

Heart and Home Harmony

Aiming for hearts, homes, and lives in harmony with:
God and His Church, and the rest of His creation through the Holy Spirit.

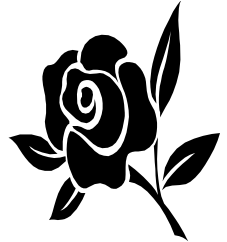
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✧ Learning How to Love ✧

This time we want to focus on loving ourselves----

How to Get What You Want and Be In Control



Can you imagine living in this world and being in control and having what you want?

Do you know that that is what God wants for you?

What *do* we want? We want to be happy and satisfied. What will make us happy and satisfied?

We want to meet the constant demands of our physical bodies. We try to avoid pain, but we will work hard to earn a profit to get possessions to bring us pleasure. We pay dear to put ourselves in a position of power to get praise from people. We always want to be the one that is right.

Are we happy then?

Soon our physical passions demand more. All earthly pleasures and possessions finally pass away. Someone pushes us from our pedestal. We perform and dress to impress our peers while others shake

their heads at our stupidity. When the season of pleasure is over, and after we have tried so hard to get attention, are we satisfied?

Vivian Stoppel aptly portrays our plight in her poem:

Our Taskmaster

The strongest chains that ever bind
are forged within our anxious mind.
No scourge in human slaver's grip
cracks louder than our self-made
whip.

Yet we, exhausted, scurry still
our inner dictates to fulfill
and serving, fearful, genuflect
before the image we erect:

the Who we think that we should
be—
the Self we want the world to see.

We live in a “free” country but how free are we? How many dictators control us? Usually it is fear of something that dictates what we do – fear of hunger, cold, loneliness, rejection, terrorists, injury, etc.

Our experiences since our conception form the fears that drive us. The fears that are based on truth benefit us. Most of us (maybe all of us) have been, more or less, lied to, used, and abused, somewhere along the way. We acquire fears, often subconscious, based on deception. Our own hearts further deceive us. Something sparks us, our fears fan the flames, and our passions fuel our action. Then – do we have what we wanted?

Let’s look at some of the sources of the lies that cause fears. Children are like soft clay, ready to be molded. They want to please and they believe what they are told. When a child is told, through word or action, that he is no good, he believes it. If he is used as an object to fulfill someone’s sexual lust, “worthless” becomes stamped on his soul, an impression that may remain. Since he cannot live with the pain, it becomes buried in his

subconsciousness or he denies the reality of it. The fear and shame are still there but he does not realize that that is what is tormenting him.

A feeling of guilt is the result of what we do. A feeling of shame is based on what we are. When we persist in sin, we become a shameful pervert, but an abused child grows up with a false sense of shame and fear. A child can deal with guilt. When he receives the punishment for his misdeed, he goes away happy and free. He cannot deal with shame. His development is arrested and he remains a child inside. He grows up living behind a mask, unable to get close to people for fear they will see the ugliness inside of him and further disappoint him. In self-defense, he wants to lash back. Any disapproval from others, real or imagined, is a painful poke in his inner wounds. His utter self-loathing drives him toward self-destruction. He hasn’t the slightest idea that his wounds are driving him.

Whatever we fear becomes our dictator. Fear of what people will think makes us a slave to our peers. False fears, false religion, peer pressure, and our passions entangle

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever.
(1 John 2:15-17)

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Editors: Luke and Rachel Martin
Parishville Christian Church
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us and habits strengthen the cords. Unable to gain control of ourselves, we somehow feel that we will be more secure if we control others. In an attempt to elevate ourselves, we put others down. Of course, that never works, though we are ever so religious or not.

Our flesh is naturally selfish. It wants pleasure (lust of the flesh), possessions (lust of the eyes), and praise (pride of life, see 1 John 2:15-17). We'll sweat, exert ourselves, and take risks for pleasure or glory – but the reward is short-lived. The pleasure that the devil promised can quickly turn to heartache, even hell. When pleasure, possessions, and praise are our goal, they become our control. People won't like us if we are so selfish – they have no use for us – and we won't like ourselves.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

The Answer:

We need fear that is based on truth. God is true. Fear him. God is love. It is wonderful to be a slave of Love. It will satisfy us forever.

Through love, God provides and we care for one another to satisfy our physical needs. Sexual passions are fully satisfied, only when Love/God joins a man and woman together. With love, we can be content with having food and clothes. Love will spare us from the snare of seeking earthly riches. (1 Tim. 6:6-10)

With love, we will labor and

endure all things. We'll sweat, exert ourselves, even take risks if necessary – and we'll be satisfied. Everything we do and possess because of love brings with it a promise of pleasure through purpose. God knows we need to feel needed.

