



SESSION THREE

How God “Builds” a Marriage

We have defined a family in a Biblical sense as a group of people: male and female; husband and wife; children. But those people are being built together by God. It is a supernatural work of God, or it's not Christian. And as God builds that, He builds it according to His plan. Not the American plan, not the Oriental plan, not any other plan. *His* plan, which is revealed in this book, for He is the Architect and Builder of this family.

If that's so, then we want to be sure we understand God's *blueprint*. God has a blueprint, a pattern for marriage. And this is what it is: God's blueprint was rooted in the original act of creation. When one day, God—using my ridiculous illustration—one day, God made a man: beautiful, good; everything was right, except it is not good for that man to be—what? Separated! Now that can function as an ice-pick, but that's not what it was made for. No human being was made to live by himself. Even if you're not married, you've *got* to have somebody. That's the reason He's given the Church. It is not good for a man—anybody—to be by himself.

And so God made *another* one like him and brought them together. And He said, “They shall leave mother and father and shall cleave unto their wife.” *Cleave*. Permanent relationship. “We're stuck. We're cleaving.” And, now here's God's blueprint: I don't care how many times you fail; God says, “You don't give up just because you're not like Jesus Christ *today*. That's your model.” I want to grow everyday more like Jesus Christ. You don't give up because you have not yet arrived. Someday we shall be like Him. And here is the blueprint: That they—man and woman in the hand of a gracious God—shall be so related that they are what? Say it all together: “one.” That's the blueprint for marriage. And I'll tell you again: Anything that hinders oneness *must* be put away. I don't care what it is. And anything that is necessary in order to have oneness *must* be given to you by the grace of God. But you see, in the hand of God this thing was made to function not on its own. And whenever a human being goes off on his own it will never function right. But in the hand of One who is more intelligent, more powerful than he—in the hand of God, they'll be one.

If you want to understand why God wants them to be one, you've got to go behind the plan to the Planner. And He says, “I want them to be like Me: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” Three Persons. Same in substance. Equal in power and glory. And yet they are so related that they are—what? Say it: *One God!* And that one God said, “Let Us make man in Our image.” That's the ultimate rationale. You'll never get deeper than that. And so our model for marriage is this: that every couple who ever walks down the aisle should take this as the blueprint. And it will take you the rest of your life for God to build it. But that's the blueprint: that we, husband and wife, should increasingly be one as they—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—are one.

Every time I see a car I'm fascinated by these cars you see on the highway, you know. And they're written all over with shaving cream or something: “Just married.” Oh, I'm fascinated and I want to turn around and follow them (laughter). But I can't help but wonder every time; I wonder what the plan is. I wonder how long it's going to last. May I suggest? There's the blueprint.

It's one thing to have a blueprint. It's one thing to have a beautiful plan. It is something else to get a builder who will build it according to that blueprint. And the more intricate your blueprint, I'll tell you, you'd better get a better builder. And God says, “I'll build it.” Do you know how God builds that? Do you know how He made this? I don't know. I was not there! I've never been to the factory, but I have an idea they did not form that ready-made, right? You who are engineers, mechanically minded, I'm *sure* that was not made like that. You know how it was made? The engineer designed *this* part, and then the manufacturer made *that* part to

specifications. And then, amazing! If that part is made to specification, *detailed* specification, and this part made to *detailed* specifications—*amazing*! When they come together they fit! That’s the way God does it.

God begins—. Listen! He does not begin at the altar. If He has not begun His work of building before the altar, they’re headed for awful difficulty. He does not begin at the altar, when we begin. We pronounce them husband and wife and throw a little rice on them—or grits, as the case may be (laughter). God does not begin at the altar! He does not begin at courtship. He does not begin with the first date. And He does not even begin at puberty, when the first urge comes toward that opposite sex. Do you know where He begins? As one great authority on marriage and family has stated (We need to scream it from the housetops.), “Marriage begins at birth.” May I say that ten times? *Marriage begins at birth*. Now these children—their marriage—what’s going to happen in their marriage later is already being formed. What happened from the moment they are born until they get to the age where they begin to think—*there’s* the critical point. So much so, that apart from the grace of God I will agree with the sociologist who says, “The greatest predictor of how a marriage will come, whether it will be a good marriage or not, is what happens in those early years of childhood.” Marriage begins at birth.

