

United Church of God *an International Association*

Clyde Kilough
Chairman

Roy Holladay
President

Letter from the President June 13, 2003

Dear Brethren,

One of the greatest blessings from God in this life is a happy marriage. When God created the first man, Adam could not find anyone comparable to himself who could help him. In Genesis 2:18-20 God had Adam name every living creature. One of the major reasons God did this was to impress upon Adam's mind the need for a mate that would be comparable to him. Spiritually man was made incomplete—needing the Holy Spirit. Physically man was also made incomplete. “And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’” (verse 18). When God created woman, He made a counterpart, or mate, for man—a person to complement him. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (verse 24). It is God's intention that husband and wife become the pinnacle of love and unity in the human realm.

Norma and I recently celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary. In reflecting back over those years, I recognize that Norma is a gift from God (the special person God selected for me) and a wonderful blessing to our marriage and family. I am incomplete without her. She has enriched our lives in so many ways. Let me explain.

In marriage, a husband and wife become a team—partners for life. As we read in Genesis, God regards them as “one flesh” or one unit or entity. Each brings certain strengths, abilities and talents to the relationship. It seems that the areas in which I have been weak, Norma is strong. She is a woman of great discernment, insight and empathy for people. She has a love and concern for people that is immediately evident to anyone who meets her. I have had to grow in these qualities. My service to the Church would have been greatly impaired without her. I have learned how to be much more approachable and concerned for people through her example.

I know that all the men in the ministry, if they had the opportunity to write this letter, would express similar thoughts about their wives. Being a minister's wife is not an easy task. Our wives have sacrificed over the years, made moves, uprooted families time and time again and cared for the household—especially when we were gone on visits or conferences. I want to take the opportunity to thank all of you for your service to God, the Church, your families and your husbands. God chose ancient Israel as His wife. Psalm 135:4 expresses God's feelings toward Israel—that she was “His special treasure” or precious possession. We can all echo the same sentiments to our wives, that they are precious to us and a special treasure. A special treasure means that they hold a valuable place in our lives.

I would encourage all of us men to express to our wives constantly how important they are to us and how valuable they are to us and to our ministry. We live in an age where it is easy to become so busy that we can begin to neglect our marriages. In general, we need to remember to step away sometimes from the “urgent” to take care of that which is “important.” There is no more important human relationship than marriage. As a reminder, I would like to mention some principles that will help to keep our marriages strong and vibrant.

Our wives need to know that they fill a role in our life that no one else can fill. Do we tell our wives that they are special above all women? She needs to know that she is more important than your

mother, your children, your friends, your secretary and your job. Kind, gentle words actually promote health. Proverbs 16:24 states: “Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.” For most wives, there is nothing more encouraging and energizing than to hear words of love and praise from husbands. Here is what the Bible says about the virtuous wife: “Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ‘Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all’” (Proverbs 31:28-29).

Ephesians 5:32 states that marriage pictures “Christ and the church.” What a wonderful opportunity to live and experience a foretaste of the relationship Christ wants to have with His bride! God has certainly demonstrated to the Church how special we are. He sent His son to the earth and Christ was willing to make “Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:7-8).

Our wives need to know that we cherish them. Ephesians 5:28-29 states: “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies . . . For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it.” Cherish means to keep warm and give comfort. It has to do with emotional, mental and spiritual support. Ephesians 5 further describes how Christ sacrificed for the Church and sanctifies the Church. While the analogy here is not completely applicable in the human realm, we can still draw lessons from it. Do we as husbands sacrifice for the good of, the well-being of, the joy of our wives? Do our actions reflect that we love and cherish our wives and hold them in high regard as Christ does the Church?

She needs to know that you love her unconditionally. Let’s face it, husbands and wives see their mates in the best of times and in the worst of times. They see our greatest joy—and our lowest unhappiness. How do we respond at those times? Peter says: “Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7). Through spiritual knowledge, wisdom and understanding, God guides us to know how to show love as He would. A part of that love is honor for our wives. Notice as well that our relationship with God is affected by our relationship with our spouses. We are “heirs together” of God’s promises.

She needs open communication. Communication has to do with understanding one another. She might have insecurities, failing health and struggles as a mother or a wife. How do I respond to her fears? Her hopes? Her dreams? She needs to know that her opinion is so valuable that you will discuss decisions with her and act only after carefully evaluating her advice.

I would like to conclude with a simple statement from Proverbs: “He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD” (Proverbs 18:22). The first part of this sentence is the classic understatement. The second part shows the magnitude of the blessing of a wife—nothing less than favor or grace from God. Norma has been God’s “favor” to me for 40 years. I am sure the rest of you husbands could make similar statements about your wives. Let us remember to treasure God’s blessing of our wives in word, in action, in wisdom, in understanding, in honor and in love.

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roy Holladay". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Roy Holladay