

Marriage on the Rock 02

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 January 2017

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Welcome to Marriage on the Rock. Here's Marv Wiseman.

Marriage is mainly spiritual. With the assumption that now in beginning to listen to this current CD number two in the Marriage on the Rock series, you have already heard number one, then you know the critical need for the dual commitments that were stressed.

But if for any reason you have not yet heard number one, then only minimal value will be gained from this number two without number one. So it is suggested if this is the case, you obtain and listen to number one before proceeding with this present disc number two. If you have heard number one, then you are prepared to proceed. Reference has been made to the many spheres that are involved in a marriage. We are all very aware that marriage is social, economic, physical, sexual, legal, and it is spiritual. And all of those just mentioned are rather well understood except the last one, and it, the spiritual, in reality, the most important of all. And it's ironic that the one aspect of marriage assigned as the most important of all is in actuality the least understood.

And if it is the least understood, yet the most important, does it not follow that it is also then the most likely to suffer from lack of implementation? How can we implement something that is so little understood? And if it leads in importance for a healthy marriage, how can a marriage that is unaware of the spiritual or confused about it ever derive any real benefit from it?

Putting it as plainly as we can, married Christians who do not understand the spiritual assets described as the most important ingredient of a marriage cannot possibly enjoy what marriage has to offer.

[2 : 10] Can you imagine cooking or baking and omitting the most necessary ingredient of a recipe and then expect to get the finished product you desire? Could the most strategic element of a formula be omitted and still obtain the end product you want? Of course not.

And the response to anyone who thought it would, would be, well, how can you expect anything else but failure when you left out the most important thing? And this is precisely why so many marriages, even among Christians, are in such an unhappy, unfulfilled state. They've left out the most important thing.

And in saying the spiritual, as the most important thing has been left out, we do not mean you need to pray together or attend church together, and we heartily recommend both of those. But a marriage that thrives on the spiritual assets God has provided involves far more than praying and attending church. Some of the most unhappy Christian couples you could ever know are in church every Sunday morning. How can that be?

Isn't attending church a guarantee of a good marriage? By no means. It will do us all well to construct a detailed explanation of what we mean by the spiritual being so critical to marriage. A marriage on the rock is well worth every effort required.

Spirit and Flesh Part 1 Having identified the spiritual to be the most critical component for married Christians, we will try to explain precisely what we mean by that. We use the term spiritual in contrast with the physical or material. This means, of course, that the spiritual is immaterial. It has no physicality.

[4 : 07] This in itself makes it more difficult to grasp. In fact, it can only be grasped by the spiritual mind, which is also non-material. So we are making a distinction between the brain, which is physical, and the mind, which is not. It is in the case of the spiritual that man may have contact with God, who is, as Christ said in John 4, God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The Word of God, the Bible, is a product of the Holy Spirit of God that he communicated to human instruments whom he used to write the Bible. It is filled with information from God to man that reveals how man is to know and relate to God and how he is to relate to his fellow man, including the one to whom he is married. These are behavioral characteristics, how we behave and act one toward another. Call it good behavior or bad behavior, and we all know which kind it is that causes all the trouble, don't we? If only we didn't act in that manner of negative bad behavior, all would be well.

But we do, don't we? Even as Christians, we are very capable of bad behavior toward each other. Why do we do that? We know the difference between right and wrong, and yet we still sometimes engage in the wrong, and that brings unpleasant consequences from the one on the other end of the bad behavior, often reacting with a bad behavior of their own, and so it goes. The reason we do this is what the Bible calls yielding to the flesh instead of yielding to the spirit. Both are referred to as a kind of walking. One's daily walk refers to the way we conduct our lives. Our walk in life is the manner in which we function. Galatians 5 says, walk by the spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. These are opposites, the spirit and the flesh. Walking or operating out of the spirit is doing that which pleases God. And walking out of the flesh means doing that which pleases the flesh, namely, ourselves. If people who are married to each other are both operating out of the flesh, what do you suppose that produces? Conflict, of course. Each wants their own way, and a power struggle erupts.

It's very natural for us to operate out of the flesh, each seeking to want their own way. Natural? Yes, natural, but destructive to the relationship. God has made provision for all believers that we need not act in a natural way toward one another, but rather in a supernatural way.

That is, by operating out of or walking in the spirit. And if we do, the result is not conflict, but harmony. The flesh knows nothing of harmony. The flesh feeds on disharmony and conflict.

If we walk in the spirit, we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Both flesh and spirit need more explanation. Upcoming.

[7 : 21] Spirit and Flesh Part 2 We are continuing to explore the biblical concepts and descriptions of the human flesh and the spirit. Our flesh is not our physical blood and tissue. Our flesh is our inner self-centeredness.

Call it the human ego, the old sin nature, our Adamic fallenness, the old man. These are all suitable terms for our fallen estate. We are all affected and infected with this reality.

And those who may believe themselves to be above this are, in addition, deceived. None of us is above this. We all possess the capacity for self-centered willfulness.

Unbridled flesh results in immoral, illegal, and sinful behavior destructive to others and ourselves. Prisons are filled with people like these. But most of us are not in prison, which may deceive us into thinking we do not have these problems with the flesh.

And that would be a huge mistake, because we all do. While our activities of the flesh may not be so severe as to send us to prison, they are certainly severe enough to create disharmony in our relationships, especially our marriages.

[8 : 37] In fact, fleshly behavior, often on the part of both mates, can become so severe it creates a separation between them, sometimes ending in the tragedy of divorce.

And it is always, always, without exception, a result of fleshly activity. There is no human remedy for this. None.

Not rehab, not reforming, not turning over a new leaf, not cleaning up your act, not therapy, with hours on a psychiatric couch. There simply is no human remedy.

But thanks be unto God, there is a divine remedy. A divine remedy. Not six or eight, but one. And that is God's one provision for operating from the power of the Spirit as opposed to the power of the flesh.

