Relationships in the Home—In-Laws

One relationship in the home that either creates a lot of stress or joy is the in-laws. The in-law relationship is a very peculiar one. It is an indirect relationship. A man marries a woman and suddenly they find out they have a mother-in-law, father-in-law and perhaps brother and sisters’ in-laws.

A number of years ago, we went out to visit Regena’s parents. All of Regena’s sisters were there with their families. As events occurred, I found myself alone with the husbands of Regena’s sisters. It dawned on me that the only physical connection we had with each of the was the fact we had married into the same family. This can create some problems.

Our in-laws may not share with us the same kind of up bringing. Some in-law problems are due to the different social and religious backgrounds.

In the Bible, we can read of various in-law. Jacob was a son in-law to Laban. In Genesis 29 Jacob met Rachel. He agreed to work for her for seven years, (verse 18). At the end of the seven years Laban substituted another daughter, Leah, for Rachel and Jacob married Leah by deceit. Jacob married Rachal after two weeks then worked another seven years. While Jacob worked for his father-in-law, Laban prospered. Jacob wanted to return to his home. So, he tried to sneak off with his off with his wives, children, and livestock. Laban found out and pursued Jacob. In Genesis 31 Jacob accused Laban of cheating him, and Laban accused Jacob of stealing from him. Does this sound like in-laws today?

Laban and Jacob were able to establish peace between themselves. “And Laban answered and said to Jacob, ‘These daughters are my daughters, and these children and my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters of to their children whom they have?” Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, let it be a witness between you and me.’” (Genesis 32:43-440. Laban understood a very important principle. You work to have a good relationship with your in-laws because to do otherwise will hurt those in your own family. A father-in-law who constantly fights with his son-in-law is hurting his relationship with his daughter. He will be causing pain in her life. The in-law relationship is one that takes a measure of work and time. Ruth was Naomi’s daughter in-law but there was a genuine love between them. Even after Naomi’s son died Ruth was there to help Naomi. The same happens today. I have been blessed not only to have married Regena but also to have a good relationship with her parents. While her father was alive, he was a source of encouragement and knowledge. Regena’s mother has never tried to interfere but to help us. As Christians we should understand our relationship to one another and have peace and love in our homes with our in-laws.

Now I am in an “in-law” relationship, having a son in-law, Jon, and daughter in-law, Laura. A number of years ago, a friend spoke of his relationship with his son -in-law. He did not want it to be an antagonistic relationship but one of harmony. He would not interfere with their decisions but try to be a source of encouragement. The relationship this man has with this son in-law is one of mutual caring and love. I wanted to have that kind of relationship with our children’s spouses. Such is what God wants it to be, as I was blessed with Regena’s mom and dad, and want to be a blessing to our children and their spouses. D. T.