*,* [*domestic violence*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_violence)*,* [*maternity leave*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parental_leave)*,* [*equal pay*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal_pay_for_women)*,* [*women's suffrage*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage)*,* [*sexual harassment*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_harassment)*, and* [*sexual violence*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_violence)*, all of which fall under the label of* [*feminism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism) *and the feminist movement.*

***A Nature Documentary Taught Phyllis Schlafly That Feminists Are the Real Bullies***

*SUBMITTED BY: Miranda Blue, Thursday 10/16/2014*

*Phyllis Schlafly, who his promoting her new book, “Who Killed the American Family?” stopped by VCY America’s “Crosstalk” program yesterday to discuss whom she sees as the culprits in the family’s demise. Chief among these, of course, are the feminists. “They don’t like men, they don’t like the family, and if you read their stuff and what they’re telling young women is ‘we are victims of the patriarchy’ and ‘we have to get rid of the patriarchy,’” Schlafly told host Vic Eliason. “Well, you know, you can hardly believe what nonsense it is. But a lot of us think it’s just great to have men around to provide and protect us.”*

*Schlafly lamented that “feminism isn’t going to go away” because feminists run the Obama administration and the media and “the men are afraid to attack the women; they don’t know how to do it.”*

*She illustrated this point with an anecdote from a nature documentary she had recently watched in which two “real bears — these weren’t any actors” faced off against each other, and eventually the male bear backed away from the female. “It just isn’t natural for men to fight women,” Schlafly concluded, “and that’s one of our problems, women take advantage of that.”*

The feminists have told women for a long time that part of the challenge to be equal with men is to

get out into the work force and compete with them. Women who stayed at home and took care of their children and their husbands were second class citizens; they were losers. Millions of women bought that lie, hook, line, and sinker. So what has happened two decades later? Dr. James Dobson addresses this:

**Dobson and Passno Mourn that Feminist 'Lies' Have Ruined both Women and Men**

*Submitted by Brian Tashman on Friday, 9/7/2012*

*Dobson: You know what’s happening over and over now is that young women hear this message and they either postpone or decide not to have babies and then at 33 and 34 and 35 they start to panic and they realize they’ve missed an opportunity and it’s getting very late and there are many childless women today who would love to hold a baby and they were sold a lie. I resent the lies that are being told to the young women that are out there because in twenty years they will regret it, many of them will regret it and it will be too late.*

*Former Focus on the Family vice president Diane Passno:*

*I resent the lies that are fed to the young men as well because we have a generation of men who don’t know what it means to make a commitment, who don’t know what it means to protect a family, who don’t know what it means to cherish a woman and remain pure until marriage. The feminist movement has distorted so many things that were precious and that the Lord said in Scripture were precious.*

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 66

**Obama Administration is a Phyllis Schlafly Nightmare:**

**'Whatever the Feminists Want, the Feminists Get'**

*Submitted by Brian Tashman on Wednesday, 9/5/2012*

*Eagle Forum founder Phyllis Schlafly yesterday spoke to the American Family Association’s Sandy Rios to denounce the Democratic National Platform’s support for reproductive freedom and marriage equality. According to Schlafly, “the feminists completely control the Obama administration” and “whatever the feminists want, the feminists get,” including endorsements of abortion rights and same-sex marriage. There is “support of everything the feminists want,” Schlafly lamented, “It’s a very destructive force in our society.”*

***Rios****: You know Phyllis just philosophically, this is what the left always says, they always say that conservatives are old fashioned, they mock the old sitcoms you know where they had separate beds, twin beds, they mock the sitcoms of the 50s, the Andy Griffith’s, the Dick Van Dyke’s, they think that’s funny and amusing and to be progressive, to be modern, to be in-this-decade—the Constitution is old and outdated too, by the way, that’s what they think—they always make that argument that to be forward moving is to throw off any of the constraints of the past. Can you just from your perspective of life, why would we hang on to boundaries, regulations and rules from the past? Isn’t this a new day?*

