TITLE: **"GUARD THE DOORS OF YOUR HOME!"**
TEXTS: **TOPICAL; primarily - I COR. 7, EPH. 4**

INTRODUCTION: ILLUS: of the necessity to lock the doors of your home in our society, because of potential danger outside.

In a similar way we need to guard our families from the attacks of the enemy (Satan and the world's system).

The family is under attack today! Satan has several weapons he is using to destroy marriages.

If you are a Christian who loves the Lord, his first tactic will be to:

1) Cool off your zeal for <u>spiritual</u> things

Other tactics:

2) To introduce wrong <u>acquaintances</u> (friends)

3) To twist (pervert) God's plan for a proper <u>sexual</u> relationship

4) To provoke you to <u>say things</u> to your mate that will badly hurt

5) To cause <u>disunity</u> in how you manage your money and children

Most couples when asked: "In what areas in your marriage do you have trouble?" will reply: "Sex, communication, and money"

Since these (and other areas) are causes for concern, we need to guard - 1) our spiritual lives
2) our social relationships
3) our sexual relationship
4) our speech
& 5) our stewardship (money and children)

You need to guard your relationship with your mate!

PROPOSITION: GUARD THE DOORS OF YOUR HOME!

<u>Five doors</u> in our marriage that we must have securely shut, locked, and guarded:

I. GUARD YOUR <u>SPIRITUAL DEDICATION</u> (I Cor. 7:28-35)
(Guard against losing your spiritual dedication; keep your zeal)

NOTE: Context - Paul in answering the Corinthians question about whether or not it was best to marry, said: It is good (best) to remain single (if you have the gift of celibacy).

READ verses 7, 9, 27, 28, v. 1.

"Such shall have trouble in the flesh" (v. 28). Remember, the result of the fall of man was a curse on husband and wife relationships (Gen. 3:16). Woman's natural tendency is to (desire) usurp authority over the man and man's is to (rule) despotically dominate the woman.

The answer is to be saved and Spirit-filled.

The spirit is willing (to make the marriage work), but the flesh is weak.

Paul is saying in I Cor. 7:29-35 -
Don't let any relationship (v. 29)
Don't let any emotion (v. 30a)
Don't let any occupation (v. 30b)
Don't let any enjoyment (v. 31)
distract you from serving the Lord (v. 35).

Paul is not saying that any of the above are bad; as a matter of fact, they are good. But nothing must distract your service!

Your mate (if a Christian) should inspire, help and encourage you to greater service, not pull you from it.

Before you marry a person, ask: Will this person help or hinder my service for Christ?

The flesh is saying, "Let me in!"
But we must guard the door of our spiritual dedication.

II. GUARD YOUR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

(Guard against dishonoring God in your social relationships)

A. HONOR GOD IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO YOUR PARENTS

"Leave and cleave" - Don't allow parents to interfere with your marriage.

The best way to show your mom and dad that they did a good job in rearing you is--when you marry--don't be dependent upon them anymore for:
1) physical needs (cooking, cleaning, money, clothing)
2) emotional needs (approval, companionship, feeling of "home-ness")
or 3) spiritual needs (direction and advice)

B. HONOR GOD IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO FRIENDS

"Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners."

Be careful in your choice of friends.

Turn to II Cor. 6:14-15.

Corrupting influences on our homes are saying, "Let us in!"

But we must guard the door of our social relationships.

III. GUARD YOUR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP (I Cor. 7:1-9)

(Guard against selfishness; seek to give pleasure rather than to get it)

Principles:

1) Sex prior to marriage is sin (v. 2)
(wrong time for sex)

Fornication refers to premarital sexual relations, whereas adultery refers to a married person who commits intercourse with someone other than mate (cp. Gal. 5:19; I Cor. 6:9 where a distinction is made; NOTE I Cor. 6:18 - Fornication is a sin against one's own body; adultery would be sin against two: you and your mate).

Cp. Jacob who waited until marriage - Gen. 29:21 - "And Jacob said unto Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her."

2) Sex apart from marriage is sin (v. 2)
(wrong kind of sex)

The word fornication comes from the Greek "porneia" from which we get our English word "pornography."

You must guard your eyes and mind (Job 31:1 - "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?").

Jesus said Lust is the same as adultery (Mt. 5:28)

"His own wife . . . her own husband" (v. 2)
"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well" (Prov. 5:15)

3) Sexual relations within marriage are holy and good.

Sex was God's invention, not Satan's (Gen. 1:27, 28, 31; 2:25; 4:1).

Heb. 13:4 - "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge"

4) Sexual relations are to be regular (habitual) and continuous (v. 3)

"Render" = present tense - to pay your debt to your mate on a continual basis.

--Such satisfaction will prevent temptation to find satisfaction elsewhere.
--Such satisfaction will prevent burning (unfulfilled sexual desire - v. 9)

5) Sexual relations are to be unselfish (v. 3 & 4)

"Due benevolence" = obligation or debt.

