

# Wings

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*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



November 21, 2010

## Leave and Cleave

When a young couple gets married, they have a lot to learn about living with each other. The last thing they need is parents interfering with the process.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).

This divine commentary follows the story of the first marriage, the union of Adam and Eve, who serve as a model of what marriage should be. This simple statement highlights a vital truth about the nature of marriage: When a couple gets married, they are joined (“cleave”, KJV) to one another in a special relationship they share with no one else. Whatever close bonds they previously had with others—especially their parents—must change to make room for a new Most Important Friend. A failure to respect this “leave and cleave” principle has wrecked countless marriages.

A marriage is the merging of two different personalities, and the merger will inevitably produce some conflicts, especially at first. Unless the marital problems are extremely sharp, it is best that the couple learn to work out their differences by themselves. If their problems are serious enough that they must seek outside help, their parents are usu-

ally the least qualified to render impartial advice. A marriage is almost doomed to fail from the start, if either partner enters the relationship ready to run home to Mama at the first sign of trouble.

Financial concerns, too, should be separated. When two young people decide to start a new life together, they should accept the responsibility of making it on their own—bills, bank notes, and all. A couple that leans heavily on Mom and Dad to bail them out of every little rough spot that comes along is establishing a habit of dependency that will be hard to break later on. They may have to accept a lower standard of living than what they enjoyed under their parents’ roofs, but the hard times will teach them how to manage their money.

The most difficult task, however, falls not on the kids who get married, but on the parents who must be left behind. It is awfully hard for parents to see their little ones go out into the world on their own and make mistakes that they themselves made long ago. The temptation is strong for parents to walk behind them every step of the way, giv-

ing them the benefit of the wisdom they’ve gained over the years. But such meddling usually invites in-law troubles that will only add to the newlyweds’ problems. Though they must bite their tongues sometimes, parents can serve their children best by watching from a distance and letting the kids learn from their own mistakes and experiences.

None of this suggests that a young married couple must sever their relationship with their parents when they marry. A close family relationship can still exist, and intergenerational advice can still be given, under carefully managed circumstances. But everyone must recognize that a new relationship has been created, and its separate identity must be respected and preserved.

Parents will always deserve honor and respect, and children should always give it. But there are boundaries that must also be respected. The marriage must come first! It is only by clinging to one another through all the ups and downs of their life together that a couple will develop the kind of intense love for each other that they seek.

– David King