***Schlafly****: Because they work. Our Constitution has lasted over two centuries; no other country’s has done that. When our borders are open people want to come in, they’re not trying to get out, I think that’s a pretty good test of whether a country is successful or not. We built a great country of great prosperity and enormous freedom and some people don’t like that, they want to look to the government for everything. I grew up during the Great Depression, we didn’t look to the government for any solution and they didn’t give us any solution and we grew up to be the greatest generation.*

***Titus 2:3-5 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4) so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5) to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.***

***1 Corinthians 11:2-3 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. 3) But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.***

Feminists have had a major negative influence on girls and young women by instilling in them the idea that being submissive to a husband is the same as being a subservient slave. They would have them believe the goal is equality with men when in reality, that goal is taking a step downward, not upward. They tell young impressionable girls that a marriage must be 50/50 with neither one being in charge. That idea is not only stupid, it’s unbiblical.

**Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23) For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24) But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.**

There is a huge difference between being feminine and being a feminist. The feminists have gone a long way in destroying femininity in women. Many, if not most females today, walk, talk, dress, and act as if they were males. Gentle soft spoken ladies are hard to find these days. Many movies have tough hardened females in the leading roles who are rougher and stronger than most males who appear to be afraid of them.

More women are getting college degrees today than men:



 DISCERNMENT, pg. 67

Women take on nearly every male occupation today.

There are women boxers, wrestlers, pastors, soldiers, generals, firemen (firewomen?), Senators, Congresswomen, Governors, policewomen, construction workers, etc. About the only place women have not infiltrated is the NFL.

The feminist movement has caused untold numbers of marriages to break apart. Their anti-male ideology is the reason why so many women no longer respect and obey their husbands but compete with them for the headship of the home.

Harmful consequences occurred when women started entering the workforce in mass:

1) Children come home from school with no one at home and wind up getting into trouble.

2) Sexual temptations can develop in the workplace and often there are immoral men who sexually harass women.

3) Wives making an income can make it harder for them to submit to their husbands in many cases.

4) Household chores are more difficult to attend to when one comes home tired and sometimes irritable.

**DISCERNMENT 36** (7-14-16)

**The LGBT Movement**

The success of this movement over the past twenty years is almost unbelievable. Just eleven years ago, homosexual activity was against the law and now it is not only accepted by most Americans, it’s celebrated.

Lesbianism, Homosexuality, Bi-sexuality, and Transgenderism, are offensive to God and are harmful to marriage. Thousands of marriages have dissolved because either the husband or the wife ran off with someone of the same sex. Think of what that must do the children.

The divine institution of marriage was severely damaged when the SCOTUS decided that there was a constitutional right for two people of the same sex to get married. Of course marriage is as honorable and as important as it ever was, but in the minds of many, it is on the same level as so called same-sex marriage which has cheapened it.

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 68

It will be cheapened even more when people demand the right to marry their pet, when parents marry their children, when men marry several women, and women marry several men.

**No-Fault Divorce**  [Not Biblical, not moral, not lawful. A contract is a contract.]

There was a time when a divorce would not be granted unless there were legitimate grounds for it. Either the husband or wife must have been guilty of breaking their wedding vows in some way before a divorce would be granted. That is one reason why there was a stigma attached to divorce. But no more, today, divorce is as common as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

*“No-fault divorce is a divorce in which the dissolution of a marriage does not require a showing of wrongdoing by either party. Laws providing for no-fault divorce allow a family court to grant a divorce in response to a petition by either party of the marriage without requiring the petitioner to provide evidence that the defendant has committed a breach of the marital contract.” Wikipedia*

What do you suppose happened to the divorce rate when this law was passed?

