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A Spiritual Lesson In Toon Language 44d

(This Version Written On The Days Of February 16--
20th , 2019 In Place Of And Based On The Impromptu
Lesson On September 6, 2018)

Inspired By God, Written And Presented By Pastor
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(In God I Trust And Write)

Series: The Muppet Show, Batman The Animated
Series, The Simpsons

Episodes: 111 Candice Bergen (The Muppet Show),
Harley And Ivy (Batman The Animated Series), Wild
Barts Can't Be Broken (The Simpsons)

Pictures: SNES Super Mario World—Castles 2 and 4

Topic: Life Sentence 4: Ball 'N' Chain

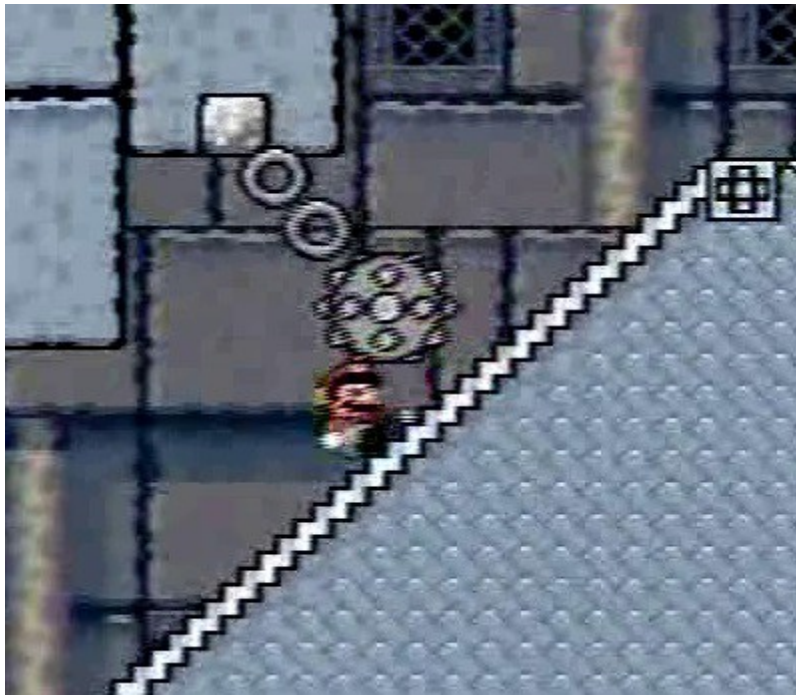
1: Opening Prayer

2: Discussion:

What in your opinion is a Ball 'N' Chain type of marriage?

This is usually an insulting term for a burdensome marriage. This usually means women, but I believe it could be used as any spouse that is seen as bad news by the other one in the couple. In other words, this feeling easily is in the eye of the beholder so to speak. Some general relationships are like this too, but for now we are looking at dating and marriage type of relationships.

Let's look at a few examples. We'll start with a couple of pictures.



What would this picture say about a dating or marriage relationship?

