



THE EXHORTER

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 3796

Proverbs 31:11-12 "The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life."

I am getting ready to embark on a journey teaching the book of Proverbs. It's been a while since I have taught it. Truisms is the heart of these sayings. They are more than just pithy statements, they are valuable lessons from Heaven. The challenge in teaching Proverbs is how to approach the book. The heart of Proverbs are independent statements. I've found the most beneficial way to teach Proverbs is to pull themes together. Many contrasts and comparisons are found throughout the pages.

Finally, as one reaches the final chapter, the words of King Lemuel, as his mother taught him, we find what is commonly known as 'the Virtuous Woman.' It's a description of the character of a woman that mom would want her son to marry. She is industrious. She is kind. She is benevolent. She is godly.

Tucked in these verses we find a wonderful relationship between husband and wife. Our verse shows this. He trusts her. She does him good. And, it's that wonderful one-two combination that makes a marriage endure and more than that, thrive.

There is an old Indian proverb that says, "Marriage is many moons in the same canoe." I like that. I've not canoed much in my life. The kids will tell of the time I t-boned another canoe and turned it over. There is some coordination that is necessary when two people are in a canoe. It's important to paddle the same direction and on opposite sides of the canoe. Balance is important or else you'll end up in the lake.

Many moons in the same canoe. Let's think about that.

First, from our verse, trust takes time to establish. Trust can be destroyed in a moment. Trust in finances. Husband and wife need to be on the same page financially. Sports gambling is becoming a problem and it is easy to turn the canoe over when one gets caught up in the immediate thrill of gambling.

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Trust when each is away at work. The majority of affairs begin in the office place. Too friendly. Too much talk about personal things. Flirting. Lonely hearts find a listening ear. It's just another step to go out to eat after work together. The next step crosses the line. The canoe tips over. Trust. No secrets when trust is strong. No hiding things when trust is strong. No lying when trust is strong.

Trust builds confidence. Trust establishes security. He trusts in her. She needs to trust in him. It's the shadowy, secretive things that leads to suspicion and the eroding of trust.

Second, she does him good all the days of her life. She's thinking about him and he is thinking about her. An endless circle. Doing good—little things. Big things. Everyday things. Things expected and things unexpected. Doing good keeps the electricity in a marriage. Doing good shows that one is appreciated and loved. And, just like the trust factor, she does him good, but does he do her good? A one way street gets tiring after a while. Remember the canoe idea. Both need to be paddling. Both are in this together.

Third, such a wonderful relationship will be noticed by others. There are those who don't want to be in the same canoe with their mate. There are those who can't leave the dock because they can't agree upon which way they should go. In some canoes, an argument takes place as to which one is going to steer. And, many canoes tip over because of anger and one wanting to get out and get away from the other person.

But, when you see that canoe smoothly gliding through the water, what a beautiful picture of teamwork, togetherness and enjoying the moment. That canoe is going places. That canoe is showing others how they ought to work together.

Helping one another is a positive result of trusting each other and doing good to each other. Helping each other when one is sick. Helping each one when one is not well spiritually. Together, in sickness or in health, richer or poorer, helping each other reach the destination, which is Heaven. Staying in the canoe and staying the course, that's what the Lord wants.

Marriage is many moons in the same canoe.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)