*“A paper published in The Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, written by Douglas Allen, argues that the introduction of no-fault divorce led to* ***a six-fold increase*** *in just two years, after a century of rather stable divorce rates. Also, the law increased the rate at which women entered the workforce, increased the number of hours worked in a week, increased the feminization of poverty, and increased the age at which people married. ibid*

*“Stephen Baskerville, a political scientist at Howard University, argues that no-fault divorce rewards wrongdoers, reduces the need of marital binding agreement contracts at the public's expense, and helps women take custody of their children at the husbands' expense in many cases where the man has done nothing wrong*.” *ibid*

One spouse can claim that the marriage is not working because of irreconcilable differences, and that is sufficient “grounds” today to get a divorce. But what if the other spouse doesn’t want to get divorced? Well that just proves that there is a difference between the two that is deemed to be irreconcilable.

The majority of states have no-fault divorce statutes in one form or another.

*“Thirty years ago, marriage laws enforced marriage vows. Marriage entailed a contractual obligation to stay together and share intimate relations (to have and to hold), to remain faithful, and to love and support each other always. A divorce suit was a suit for breach of contract. Breach had to be shown, and breaches would be penalized in the adjudication of property and support.*

*“When "no fault" divorce laws swept the nation in the 70's, enforcement of marriage vows was eliminated. The marriage contract became simply a set of rules for dividing up property and determining who had to pay what support to who, as soon as either party wanted out, without regard to who had broken which vows.*

*“The new system eliminates the difficulty of assigning blame by eliminating punishment for blame. It is like eliminating the difficulty of deciding who to believe in rape cases by making rape legal. The most rapacious breach of marriage vows is not only protected but is often very handsomely rewarded. There is each day an offer on the table for the spoils one can walk away with, and a firm guarantee by the state that there will be no scrutiny of anyone's motives or behavior.*

*“Since the couple will no longer be sharing expenses, their combined prosperity will typically decline, but very often the rules will offer a lucrative package to one at the expense of the other. In particular, thanks to three decades of chivalrous male concession to strident feminist demands, the rules for settlement are grotesquely biased against breadwinners.”*

Because there are no consequences and no stigma attached to divorce, couples have little incentive to stick it out, to work harder to make it work, or to keep the sacred vows they made when they were married.

There was something somewhat similar to “no-fault divorce” in the O.T. It is found in ***Deut. 24:1.***

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 69

***Deuteronomy 24:1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,***

The Hebrew word ERVAH, ***indecency*** can mean something improper, unclean, shameful, or dishonorable. However it cannot mean adultery here because adultery was considered to be a crime punishable by execution, being stoned to death, ***Lev. 20:10****,* ***Deut. 22:22***.

The Rabbinical school of Hillel interpreted this as meaning divorce for any flimsy reason, using it as a divorce gimmick. So anything that displeased a husband gave him grounds for divorce. For example:

* By her walking in public with her hair down.
* By her flirting with a man.
* By her being noisy so that neighbors hear her arguing.
* If he found a woman who was more beautiful.

So divorce was legal under certain circumstances which was called “indecency” or “a matter of shame. It probably started out as being rational and reasonable but eventually turned into a divorce gimmick that was used by the husband to get rid of his wife.

The divorce gimmick, like “no-fault divorce”, seeks to maintain a superficial righteousness, and even self-justification in getting rid of a spouse without a legitimate cause. Hence, it becomes a combination of hypocrisy and sinfulness. It became a dirty trick when people did not stick with the high standards of the Bible.

***Matthew 19:3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?"*** [They were always trying to catch Him going against the Law.]

Jesus told them that when a couple gets married, they become one flesh and what God has joined together, let no man separate.

***Matthew 19:7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?"***

***Matthew 19:8-9 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality*** [Gr. PORNEIA: adultery, fornication]***, and marries another woman commits adultery."***

In saying this, our Lord not only rescinded the “divorce gimmick” used under the Mosaic Law, but actually limited legitimate divorce to adultery. He changed it from a criminal matter to a civil matter.

The Bible says there are three things that dissolve a marriage with the right of remarriage.

1) Adultery: ***Mt 5:32****,* ***19:9****.*

2) Desertion: ***1 Cor 7:15***.