And before going further, let me be very candid and admit, there are complexities about this subject I cannot fathom. But despite my lack of knowledge about issues involving walking in the Spirit as opposed to walking in the flesh, I do know the provision for this is from God, and I know it works, while nothing else does.

[9 : 52] It will be absolutely essential that those striving for a marriage on the rock get a good grasp of this, or attaining the goal of enjoying a marriage on the rock simply will not be possible.

Now you can readily see why the marriage on the rock is necessarily limited to those who are believers, and whose very individual life is founded on the rock himself, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Because only those in Christ are eligible for having this kind of marriage. Romans 8, 9 states, Now if any person does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Having the Spirit of Christ, which is obtainable automatically by being in Christ, is what makes the dynamics of walking in the Spirit possible as opposed to walking in the flesh.

Please stay with us as we pursue this critical subject. There is no other way to get where we want to go apart from grasping and implementing this content.

[10 : 57] Spirit and Flesh Part 3 This ongoing consideration of the conflict between spirit and flesh in the life of a believer is absolutely essential in order for a married couple to have a marriage on the rock.

The fact that it is unknown by many believers guarantees it is not being utilized, and that in turn prevents a marriage from being what it ought to be. In almost every marriage of Christians, where there is disharmony and unhappiness, each is usually convinced the problem lies with their mate, not them.

But it does lie with them as well as their mate. Each partner contributes one's own emotional and psychological chemistry to the marriage, both positive and negative, both helpful and unhelpful, so that the mix is a complex dynamic that produces what that relationship has produced and is producing.

If each partner contributes from their flesh rather than from the spirit, the result is inevitable. A marriage of perpetual power struggle, self-centeredness, game-playing, manipulation, all that becomes the norm.

And it's an exhausting and very unsatisfying way to live. Each tends to want their own way, and each tends to blame their mate for the marriage not being what it should be.

[12 : 19] The fleshly part of the lives of both are clearly in operation. Included in the long list of characteristics that our self-centered flesh produces are enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, and dissensions.

There are even more listed in Galatians 5, but these are the chief areas of negative behavior that plague marriage. Strife, outbursts of anger, disputes, and dissensions.

All an ugly lot produced by the flesh controlling a believer. The same chapter 5 contrasts those unbecoming qualities with those produced by the believer walking in the spirit as opposed to walking in the flesh.

And they include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When a marriage is made up of two people, with each contributing these positive qualities, a marriage on the rock is produced and enjoyed immeasurably.

These are called the fruit or the produce of the spirit as opposed to the negative works of the flesh mentioned earlier. So, which do you have in your marriage?

[13 : 32] And which do you want? If you plan to make good on those two requirements for having a marriage on the rock we mentioned earlier, they will now come into use.

The first was a recommitment to your mate, and the second was a recommitment to God and His word to follow and obey it. Remember? So, here in Galatians 5, as well as elsewhere, like Romans 6, God's word is telling us that as we yield our wills to the Holy Spirit, we can then produce the fruit of the spirit.

If we instead yield or give ourselves over to the flesh, we will produce the nasty negatives of the flesh, our old man or the old Adamic nature. The one dominating us is the one which displays our behavior, whether godly and of the spirit or ungodly and of the flesh.

Now, exactly how do we go about yielding? It's upcoming. It's upcoming. Spirit or flesh, the Christian option.

As best as we are able to understand human nature and the manner of our composition, we know from the creation account of Genesis 2 that Adam and Eve were endowed by God with volition.

[14 : 46] This meant they possessed the ability to comply or not comply with God's commands. And such volition was essential if they were not to be robots or automatons. We know their ability to obey or disobey was utilized in Genesis 3 when they exercised their volition in disobedience to God.

But God did not then remove their volition from them so as to prevent them from further disobedience. They maintained their volition and passed it on to the next generation. Human volition remains a vital part of our constitution.

What is more, whenever someone becomes a believer in Christ and passes from spiritual death to spiritual life, his original volition remains intact. Although a person becomes a new creation, not everything about him is new.

His physical body remains the same. But it is his spirit that is regenerated and made new in Christ. And upon death, it is this immaterial part of his being that becomes absent from the body and present with the Lord.

The human will or volition also remains unchanged and intact. And it was with this will that he placed his trust in Christ and was saved.

[16 : 01] And it was with this same will that now as a Christian, he still makes choices right or wrong. Because we have become believers, it does not mean we are no longer able to do wrong things.

By walking in the flesh, we are doing wrong things because that's all the flesh can do. But now as a believer, we have an option we never had. Now we can walk in the spirit and not fulfill the demands of the flesh.

This is an option not available to non-Christians. They have not the spirit of Christ, according to Romans 8, 9, and they are limited to fleshly activities, so that even things they do that outwardly appear good are still tainted by their old fleshly nature, which is the only nature they have.

But all who are in Christ, while they may yield to the dictates of their old nature, they need not do so, because the power of the Holy Spirit is available to them, and they have no excuse for not drawing upon that spirit and his power.

This is the principal reason for the Holy Spirit having been given to all believers at the point of their salvation. It is so we can live a life pleasing to God while still living in this fallen world.

[17 : 14] This presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is the divine dynamic that impacts our behavior resulting in how we treat one another.

And nowhere is our treatment of one another so frequent and ongoing as in a marriage. When two believers, who are married and committed to each other and to God and His Word, function in their relationship through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, a marriage on the rock follows.

Many Christians do not even know of this supernatural option being available. You do now. This is the very purpose of this CD series, Marriage on the Rock.

We'll be explaining it all in considerable detail. How do we yield? Part 1 We are considering the two options available to Christians who are married.

Option number one is a marriage dominated by the flesh or the self-will of each partner. This option inevitably produces a stressful and unfulfilled marriage, often characterized by a perpetual power struggle.

[18 : 29] And there are many Christians who have this kind of relationship. But there is absolutely no excuse for it, particularly when God has graciously provided all the assets needed for option number two, which is a marriage on the rock, characterized by two believers more eager to please the other than they are to please themselves.

