

"A Church Determined to Become a House of Prayer Striving for Excellence without Exception, Quality Without Question, Committed to the Cause of Christ"

The UBC WORD

Union Baptist Church, 904 N. Roxboro Street, Durham, NC 27701

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God's Plan For Marriages

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE (s)

"God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits.
(The Message Bible, I Cor 12: 4-7)

Christian literature, movies and bible study materials all seem to beckon you to discover God's plan for your marriage. Perhaps you never thought of God having a plan for your marriage, much less making the time to discover what God's plan for marriages is? Is there really a purpose for this culmination of love or is it whatever two people make of it? Are you seeking God's purpose for your union or asking "Why did we get married in the first place?"

A pastor's blog recently raised the question "Is Marriage obsolete?" While some naysayers think it is, the institution of marriage is the oldest institution established by God still in effect. Look in any good Bible concordance and you'll find several entries relating to "marriage", "marrying", or "married". It is a covenant relationship older than the Mosaic Law. God performed the first wedding when he joined Adam and Eve together (Gen. 2: 20 - 25) and its purposes are clear - to reflect God's glory.

Genesis 2: 18 - 20 helps us understand God's intent for marriage. In these verses, God declared that it was not good for man to be alone, so woman is created. She will function as a helpmate, a companion, and an encourager to the man. Marriage

therefore provides an institution for spouses to fulfil each other's needs. Second, God told Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:28). Thus we see that marriage is the intended context for the proliferation of the human race. It also implies that husbands and wives would provide a suitable home for children to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of God (Proverbs 22:6).

Third, marriage also serves to keep us from immorality. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." (Hebrews 13:4) No explanation needed. Lastly, God intended that marriage would help us develop our spiritual lives since marriage serves as a model of our relationship with Christ. Ephesians 5:21-32 teaches us that marriage is a relationship of mutual submission which calls for different qualities/roles. Men are assigned sacrificial love (as Christ loved the church), providing for the wife, loving her as his own body and headship of the union. Women are called to be submissive and respectful of their husbands. Together the two become a unit that works in unity and tandem.

In other words, marriage is to be a binding, lifelong commitment (Romans 7: 2-3). It is to be cemented in love (Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 3:19, Titus 2:3-5). Easier said, than done? We agree. But because it is God's plan, it can be done.

Consider these ways of making your marriage stronger. Begin by individually seeking a closer relationship with God. As you grow closer to Him in a personal relationship, you will discover that you will grow closer to each other in your marital relationship. Pray about your marriage, individually and together. Tell God that you want to live your lives according to His will. Reading the scriptures, praying together and seeking the wisdom of mature Christian couples will help you discover what living according to His will is really all about.

A God-centered marriage requires work. At Union Baptist Church you can find help with studying God's word by attending the bible study class for couples, Marriage Takes Three. The Couples Ministry provides fellowship with other like-minded Christian couples through social events including our Valentine's Soiree, Couples Cafes, Annual Picnic, and other "couples only" outings.

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A message from the Congregational Care and Counseling Ministry

My grandfather told a story from the pulpit one Sunday of a woman who during her testimony spoke of an encounter with the devil. She reported once she gave her life to Christ, the devil jumped on her trail. He wrestled her to the ground, and each time she tried to get up, he kept kicking her, knocking her down. My grandfather's point? By the end of her testimony, people were questioning the value of giving their life to Christ if they had to spend this level of time and energy "wrestling with the devil."

I hear people say all the time, "*the devil made me do it.*" My response to that is, "no, he didn't. Seriously!" In I Corinthians, Chapter 10, verse 13, the apostle Paul wrote, "***No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.***" (NRSV)

The news headlines for the past three weeks have challenged my emotional capacity as a child of God. Unless the reports are inaccurate, three fathers have deliberately killed their children because of a dispute with the child's mother. Did the devil make them do it? No, he didn't. Seriously! Research reveals more than 50% of marriages end in divorce. I shudder to consider the percentage of parents who choose never to marry. My point? Everyone reading this message has had his/her heart broken at least once, so heartache is COMMON to all of us. How we choose to deal with it is an entirely different conversation.

