therefore, draw from counsel addressed to believers in general and attempt to make specific applications to the minister’s situation.

The most comprehensive New Testament counsel is found in Ephesians 5:25-33. Drawing on the Creation story, Paul presents what might be called a rationale for husband behavior. Several themes may be identified, each of which is amplified in other Bible passages.

Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Faithfulness and Loyalty

“Be united to” or “be joined unto” (vs. 31, NIV, KJV) describes Christian marriage. One of the meanings of the word “united” or “joined” is “be faithfully devoted to.” The prophet Malachi counseled, “Do not break faith with the wife of your youth” (Mal. 2:15).

This is the starting place—the bedrock upon which the whole marital structure is built. While this may seem so self-evident as to be unnecessary to mention, the sad history of our church reveals that many ministers have not mastered this fundamental lesson. Let us recognize that the pastor is particularly vulnerable to the temptations of unfaithfulness and disloyalty, placed as he/she is in the public spotlight with much attention focused on what may seem to be the more “glamorous” tasks. The pastor represents all that is right and good. In counseling and pastoral ministry, the pastor comes across as warm, understanding, and caring.

It is easy for female parishioners to see in the male pastor all the virtues that they may find lacking in their own husbands. Because the pastor and his wife share the grind of daily life together, there