I want to spend our session talking to you about some of the things that you should give your children—some of the things that should have happened to you in preparing you for marriage when you were a child. What is liable to happen to some of you who are having difficulties in your marriage relationship—what might happen to you—as I touch some of these things very superficially, you might begin to understand: “Oh, I see now why I’m *now* having certain difficulties in my marriage. *That’s* where it started.” And then as you go out, there are so many people out there hurting. They’re having problems in their marriage. It will help you to understand where they come from. Couples who come to me in awful problems, time and time and time again I talk with them and it goes back yonder—what happened to them as children. And I’ve learned a little something of how to help them out of that. It will help you to help others.

I want to touch five areas which God wants to give to every child as He begins to build and prepare them for marriage. Here’s the first one, and in a sense, most basic: The first thing this child should get—and he should get it early in life. . . . Now, I don’t want to use any words that are flying around the world. America is full of it. Our culture is reeking with these problems. And there are a lot of words that describe it. I don’t want to talk words. I don’t want to get tied up with terms. I just want to talk the reality. This child, from the moment he’s born, God wants to give him a clear, simple, realistic, wholesome understanding of who he is and his own worth. Now you can abstract that and give a label to it. I’m not interested in that. I’m interested in this: that that child understands who he is, how *worthy* he is. Is he significant? What does he think about himself? And please, don’t tie this up with the sin of pride. That’s something entirely different. He needs to understand who he is. Is he worth anything? I want to talk to you practically. Do you know where he gets this? If he doesn’t have some wholesome, normal, realistic view of himself—that he is worth something—the psychologist tells me, and I’ve seen it: It will affect who he relates to. It’ll affect his friends. It’ll affect his job. It’ll affect his marriage. It’ll affect everything. In fact, one of them says his attitude about himself determines him, whether or not he can handle success or failure. It is very, very important. I know; I’ve wrestled with it all my life. I’ve never, never had it. And apart from the mercy of God I’d have crumbled under this. When I came along, I didn’t think I was worth shooting. I don’t know how my wife has put up with me these 36 years. She knows me like a book. She knows when I spout out all this garbage, “You’re no good. I’ve got it beat.” Do you know where it came from?

When our last child was born, he was just a little infant. Just came home from the hospital. And our next boy, who was about six years old then—little brother, little baby brother was lying there he said to his mother, “Mommy, does he know who he is, or does he just lie there and think he’s nothing (laughter)?” That is a brilliant question! That will confound *all* the psychologists. You think my children are not brilliant (laughter)? You listen to that!

Now let me ask you this: What is your answer to that? Does he know who he is? Of course he knows who he is! Does he know who he is, or does he just lie there and think he’s nothing? He doesn’t have the slightest idea who he is. He doesn’t have the slightest idea whether he’s no good or an angel from heaven. *He doesn’t have the slightest idea*. You know how he gets it? He gets it only one way. Do you realize just physically—this is just a simple analogy—physically, you will never know whether you are pretty in your face

or ugly because your eyes, you see, can't turn around (laughter)? Did you ever realize that? The only way you can tell how you look in the face is what? Say it all together. *You must look in a mirror.* The only way a human being will ever know what he's like, whether he's worth anything, is what? Look in a mirror. Do you know what that mirror is? That mirror are the significant people that stand around him—primarily his parents. And this is what he sees. He looks. And he doesn't know anything. He doesn't know what's taking place. I didn't have any idea what was taking place! And my parents didn't mean to, but I looked in the mirror. I didn't ask them. I just looked in the mirror. Before I was conscious or aware of anything, I just looked in the mirror. Do you know what I read? I read that they didn't think I was worth shooting. They didn't mean that. But that is what I got. Do you know what American children are getting?