3) The death of a spouse: ***Rom 7:2-3****;* ***1 Cor 7:39****.*

**DISCERNMENT 37** (7-19-16)

Certainly wives who are battered by their husbands, who have children who are in danger from their father, have a legitimate right to divorce their husband. But the Bible does not give them the right to remarry. However, in cases where divorce occurs without the right of remarriage, the death or remarriage of the divorced spouse who is guilty gives them the right of remarriage.

You don’t have to get a divorce just because your partner commits adultery. The innocent mate may wish to continue the marriage. Adultery is a sin, and once forgiven, it is no longer an issue. But it takes virtue and strength to forgive someone who has committed adultery, and it takes time to build up trust again in a relationship.

Legalism says that the Bible authorizes no kind of divorce whatsoever. That is untrue. Self-righteous, legalistic, arrogant people always want the guilty party to suffer and wallow in the dirt.

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 70

But this doesn’t mean that the innocent party has to suffer along with them. The innocent party has the right of remarriage.

**OUR MANIPULATIVE MEDIA AND OUR SEX SATURATED SOCIETY:**

*“Television, movies and the Internet are having an effect on mankind that would have been unimaginable even a century ago. The media—print and electronic—shape our lives and our minds in ways that most fail to realize, and with sobering effects!”*

Tomorrows World, *How the Media Mold the World, by Douglas A. Winnalll*

*We are witnessing a major cultural revolution that is having an incredible impact on our society. Yet, despite numerous warnings, few seem to understand what is really going on or where this surging wave of social change is taking us!*

*Ibid*

*Many assume today that when and what we watch is merely a matter of personal taste but modern media executives acknowledge that "television is undeniably the most powerful influence in our society today. Some claim that only "extreme right wing religious fanatics" become upset over the content of films and television and that "mature" individuals prefer the "adult content" of modern media entertainment.*

*Ibid*

*However, these assumptions are self-serving myths unsupported by the actual evidence! In fact, knowledgeable members of the media and communications fields are increasingly vocal about the extremely detrimental effects of this modern electronic revolution.*

*Ibid*

Of course the manipulative media and our decadent entertainment industry can be very harmful to a strong and happy marriage.

**Entertainment:**  Hollywood has been consumed with sex for decades but now it seems that there are no limits to the gratuitous use of vulgar language and explicit sex scenes in their movies. That goes for TV as well.

Even the award shows like the Grammy’s and the Academy Awards are not off limits to sexual innuendo and vulgar gestures. The half-time shows for the Super Bowl can also be embarrassing to parents who have children watching.

**Books**: Sex sells and of course publishers know that and that is why they promote such books as “Fifty Shades of Grey” which is a graphic sexually explicit book. The Romance novels seem to be very popular with women because they present relationships in a very unrealistic way.

**Internet:**  Like all other media, can be used for good or bad. It is shocking to realize how powerful and vast the internet is.

*“According to estimates from Scandinavian research centreSintef, 90% of all the data the human race has ever produced has been generated in the past two years. That explosion is due to the rise of the web, smartphones, social media and the "big data" projects in which businesses, governments and scientists are involved.”* BBC News*, Web porn: Just how much is there?*, by Mark Ward, April 2013

They say that 30-37% of that data is pornography.

*“In 2013, Google research showed that porn sites get more traffic than Netflix, Amazon, and Twitter combined (source). In the UK, as of 2013, porn websites were being accessed more than all social networks combined, and more than all shopping websites combined.´*

IN THE USA:

*64% of American men view porn at least monthly, and the percentage of Christian men is nearly the same*

 *as the culture at large*

*79% of men ages 18-30 view porn at least monthly.*

*67% of men ages 31-49 view porn at least monthly.* DISCERNMENT, pg. 71

*55% of married men view porn at least monthly.*

Pornographic websites, 4.2 million

Pornographic pages, 420 million

Daily pornographic search engine requests, 68 million (25% of total search engine requests)

The porn industry generates $13 billion each year in the US.