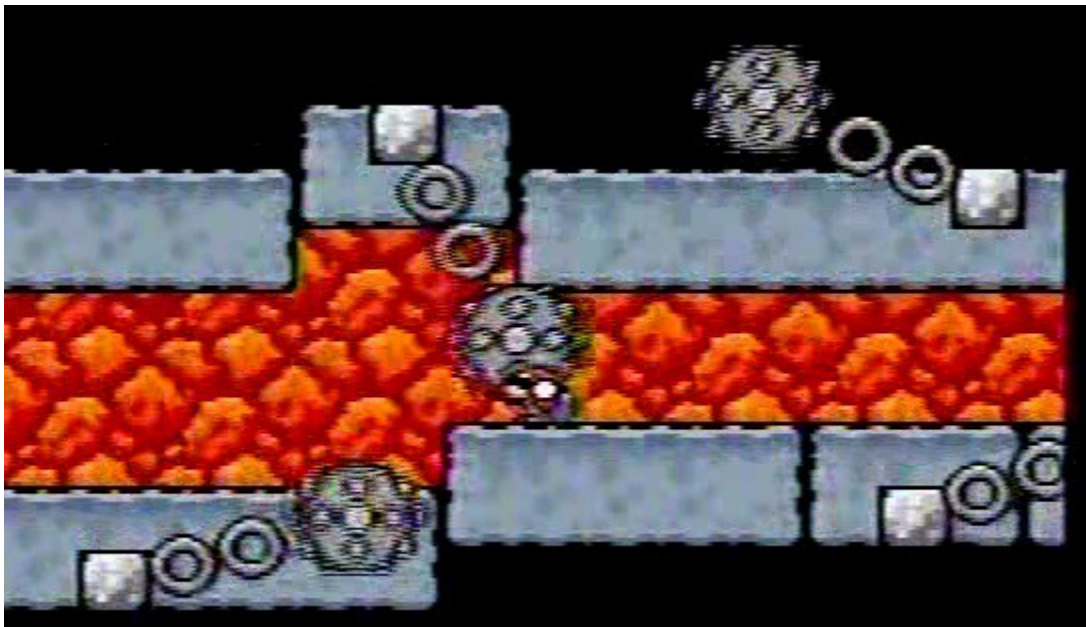
Have you ever been in a relationship that you are constantly going uphill, on your heels or about to get hurt if you don't slide backwards?

Portrayed here, is a picture of Mario in an enemy castle from Super Mario World (Castle # 2). He is up against an obstacle named “Ball 'N' Chain”, which is this lesson's namesake. Mario, if he doesn't slide backward and time things right to

advance and get away, he will be smashed.

A lot of marriages are like this. I come from a home when I was growing up that this was the case. Mom had to be constantly defensive because she was seemingly always on the escalator to trouble. This would be never fun for anyone. Mom had one of the textbook ways to have a Ball 'N' Chain marriage.

Here's another picture.



Now, this is a picture portraying Mario in another enemy castle from Super Mario World (Castle # 4) and Ball 'N' Chain again has its sights on Mario.

This time there is very little room to maneuver and Mario must duck.

How does this describe one of the bad relationships we are discussing?

Sometimes, a bad relationship much of the time doesn't allow the victim to be who he/she is made to be. Victims are not allowed to have their natural personality. This is a controller that can be very sick-minded much of the time, even sadistic.

Do you know of such people that wouldn't make a very good spouse?

I've had lots of relationships like these; mostly these were when I was younger and the girls that I had were using me for prestige or because they wanted to play me like a yo-yo with lines like “if you love me you'll do this”, usually this meant going against my moral principles. If these girls kept the way they were, they would be the ones to lie or control to get things they want and it would be a parasitic relationship for anyone who would

try to love them.

3: Cartoon Clips And Bible Study:

Let's look at some actual relationships portrayed in our shows of choice for this lesson.

We are going to look at a series of clips from a Batman: The Animated Series episode called **Harley And Ivy**, in case anyone wants to watch the whole thing, we have a link to the whole episode here below.

Cartoon Link:

[http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley
And_Ivy.webm](http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley_And_Ivy.webm)

This episode is very good all the way through with the Bible focus for this lesson, but we are going to show four segments that are the meat of this episode for the lesson.

Look at the 1st clip of **Harley And Ivy**.

Cartoon Link:

[http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley
_And_Ivy_1.webm](http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley_And_Ivy_1.webm)

What do you see in this clip?

Harley Quinn is the only female member of The Joker's gang; she is also his girlfriend.

Do you see what kind of treatment she receives at The Joker's hand?

The Joker is berating, mean-spirited, has a bad temper and is controlling; he doesn't appreciate her for her contributions to the gang. Her contributions to the gang are evident later.

Let's see the 2nd clip of **Harley And Ivy**.