Several years ago, as most of you know, Ann Landers sent out a questionnaire because several of her readers asked her to. She sent out a questionnaire to all her readers who had children and asked them this: "You who have had children, and now you've raised them, if you had it to do over again, would you have children again?" So she got the biggest response to any question she ever put out. She got 10,000 responses. Do you know what 70 percent of them said? Seventy percent of them said, "If I had it to do over again, I would never have had children."

Now you tell me if 70 percent of those parents, after they'd gone through it said, "Don't give me any more children," tell me what attitude did those children pick up from the mirror as to their own worth? Tell me. Quickly, tell me. What are they worth? Do you know what children are worth in America? If this doesn't break your heart! All over our society, all over our culture children don't mean this (snap of finger). You can't hide it. It's not what you say: "Yeah, I think you'll—." But it's your whole attitude! It's the time you spend with them, the value, the priority you give them. And to shuffle them off to these . . . and go give themselves to the things that are important, because that child is nothing but a drag or a hindrance. "It cost me 35, 40, 50, \$75,000. And he's a drag!" Do you think a child doesn't read that? I'm asking you to take God's attitude if you have picked this up. Do you know what God says about that little baby? I don't care what he does! Do you know what God says of that? Psalm 8. He's a little what? Say it: He's a little god. If you've got that idea, that this child is the most important thing in our lives, apart from Jesus Christ and apart from one another, the most important thing in our lives is this little child. I wonder how many of you who have children will so commit yourselves to that—not because you feel it. If you wait for some little warm feeling, just skip it if you're like me. "I'm committing myself to this: that that child is the most important thing in my life." If you commit yourself to that and begin to function with that, that he's—he's a heritage of God! He's a little god! He's the most important thing! Do you think that child is going to catch it? *Whew!*

My daughter-in-law is working in a lab school at the University of South Carolina. It's a lab school training kindergarten teachers to deal with young children—pre-schoolers. She's working there as a grad assistant. And Judy was telling us about a little child she watched, and he's so different from some of them. And this little boy told her one day: He says, "Mrs. Hatch, you know, I think my momma thinks I'm the greatest in the world. And in fact, I think my momma *enjoys* me." Let me ask you, do you know what will happen? "Oh," you say, "he's going to be conceited." Conceited? Oh, no. Do you know what he's going to be? *Whew!* He's going to be normal.

And so my daughter-in-law met the parents and said to the father. She said, "I watch your little boy. He's just four years old, but I sense that you are doing something for him that is very significant and I appreciate it." And the father said, "You know, Mrs. Hatch, my wife and I, before our little boy was born. . . ." (And he's not a Christian, and boy, this ought to strike us.) "My wife and I, before he was born, decided we were going to put him top priority. And my wife decided she wasn't going to work. And we had to use all of our life savings to do it, but we decided she was going to give—*both* of us were going to give—ourselves to this little boy. And it paid off."

If this little child begins to get that understanding of himself and then he gets married, do you think he's ready for marriage? If you come with God's family and you say, "I am going to deal with this child top priority. He's God's *gift* to me. And I don't care if we starve. I don't care if we have to live on peanut butter." (It's easy for me to say this with my children all gone!) "But I don't care what. We're going to live for this child because he's important." He will catch that. Now I'll guarantee you, he'll come up and he'll have a normal relationship.

He won't think he's some big shot. He'll have a normal, realistic view of himself that *he* is important, and that he's *worth* something. And then when he's married, he'll be over many of the humps. Let me touch some of these other areas quickly.