64% of college men and 18% of college women spend time online for Internet sex every week.

*'The young women who talk to me on campuses about the effect of pornography on their intimate lives speak of feeling that they can never measure up, that they can never ask for what they want; and that if they do not offer what porn offers, they cannot expect to hold a guy.*

*Na*omi Wolf

Consider these News headlines:

***Dems declare war on words 'husband,' 'wife'***

***Oregon allowing 15-year-olds to get state-subsidized sex-change operations***

***Toronto to host massive orgy for disabled people***

***Democrat Congressman 'Fine' with Men Marrying Mules***

***Prominent Atheist Richard Dawkins Defends ‘Mild Pedophilia’***

***Despite Protest, Public High School Allows Boy To Use Girls’ Locker Room***

***California Group Mails Condoms to 12 Year Olds***

***College Hosts Sex, Masturbation Tutorial Inside A Church***

***Bible Rewritten to Comply With Homosexual Agenda***

***Top Hollywood Director Believes Incest Is Acceptable***

***Sweden: Quote Leviticus, Go To Jail***

*In Sweden, expressing a moral objection to homosexuality is illegal, even on religious grounds, even in church, and a pastor minded to cite the more robust verses of Leviticus would risk four years in jail.*

***PETA Rebukes White House for 'Flippantly' Dismissing Question on Senate's Vote to Legalize Bestiality in Military*** *(CNSNews.com)*

*People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has written a letter to White House Press Secretary Jay Carney rebuking him for "flippantly" dismissing a question he was asked at Monday's press briefing about last week's Senate vote approving a bill that would repeal the military's ban on bestiality.*

The following are the powerful forces we have covered that work to destroy marriage in the 21st century.

Government Welfare for Single Moms

Co-habitation

Feminists Movement

The LGBT Movement

No-Fault Divorce

Our Manipulative Media and our Sex Saturated Society

**DISCERNMENT 38 (7-21-16)**

People who are **losers in life** are losers in marriage. People who are winners in life have the opportunity to be winners in marriage, although it doesn’t always work out. Losers are not people who fail. Losers are people who do nothing about their failures.

Most people who get married don’t have a clue about what they are doing. They think getting married will make them happy. Principle: If you don’t already have the capacity to be happy, no one or anything else in life will make you happy. Knowing and applying God’s Word gives you that wonderful capacity to be happy in every circumstance.

Marriage can be a great source of joy but it does not come easy. After all, marriage is combining two OSNs together under one roof for life. So discernment in choosing a mate is extremely important.

**WOMEN** DISCERNMENT, pg. 72

Don’t marry an unbeliever, ***2 Cor. 6:14***.

Don’t marry a believer negative toward B.D.

Don’t marry a man who is jealous.

Don’t marry a man to whom you cannot submit.

Don’t marry a man you do not love.

Don’t marry an alcoholic or a drug addict.

Don’t marry a man you don’t respect.

Don’t marry a man you can manipulate.

Don’t marry a man who is arrogant.

Don’t marry a man who puts himself first.

Don’t marry a man who is irresponsible.

Don’t marry a man who you don’t trust.

Don’t marry a bully, or

A man who is selfish.

A man who won’t communicate with you.

A man who is insensitive.

A man who is cruel to animals.

A man who never apologizes.

A man who constantly makes excuses.

A man who is a criminal.

A man who doesn’t respect your decision to remain chaste.

A man who is irresponsible with money.

A man who never makes you laugh.

**MEN**

Don’t marry an unbeliever.

Don’t marry a believer who is negative toward B.D.

Don’t marry a woman who will not willingly submit to you.

Don’t marry a woman who you do not love.

Don’t marry a woman who can manipulate you.

Don’t marry a woman who is arrogant and bossy.

Don’t marry a woman who is always right & can’t laugh at herself.

Don’t marry a woman who belittles you in front of others.