God tells us to esteem others better than we do ourselves. **Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. (Philippians 2:3) For, brothers, you were called to liberty. Only do not use the liberty for an opening to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)** Can you imagine what this world would be if everyone obeyed God's command to love and serve one another and esteemed you better than they do themselves?

Love recognizes our worth. God knows our worth and He wants us to know our true worth. He doesn't want us to think higher of ourselves than we are. Neither does He want us to loathe ourselves. We need to recognize that when God made us, He did all things well, but the devil has deceived us, we have disobeyed God, our spirit has died, and our flesh leads us to increasing wickedness. Stop fearing the devil, the father of lies. Fear God. Accept the remedy for this death that He has provided through his Son. He takes all our

guilt and we go free. Faith in the love of God will help us see the truth about ourselves and help us stop carrying the shame that doesn't belong to us. The Spirit of Christ will help us heal, root out bitterness, and forgive those who wronged us.

Religion will never give us what we want. No matter how religious we are, if we are serving Self, we will not be serving God. If we fear man or a church, we will not be fearing God. (Matt. 6:24) **Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows**

in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27) 1 John 2:16 identifies the world as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Really, the only way to overcome the tyranny of our Self, is to trust in His mercy and turn ourselves completely over to God's rule. The fruit of His Spirit is everything we want. It will never make us ashamed. We won't need that self-made whip, for we, along with God, will joy in the work He is doing in us – what He is making of us. The Who we think that we should be—becomes the who that God made. The self we want the world to see— should become true—Lord help us! We'll never be alone, because we have Jesus for

our friend. (Heb. 13:5) And being more likeable, we'll find friends and companions easier.

Love chastens for the good of the recipient. When God chastens, we can endure the pain, knowing that it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. (Heb. 5-11) That is what we want: peace that comes from being right.

Sadly, most people do not have that peace. Driven by past wounds and mistakes and their lust, many descend to depths of cruelty, desperately trying to gain control. What do you do if you are caught in

But the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (See Gal. 5:22-23)

the grip of a “control freak?” By far, your best option is to place yourself under God's control. The fear of Him will override all other fears. Though He has given man a free will, He has control and has

your best in mind. **And do not fear those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28) If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)**

By looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, (Hebrews 12:2) we can trust and rest, knowing that, when the time comes that we can see the whole picture, whatever He wants for us is what we want.

Charity (love) never fails. 1 Corinthians 13:8. Love is powerful. It can break down walls where nothing else can. You might be surprised to find out how much you affect those around you. The ripples can spread far, and through generations. We must have love, so that that influence is good.

Only through Love/God will we get what we want. By not seeking pleasure, we can have pleasure forevermore. By giving up all, we can possess our soul. By humbling ourselves, we can obtain the praise of God. If He allows us breath, we will, by the Holy Spirit, be in control of everything that we can or want to be. It's good that I cannot control you, but I hope to convince you to become a servant of Love. A servant— but free indeed. (John 8:32-36)

He who finds his life shall lose it. And he who loses his life for My sake shall find it. (Matthew 10:39)

You will make Me know the way of life; in Your presence is fullness of joys. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalms 16:11)

In your patience possess ye your souls. (Luke 21:19)

... as unknown and yet well known; as dying and, behold, we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrow-

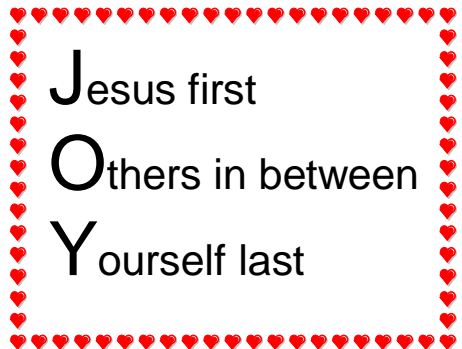
ful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. (2 Corinthians 6:9-10)

... according as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue, (2 Peter 1:3)

And whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he who shall humble himself shall be exalted. (Matthew 23:12)

Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in due time, (1 Peter 5:6)

...How can you believe, you who receive honor from one another and do not seek the honor that comes from God only? (John 5:44)



Jesus first
Others in between
Yourself last

The Mail Box

Dear Brother and Sister Martin,

The spring 2002 issue of *Heart and Home Harmony* has been sitting on top of my computer for several months waiting for me to find time to write to you. I appreciate the good ministry and advice in your little paper, along with The Boys Bugle.

I would like to make an observation in connection with your article, “The Liberation of Women—and Men.” Concerning women who live with an abusive husband, you write, “If she does what God says (lives godly, submits to him, and shows her appreciation wherever she can) he will likely change for the better.” I have had a bit of experience counseling women with abusive husbands and have done quite a bit of reading on the subject. While the steps you suggest may sometimes work, by the grace of God, all too often the abusive behavior is so ingrained in the man (perhaps modeled to him by his own father) that no amount of submission on the part of the wife helps. Often the abused wife feels guilty and responsible for her husband’s bad behavior when it isn’t her fault at all.