I often tell people, young and old alike, "Be sure 100% of you wants to do whatever it is you're contemplating, because once you cross the line, you can't take it back." The anonymous author of the letter to the Hebrews wrote in Chapter 4, verse 12, "***Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***" (NRSV) Each of us whether Christian or not, must accept responsibility for our actions and stop blaming the devil for the decisions we choose to make. The devil may place evil thoughts in our mind, but if the apostle Paul and the anonymous author of Hebrews are correct, then we must first accept trials and tribulations will come to test our strength but those of us who walk with Christ have to believe nothing we encounter will EXCEED our capacity to cope. Secondly, if we will take the time to consider the 'why' (intentions) of our choices, we might be inspired to step away from the glass and choose a response that reflects the character of Christ, e.g., *what would Jesus do?*

It is impossible for Pastor Hammond, Dr. Wiggins-Obie, Dr. Armstrong, or me to know everything you might be going through today. Nevertheless, be assured God knows, and He knows because, "***we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.***" (NRSV, Hebrews 4: 15) If you are overwhelmed to the point the 'why' of your actions does not line up with the Word or the will of God, please contact the Congregational Care and Counseling Ministry for assistance.

You can reach Dr. Tonya Armstrong, PH.D., M.T.S., or Anita Daniels, MSW, LCSW, LCAS, at (919) 688-1304, extension 55. God bless each of you.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

- ◆ **March 2, 12:30-3:00 pm:** Career Fair and Trade Show sponsored by Durham Economic Resource Center and The Black Brown Green Alliance. Site: Community Family Life and Rec. Center at Lyon Park, 1313 Halley Street, Durham, 27707. Professional business attire required.
- ◆ **March 4-12:** National Week of Prayer for the Healing of HIV/AIDS. Various services and opportunities for learning about the prevention and state of this pandemic and its impact on our community. Sponsored by the Durham Faith Community on HIV/AIDS. All events are free. Financial donations will be collected and a food drive is ongoing at the locations hosting events.
- ◆ **March 17, 7:00 pm:** The Spellman College Glee Club will be in concert on March 17th, at 7 pm at Mt. Level Baptist Church. Concert is free and open to the public.
- ◆ **March 26, 8:30 am :** The Great Human Race begins at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park. A great time of fun, fitness and supporting volunteerism in Durham. You can register in advance or the same day. Registration begins at 7 am.
- ◆ **April 1, 8:30 am—4:00 pm:** "Mental Illness as a Spiritual Journey" Conference sponsored by Faith Connection on Mental Illness. \$15 before 3/12/11; \$25 afterwards. UBC is one of the sponsors and Dr. Tonya Armstrong is a presenter. You can register online at wakeahec.org. This conference is for ministers, caregivers, family members, etc. Space is going fast; lunch is included in the registration fee.

BODY & SOUL CONNECTION: Learning from Bears?

Hibernation in Bears

Among all the news this week of riots and crimes, storms and fires, were several articles about a newly released study on bear hibernation. Researchers discovered that while the body temperature, heart and breathing rates all decrease during hibernation, bears do not lose bone or muscle mass. This has implications for human health since people who reduce consumption and are totally inactive lose significant amounts of bone and muscle mass. If researchers could figure out how to apply the hibernation process to humans, they could better help people survive medical crises, decrease the complications of bed rest, and adapt to long-term space travel. Well, thoughts of hibernation in bears made me think about parallels with humans. In bears, the process of overeating to prepare for months of hibernation is called *hyperphagia*. During this period, bears consume about three times as many calories as normal. Like the bears, many of us eat more in late fall and winter, especially high fat hearty foods, as if we're trying to stay warm by consuming excess calories. In contrast to the bears whose *hyperphagia* ends sooner, we start our *hyperphagia* about Thanksgiving time and continue through at least New Year's. Some of us get so used to this new habit that we continue overeating until spring arrives. Then we suddenly realize that milder weather means lighter weight clothes and everyone will soon see what we've been up to! When bears transition to hibernation after their period of *hyperphagia*, they first "voluntarily" reduce food consumption and then go into a dormant state of lowered metabolism and lowered body temperature for the five or more months during which consume nothing. Our problem is that after all our overeating, we do not hibernate and therefore have no use for all those extra calories.