Don’t marry a woman with an uncontrollable temper.

Don’t marry a woman who holds a grudge.

Don’t marry a woman who is argumentative.

Don’t marry a woman who has to have the last word.

Don’t marry a woman who is very critical or fault-finding.

Don’t marry a woman who gripes, gripes, and gripes.

Don’t marry a woman who has to get her way.

Don’t marry a woman who goes behind your back & hides things from you.

Don’t marry a woman who you don’t trust.

Don’t marry an alcoholic or a drug addict.

Don’t marry a woman a woman with loose morals.

**DISCERNMENT 39 (7-26-16)**

**GOD’S PATTERN FOR MARRIAGE**

The scriptural record of the first marriage in Genesis 2:18–25 includes at least six principles which establish a divine pattern.

*1. The choice of a life mate should involve God*. Though man’s will is involved in taking this important step. [Fallible man can easily make a bad decision based on the wrong reasons when choosing a mate. He must rely on God and His Word when making this all important decision].

*2. Marriage means companionship and unity*. It is a co-operative venture. Amos appropriately asks, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Applied to marriage, the answer to this question is decidedly “no.” Eve was created as Adam’s counterpart, as his complement. Thus it is of supreme importance that there be unity of faith. To marry a nonbeliever is to ask for trouble. It violates a principle established in Eden.

*3. Marriage as originally planned involved one man and one woman*. Polygamy was not God’s idea for successful marriage. Having more than one wife was introduced because of man’s sinful nature, his own self-will, and his tendency to leave God out of his plans. Wherever it was practiced, it created problems that led to unhappiness, jealousy, and many other difficulties. A man is to be “one flesh” with one woman.

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 73

*4. Marriage involves physical union*. Since that first marriage in the Garden, God’s plan for husband and wife has included this important relationship (Gen. 1:28; Prov. 5:18–20). In some mysteriously wonderful way, it is the means whereby God says man and woman “become one flesh” (1 Cor. 6:15–16).

*5. Marriage involves a new social unit*. To be successfully married, both man and woman must leave father and mother and establish a new home (Gen. 2:24). In fact, it is the parents’ responsibility to help prepare their children for the time when they are to break home ties and establish a new dependency.

*6. Marriage is for keeps*. Though God says nothing specifically in Genesis 2:18–25 regarding the possibility of separation (sin had not yet entered the race), the term “shall cleave” strongly implies that this union was lifelong. Jesus clarified this: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6).

*Bibliothea Secra Volume 116, page 16*

Most Hollywood weddings seem to reject point 6:

*“A Hollywood wedding is one where they take each other for better or for worse—but not for long…”*

*E. C. Mckenzie Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 346.*

*Franklin C. Bailey of Los Angeles is in charge of what he calls “the busiest repair shop in town,” and adds that “just around the corner is the busiest wrecking business.” The repair shop is the marriage counseling service he runs as counselor of the Conciliation Court of Los Angeles. The wrecking business around the corner is the divorce court. “Mr. Bailey lists as the major complaints from the 10,000 people who have passed through his office, in this order: sex, money, children, and trouble with in-laws. But he says that the real problems are selfishness and greed.*

*3*

*Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 345–346.*

All relationships require maintenance and that is especially true for marriage. I’m talking about daily, moment-to-moment maintenance. Part of maintenance is to not think about ourselves first and do what we want to do, even though that is our natural inclination. People want their marriages to be successful and happy but both parties have to make a conscience effort every day to be kind, thoughtful, loving, and forgiving every single day.