Cartoon Link:

[http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley
_And_Ivy_2.webm](http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley_And_Ivy_2.webm)

What do you see in this clip?

Speaking from a bad guy's perspective, what does Harley Quinn contribute?

It looks like Harley Quinn is an expert gymnast, can dodge alarm beams with ease and is quiet when she commits theft; if Poison Ivy wasn't sloppy, Harley Quinn would have gotten away unnoticed. In addition, Harley Quinn is quick thinking and gets escape plans fast. From a bad guy's perspective, Harley Quinn is underestimated and The Joker is missing out.

Let's look at clip # 3 of **Harley And Ivy**.

Cartoon Link:

[http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley
_And_Ivy_3.webm](http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley_And_Ivy_3.webm)

What do you see in this clip?

In this clip, our bad girls show their humanity when they talk about relationships. Harley is showing herself to be going through similar symptoms of Battered Wife Syndrome and she isn't even married. Poison Ivy is trying to show Harley Quinn the meaning of a bad relationship, but this doesn't work too well. Blind love in this case is an obsession that will yield horrible consequences all the rest of her days if she can't break this bad relationship and its hold on her.

Let's look at the 4th clip of **Harley And Ivy**.

Cartoon Link:

[http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley
_And_Ivy_4.webm](http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Harley_And_Ivy_4.webm)

What do you see in this clip?

In this clip, we see that Harley Quinn is very important for a lot more even than how she can commit crime. She also is a homemaker, as she does laundry, feeds the hyenas, and keeps The Joker organized. The homemaking wife does most of this in a lot of marriages. Although not married and a bad girl, Harley Quinn has a relationship with The Joker (good, bad, or ugly) and does a lot for him; this includes the fact that Harley Quinn loves The Joker.

However, why is this a Ball 'N' Chain relationship?

The Joker clearly doesn't look hard enough at

Harley Quinn's gifts, he yells at her all the time, gets mad at her because of little mistakes (like the “bang flag” gun), he is only upset that she's not there to yell at and not appreciate (he blames everything wrong on someone else), he is controlling, jealous, envious and a user—a total parasite of a relationship; The Joker doesn't really love Harley Quinn. In my opinion, Harley Quinn quite possibly is a sweet woman in the wrong crowd; this causes her to commit crimes to impress and fit in, while her mental issues reinforce the cycle of bad behavior.

In a little background for Harley Quinn, according to the story line, she was once a prominent Arkham Asylum psychiatrist and was treating The Joker for his mental instability. Since Harley Quinn is kind of the vulnerable type, The Joker was able to warp her into thinking that he is more of a victim than a criminal (instead of facing his mental problems truthfully). Harley Quinn bought this and was warped eventually into loving a patient that is totally sadistic and quite frankly, may not be able to be treated easily with just meds and a shrink.

Harley Quinn might even think that loving The Joker might change him for the better. Until God touches someone like The Joker with mental healing, this won't happen in anyone's lifetime.

Let's look at another relationship scenario by watching this clip from The Muppet Show # 111: Candice Bergen. This is a song called Put Another Log On The Fire.

Cartoon Link:

http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Put_Another_Log_On_The_Fire.webm

What do you see in this clip?

This song is hilarious, but why would this relationship be a Ball 'N' Chain marriage?

This hillbilly guy has some problems and Candice (playing the prairie wife) is not happy with him. There are several reasons for this bad reaction.

Let's go through the list.

1: The husband is very lazy, as he just sits in his easy chair the whole song and barks orders in song.

2: He isn't appreciative. If you pay attention, he doesn't say thanks once—just barks the same orders, even though she has already done them once or more.

3: This man might be cheating because he sings about taking the wife's kid sister out driving every night.

4: He is clueless that the end is near for his marriage possibly because he tells her to tell him why she's leaving him.

5: He is insulting by calling her fat the way he sang it.