Hibernation in Humans

Hibernation in humans more often occurs on the social rather than the physical level. Whether due to illness, personal or family stresses or other difficult events, we sometimes feel the need to "get away from it all" and retreat from the world. Continuing bouts of illness, unemployment, being a newcomer to the area, lack of a church family – these are all things that can cause people to go into hibernation. Sometimes the trials and stresses of life leave us with the feeling that we need time to back off from certain relationships and activities in order to process what has been happening and regroup our personal resources in order to face the world again. Sometimes continuing illness, especially if it occurs when one has little social support, can put someone into unintended hibernation, as they find themselves more and more isolated from others and stuck all alone for days or even months in their own little "den."

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EVENTS TO SUPPORT (in person or with prayer)



March 2, 5 am: Sunrise Prayer and Praise.

March 12, 9 am: Boys to Men Program sponsored by the Samaritan Men.

March 13, 7:45 am : Rev. Wiggins-Obie is preaching at Mt. Gilead Baptist Church.

March 16, 8:30 pm: Church Meeting.

March 18, 7 pm: Family Prayer and Worship for the whole church sponsored by the Prayer Partners.

March 19, 11 am: New Disciples Fellowship.

March 20, 11 am: Rev. Daphne Wiggins-Obie preaching at Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, Durham.

March 20, 11 am. Rev. Larry Thomas

preaching at Mt. Zion Baptist Church n Apex.

March 20, 4 pm: UBC Worshipping with Temple Memorial BC (Highpoint, NC). Advance sign up is required to ride the buses.

March 25-26: Couples Retreat at Northgate Mall. See ad on p. 4.

March 26, 11 am– 4 pm: Samaritan Men's Fish Fry at Heritage Square (behind St. Mark's AME Zion church).

March 27, 11:15 am: National Black Marriage Day will be observed.

March 28, 7 pm: Women's Forum: *Overcoming the Superwoman Syndrome*.

Service @ Hillhaven- Pettigrew Nursing Home.

3rd Sundays @ 3 pm

March 20: Rev. Charles Smith

Services @t Seasons of Southpoint Center, Sundays @2 pm

March 6: Rev. Kevin Thomas

March 13: Rev. Sandra Hooper

March. 20: Rev. Kem Brown

March. 27: Rev. George Ashby

Family Night Worship Schedule Wednesdays, 7 pm

March 2: Rev. Patricia Pettiford

March 9: Rev. Sandra Hooper

March 16: Rev. Kem Brown

March 23: Rev. Alice Evans

March 30: Rev. George Ashby

Learning From Bears (continued from p. 3.)

Bears are genetically programmed for the five stages of hibernation yet are able to adapt to differing climates and food availability. While we certainly have some genetic direction as to how our lives unfold, we also have a lot of choice whether it is in the area of food consumption or patterns of social relationships. Some of these relationship choices relate to our own lives and others relate to how we might reach out to others in need.

Learning from Bears

So what can we learn from bears? 1) If bears can voluntarily reduce food consumption, so can we. 2) If we're going to make a change in food consumption, we need to do it gradually, and choose a moderate rather than an extreme approach. 3) If we're going to overeat for a time, then we need a time of reduced consumption to compensate for it. 4) If we're going to hibernate from the world, when winter is over (whatever our "winter" is), we need to eventually emerge and resume normal activity. Someday what scientists have learned from bear hibernation may help us during a medical crisis. In the meantime, we need not to create crises by a) overeating as if we're preparing for a hibernation that never happens, b) living as if we want an indefinite hibernation from the world, or c) ignoring an unwanted hibernation affecting a friend or relative.

Bears in the Bible are usually eating, tearing or devouring, so let me conclude with a different type of "bear" reference to encourage us all to persevere in our efforts toward physical and emotional health: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation" (Psalm 68: 19).