The second issue is this: When this little child comes in. . . . Now watch: "I think you're great!" and "You're one!" and "You're a little—!" and boy, he develops that. He sees in the mirror that "People think I'm . . ." and that's great. But he's got to catch something else because this little baby is either a boy or a girl. Right? Yes or no (laughter)? Alright, now let me ask you the next question: Do you think he *knows* that he is a boy or a girl? He does not. Let me ask you another question: Do you think he *likes* being a boy or a girl? That is up for grabs, too. He's got a male body but he doesn't have the slightest idea that he's a man—that he's a boy. And he doesn't know whether it's good or bad. He's going to get that from you.

I'm sure you saw on TV some time ago, that that's the awful confusion of our culture, where it says this child was born "with a birth defect." He was born as a girl. Do you know what that means? Every child must come along. He'll not only understand his own worth but he must understand that he is a little boy, and that he will become a man. And he must *know* that. And he must *accept* that. And he must *like* it.

Let me just say a couple of words about when that does not take place. A pastor called me back in the fall asking [for] counsel and prayer about a little boy. He has a male body but somewhere along the line he caught the idea that he's not important unless he's a woman. Now, it's usually the other way around. And so he wants to be a little girl. Do you know what that means? He doesn't like being a little boy. He rejects being a man and he accepts being a woman with a male body. Do you know what they call that? That's transsexualism. And that is what's happening in our society. And they are performing operations all the time, taking that male body and changing it to a female body to match what he has accepted. Man, what confusion!

You say that doesn't affect marriage? Let me ask you, did God make them all in His image? Yes or no? He did. Therefore, they are important! He not only made them in His image as persons. . . . Listen, He also made them what? Male and female. *That* is good! God makes it very clear and I ought to communicate this to that little baby. "What are you?" "I'm a boy." "Hallelujah!" "What are you?" "I'm a little girl." "Hallelujah!" "Man, that's great to be a man, isn't it?" "And it's great to be a . . ."—I think! I've never been one (laughter). That affects your marriage, you see. If you're not satisfied being a woman, if you think it's a—raw deal . . . man, get with God and take it from God: "That's great! It's great to be a woman!" Why? God created them what? Male and female. That's what the psychologists call his gender identity. He's got to learn that. And he'll pick it up from your attitudes.

Alright, let's move to number three. God has designed in this family that that little child, from the moment he's born, and that mother picks him up and begins to nurse him. And then later on when he begins to talk and to walk and to get into everything, then he begins to do all kind of amazing things. Do you know what's happening? Oh, you've given him such good training for marriage. That family is the most *ideal* place to learn your basic, basic lessons of human relationships. If he does not learn in those early years, in that *ideal* school of sociology, do you know what you've got in a family? What an opportunity to learn human relationships! You know what you've gone? They can learn every kind of human relationship that they'll ever run into, they can pick up right there. They can learn to relate to somebody in authority. They can learn to relate to somebody older. They can learn to relate to one of the same sex. They can learn to relate to one of the opposite sex. They can learn to relate to their peers. They can learn to relate to that little ole sister. I don't know any human relationship that they cannot learn in that great school. But the sad thing is they are not learning. Don't draw back from spending time relating to your children. *Please*—because *there* they will learn the basic lessons of human relationships!

And do you know what marriage is? Marriage is nothing essentially but a complex what? *Human relationship*. And if you have not learned in the family, in those early years how to relate to people . . . Oh, the priceless privilege of taking these little children in a non-romantic, non-sex-oriented situation and just teaching them how to relate to each other. Boy, that's heaven on earth! *Number three*—he can learn the basic lessons of human relationships. If he has not learned it in the family you know what it's like? It's like sending a young man 21 years of age to the front line in a hot battle, and he's never had any basic training. What would you think of a nation that would send its soldiers to the front line and never even taught them how to use a rifle? Never

even taught them anything about warfare. “Put them out in the front lines!” That is what happens, time and time again. Young people get married never having learned the basic lessons of human relations. That is where you are supposed to learn it—in the family.

