



LEARNING TO LEAVE, CLEAVE, AND WEAVE

FAMILY RELATIONS

By Justin Marbury



One of the most common areas of conflict among newlyweds is family relations. The conversation may go something like this: Wife: “His mom criticizes everything I do. She thinks she’s the expert on everything.” Husband: “Mom’s just trying to help. She doesn’t mean anything by it. It’s just the way she is.” And so on. Neither party knows the proper response to the sudden conflict. Should he tell his mom to hold her tongue and not be so critical? Should she listen to her mother-in-law’s advice and try to welcome her critique? Learning to entwine two lives can be difficult. But when you follow the biblical principles of leaving, cleaving, and weaving, you can avoid some of the things that might tangle you up.

- 1. Leaving.** God said, “A man shall leave his father and mother...” (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is a process of leaving behind your parents and moving toward your marriage partner. This is part of God’s design for His first and most foundational social institution—the family. Yet leaving can be the most difficult part of a new marriage. Here are some tips for both parents and their married kids:

Parents: Realize that your primary responsibility as a parent is complete. You’ve raised and loved your child to the altar. Now it’s time to step back and give your child space to develop his or her own family. Encourage your child to seek your advice and involvement, but don’t smother.



Kids: Recognize that your new family is number one now. Your husband, wife, and children come before any other family or friends. This doesn't mean disrespecting your parents or disregarding their feelings. Involve them as much as you can.

- 2. Cleaving.** “...And be joined to his wife...” (Genesis 2:24). For marriage to be what God intended, the couple must cleave to one another. This means, “to adhere or stick together.” All the hopes, dreams, plans, and purposes you held as individuals should be surrendered to the marriage unit. When two become one, it's a new beginning—a new adventure—together and inseparable.
- 3. Weaving.** “...And they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Becoming one is more than consummating the marriage—it's a complex process similar to weaving a tapestry. The weaver takes individual strands, each with its unique color and composition, and he creates something more beautiful than the individual threads. Likewise, God, the Master Weaver, takes a husband and wife, each surrendered to Him, and brings their individual, colorful personalities, gifts, and abilities into the union. The result is a skillfully woven, beautiful tapestry called marriage.

Leaving, cleaving, and weaving is a challenging process. It's easy to get tangled up if you don't put God and one another first. A good marriage requires selfless service and surrender. When done well, the world can't help but notice the beautiful tapestry and the Master Weaver whose skill is on display in your marriage.