6: In short, this man would run his wife ragged

without loving on her, telling her how special she is, how beautiful. Even if she is putting on some weight for example, a good relationship is one that is loving no matter what, which is not what's happening. In the whole song, he only says he likes her when she's sweet and sits at his feet, but this doesn't include when she has mental issues, she's sad, angry, mad, or anything that is considered negative; on top of this she is not allowed to fight about the issue (civil or otherwise) because it's not “feminine”. This husband wants to just be taken care of, but not give her any good attention, has no interest in helping her in the physical and emotional senses. This husband can be considered a Ball 'N' Chain because he is unduly burdensome and seems to like it that way.

7: This guy thinks that taking his wife fishing once in a while will make up for everything and he says that a guy can't love a woman more than that; this is of course, false. In my opinion, he is deluded.

8: This man's friends didn't help when they started supporting him in this skit. It looks like this made

the wife more upset than before that there was so much reinforcement and support for this one-sided relationship. She decided to do something drastic.

What do you think of her response with the shotgun?

This might be a tad overblown, but understandable. The wife is being mistreated, neglected, probably cheated on and controlled. Usually if there is going to be a breaking point, this is it. Unfortunately, this scenario has happened for real when a spouse snaps and is violent, or kills the other one.

This couple probably needs a lot of help to reconcile even when and if she really leaves. A lot of times, this can happen and a lot of times not.

Let's look at a couple of Bible passages about what a good relationship is supposed to be in John 10: 10-11; James 1: 16-17; Genesis 2: 18-25 and Ephesians 5: 22-33

Joh 10:10 The thief comes only to steal, slaughter,

and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Joh 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

This passage is about salvation in Christ alone; a good spouse will point the other to Jesus Christ and will be willing to pay the ultimate price to help the other.

Jas 1:16 Do not be deceived, my dear brothers.

Jas 1:17 Every generous act of giving and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father who made the heavenly lights, in whom there is no inconsistency or shifting shadow.

We need to remember the legitimate gift of a spouse is from God.

Gen 2:18 Later, the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make for him a companion that is a suitable match for him."

Gen 2:19 After the LORD God formed from the ground every wild animal and every bird that flies, he brought each of them to the man to see what he would call it. Whatever the man called each living creature became its name.

Gen 2:20 The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds that fly, and to each of earth's animals, but there was not found for the man any companion corresponding to him,

Gen 2:21 so the LORD God caused a deep sleep to overshadow the man. When the man was asleep, he removed one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh where it had been.

Gen 2:22 Then the LORD God formed the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.

Gen 2:23 So the man exclaimed, "At last! This is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. This one will be called 'Woman,' because she was taken from Man."

Gen 2:24 (Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they will become one flesh.)

Gen 2:25 Even though both the man and his wife were naked, they were not ashamed about it.

God married Adam and Eve in the Garden Of Eden and this is how marriage began. Marriage is meant, among other things to be a strong reminder of the covenant between God and His church.

Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a

glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Eph 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

Eph 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Eph 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Eph 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

Eph 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Eph 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Marriage, in the holiest of senses, is going to have the hallmarks of God's salvation for man through Jesus Christ our Lord. The man is the Christ figure

and the woman is the Church figure. Christ died for His church and men need to be the same. People of the church are pure, spotless, without blemish. Since Christ is pure and we Christians emulate Him, men and women must be pure, spotless, blameless, support each other in everything and love each other as only God can do through us (we can't do this ourselves); in one of the biggest ways possible, this includes the institution of Holy Matrimony.

Aside from all of this, what if things don't work out between the spouses?

Let's look at our final cartoon clip; this is from The Simpsons episode **Wild Barts Can't Be Broken**.

Cartoon Link:

http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/144/Stick_It_Out.webm

First, why would this have to do with marriage?
Second, what do you think about the comment as it would relate to a marriage?