A message from your Parish Nurse, Janet Morton, 688-1304 ext 24.

The Art of Marriage
Video Event

Getting to the Heart of
God's Design

God can turn any marriage
into a masterpiece.

Register Today

Sponsored by UBC Couples Ministry

**DON'T MISS THIS GREAT
OPPORTUNITY TO "TUNE UP"
YOUR MARRIAGE**

Registration Deadline: March 6th

Cost: \$50 a couple

Where: Northgate Mall,
Lower Level

When: March 25, 6:30—9 pm

March 26, 8:30 am—4 pm

Session Facilitators:

- Samuel and Daphne Wiggins-Obie
- Tonya and Corwin Armstrong
- Charles and Pamela Barnes
- Rubie and Harry Lawson
- Sherman and Paula Newman
- Elton and Myrtle O'Neal



UBC MINISTRY UPDATES

- ◆ **Angel Food Ministry:** Don't forget to look for the new menus every month. Orders are taken on Sundays and Wednesdays and packages must be picked up from Southside Church of Christ, 800 Elmira Avenue, Durham 27707. Payment must be made with order. Distribution day is March 19th. Last day to place an order is March 9th. If you have additional questions contact Marian Holmes at 623-3937.
- ◆ **Bible Study Classes:** The Spring Term of Bible Study classes and Sunday school is about to begin. We begin a new term of SS classed on March 6th. The new term of BS begins on March 7th with Men's class and March 9th for the others. Brochures are in the front and rear of the church.
- ◆ **Crop Walk Time:** We still need more disciples to participate in waling the CROP Walk this year. The Durham CROP Walk raises money to combat hunger locally and worldwide. Andrea Reavis is spearheading this effort for us, dreanj2000@yahoo.com, if you can be part of the organizing effort. Pledge forms can be picked up at the rear of the church now until they're gone. Monies have to be turned in by the day of the walk, March 20th. The walk begins at 2:30 pm from in front of Duke Chapel.
- ◆ **Etiquette 101 Sessions:** Open to ages 6-18 yrs, males and females. \$5 a person. April 16, 11 am—1 pm. Participants will be selected to try out their new skills at a local restaurant. Sign

up in Youth Church or contact Ivy Wilcox at sistas2010@att.net.

- ◆ **Lenten Calendar:** The Lenten Season begins on March 9th. This is the 40 day period of reflection upon Jesus' preparation for the cross, which Christian world wide observe. There will be a Lenten calendar available on March 6th for those who want a guided resource to observe these days.
- ◆ **Men's Bible Study:** The BS topic beginning the next term is *The Discipline of Stewardship for the Purpose of Godship*.
- ◆ **Parish Nurse Ministry:** Weigh down weights will be taken on the 4th Sunday of the month after all services.
- ◆ **Pastor's Aide:** Will be hosting a birthday celebration for Pastor Hammond on July 23rd at the Union Independent School. Tickets are now available. For more details or to purchase a ticket, contact Algene Vareene at 471-6896 or a member of the Pastor's Aide Ministry.
- ◆ **Samaritan Men's Fish Fry:** Don't miss some of the best fish in town. March 26th, 11- 4 pm. (Heritage Shopping Plaza, behind St. Mark's AMEZ Church). Fish plates (with 2 sides) and Fish sandwiches. Price \$7 and \$4. Proceeds go to support Samaritan Men's work with our young males.

◆ **Women's Ministry:** Will host a forum, *Overcoming the Superwoman Syndrome* on March 28 at 7:00 p.m. Open to women of all ages and the community. The facilitator is Anita Daniels, our Assistant Minister of Congregational Care.

◆ **Youth New Disciples Classes (YNDC):** Our next cycle of YNDC begins March 6th. If your child ages 6-17 joined the church and never went through these classes, please bring them on March 6th. It is a 6 week series for youth who have accepted Christ in their lives. Classes are at 9:30 am on Sundays. If your child is presently attending a SS class he/she can rejoin that class upon completion of their New Disciples class. Email the child's name and contact information to Dr. Wiggins-Obie at [dwiggins@unionbaptist-durham.org](mailto:dwig-gins@unionbaptist-durham.org).

DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR MINISTRY UPDATES AND CHANGES

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The newsletter is available on-line at www.ubcdurham.org. Click on the newsletter tab. Submissions for the April 2011 issue are due by March 21st .

God's Plan for Marriage (Continued from Page 1)

We also provide additional spiritual support through our retreats, workshops and video events. And we celebrate our UBC marriages during the National Black Marriage Day celebration

Dennis Rainey suggests in a recent daily devotion that after a month of marriage, everyone can find grounds for divorce. The challenge is to find reasons to stay together. If you are not experiencing the kind of marriage that God wants you to have, take a moment to explore some of the incredible resources that are available through websites, books, videos, podcasts, etc. Someone once said, "The kind of marriage that God wants is so sublime that it is a little taste of heaven on earth." May we all strive to make our marriages of this calibre.

Article written by Min. Harry and Rubie Lawson

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT:
UNION BAPTIST YOUTH MISSIONARIES

The Youth Missionary Department of Union Baptist Church was the host to the Durham County Youth Missionary Department monthly meeting on February 13th at 3 pm. The meeting was attended by approximately two hundred people. The theme for the Missionaries is "To Convince the Unconvinced to be Convinced through Education, Missions and Fellowship: A Call to Spiritual Integrity with Emphasis on Love". The meeting was called to order by the County President, Alyssa Williams. She welcomed the attendees and turned the meeting into the hands of the Youth from Union Baptist.

David Reavis, the 1st Vice President from Union Baptist again welcomed the group and started things rolling by starting the group in singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing". The Scripture was I John 4:7-8. The Devotional Message taken from the Joyful Helper Missionary Guide was entitled "Continuing to Call (pages 37-39). The message included a story of God asking the character in the story "Do you love me?". Ordinarily, we would immediately think in our minds that "Of course, I love God". There would be no question at all. However, the story goes on to ask pertinent questions about the character's actions that seem to indicate some failings in the ability to demonstrate love, at times. The story seems to be designed in such a way as to get every listener to ask themselves "Do I always SHOW my love for God?". The conviction that might arise is targeted to get us to move beyond our comfort zones and spiritual slumber, to more effective and active participation in God's plan for our individual lives.

The high point of the day came during the Youth Activity. Worship and Praise was led by the Instruments of Praise dance team along with dancers and drummers from the Chuck Davis Dance Ensemble. The sounds of the African Drummers and the vividly colored costumes worn by the dancers created a visual and aural experience worthy of any African village. Audience participation in the percussion came in the form of hand clapping to the beat of the music. A little extra help with lighting effects came from the UBC Audio-Visual Ministry as well.

Everyone was blessed by a brief explanation of the focus of the Dance Ensemble's mission by none other than Chuck Davis himself. He reminded us all of our African traditions of respect for elders, tribal care of the village youth, and a deep abiding sense of UNITY, regardless of individual circumstances. Within the presentation, he included audience participation via call-and-response with chanting and physical gestures that embodied the message of UMOJA (unity). The wisdom gained by experience and his world travels was communicated in his voice, gestures, message, and powerful presence. This was truly a unique and moving experience for everyone.

After the Youth Activity, the County Business Meeting was held and the Youth Presidents gave their reports. Upcoming events were announced such as the Great Human Race in March, a city-wide Youth Revival in July, a "Teen Night" in the near future, and a Youth Missionary Banquet in June. Visits to volunteer at Ronald McDonald House, and continued support of a family adopted by the County Youth Missionaries (after the loss of their home due to fire) were also discussed. It seems that the Youth are on fire for Missions and are ready to be more active than ever in their local churches and communities. Looking forward to the future, we can expect a mutual spiritual strengthening that crosses age boundaries and injects new energy into the lives of our churches and surrounding communities.

Article Submitted by Ron Jackson, Union Baptist Church, Assistant Youth Missionary Supervisor.