They walk in the Spirit rather than walk in the flesh. Because of our fallen nature as a child of Adam, the flesh is our natural bent. It is built into our ego and psyche, making us self-serving, self-seeking, and self-pleasing.

In a word, just plain selfish. It's perfectly natural to be self-centered, but it's also destructive to ourselves and others.

Option two is not natural. It's supernatural. And it's a gracious provision or asset God has provided for all believers.

There is no laboratory where this supernatural demonstration of other-centeredness rather than self-centeredness can be so consistently displayed as in a marriage.

[19 : 43] And when it is, you have a marriage on the rock. But if we are functioning as believers with option number one, which is the natural, how can we get to option two, which is supernatural, God-honoring, and is of the Spirit as opposed to of the flesh?

It's expressed in Romans 6 as yielding. You do that with your will, much as you willfully do anything else. When you come to a traffic sign at a busy intersection that reads yield, it means you must give way to someone else who has the right-of-way.

They come first. Then you. If you don't yield when and where you should, you and others may be at great risk of collision. And collisions are what happens in a marriage when neither is willing to yield.

We yield with our volition. It's an act of our will. Let's explain something about our volition. It's another name for the will, our ability to make choices.

We are each a free moral agent knowing right from wrong. And this also provides us with the basis for being accountable to the one who gave us this power of choice. When God saved us as a result of believing on Christ as our Savior, He made us a new creation in Christ, but He did not remove our power of choice when He saved us.

[21 : 12] Our volition remained intact. This same will that we use to sin with before our salvation is the same will that makes it possible for us to sin after salvation.

This is critical to understanding how it all impacts Christian marriages. We are here building a case that will make a lot of sense when we get there.

More upcoming. Is this stuff really necessary? At the outset of this present segment, an important caution needs to be issued.

So here it is. A listener may be tempted to ask, is this stuff about the flesh and spirit really necessary? After all, I only want a better marriage. I'm not especially interested in all of this biblical stuff about spirit and flesh.

That's all fine for preachers and teachers, but I'm just a married person looking for hope and help about my marriage. So what does all this have to do with having a better marriage anyway? The answer is everything.

[22 : 18] Absolutely everything. In fact, this critical baseline content is so essential, you will not have a marriage on the rock without it. Yet at the same time, there are many listening now who already enjoy a marriage on the rock and they've never heard this particular content.

Still, they had to have learned these principles about walking in the flesh or spirit and they have applied them, perhaps without even calling them flesh or spirit. Most of these marriages learn the flesh and spirit principles by gradual spiritual growth during their marriage and that spiritual growth resulted in the positive, godly, and considerate way they treat one another.

Probably, this is the way most Christian couples have arrived at the marriage on the rock they value and enjoy so much. However, for those who are married for a lesser time who find their marriage to be an ongoing struggle or for those married longer but still finding a fulfilling marriage to be elusive, this present content can greatly accelerate the time needed to obtain the marriage they have always wanted.

This flesh and spirit content lies at the very core of what causes relationships to fail or thrive, especially marriage relationships.

You cannot get more basic than in the understanding and implementing of this material and if you are unaware of it, the likelihood of your applying it by accident is slim indeed.

[24 : 00] This is the stuff that surfaces when we speak of marriages being mainly spiritual. Knowing and working from the spirit flesh concept will determine how a married couple treat each other and that in itself is what a great marriage is all about.

That consistent quality of positive, loving treatment is what results in a marriage on the rock as opposed to living in a marriage that is endured rather than enjoyed.

But in addition to knowing and utilizing this truth, that too is dependent upon whether both mates have made those two critical commitments explained on CD number one.

So, if you are one who is asking is this stuff really necessary and what does all this have to do with having a better marriage, we reply emphatically and unapologetically.

Everything. Absolutely everything. And the further you go with the upcoming content, the more obvious it will become. Trust me, a marriage on the rock is worth whatever it takes to get there.

[25 : 15] Back to How Do We Yield to the Spirit? Part 2. On the previous session, we took a brief detour to reinforce the necessity of understanding the very underlying reason why we behave the way we do in all relationships, but especially in that of marriage.

And previous to that, it was session number six we interrupted to make that reinforcement. On session six, we explained that our will or volition remains under our personal control regarding the decisions we make.

This God-given volition all humans have is the mechanism we use to yield or surrender ourselves to God and His provision for us. And by the way, this is life's most important and only victory that is won through surrender.

We usually think of surrender meaning losing, and so it is in nearly all human experience, but we are speaking of a divine, a supernatural area. And as is often the case, matters concerning the deity and His ways are the opposite of man's, and so it is here.

The yielding to the spirit as opposed to yielding or giving way to the flesh, that is, our fallen, Adamic, self-centeredness, is an option possessed only by believers.

[26 : 38] We are told in Romans 8 that the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, for it does not subject or yield itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.

And those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Then in contrast, Paul says, reminding the Christians, you, however, are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you.

But if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. Because the believer is in Christ, he possesses the option of yielding his will to God's will.

If he does, he will produce the behavior that is characterized in Galatians 5 as the fruit of the spirit. If a believer refuses, again with his volition, to yield to the Holy Spirit, he has but one remaining source to yield to, and that is the flesh.

The flesh and spirit are total enemies. This is what Paul meant when he said in Galatians 5, For the flesh sets its desire against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

[27 : 51] For these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. This simply means we, with our volition, yield ourselves either to the spirit or to the flesh, and whichever it is, reflects our attitude and actions.

It will be pleasing to God and beneficial to us and others. If we yield to the flesh, it will be detrimental to us and to others. With the neutrality of our volition, we may yield to whichever we choose.

In fact, we are commanded to yield to the spirit, and if it were not possible for us to do so, then the commandment makes no sense at all. This is critical stuff.

Let's get a handle on it. Because a marriage on the rock is well worth every effort that is required to get there. What we know about volition, flesh, spirit, yielding, and power.

There are aspects of this critical dynamic of flesh and spirit and the concept of yielding to one or the other that we honestly cannot now see as clearly as we would like.