Number four. What does your child think about the physical thing we call sex? Oh, if only things had been different for me. God’s mercy has been great. When I came along nobody told me anything. I asked one question and my parents said, “When you get to be a doctor you’ll understand.” I never got to be a doctor (laughter). But I picked it up out on the street, and it was dirty—filthy—and do you think you get over those things? Those things are deep. And sex was dirty. It’s not so much today. It’s not dirty anymore; it’s out in the open. It’s something to play with, something to show off. But oh, I see some young people coming up with God’s view. They get it when they’re little children. They’re not involved in it yet. But they get an idea, “Sex is good!” But it is for God’s purposes in marriage. It’s great! It’s holy! It’s good!

Now you tell me. Here’s a young girl, and I’m thinking of one I’ve talked to a couple of times. Wonderful person, Wonderful Christian. And she comes and she says that when she is relating to her husband in a physical way, she can respond to him. But she says immediately after, a great cloud of guilt comes upon her and she says it’s dirty. And she can’t get rid of it. That should never be. Don’t leave it up to your schools to give them sex education. Tell them it’s good. It’s God-made. It’s beautiful. But don’t waste it out there; and it’s not what God planned until it’s in marriage—very beautiful. And a young person who gets those attitudes and understandings about the physical thing of sex, oh, he’s ready to get married.

Number five. Every child has a right to have one good course in marriage and family life. And I’m not talking about a formal course. But if he hasn’t had it, he’s not ready for marriage. Everybody needs a good course in marriage and family. And do you know what God’s plan is? Do you know what a child has a right to? That when he comes up, he looks at his mamma and daddy. Nobody tells him, no text books, no lectures—just a good model. And he watches his dad and he sees his daddy respects his mamma, and daddy likes his mamma. And sometimes he kind of gets the idea he’s glad he’s married to his mamma. And he thinks marriage is great. And he doesn’t like jokes about marriage. And his mother loves his daddy. And they seem to be so happy. Do you know what he’s getting? He’s getting a great course in marriage. He’s getting a model of that oneness. Let me ask you. If he sees that, do you think he wants to get married? Do you know why young people are fed up on marriage and are not getting married? Do you know why? They look up there and say, “If that’s all there is, held together by a piece of paper . . .” They say, “If that’s all there is, you can have it; I don’t want it.” They have a right to see a model and to have these parents tell them about marriage and family. If they get it, they’ll be ready.

Let me tell you about one gal who got it and then we’ll close. A couple years ago one of our students—she was just a sophomore, and I was a little surprised at what she told me—but she—. I was eating lunch with her in the dining room and she said, “Mr. Hatch, I’ve got something I want to tell you. I’ve just recently become engaged.” “That’s great!” She said, “Mr. Hatch, I’d like to tell you about what my dad said when this fellow asked him if he could marry me.” She said, “He went up to see my dad and said, ‘Mr. so and so, I’d like to marry your daughter.’ And he said, ‘Alright, on two conditions. Number one, if you’re sure it’s God’s plan. Number two, if you’ll live in my backyard’” (laughter). And then this young girl, she said, “Mr. Hatch, I’ll tell you why my dad said that.” She said, “When I was growing up we had such a wonderful family.” Her father was a pastor and yet he’s a wonderful father, and a wonderful husband. She said, “I had such a wonderful family. I was so close to my father and my mother. In fact, when I was a little girl I used to tell my daddy, ‘Daddy, when I get big I’m going to marry you.’” Then when she got a little older she realized she couldn’t marry her father so she said, “Daddy, when I get married I’m going to live in your backyard” (laughter). And I turned to that girl and I said from the depths of my heart . . . I said, “Donna, you’re ready to get married.” Do you know why? She’s had it all. She knew who she was. She’d had such wonderful relationships. She was proud that she was a woman. I didn’t talk to her on that occasion. I did on other occasions about the sex thing. She knew it was beautiful. And she had seen the thing modeled in her family. *Oh, what a heritage.*

Do you see this? That a biblical, Christian family unconsciously will prepare children for marriage from birth? Don’t prepare them for a career, primarily. Prepare them for marriage and family—for *God’s* family. God will take care of the career.