

What ruins great homes? (25:24)

It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

THE TEXT (NASB)

It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

*It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.
KJV - Proverbs 25:24*

INTRODUCTION



Once we have basic shelter, it is important to emphasize the quality of the fellowship than the quality of the furniture. Harmony at home is priceless.

After a hard day at work, we should be able to get rest and recuperation at home, but fights between spouses can turn a haven of rest into a war zone. This important truth is repeated verbatim at: ([When is a house no longer a home?](#)) and almost verbatim at Proverbs 21:19.

Many marriages are ruined when financial success is put above family success. Materialism ruins marriages. A home's internal peace is more valuable than its size or elegance.



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COMMENTARY

Classic Comments



A **house** may look like a palace but, if the wife is, as John Gill describes, **contentious**—“always noisy and quarrelsome, her violent passions, her storming language, and thundering voice”—it ruins the whole atmosphere. Even a large elegant house well-suited for parties and entertainment becomes, as Matthew Henry states, “unfit for the enjoyments of true friendship. It makes a man ashamed of his choice and his management and disturbs his company.”

Note Matthew Henry’s additional commentary:

What a great affliction it is to a man to have a brawling scolding woman for his wife, who upon every occasion and often upon no occasion, breaks out into a passion, and chides either him or those about her, is fretful to herself and furious to her children and servants, and, in both, vexatious to her husband. *If a man has a wide house, spacious and pompous, this will embitter the comfort of it to him.* (Emphasis added.)

What About Horrible Husbands?



The text deals with the problems caused by a domineering and over-controlling wife. What about horrible husbands? Men as husbands tend to fail in two basic ways: They are either too passive or too harsh in their leadership responsibilities. God has designed men to lead lovingly, but when they are passive, as Adam was when he stood by and said nothing to the evil force attacking Eve (Genesis 3:1-6) then problems arise. Similarly when men abuse women and lead harshly. The Hebrew word for “rule over” in Genesis 3:16 is, I believe, better translated as “dominate” as in the International Standard Version. It suggests that as a result of the rebellion toward God, Adam would be tempted to domineer his wife rather than



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lovingly lead. Dr. Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr. puts it this way, “The word ‘rule’ would now be construed as the exercise of *ungodly* [emphasis added] domination.”¹ Be it from irresponsible passivity or harsh domination, a wife can easily be frustrated into nagging the husband to mend his ways. Sometimes there is another indirect cause for marital strife.

Adoring Assets rather than Each Other

One of the contributing factors to ruined relationships is “stuff.” Excessive devotion to assets and their maintenance can leave both spouses with insufficient time and energy for each other. Many couples end up loving things and using people instead of loving people and using things. This is facilitated by easy access to credit so that people buy much more than they need. Too much “stuff” brings clutter. Greed poisons harmony in the home. Even a big house provides no refuge or rest.

Separation, Not Divorce



The text does not recommend divorce and re-marriage as a solution. The text does not say living in another house with another, but a compliant woman, is better than living in a house with a contentious woman. Indirectly, the text makes housing (temporary and changeable) subordinate to marriage (lifelong). However, marital separation and physical discomfort are recommended over living together in hostility. Matthew Henry wrote, “*It is better to be alone than to be joined to one who, instead of being a meet-help, is a great hindrance to the comfort of life.*” *She may be beautiful. She may be brilliant. But if she acts like a bully, it’s best to separate.*..

Matthew Henry observes that rather than fighting back at his wife, the hassled husband should:

...retire into a corner of the house-top, and sit alone there, out of the hearing of her clamour; and if he employ himself well there, as he may do, it is the wisest course he can take. Better do so than quit the house, and go into bad company, for diversion, as many, who, like Adam, make their wife’s sin the excuse of their own.

His point is insightful. It’s better to break off the relationship (hopefully temporarily) and suffer some deprivation of comfort rather than violating God’s plan for marriage by seeking a new relationship. This doesn’t mean divorce or moving out of the house; perhaps sleeping somewhere differently, but in the same house. Hopefully it’s for a short time only.



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus said that Moses, under divine guidance, permitted divorce.

But divorce is NOT God's preferred solution to a troubled marriage.

God is very clear on how He feels about divorce. He said "I hate divorce." God goes on to say "take heed to your spirit [not your assets] and don't deal treacherously," (Malachi 2:16).

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Work hard towards harmony in the house.
- Don't buy more than you need, otherwise increased stress will ruin the enjoyment of the house. If you have too much consider drastic downsizing (selling) assets in order to free up time for family rather than asset maintenance.
- Toggle through this website on keywords: *better life (quality)* and contrast it with *more assets (quantity)*. It's amazing how most of Western society has been tricked into believing that more assets result in a better life.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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KEY WORDS

better life (quality), bully, consumption, debt, divorce, house, marriage, self-control, self-indulgence, strife, woman, bf sharing

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Tax-Driven Ted?



Death and taxes: The only things we can be sure of! Certainly that's the way Tax-Driven Ted sees it. Whereas others pay some or little attention to taxes, he is consumed by tax minimization. Ted is tax obsessed. Why? For many Canadians, if left unmanaged, taxes eliminate over 50% of income. In Canada tax freedom day falls in July.

Tax freedom day is the day of the year when you have paid all your taxes and can now keep the rest of the money you earn. Tax-Driven Ted will spend money just to get a write-off. He fails to seriously evaluate the underlying economics behind the decision and chooses to focus on the tax consequences. He loves to borrow money to invest simply because he can write off the interest costs of amount borrowed. This investment technique is called leveraging and is commonplace.

Ted doesn't believe he should pay any taxes. After all, the government wastes money. It's extremely inefficient. He uses every angle to reduce taxes. He's always looking for loopholes, credits, or write-offs. *His focus is not on customer satisfaction but on tax reduction.*



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He goes on trips and conferences so that he can take the tax write-offs. He loves limited partnerships investments and other tax shelters. For some investors tax considerations are secondary, but for Tax-Driven Ted, they come first.



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FOOTNOTES

¹Piper, John, and Wayne Gudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991. P109.