You are obligated to please your spouse.

Your goal is not to please yourself but your spouse.

You can't say, It's my body, not yours" (v. 4).

God is teaching us "mutual dependence." Each is the other's property.

Purpose for sex: Your physical relationship is a reassurance of love and affection.

6) There is to be no sexual bargaining (controlling or manipulating) (v. 5)

Abstinence must be with consent (agreement).

God says to the bride and groom on honeymoon, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Song of Solomon 5:1).

If you keep your mate satisfied, you greatly lessen the temptation to look for greener grass elsewhere.

Prov. 27:7 - "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

Most husbands and wives are empty.

Selfishness and sexual immorality are saying, "Let us in!"

But we must guard the door of our sexual relationship.

IV. GUARD YOUR SPEECH TO YOUR MATE (Eph. 4:15, 29-32)

(Guard against speech that tears down; use your tongue to build up [edify])

1. Speak to each other with openness and honesty (Eph. 4:15)

   ". . . Speaking the truth in love"

   This means: a. You must speak (talk!)
   ILLUS: If we don't talk with God, we are not right with Him; same with our mate.
   b. You must speak the truth (don't lie or cover problems)
   c. You must speak in love (never in anger)

2. Speak to each with a goal to edify (build up) (Eph. 4:29)

   "Corrupt" = that which is rank, foul, rotten, worthless, or disgusting.

   An uncontrolled tongue can do severe damage (Prov. 12:18; 15:1; Ja. 3:5-8).

   Ask yourself, "Will what I am about to say help or hurt? Is it constructive or destructive?" (Prov. 20:15; Rom. 15:1-3).

   "Edifying" = to build up.

   Rule of thumb: If it won't build up, then shut up! (cp. Eph. 5:4)

   "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." (Ps. 19:14)

   "Grace" = a gift, a pleasure, a profit.

   The meaning is: "that it may benefit the hearers."

   Sometimes our tongue--rather than bringing "grace"--can bring "disgrace."

3. Speak to each other with Spirit control. (Eph. 4:30-32)

"Grieve" = to cause pain or sorrow.

The fruit of the Spirit is self-control, gentleness, goodness, patience, kindness (Gal. 5:22-23).

Before you say it, ask yourself:

a. Are the words I'm about to use the best way of saying it? (Prov. 12:25; 15:1; 16:23)

NOTE: The tone of your voice reveals more than what you say. Avoid emotionally charged words.
Prov. 15:1 - "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

b. Is this the best time to say it? (Prov. 15:23, 28; 25:11-12)
"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver)

NOTE: Good beneficial communication requires not only correct speaking but accurate listening.

"Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Ja. 1:19)

1) Don't interrupt (Prov. 18:13)
2) Give undivided attention

Real communication -

Try this: Ask your mate, "What can I do (change) to be a better wife/husband for you?"

Don't be offended at the answer. Determine to change!

The world's way of handling problems says, "Let me come into your life."

But we must "guard the door of our lips."

V. GUARD YOUR STEWARDSHIP OF YOUR MONEY AND CHILDREN

(Guard against disunity in managing what God has entrusted to you; keep harmony)

A. MONEY

Amos 3:3 - "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

1. Both must agree with what God says about money.

   a. He gives the ability to make it (Deut. 8:18; I Cor. 4:7)

   b. Everything ultimately belongs to Him (Ps. 24:1; I Chr. 29:11)

   c. Many things are more important than money (Prov. 15:16-17)

   d. Covetousness, discontentment, worry or concern about money is sin (I Tim. 6:8; Phil. 4:11; Heb. 13:5).

2. Both must agree about how to earn it and spend (invest) it.

   a. God expects the man to do honest, hard work (Ex. 20:9 - 6 days working; Prov. 13:11 - no one gets rich quick! It won't last)

   b. God wants us to carefully, prayerfully plan how to spend it (budget) Prov. 20:18)

   c. God wants our giving to Him to be cheerful and a priority (II Cor. 9:7; Prov. 14:21, 19:17; Gal. 6:3-9; Eph. 4:28)

B. CHILDREN

You must agree as to their 1) <u>education</u>
2) <u>discipline</u>

There is a definite need for unity in rearing your children.

Recall the tragedy of Jacob and Esau. Because Mom (Rebekah) and Dad (Isaac) were not eye to eye in regards to their children (showing favoritism and sneaking behind Dad`s back), they reared one child who grew up to be a liar (a deceiver) and the other one to be a rebel (a vagabond).

This unity can happen only when both parents are depending on a single, absolute authority - the Word of God (Ps. 127:1 - "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it . . .")

Materialism and the world's philosophy of rearing children are saying: "Let us in!"
But we must guard our stewardship of our money and children.
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