[29 : 11] Yet this deficiency does not excuse us from the responsibility of yielding with our will because even though we do not know exactly how all this works, we know it does, and the results are honoring to God.

So in spite of what we do not know about the precise workings of our yieldedness to the spirit or the flesh, let's note what we do know about it. First, we do know God created us free moral agents endowed with a will or volition.

Two, we do know because we are free to make moral choices, we are also accountable for our choices. Three, we do know the ability to walk in the flesh is ours through our Adamic fallenness.

Four, we do know that the power for walking in the spirit is not ours but God's through his Holy Spirit that indwells us. Five, we do know a state of perpetual war exists between the flesh and the spirit.

Each seeks to dominate the other in an effort to control the life and actions of the believer. Six, we do know that with our volition we can yield ourselves to the influence of the spirit or the flesh.

[30 : 25] Seven, we do know that scripture in Romans 6 clearly states our responsibility for yielding ourselves to God. Eight, we do know we are clearly told that we are not to permit sin to reign in our mortal body so that we should obey its lust.

This clearly supposes that it is within our ability to do that. Nine, we do know we are told in Romans 12 that we are to present or we might say yield our bodies as a living sacrifice to God and that doing so is our reasonable service.

If we are somehow unable to do this, the command to do so makes no sense at all. Ten, we do know we are not speaking of mere human willpower on our part to walk in the spirit as opposed to walking in the flesh.

Our willpower is woefully inadequate to enable us to live as we ought. Thus, the power for walking in the spirit is not ours but God's.

Yet, our will is still active and able to do something even though it cannot enable us to live as we ought through that sheer willpower.

[31 : 44] So, what then is the something that the will can do? Whatever it is, it is something we are able to do and accountable for whether or not we do it.

This conundrum then brings us to the area of our acknowledged deficiency. We cannot provide the power but only God can. Yet, it appears we are responsible for whether or not God's power is activated.

This makes God's working subject to our working first. Can that be true? We will attempt an illustration of it all in our next session number 10.

Man's Volition and God's Power The last item on the previous track number 9 concluded with the tenth item of what we do know about volition, flesh, spirit, and yielding.

It asserted that the power for walking in the spirit is not human willpower. It is God's power through the operation of his Holy Spirit. Yet, God does not force this power upon us.

[32 : 55] God does not make us walk in the spirit. He clearly wants us to do so, and we are even commanded to do so, clearly in both Romans 6 and Galatians 5.

But if we lack the power to do it, yet God requires that we do it, there appears to be a kind of disconnect. One can only conclude there must be a God and His power.

God provides the supernatural ability only He is capable of providing, while we provide the volition that gives God the permission to release His power on our behalf.

But this sounds really crazy. God doesn't need our permission to do anything. He works all things after the counsel of His own will.

He isn't dependent upon man's permission for anything. If ever there was an indisputable axiom about the Almighty and His ways, this is it.

[33 : 59] We do not deny this. We affirm it. Yet we affirm something else as well. God did not endow man with volitional powers and then retract them.

Human volition enables us to make right and wrong decisions, be obedient or disobedient to authority, even God's authority. The volition God gave man is genuine.

He does allow us to freely use it responsibly or irresponsibly. He calls upon us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but He does not force us to do so.

There is clearly a partnering between the provision of God and the volition of man. It is a partnership of created necessity if God was going to grant legitimacy to the volitional powers He gave to man.

If God were to consistently override or countermand human volition, the purpose and legitimacy of volition would be destroyed or seriously compromised. In addition, the accountability factor of man being wholly responsible for his actions would likewise be threatened if not nullified.

[35 : 11] The end result of all this by way of conclusion is that God's power for walking in the Spirit is readily available and eager to be used, but its use is dependent upon our human volition to request it.

God will use His power on our behalf, but He does not force it upon us. This can only mean that the supernatural power needed for walking by the Spirit is clearly God's, not man's.

But at the same time, it is man's volition that causes God to release His power on behalf of man. This is an amazing collaboration that respects man's volition God gave him while providing the divine enablement man could never muster by his own willpower.

Man's Volition and God's Power, Part 2 We have been attempting to put together a case, a case explaining the biblical provision as to how human volition and responsibility are partnering with God's power and availability.

While we are commanded to walk in the Spirit so we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh, we are at the same time clearly unable to do so. But God does not make demands of us that we cannot fulfill.

[36 : 30] So how do we resolve the demand that He makes with our inability to fulfill it? He fulfills it for us and He does it on the basis of His grace. Yet He does not fulfill it without our permission to do so.

We are aware this sounds nonsensical because God does not need anyone's permission to do anything unless, unless He has obligated Himself to work in concert with the volition He has given us.

He has so obligated Himself, not out of necessity, but out of His own power to do so. When we exercise our volition to invoke His power to enable us to walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh, God responds with His enabling power to do so.

It does sound like a stretch for God's power being dispatched in accord with our volition, but it is. Again, not because God is dependent upon our volition, but because He has chosen this methodology in His own wisdom.

It is a condescending act of grace on God's part to do so, and it again highlights the legitimacy of the volition He has given us. In actuality, this same dynamic of partnering with the deity is realized in our personal salvation.

[37 : 49] God clearly demands a holiness, a righteousness from us that we simply cannot fulfill. To be accepted of God, we must present a flawless moral righteousness that is simply beyond us.

God requires that we, as sinners, provide a righteousness we cannot possibly produce. So how can God be just if He demands something from us beyond our ability to provide?

The answer is, He provides it Himself. He then presents His provision to us as a free gift of His grace. That gift, of course, is salvation itself.

The way God makes salvation available to us is through the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, through His love and grace, God Himself provides for us what He demands from us.

How then do we obtain this righteousness He provides? We receive it from Christ Himself when we place our faith in Him. And how do we do that so as to receive this gift of righteousness from Him?

[38 : 51] With our volition, with our will, we exercise our faith, our trust in the person of Christ, and we receive the free gift of salvation along with Christ's very own righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5.21 says, For God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

This is glorious beyond human words. It is the supreme example of man's volition releasing God's power, the power to regenerate the man who exercises his volition.