When the husband is a professing Christian and a member of a local church, I would suggest the following Scriptural recourse to wives whose husbands consistently sin against them, “Moreover if thy

brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained by brother” (Matt. 18:15). Many abused wives have gone this route many times, with no lasting results. What then? Is there any other recourse? Let us read on: “But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican” (Matt. 18:15-17). This teaching of Matt. 18:15-17 is not very often applied to spouse abuse, but I believe it is very applicable. Some may think that the wife’s need to be submissive to her husband precludes her from taking this step. But it is well to remember that if her husband is a Christian, he is not only her husband but also her brother in Christ. If he is repeatedly sinning against her, she is enjoined by this passage to involve others in the local church (or at least a Christian counselor in step 2) if her husband doesn’t respond to her personal appeal to him.

Does this make sense, Scripturally? I would appreciate any comments you might have about the suggestion made on the preceding paragraph.

“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1)

Sincerely in Christ,

Paul L. Canner

Yes, we think it makes Scriptural sense. We corresponded with Mr. Canner and received another letter

Dear Brother Martin,

Thank-you for your letter of July 28.

You ask, “Why would a husband abuse the lady he loves the most?” There is no one simple answer to that question, but let me offer a suggestion. I believe it is often due to the husband loving himself even more than “The lady he loves the most.” He may be insecure, afraid of failure, or rejection, so he becomes a controller of those close by—especially his wife and family—making sure that they stay in line, don’t make fun of him, don’t embarrass him, don’t contradict him, don’t disobey him, don’t reject him. It’s all about him. He has never learned to love in the way Christ loves us and “Hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:2). He has no idea that he is supposed to love his wife “even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5:25).

This controlling usually begins during the courtship or engagement period. One common form it takes is, “I need you desperately! I will die (or kill myself) if you won’t continue the relationship with me.” The girl often feels flattered by such apparent devotedness. Or else she doesn’t want to feel guilty, so she continues with him, in spite of her better judgment. If she allows

this controlling behavior by her male friend to continue unchecked, it will soon develop into more definite kinds of emotional, mental, or even physical abuse, even before they are married. The one who is abused usually thinks, “If I would only treat him better, or be more submissive to him, he will stop abusing me,” or “As soon as we are married he will treat me better.” Instead, it only gets worse.

In my experience, most often it is the man who is controlling, but occasionally it is the woman who controls—and abuses—her husband. We need to help our young people to be alert to signs of this kind of behavior before entering into a lifetime commitment with such a person.

Sincerely in Christ,
Paul L. Canner
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Mr. Canner,

Each one must remember that each is 100% responsible for his own actions. Staying in a dangerous situation or hiding sin helps no one. Hopefully the brotherhood can help. It’s good for all of us to learn more about the subject so we can reach out in understanding and love rather than being a hindrance. We wish grace, humility, and wisdom from God to those who are suffering and to those who wish to help.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,
Luke and Rachel Martin

Here in the North Country

Dear Readers,

Greetings from the dusty North Country. Though we are hoping for rain now, we did get enough earlier to give us plenty of food. The strawberries were so plentiful that Daniel was able to pick 16 quart in 15 minutes! Luke is getting 3/4 an acre ready to plant blueberries. He wants a bigger pond so that we can irrigate. Melvin and Luke have just finished digging the pond. They were thankful for the lack of rain, which made the job much easier.

Besides the usual harvesting

this time of year, we are planning and preparing for about 300 wedding guests. Daniel plans to get married to Mendy Drury on September 7. We are glad to welcome Mendy into our family. We wish them much happiness and the grace of God as they go through life together.

We are looking forward to a time of rich fellowship this weekend as family and friends, far and near gather for the happy event. We thank God for His marvelous blessings. May you also partake of them.

In Christian love,

Luke and Rachel Martin

God, Give Us "Drive" but Keep Us From Being "Driven"

There's a difference between "drive" and "driven"—
The one is selfish the other God-given—
For the driven man has but one goal,
Just worldly wealth and not "riches of soul,"
And daily he's spurred on to reach and attain
A higher position, more profit and gain,
Ambition and wealth become his great need
As daily he's "driven" by avarice and greed ...
But most blessed are they who use their "drive"
To work with zeal so all men may survive,
For while they forfeit great personal gain
Their work and their zeal are never in vain...
For they contribute to the whole human race
And we cannot survive without growing in grace,
So help us, dear God, to choose between
The "driving force" that rules our routine
So we may make our purpose and goal
Not power and wealth but the growth of the soul...
And give us *strength* and *drive* and *desire*
To raise our standards and ethics higher
So all of us and not *just a few*
May live on earth...*as You want us to.*

By Helen Steiner Rice