The following was taken from my book, **YOU’RE MARRIED. NOW WHAT?**

*Over time, husbands and wives have disagreements about one thing or another that may eventually lead to an impasse. Both of them think they are right and neither one is willing to concede or compromise. Most couples don’t know what to do at this point because they lack the skills needed to resolve the situation. So they can easily become frustrated, angry, and tempted to say or do something they might regret later.*

*Before you know it, seeds of bitterness are planted. Kindness, gentleness, and laughter disappear. No more loving gestures, just cold stares and scorn. Where once they enjoyed lively conversations and a close rapport, there’s silence. Neither of them wanted this to happen yet they feel helpless to stop it. It’s as if some monstrous force intruded into their lives and made them enemies. Some couples manage to survive by tip-toeing around sensitive issues, but the awkwardness and discontent is still there.*

*Just the daily routine of life can take a toll on marriage. Many become disheartened and afraid that life is passing them by. They feel like a prisoner, locked in a mundane existence with a mediocre mate, and think they’ve fallen out of love, so they want out. Can these relationships be restored? Can these marriages be saved? Absolutely!*

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 74

*The principles in this book can not only save struggling marriages but can also put relationships with friends, family, or associates back into mint condition. So if you’re in a relationship that just needs a little tune-up or in one that requires a complete overhaul, turn this page and continue reading.*

*We all agree changes must be made before a struggling or broken marriage can be repaired. The problem is, most people think it’s their spouse that’s got to change. They say, “If she would just stop \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, everything would be all right,” or “If he would just start \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, everything would be fine”. WRONG!*

*You’ve probably already tried everything to change your spouse and it hasn’t worked, has it? Why? Because you can’t change others; you can only change yourself. But here is the neat thing. When you change yourself, it produces changes in your spouse. They will find it more and more difficult to find fault with you or to hate you. Changes in yourself will inspire changes in them.*

*God never tells us to try to change our spouses. Our job is to obey Him and let Him make the changes in them. Once you realize this, life becomes a whole lot easier with less frustration and fewer confrontations.*

**DISCERNMENT 40 (7-28-16)** Continuing excerpts from **YOU’RE MARRIED, NOW WHAT?**

***THE BLAME GAME***

*Do you accuse your spouse of being more to blame than you? Who cares who’s more to blame? It’s not about blame! There is not one verse in the Bible that tells us to blame or accuse anyone. In fact, it tells us not to judge others. Placing blame on the other person will not solve your problems. You must face this fact. Your marriage will die if you don’t stop blaming your spouse while making excuses for yourself.*

*So, if you’ve been blaming your misery on your spouse, your family, your kids, your friends, your job, your boss, your circumstances, or anything else, stop it! Quit blaming others for your unhappiness. You are responsible for your own happiness. No one can make you happy but You. True happiness is not affected by what other people do or don’t do. Happiness comes from what is in your soul, from what You are thinking.*

*Excusing yourself and blaming others for your own ugly, bitter, sarcastic, hateful, and revengeful behavior MUST END! Do you honestly think that wining, complaining, judging, accusing, badgering, blaming, or yelling at your spouse is going to make them a better person? Will it cause them to love you more? When has that ever worked? You can’t force someone to change. They’ve got to want to change, and seeing you making changes in your life will make them more willing to make changes in their life.*

*Don’t be a scorekeeper.*

***COMMUNICATION***

*Communication is to marriage what oxygen is to breathing. You can’t survive without it. Some have described a happy marriage as a long conversation that seems too short. When couples stop talking, they’re in trouble. Problems cannot be solved when people don’t talk to one another. Giving the other person the silent treatment is exactly what your marriage does not need! That is true for all of your relationships.*

*Good communication requires not only talking, but listening. I mean really listening. Listening is not waiting for your spouse to stop talking so you can say what you want to say. It’s thinking about what the other person says and then responding to it. It’s amazing how many couples carry on what they think are conversations and no one is listening. They just take turns blasting away at each other.*

***James 1:19 ...This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger...***

 DISCERNMENT, pg. 75

*It would help if people expressed what they would like to see happen rather than focus on what they don’t like. Droning on and on about what you don’t like is negative and tends to bring everybody down. Your spouse is much more likely to listen and not become defensive if you explain what they could do that is pleasing to you rather than complain about what they’re doing that displeases you. The idea is to inspire them to do something positive rather than condemn them for doing something negative.*