This is God being just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus Christ. Man's Volition and God's Power Illustrated The previous session, number 11, sought to combine man's volition with God's power.

This explanation is not as thorough or satisfying as one would like, but in the absence of further light at the present time, it will have to suffice. And suffice it to say that man's God-given volition and God's inherent power are vitally connected.

[40 : 02] Man has a will, but lacks ability. God has ability, and gave man a will. God's ability is released upon man's exercise of his will to request it.

It is indeed an amazing partnership between the creator and the creature. And it must be a partnership born of necessity if the volition God gave to man is genuine.

There is no question about the genuineness of God's power. The question is, is his power married to man's volition? It appears undeniable that it is, and by divine design.

A feeble, but we trust somewhat helpful illustration is offered. Imagine, if you will, holding a loaded handgun. A combination of forces is about to occur.

Force number one is your finger that will pull on the trigger. Force number two is the explosion of energy that will occur following your pulling the trigger. Neither the gun nor the explosion pulled the trigger.

[41 : 09] You did. And you did so volitionally as an act of your will. The gun was powerless to do anything without your initiating the action.

When you did so, the trigger activated the hammer. The hammer struck the shell, resulting in a powerful explosion within the confines of the gun chamber. The energy released forced the projectile into the space of least resistance, which was out through the end of the barrel.

Was the power and energy that was released yours, or was it due to the explosion? Clearly, it was that of the explosion. All you did was pull the trigger.

Yet, there would have been no power and no explosion had you not pulled that trigger. You were responsible and active. The gun was passive, not active.

You activated it. No doubt this is why we often hear, guns do not kill people. People kill people. In drawing upon God's power, not ours, for the ability to walk in the Spirit, we exercise our volition by pulling the trigger.

[42 : 21] The gun and the explosion represent God who provides the power. Yet, He does so at our behest. Our pulling the trigger is simply our request to God to provide for us the power He has that we really need.

We cannot walk in the Spirit in our own strength. He and His power are available, but will not be imposed upon us against our will. This is a partnering not to be denied.

God is fully respecting the volition He gave us, while at the same time, stands at the ready to do for us what only He can do. We recognize our illustration is lacking, as are all illustrations attempting to explain the divine.

Perhaps a better one can be forthcoming later, but for now, it is the most we can do. It's a flesh-dominated world.

As we continue through this foundational material, designed to lead to a marriage on the rock, please don't make the mistake of thinking it unnecessary. It is not only necessary, but supremely so.

[43 : 27] Not only for marriages, but for all other relationships as well. Because what we are dealing with right now constitutes the entire dynamic of positive or negative human behavior.

To skip or discontinue this material as only so much doctrinal content that really doesn't interest you, would mean to forfeit understanding the very underpinning upon which human behavior is built.

We repeat, this is vital and will become more apparent as we move further on to arrive at the marriage on the rock. You will be grateful for having a handle on the dynamics of human behavior that not many Christians have.

The insights you will gain will serve you well for all the rest of your life. A good understanding of the theater of flesh and spirit is essential, not only to one's marriage, but to human behavior in general.

These insights you will be getting are essentially unavailable to non-Christians. The reason, of course, is because the authority we appeal to for understanding and conclusions is the Bible.

[44 : 34] And sadly, today's culture places very little authority in the Bible. However, the Bible is the only consistent explanation for the world and human lives being in the great perpetual conflict we see all around us.

It's a flesh and spirit contest the world over and has been since Genesis 3. Undeniably, human flesh, by far, is dominant the world over.

And this should be obvious to any casual observer. The spiritual has always constituted a minority. Yet there is, with the minority, a peace, a confidence, a tranquility the world knows nothing of.

It exists only among the redeemed. We are merely trying to inform the redeemed of their incredible riches and potential because they are in Christ.

This being so, Christians alone are instructed to do something in Romans 6 that the world cannot do, cannot want to do, and could not do even if it wanted to.

[45 : 38] We have the supreme, yes, supreme privilege of yielding to the Almighty. While this yielding is a responsibility, we ought to regard it as an amazing blessing and privilege.

Let's look at Romans 6 and ask the question, why yield? Why surrender? Why give in? To whom are we surrendering and giving in? Chapter 6 of Romans, in verse 12, issues a command in stating, Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lust thereof.

The prohibition clearly reveals an option. While the believer is not to allow sin to reign in his body, he can do just that. And any believer who is not walking in the spirit is doing that very thing.

He is allowing sin to reign in his mortal body by walking in the flesh rather than in the spirit. While he has no cause or right to do this, yet he may. This is how marriages are severely damaged.

We will continue with this critical and urgent content. Yield to whom you will. The previous session referenced Romans 6, 12.

[46 : 54] It explains the way the world is because it explains the way people are. The vast majority of the world population is made up of people who function from their fallen fleshly nature, which is essentially self-centered.

They know nothing even of the existence of an alternative. The Christian not only should know very well about walking in the spirit, but is called upon to do it. It is to be the new norm for all who are in Christ.

It is not the way of the world, but the way of Christ, quite contrary to what the world is about. Romans 6, 13, which follows, enjoins Christians to do something only Christians can do.

He is to yield or surrender or present his members as instruments of righteousness unto God and not yield them unto sin. So what are these members that may be used to engage in righteousness or unrighteousness?

They are simply the body parts we use to sin with or to do good with. They are arms, legs, feet, eyes, ears, all vehicles for good or ill.

[48 : 00] Who decides which way they will be used? You do. You do as an act of your volition. God does not make you surrender to the right thing.

You have the option of doing so or not doing so. As a Christian, you can yield your members as instruments to unrighteousness, and if you do, you are clearly walking in the flesh and you will fulfill the lusts of the flesh enumerated in Galatians 5.

The unregenerates of the world do not have the option the believer has. They are simply sold under sin, and it rules their psyche, keeping them enslaved to sin, and they may not even know it.

