

Marriage, Part 1

October 7, 2007 - Skip MacMillan

The importance of your devotion to God in your marriage

"Merely changing what we do will not change who we are" - Larry Crab, *The Marriage Builder*, p.10.

1. **Connects** you to God.
2. **Needs** that only God can meet are met: **acceptance, meaning, love, value, purpose.**
3. **God heals you:** Exodus 15:26 - "I am the LORD, who heals you" - past sins, false beliefs and ideas of marriage.
4. God brings out **His character qualities** in you: Galatians 5:21-23.
5. God prepares you to **give** as opposed to **receive**. One of the differences between maturity and immaturity: giving as opposed to taking.

Philippians 2:13 - "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

The Gospel: Romans 5:8

The Gospel and You

Colossians 3:12, Ephesians 5:1

I am therefore I do - I am (loved, justified, being sanctified) therefore I do.

Why get married if God is not your motivation? 50% don't make it and culture doesn't promote it.

The Gospel Applied to Marriage

Love

Love Defined: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. God loves you with this kind of love; Scripture defines love for us.

1. God loves you, Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

You are understanding and experiencing His love for you.

How can I love if I am not loved? If I am not loved, I will look to my spouse to meet that essential need that only God can meet.

2. God's Example: God gives us an example to follow.

God demonstrated His love for us "**while we were still sinners**".

Commit to love them in the midst of their differences, imperfections, failures and sins.

3. First, love your spouse as an expression of your love for God.

I love because I am experiencing God's love for me "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

4. Love your spouse.

Forgiveness

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Colossians 3:12-14).

1. God forgives you: "the Lord forgave you"

The Lord forgave you by giving up His life so you could live – you must personally experience this.

2. God's example: Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

We have a tangible example of forgiveness to follow in Jesus Christ.

He doesn't revisit sins after real, genuine, and gut-level confession.

3. Forgive your spouse as an expression of your love for Christ and appreciation of His forgiveness for you.

Your forgiveness is freed up from your spouse's reaction or lack thereof.

Your forgiving is based on Christ forgiveness of your sins and your personally experiencing that forgiveness.

I forgive because the LORD forgave me.

My forgiveness is not contingent on my spouse's response.

4. Forgive your spouse

Forgiveness frees you and him/her from the past and moves you into a healthy marriage.

Withholding forgiveness:

Who benefits when we withhold forgiveness?

Withholding forgiveness ensures that **you will not get** out of the troubled spot but remain there.

If you're having trouble forgiving: take time to reflect on God's forgiveness of all your imperfections and sins.

Your forgiveness of your spouse is contingent upon recognizing Christ's forgiveness of your sins. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Humility - Philippians 2:1-8

1. God humbled himself for you: Philippians 2:5-8.

2. God's Example: He humbled Himself in becoming a human, to suffer and die for you and me.

3. Humble yourself before your spouse out of a love and gratitude for God's humility for you.

4. Humble yourself out of a love for your spouse.

Humility is one of the most powerful tools of God. It breaks through the most difficult arguments.

Those on the receiving end of love, forgiveness, and humility – do not take advantage of love, forgiveness, and humility but reciprocate with love, forgiveness, and humility. God is giving you a merciful and gracious gift.

Contrast God's design with our culture: pre-nup., plan B, "Life is short, have an affair", CNN, etc.

What if . . . ?

Love sets parameters

God is our example, He sets parameters (commandments).

He loves enough to set parameters.

He doesn't permit harmful behaviors to continue but confronts them, "so that it may go well for you".

Love doesn't permit harmful behaviors.

When we operate out of love there is no need for commandments.

1 Corinthians 13

Love is other-oriented.

Love serves the other.

Parameters and commandments are given to deal with sinful attitudes and behaviors and to point us to Christ.

Parameters: start with the Ten Commandments (no lying, no adultery).

Last Resort:

Let them go, 1 Corinthians 7:15.

Marriages in the Bible

There are very few good examples of marriages found in the Bible.

The Bible is honest; it does not hide that marriage takes a tremendous amount of effort, attention, and time.

God does not give us quick fixes, Bible clichés, or simple answers.

Final Thoughts

Be devoted to God

Know God is Sovereign

Sovereign = God's predetermined purpose and his power to bring about this purpose.

God brought you together, God is the foundation of your marriage, start here and build.

In Genesis 1-2, God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone".

It was God who made "a helper suitable for him."

It was God who "made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man."

And it was God who "brought her to the man."

It is a tremendous support and strength in troubled times to know that God is the one who ultimately brought the two of you together. And it is God who has the power to make it last a lifetime.

God's Vision for marriage

God's vision for His bride, the church - Revelation 21:1-5.

Remind yourself that your spouse is God's daughter or son; treat them accordingly.

Seek to bring life to your marriage

These bring death: lack of forgiveness, harping on the past, disconnected, disengaged, critical, negative, bitter, selfish, independent, emotionally removed, dishonest, lack of effort or apathetic, addictions, un-biblical expectations, putting something before our spouse (career, friends, family, money, etc.).

Life for your marriage is found in: love, forgiveness, humility, acceptance, words that build, passionate intimacy, giving, putting the other first, commitment.

Pray and read Scripture together.

Philippians 2:1-4 / Colossians 3:12-17