

Premarital Wall-papering

We live in an age preoccupied with sex. It is used in ads to sell books,, cars, vacations and toothpaste. And so it is no wonder young people think that they need to try out marriage by "living together". We are told that the physical relationship is such an important part of marriage that the man and woman involved need to have this experience to see if the marriage will be good.

I have an alternative: let the man and woman wallpaper a room together. Let them slop paste around, spill water, get in each other's way, look at each other's work, and learn of each other's patience, or the lack of it...there's the way to see what it is going to be like!

Young people: don't be fooled by what the devil preaches in books, on television, and from the mouths of his disciples. Marriage is not primarily a physical relationship. It is a life long commitment by two people who care about each other. Love and sex are not the same thing.

Learn about each other. Spend time together. Plan as much for your marriage as you do for your wedding. Papering a room together is not as much of a joke as you think! How two people get along together and whether they have common ideas and goals make for the best of situations.

Jesus called living together "sin", fornication. He placed the highest values on marriage, using it as the figure to describe his relationship with the church (Eph.5). He wants you to have all the joy God gives -- including that of the physical relationship in marriage. But, carefully consider that He shows a basis for marriage far beyond that of the world. In fact, it is in Him!

- by Robert Hines

Wake Up!

I have never tried it, but I am told that if you drop a frog into hot water, he will jump out. However, if you were to place a frog in a kettle of cool water and gradually heat the water, the frog would stay put and perish in a boiling death. Perhaps you wonder how even a frog could be so stupid as to be unaware of his gradually changing surroundings. Are we any wiser?

When I was growing up, most Christian parents were terribly concerned about the immoral influence of Hollywood films. Those are the old movies that today are shown on TV and judged innocent and harmless -- "family pictures." Now TV news, commercials and entertainment are saturated with lust and violence. Ten years ago people were saying, "If it gets any worse, I'm going to toss my TV set out." Has it gotten worse? Are we a bunch of slowly cooking frogs?

The lulled frog syndrome can also be witnessed in many churches. A few years ago many members were expressing concern about churches being diverted from their work. If what is now sponsored, from church ball teams to video game rooms, from secular education to homes for unwed mothers, if churches had introduced anything like this fifty years ago, members would have jumped clear into the next county. But these changes have been introduced gradually and with little awareness; and the people of God have been lulled to sleep. How grave is their danger!

"Awake you who sleep. Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:14-17).

- by Marvin A. Noble

Getting More Out of the Sermon

Experts tell us that we speak at a rate of 125 words per minute. But we can listen to 400 words per minute. It's no wonder the attention often wanders. That means we need to discipline the mind to listen to a lesson without distraction. Here are some suggestions to help you get more out of the sermon.

1. OPEN MIND. We need to be in the right frame of mind to listen. Our worship is to be "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). We should approach a sermon with the attitude that we want to learn and profit from it. Attitude makes a big difference.

2. OPEN BIBLE. Compare what you hear with God's word (Acts 17:11). You need to form personal convictions based on what you read in the Bible. It will stick in your mind longer when you read it for yourself.
3. TAKE NOTES. This will be another "visual aid" to help you remember. You can recall more of what you see than what you just hear. Plus, you will have the notes to use for further study.

You CAN get more out of the sermon. But only if you try.

- by Roger Hillis

Never Give Up!

Winston Churchill is remembered as one of the great motivators of the past century. His leadership qualities were a deciding factor in helping the British people through the darkest hours of World War II.

Later in life Churchill was invited to return to the preparatory school he had attended as a youth. He was to address the students, and they had been told to expect "one of the greatest orators of all times." Their instructions were to listen carefully, and take notes.

Churchill's speech to the student body was incredibly brief. You, no doubt, are familiar with the entire text of that speech. Sir Winston said, "*Young Gentlemen, Never, never, never, never give up!*" That was it. No more. But it was a message that could not be forgotten.

Others have pointed out that the key to success is not necessarily talent, or training, or luck. It is patience, persistence, and perseverance that wins the prize.

This principle also applies in spiritual pursuits. We've known of some incredibly talented folks who have given up. And others who have received the finest opportunities have simply quit.

We need determination to continue on, no matter what comes our way. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Don't whine and drop out at the first sign of adversity.

The book, of Hebrews was written to Christians who were tempted to give up. The words of encouragement written to them are needed by us today: "*Cast not away therefore your confidence. . . ye have need of patience. . . we are not of them who draw back (10:35—39) . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us (12:1)*".

Never give up!

- by Greg Gwin