This is the biblical picture of all non-Christians as revealed in Ephesians 2, verses 11 through 12. Verse 13 goes on to show us the only way out of that slavery to sin and self-centeredness.

It is, but now. In Christ Jesus you who were far off have been brought near by the death of Christ. In other words, unbelievers who can do nothing but walk in the flesh, upon coming to be in Christ, have had the power of sin canceled in their life when they are regenerated.

[49 : 18] Now they may live a life of yieldedness to God and present their members as instruments of righteousness unto Him, as opposed to presenting them to sin, the only thing they could do before Christ saved them.

How do we make this presentation, this yielding? With our volition. We do so with our will, because we now are able to do so.

We did not have that ability before Christ saved us, but now we do. Use then that volition God gave you to this new end and you will be walking in the spirit and not fulfilling the desires of the flesh.

Now, how do you think this will affect the way you treat the person to whom you were married? Dramatically. The difference between what the self-centered flesh engenders as opposed to what the God-given spirit engenders is incalculable.

When each mate in a marriage is spirit-motivated rather than flesh-motivated, this is a marriage on a rock. Reasons for yielding to the flesh We have already discovered why non-Christians yield to the flesh.

[50 : 30] They have no choice. They are devoid of any other option. Being sold under sin, it is their only recourse and they are quite comfortable in that sphere. The reason they are, and they will tell you, they are doing their own thing.

They are self-serving, self-seeking, self-satisfying, self-promoting, and would have it no other way. Actually, it is incorrect to say they yield to the flesh because there is no yielding to it.

It is simply what and who they already are. Being fallen and unregenerated, their flesh is not only what they are about, but it is all they are about.

And unless they are prepared to embrace the gospel, it is all they care to be about. This being the case, and this clearly is the case apart from Christ, we can understand where they are coming from.

It's the only possible place they can be coming from. Believers ought not fault them for merely being what they are. In fact, we need to pity them, love them, pray for them, and whenever we can, compassionately give the gospel to them, all the while reminding ourselves that we were in the very same dire situation before we embraced Christ as our Savior, experienced that miracle of regeneration.

[51 : 50] Remember? It resulted in making us a brand new person in Christ. So we should then be fully understanding of our unsaved friend's plight, although most of them don't even know they have a plight.

But what can we say then about the Christian, who now has the option of yielding to the Spirit of God rather than the flesh, but does not do so? As utterly incomprehensible as that sounds, it does occur among several professing Christians.

Perhaps that is a tip-off. Maybe all they are is professing Christ and not possessing Christ. The difference is between saved and unsaved, and no greater difference exists.

That may explain why many who call themselves Christians and believe they are still give every evidence of walking in the flesh and not the Spirit. Their outward behavior advertises where their heart and values are, and they certainly don't reflect anything close to biblical standards.

This being the case then, their greatest need is not to walk in the Spirit. They can't do that, actually. Their greatest need is to embrace Jesus Christ for their personal salvation.

[53 : 03] They may not be regenerate at all, but only think they are. And as such, walking in the flesh is all they can do. They do not have the option of yielding to the Spirit of God or walking in the Spirit, because that option is for believers only.

But then, what about the troublesome category of true born-again Christians who walk in the flesh? What can be said about them? Two possibilities occur. One, they are truly saved, but simply unaware and untaught about the flesh and Spirit issue.

They themselves may wonder why it is they so often succumb to temptation. Or two, they are truly saved, but insist on exercising their volition to live so as to please themselves.

Elaboration on both is upcoming. Why Christians Yield to the Flesh The preceding session revealed why those who are unsaved yield to the flesh rather than to God.

It is because, first of all, they cannot yield to God for His strength and power for living when they have not yielded to God for His salvation through Jesus Christ. Thus, it is easily understood why non-Christians do not yield.

[54 : 22] But what is terribly puzzling is why those who truly do know Christ do not yield to God for victory in their daily life and for His power to walk in the Spirit as opposed to walking in the flesh.

We pose the possibility that one may only be a professing Christian rather than one who is truly saved, and he may not even realize his true estate. If that is his true condition, he cannot yield himself to God for His power to live and walk in the Spirit if in reality he is not even a believer.

Some Christians are of the opinion that anyone who is truly a believer will automatically avoid all things of the flesh and only walk in the Spirit. Their view is that anyone who isn't living the Christian life isn't a Christian at all.

While there is no doubt that anyone who is a true believer should most definitely live like what he really is. But no argument there.

However, there is no denying that not all Christians live like Christians should. Such is made quite clear by the severe scolding the Apostle Paul delivered to the Corinthians in his first letter to them, chapter 3 through 6 in particular.

[55 : 40] Paul never accused them of not being true Christians, but he did soundly rebuke them because they were conducting themselves in very fleshly ways, not spiritual ways.

They were Christians behaving unchristianly. Please don't say Christians can't do that. Oh, yes, they can. We can say they shouldn't do that, but not they couldn't do that.

The Corinthians, whom Paul led to Christ himself, consistently referred to them as saints or separated ones. That means these were separated from the world unto God.

They were believers. Believers who no doubt were an embarrassment to Paul and to God as well. The Apostle indicted them for their divisions and prejudice, their carnality and boastfulness, and their refusal to hold one another accountable for bad fleshly behavior.

They were believers who were clearly walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit. Why were they doing that, when as believers they did not have to walk in the flesh?

[56 : 50] They had the gracious option of submitting to and walking in the Spirit. So why didn't they? For the same reason believers do not walk in the Spirit.

They prefer the flesh. We want to be in charge. Yielding to the Spirit means God is in charge. It's our life, we say.

We want to do our own thing. This is the only way we can run the show. And my marriage is if I am in charge. This is a marriage not on the rock.

The Motivation in Opting for the Spirit It is absolutely essential to realize the grave importance of our subject at hand, that of the working of the Spirit and the flesh.

Both realities dwell in the life of every believer. Nothing, absolutely nothing, so dictates the attitude and actions of a Christian more than these.

