

Eunice's Family: What Can Be Done

Marriage is life's most intimate relationship. No one will affect you more than your mate. "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames him is as rotteness in his bones" (Prov. 12:4).

For many reasons, Christians should marry Christians. Only in that case can you share what is most important in life — your service to Christ — with your closest companion. An unbelieving mate may influence you away from the Lord. If that does not happen, he or she will hold you back in some way, or at least make things more awkward or difficult. Two people dedicated to doing God's will have a common basis for solving problems that come to the relationship. If God blesses the marriage with children, your parental obligation is much easier if both parents are Christians. And when death ends your marriage, how much better to face the loss of a companion knowing that he or she died in the Lord.

We need to emphasize these practical realities to people contemplating marriage. Nevertheless, some choose to marry those who are not Christians. Also, it is not uncommon among those already married for one spouse to become a Christian but the other does not. Such families should consider Eunice and take heart. She shows what can be done in that situation.

Acts 16 tells of Paul coming to Lystra on his second preaching trip. "And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek" (vs. 1). Timothy's mother was Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). His father was evidently not a Christian, and he was sufficiently opposed to Eunice's beliefs that Timothy had not been circumcised (vs. 3).

What did Eunice do? Two things. First, she lived by her convictions, despite her husband. 2 Timothy 1:5 speaks of her sincere faith, which also characterized her mother, Lois. Second, she taught her son. Paul reminded Timothy that "from childhood you have known the sacred writings" (2 Tim. 3:15). It was surely more difficult for Eunice to have to do this training without a husband's help, but she did it. Doubtless Lois also contributed. If Eunice did it, so can you. It will require persistent instruction and a consistent example.

Something else about Eunice is noteworthy. It was at Lystra where Paul was stoned and left for dead on his first preaching trip (Acts 14:19). Now, this same apostle wanted her young son to go with him to destinations unknown to assist him in preaching. What would be in store for Timothy? How would he fare? Surely she had concerns. But the text reveals no hesitation on her part or his, and this faithful mother's beloved son proved to be a valuable worker in the Lord's cause. If you will be a Eunice, your son may be a Timothy.

- by Frank Himmel

The Plague of Profanity

Are you as sick of hearing it as I am? We are exposed to it at the super market, over the back fence, and at ball games. It fills our novels, movies, and is profuse on television. What is this mysterious influence? Profanity!

We hear it – not just from sailors ("cuss like a sailor"), or from the French ("pardon my 'French'") – but from all strata of society. It used to be the case that a gentleman would never use profanity in the presence of a woman – and deep down he knew he shouldn't use it anywhere. Now, women can swear with the "best (or worst) of 'em." Small children, who have not learned to discuss much of anything yet – on an intellectual basis – can spew forth a "blue" streak. It almost seems as if some of their first words are of the "four-letter" variety.

The Bible is not silent on the proper use of human language. Paul wrote:

"Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Eph. 4:29).

The term rendered "corrupt" is the Greek *sapros*, akin to *sepo* ("to rot"). It denotes that which provides no good service. Our words in the presence of others ought to be such as build men up, rather than debasing them (cf. Job 4:4).

Again, the inspired apostle wrote:

". . . but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful ['filthy' KJV] speaking out of your mouth. . . ." (Col. 3:8).

The term signifies that which is base, characterized by shame. As a result of their studies of the Greek papyri, Moulton & Milligan suggested that the word generally denotes "foul or filthy" language (Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1963, p. 14).

Profanity is such an invasive influence; it's a mind-maggot. It gnaws its way into the recesses of one's thinking, and, if harbored, will make its presence spontaneously felt at the slightest provocation. This is what happens when we allow ourselves to be unnecessarily and regularly exposed to its vileness. We may soon begin to "cuss" mentally even if we don't verbalize profanity outright.

- by Wayne Jackson

In Case You Didn't Know . . .

Lots of years and more than 100,000 miles had left their marks on my old pick-up truck. It had a peculiar habit of stalling if you didn't play the gas pedal just right in cold weather. And the transmission required a special talent in order to find third gear. In fact, because of its various idiosyncrasies, I had become the only one who could drive that old Ford with any success at all.

Local congregations can be sort of like that old truck. Sometimes we hear criticisms like: "they're not friendly", or "no work is being done", or "they just don't care, enough about other people". Now these judgments may be true but, on the other hand, it might just be that you are not aware of what's happening. You may not know about the work that is being done.

At first glance you would not notice the good sister who carries food to a family that has experienced a serious illness or a recent death. You won't be able to see the brother who offers some money to help another in need. Seldom can you detect cases where vital words of encouragement are directed toward a weak Christian. You may not recognize those who extend hospitality to visitors; the extra Bible studies being held to convert lost sinners; the many kind deeds being performed. These are not done to be "seen of men".

One disgusted fella who borrowed my old pick-up returned it and said it was only fit for the junkyard. I knew that he just didn't know how to drive it. Some who criticize the local church just haven't taken the time to get to know it and to appreciate the good work that is being done. Have you?

- by Greg Gwin