Marge was talking about the Springfield Isotopes baseball team, who are usually losers. They are hardly ever any good. True fans won't abandon their team when it loses. A fair-weather fan isn't the best fan, just like a fair-weather spouse isn't a good spouse. If a marital partner abandons the other in the couple, it is devastating. A marriage is supposed to be forever, just like salvation in Christ is forever! Marriage is a bunch of things; it is the most wonderful experience aside from salvation itself, it can be the most nerve wracking, it can be burdensome if the wrong attitude is present, it will be one of the most life-binding choices one can ever make.

Let's look at our two final Bible passages for this lesson in 1 Corinthians 7: 1-16 and Romans 12: 1-2.

1Co 7:1 Now about what you asked: "Is it

advisable for a man not to marry?"

1Co 7:2 Because sexual immorality is so rampant, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband.

1Co 7:3 A husband should fulfill his obligation to his wife, and a wife should do the same for her husband.

1Co 7:4 A wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband doesn't have authority over his own body, but his wife does.

1Co 7:5 Do not withhold yourselves from each other unless you agree to do so just for a set time, in order to devote yourselves to prayer. Then you should come together again so that Satan does not tempt you through your lack of self-control.

1Co 7:6 But I say this as a concession, not as a command.

1Co 7:7 I would like everyone to be unmarried, like I am. However, each person has a special gift from God, one this and another that.

1Co 7:8 I say to those who are unmarried, especially to widows: It is good for them to remain

like me.

1Co 7:9 However, if they cannot control themselves, they should get married, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

1Co 7:10 To married people I give this command (not really I, but the Lord): A wife must not leave her husband.

1Co 7:11 But if she does leave him, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. Likewise, a husband must not abandon his wife.

1Co 7:12 I (not the Lord) say to the rest of you: If a brother has a wife who is an unbeliever and she is willing to live with him, he must not abandon her.

1Co 7:13 And if a woman has a husband who is an unbeliever and he is willing to live with her, she must not abandon him.

1Co 7:14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified because of her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

1Co 7:15 But if the unbelieving partner leaves, let

him go. In such cases the brother or sister is not under obligation. God has called you to live in peace.

1Co 7:16 Wife, you might be able to save your husband. Husband, you might be able to save your wife.

Rom 12:1 I therefore urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercies, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices that are holy and pleasing to God, for this is the reasonable way for you to worship.

Rom 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but continually be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may be able to determine what God's will is—what is proper, pleasing, and perfect.

Reconciliation is what God wants when relationships break down. We also need to remember to pray first before any marriage in faith. A marriage shouldn't and mustn't be based on lust, lies, power, prestige, or anything else outside of

genuine, lasting, committed love. Then after all of that, God has to be in the middle of the potential marriage even before the “I Do”. When the marital choice is made, God has to be in control of the relationship from the get go.

4: Closing Thoughts:

What have we learned?

I have been married 10 ½ years now (as of the completion of the written form of this lesson) and counting to my lovely wife Bonnie. Before we married, we didn't know each other outside of one encounter on December 7, 2006. After that, we both became hungry for a marriage (without the other knowing). We didn't know we would end up together, but we simultaneously started praying together (we didn't know the other was) for a year and then were married on September 6, 2008. This lesson was done special for this anniversary. This lesson was presented impromptu style on September 6, 2018 and finished on our Toonspirit Ministries birthday anniversary February 20, 2019.

This marriage is an incredibly powerful witness to the people around us. We fall more in love with each other as time goes by because God controls this marriage. This relationship is not a Ball 'N' Chain relationship even though we have things go wrong, little spats here and there, illness, emotions not the best etc. This lesson reminds us that good marriages are still possible, but God has to do it. If we work on our own, it won't turn out very rich, satisfying, or even possibly last. Giving up is not an option for us; we always will pray together, play together, forgive each other and treat each other with respect. This is the heart of the lesson. Remember to keep God first in your marriage and then everything else too.

5: Closing Prayer