[57 : 59] They constitute the very source of godly or ungodly behavior. The flesh, which is carnal and corrupt, even in the life of a Christian, is at war with the Spirit and its purity in the life of the same Christian.

Between these two entities lies the human volition. This is the decision-making instrument, also possessed by every Christian as well as every non-Christian.

But only the Christian has the option of yielding his will to the Spirit. The non-Christian does not have this option, since the Spirit of God is not available to him by reason of his not being in Christ.

One who is a believer, yet does not see the freedom of his will to yield to the Spirit, so as to produce the fruit of the Spirit, such an one has nothing remaining to him but to yield to the flesh.

And yielding to the flesh only produces the works of the flesh. Please read the ugly list of those works in Galatians 5. Each vice on the list is unworthy of anyone professing to be in Christ.

[59 : 11] Yet, by not opting for God's way of the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit, the flesh in all its ugliness is all that remains. No believer functions in a vacuum.

Flesh or Spirit, you may take your choice, but you cannot choose neither. It's an either-or situation. Bringing the flesh of an unsundered life into a marriage by either or both partners will definitely and inevitably produce all kinds of negativity and disharmony, resulting in a far less than satisfying relationship, one that neither partner can possibly enjoy.

Endure, perhaps, with perpetual gritting of the teeth, but not enjoy. Why do some Christian marriages insist on subjecting themselves and often their children to this kind of painful environment?

All this angst when the incomparable sweetness and harmony is near at hand. Isn't life too short to spend it in this fashion?

Avoidance of this kind of a scenario is reason in and of itself to hasten with our volition to bring it to the only one who can and will change it all.

[60 : 31] God not only can, but will do so for any and every Christian couple meeting those two critical requirements we explained several segments ago. Remember? They were a recommitment to each other and a recommitment to God and what He has revealed in His Word.

These are so essential, a marriage on the rock is impossible without them, and they are so powerful, a marriage on the rock is a divine guarantee for those who will dare to meet them.

Which will it be for you in your marriage? A Greater Motivation in Opting for the Spirit Our previous session expressed a positive motivation for the Christian married couple to function by yielding to the Spirit of God as opposed to yielding to the flesh.

Whichever we with our volition yield to will determine the nature of our marital relationship. It was concluded that this in itself is more than adequate reason for both husband and wife to do the right thing.

Still, there is an even greater reason for doing marriage God's way as opposed to our way. And what might that be? In addition to it being the right thing to do, it is simply this.

[61 : 53] There is no more profound way we can express our gratitude to God for His salvation than with our eager, loving, and willful obedience to Him in all that He dictates.

Partaking of God's eternal life, His incredible forgiveness, and His every gracious provision ought to elicit from us an unquestioned obedience.

For any believer who claims to be thankful for all he possesses through the sacrificial death of Christ for our sin, and then withhold the surrender of our wills to Him, surely constitutes some fashion of spiritual treason.

Can we honestly call it anything else? Walking in the flesh is going over to the enemy. Perhaps it is treason by ignorance, treason that is not intentional, treason and ingratitude because we just never considered or thought of it in that vein.

But is there any other way we can put it honestly now? If we could plead innocent, unintentional ignorance before, can we do that now?

[63 : 03] We are reminded of Christ's words in Luke 6.46, Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? A sobering question for every married Christian.

Single Christians, too. Is this not a good place for a new beginning? If there is any recurring, compelling message all throughout Scripture, it is this, most of all.

God wants to be believed and obeyed. With the volition He gave us, we can use it to serve Him or serve ourselves. Should there be any contest here?

Should anything so characterize the life of a believer more than eagerness to know God's will so we can do it? We know of no way we can better show our gratitude to God for all He has provided for us through our Lord Jesus Christ than to hasten to obey Him.

The height of ingratitude is by going our own way in disregard of Him. Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?

[64 : 15] The best place and time to start is when and where you know you need to. How about now? Attaining to a marriage on the rock is worth whatever sacrifice might be needed in order to achieve it.

This would be an excellent sacrifice to make. Submission to His will. Recapping the Critical Concepts This session will focus on a review and definition of key terms and concepts that are so vital toward creating and maintaining a marriage on the rock.

That term itself is taken from Matthew 6 and the Sermon on the Mount. In it, Christ stated that those who build their lives upon the truth and wisdom of His Word would be like a house built upon the rock, solid foundation.

It would be able to withstand every onslaught that adversity could bring upon it. Conversely, lives built upon any other foundation were akin to building upon sand.

When adversity comes, it will collapse for lack of a solid foundation under it. Thus, a marriage that is built upon a rock is made up of husband and wife, each of whom, in their own personal life, is built upon Christ and His Word.

- [65 : 40] Then, upon marriage, they build that house together upon the rock of Christ, and it can and will withstand anything the world or the adversary can throw against it.

We address the flesh, which is merely synonymous with the fallen human ego, that is, our self-centeredness, our self-will, our baser sort, our old man of Romans 6.6, and our old sin nature from Adam.

These are all essentially the same thing, and they constitute our sin nature, which produces only sins, the works of the flesh, a la Galatians 5.

At the opposite pole, also enumerated in Galatians 5, is the concept of walking in the Spirit. Spirit and flesh are antithetical, at war with one another, and each is vying for ascendancy and control of you, your very life, and all you produce by way of attitude and actions.

Your volition gives you the freedom, as a Christian, to yield or surrender your members as instruments to the flesh, or to the Spirit, you decide. Your members are your hands, feet, eyes, ears, and other body parts we use to sin with.

- [66 : 59] Romans 6 makes it clear that you can yield them to whom you choose, to God, His will and service, or to the flesh, and its will and service.

God and His Spirit produce only the fruit of the Spirit, in Galatians 5, all of which is honoring and pleasing to Him, and by far in your best interest as well.

The flesh allows you to please your ego, satisfy yourself, disregard God and others, and do your own will. And while it is very tempting, and promises great satisfaction, it always betrays, leaving empty and guilt-ridden.

