

**Family Matters:  
Hearts on the Home Front  
"A Couple's Huzza!"  
Deuteronomy 24:5      4-27-08**

We're starting a new series today entitled "*Family Matters: Hearts on the Home Front.*" We'll be looking at several different dimensions to family life, but none is more important than the bedrock of a healthy marriage. As you look at the Title screen, I already know what you're thinking -- "**What on earth is a Couple's Huzza [huh-zah]?"** I'm glad you asked! It's actually a very important question. It's not a fancy European moped, nor an expensive high-bred lap dog sporting a diamond necklace. A couple's huzza is a type of "love call," a language of life encouragement that I want to talk to you about today. It's really a very simple word with enormous implications for life and especially for marriage.

Huzza began out on the high seas. The word originated as sailor's slang in the mid 1500's. They would say "Huzza" as they hoisted the sails. It became kind of like our modern day "Hurray!" It was used as an exclamation of joy, applause, appreciation – a shout of encouragement, triumph and cheer: "You can do it!" "Way to go!" or (more likely for men) – "That was an awesome dinner!" Huzza! Today, in the context of the marriage relationship, this is how you say "huzza" = **(\*I believe in you picture\*)**.

It's what every husband needs from his wife and what every wife needs from her husband. It's also what every child needs from their parent and what every parent wants from their children. It's the kind of believe that conveys love, support, encouragement, appreciation and confidence. In marriage, "huzza" is not the "GRIN-AND-BEAR-IT HAVE TO" but the "CAN DO" - "WANT TO" – "GET TO" - "LOVE TO" of marriage. It's the kind of believe that says, "The pleasure's all mine!" It's an honor, gift and blessing to believe in you. Believing in you hoists my sail and fills them with the wind of your life. That's what God had in mind for the institution that we have come to know as marriage.

In Hebrew, it's called "Saw-makh" or "Cheer!" It was a command given to every man entering into marriage. It was their charter of inception, the way they were called to begin their relationship. It was given in the context of compulsory military service for every young man in Israel, but it wasn't really about military life – it was about a vision of starting well and building on the strength of a well-formed foundation. The Mosaic Law put it this way: **"If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married"** (Deuteronomy 24:5 TNIV).

Christian Comedian, Jeff Allen, puts it this way – "Happy wife, happy life!" Truth is, this verse gives us a biblical prescription for a happy and fulfilling marriage; one that every husband would be wise to follow. Can you imagine the luxury! Newlyweds being given one full year in which to adjust to married life, with no responsibilities or duties during that period. Compare

that with today's most frequent scenario: both are working or in school, starting a career, buying their first home, beginning a family, juggling debt and bills and trying to adjust to life together.

Imagine a different kind of start, where the husband has one responsibility: "to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married." Sounds almost romantic doesn't it. For one whole year the husband's first and only responsibility was to be the happiness of his wife. Not to make, not to buy, not to do but to BE the happiness of his wife. That only happens in relationship. Relationship only happens with shared time, attention, love and affection. Solomon had the right idea: He said, **"May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth" (Proverbs 5:18 TNIV)**. It's so important to discover, create and nurture DELIGHT in one another.

I suppose you could say that the first year of marriage for an early Israelite couple was intended to be a type of intensive "boot camp" for their new relationship; a year of concentrated energy and endeavor; an all-out effort focused on preparing for a lifetime of love. That was the goal. That first year of marriage is supposed to set the pattern for the rest of the marriage. During the first year, the husband was/is supposed to develop the habits and establish the priorities that will last a lifetime. Not a "one-year penalty-box pay-the-dues-before-you-go-off-on-an-adventure" tour of duty, but a language learning intensive; one full year of intensive personal engagement on the language of marital love. But language learning doesn't come easy.

When I entered into seminary, I did what they recommended for all new students; which was to take an entire year of Greek in the first quarter and nothing else; a saturation plunge. That's what I did. That's all I did. Four hours of class each day with hours and hours of reading, studying, writing and memorizing until I was drowning in 3x5 note cards. It was intensive, it was intentional, it was foundational, it was engaging and, along the way, it became deeply gratifying as light bulbs started coming on for me. Eventually, it wasn't necessary for me to say anymore, "It's all Greek to me!" That first course laid a foundation for the rest of my biblical studies at seminary. That was the idea behind this first year of "bringing happiness/cheer to the wife you marry."

The goal in good marriage is that, eventually, nothing should be "Greek" ("I don't get that" "I haven't got a clue," "I don't understand you"). Now anybody who's been married longer than a year certainly knows you don't learn everything you need to know in the span of just one year. If it were only that simple right? *"Hey Bob, did you put your year?" "Yeah, I did. I barely made it, but I got it done! Glad that's over with!"* What you can do, however, is to establish habits, patterns, rhythms and trajectories for your long journey together. It's not a fail-proof guarantee against devastating storms or capsized relationships – but it is the vision and provision of God and it is how we are called to live.

To create a Huzza marriage is to establish patterns of mutual encouragement and regular messages of believing in one another. It means becoming each other's lead cheer leader, fan and coach – people who will

encourage, inspire and root for the one you love. That is the very first life-lesson any husband is called to learn in marriage. It's God's vision for us. Spend the first year doing nothing but learning how to make your wife happy and then do that for the rest of your life. In marriage, husbands and wives don't need to play the role of police, detective and probation officers who examine, arrest, question and scrutinize. The Bible says, "**Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness**" (Hebrews 3:13 TNIV).

Quick show of hands: Is there anyone here today who does not want or need daily encouragement? It's so easy to become hardened and beat down. Home is not the place where that should happen but it frequently is the source of our greatest challenges and pain. So much of life can simply grind healthy marriage to a halt. That's the place where people just give in to coping, surviving and living together in their hurt. All Huzza is gone.

We really need to pay attention to learning those love languages and the needs of our spouses. The Bible says, "**So each husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself, and each wife should respect her husband**" (Ephesians 5:33 CEV). It was Dr. Gary Chapman who revolutionized this idea with his book "The Five Languages of Love" back in 1992 ([www.fivelovelanguages.com](http://www.fivelovelanguages.com)):

1. **Hearing words that affirm**
2. **Quality time spent together**
3. **Receiving gifts and tokens of caring**
4. **Having things done for you**
5. **Physical touch and connection**

These are all important dimensions to a healthy marriage relationship and while our spouse appreciates and longs for several of them more than the others, all are important for us to learn to offer as an expression of our Huzza – to say daily, "I believe in you and love you deeply!"

I want to challenge married people today. Where is your Huzza happening for your spouse? I want to challenge the young people, single adults and widowed. Where are you learning the priority of encouragement and how are you expressing it to the people God has placed in your life? And are we all willing to adjust or radically change our lives to ensure that Huzza can happen.

That's what Robertson McQuilkin did. He was the President of Columbia International University in South Carolina. He held that post for 22 years as a distinguished and very successful Christian leader. It was during that time that his wife, Muriel, battled Alzheimer's Disease. They had been married in 1948 and then, in 1981, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. It became so bad that in 1990, he needed to make a decision – his work or his wife and marriage. He resigned in 1990 to take care of his wife. I want to play his very brief resignation speech for you today before the entire campus gathering, because it is a sacred reminder of how we should think, live and love in all human relationships, but especially in marriage. Let's listen in: (\*Roll clip\*).