It is a self-centeredness that makes solid, loving relationships impossible, and riddled with dissatisfaction and disharmony.

Never a marriage on the rock, but often a marriage on the rocks. Did you know you as a Christian married couple really can have the kind of marriage you want that God wants for you?

- [68 : 08] If you don't already have that, but want it, by all means, continue with us. All Human Behavior Begins Here To say all human behavior begins here, either as behavior engendered by the Spirit or that engendered by the flesh, seems a stretch.

But is it? Are we justified in insisting that all human behavior originates from the willfully induced yielding to the Spirit, or yielding to the flesh? Well, not wanting to overgeneralize or claim for these two opposing dynamics more than we should, is there not some other element, some possible third origin from which human behavior can originate, something else besides flesh or spirit?

Yes, there is. But only one other dynamic we can put forth. There are some, tragically so, who suffer from severe mental incapacity or neural abnormality, who originate behavior we do not see either as fleshly or spiritual.

These are the legally insane, unable to distinguish right from wrong or good from evil. Their condition may be congenital or resulting from serious physical brain damage.

They very often are behavioral challenges to caregivers, but we cannot assign them to willfully choosing to yield to either flesh or spirit.

- [69 : 42] In many cases, they are simply devoid of powers for reason or logic, and they act impulsively rather than thoughtfully and deliberately. But we cannot join that category.

So what then shall we say about ourselves? We are volitional, willful, intentional, deliberate, purposeful, rational, at least for the most part, and we are they among six billions of others on the planet who with our personal volitions wreak havoc upon each other in every part of the world, upon all generations of humanity to this very present time.

All human love, goodness, kindness, generosity, all that is noble and praiseworthy was generated from the sphere of the spirit, and those who yielded themselves to God resulting in those positive things produced.

Conversely, all human brutality, wickedness, malevolence, perpetrated along with innumerable other negatives, were all generated from human flesh.

No doubt at times, assisted by the adversary as well. Still, we can't cop out with, the devil made me do it, now can we? The only point we are trying to make, even insist upon, is that we are responsible for our behavior, good or bad, and our flesh or spirit lies at the very cause of it.

[71 : 11] Simply understanding that, and knowing where to put the onus, means we have a diagnosis. Now, we can treat the situation. You may not realize it, but you are one of a small, a very small number of people who even understand the problem.

You will be even fewer in number among those who will have the remedy. And it's been in God's word all along, no secret. We are trying as best we can to publish this abroad, because nothing short of God's way can lead to a marriage on the rock.

Are you coming with us? You've been listening to Marriage on the Rock. A preview of CD number three, upcoming.

Louis Armstrong recorded a beautiful rendition, delivered as only he could do it, of A Wonderful World. Some of the lyrics go like, I see skies of blue, red roses too.

They only say, I love you. And I say to myself, what a wonderful world. Well, it is, sometimes.

[72 : 26] And we are all grateful for all of those sometimes we can garner. But they only exist sometimes. Sometimes the world isn't so wonderful.

Sometimes it can be excruciatingly painful just being a part of this world. Why is that? People. People doing fallen people things from human flesh or evil self-will.

Do you realize that every human hurt, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, stems from someone's fleshly activity? What do we call these sinful, negative, hurtful things?

We all have them. And sometimes we are the sender and sometimes we are the receiver. Whichever we are, we all do these things to one another.

They are offenses. Offenses are infractions. They are emotional or physical intrusions upon and toward another person.

[73 : 33] That's as personal as we can get. But offenses know no bounds. Sometimes offenses occur between nations. That is, when one nation's actions are offensive to other nations.

If the offense is not ameliorated, we may go to war. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941, the USA was offended.

Mightily so. All wars begin with offenses committed by one or more nations upon another. We know all too well this can entail horrendous consequences.

There is no sphere of human existence that is devoid of offenses committed. Alas, this includes marriage. But wait, that can't be.

Not marriage. These people love each other. You're not going to offend someone you love. That can't be. Oh, yes, it can be.

[74 : 35] And is. When we got married, we didn't leave our old, Adamic, self-centered nature at the wedding altar. We dragged it with us right into the marriage.

Some didn't even get through their honeymoon before they put it on display in what became known as Round One. Let the power struggle begin. And you tell me these people love each other?

Of course they do. Often they are deliriously in love. Good for them. Yet, love and all, they still have that tendency to self-will and all the unpleasantness that accompanies it.

To get to a marriage on the rock, we need to carefully analyze the offenses we inflict on each other. Think of them as wounds. They are wounds caused by words or deeds and they hurt.

A lot sometimes. Wounds we inflict even on those we love are actually not as great a problem as one might expect. What we want to focus on in the next CD will deal with wounds that haven't healed.

[75 : 48] These are the unresolved offenses. offenses. They are the real killers of relationships. Not so much just offenses but unresolved offenses especially in the marriage relationship.

The effective resolving of offenses leads directly to a marriage on the rock. If you have one, treasure it and enjoy it.

If you want to reinforce the great marriage you have, be sure to come with us and you'll hear things that will strengthen the good marriage that is already yours and you may gain some insights that will enable you to help other marriages struggling.

And if you don't have that elusive marriage on the rock, but you want one, and you and your maid have signed off on those two critical requirements mentioned at the first on CD number one, then be sure to obtain CD number three following this and we will get started right away.

You'll find it extremely enlightening and encouraging and while you gain new perspectives about yourself and the person you married, then with these mentioned requirements under your belt, you'll be on your way to a marriage on the rock.

[77 : 10] Let's not be willing to settle for anything less. Let me pray for you. Loving Father, we pray you will enable all of us to maximize what we have already learned and prepare our hearts and minds for the content ahead.

We pray you will do a real work of your grace in the heart and mind of every listening husband and wife. Help us, we pray, to understand and present the powerful assets you have provided for us so we can reap the benefits you intended.

Thank you, Father. so much for what you have built into marriage, enabling all believers who will to have a marriage built upon the rock. We pray and ask it in the only name that is worthy, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.