

A Holy Partnership
Connecting to Church Series - Part 22

Marriage Series - part 3

October 17-18, 2020

Ephesians 5:22-33

The Formula Isn't DIVISION but ADDITION

Lesson

• **Context Passage**

- **Ephesians 5:22-33** - *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."*

- **Tools for Expectations** - The Apostle Paul's laying down some serious expectations but not giving us a lot of detailed tools to fulfill them. Let's take some time to equip ourselves to do what God asked us to do.
- **Marriage was designed by God for a few reasons that we can discern: I'll cite 3.**
 - 1.) **a place for glory to God** - here on earth as it is in heaven. Hearts, homes & churches. It's a home base for power to advance the kingdom.
 - **Christian Families Reveal God** - The family, marriage and children reveals what God is like, in this world. Just as you can look at nature and discern things like God is powerful, God is creative, God is brilliant, God is orderly...so too are you supposed to be able to look at Christian families

and learn more about God. God as Father, God as Comforter, God as Protector and Provider, God's communication methods with His people, etc. You and your family you live with should be walking billboards for God.

- **God is glorified when things are operating as they should be** - trees and mountains praise God by just doing what they were built to do. The same thing is true of us as individuals just being who we were built to be, and our relationships being what they were designed to be. A solid, thriving homelife raises Glory to God. He looks good when we operate as we should.

2.) **a place to be transformed** - marriage is a crucible to change. Iron sharpening iron is never more evident than in marriage. God will use your spouse as His primary shaping tool, the primary chisel, in your life (look at your person next to you and say, 'oh I feel you chiseling at me'. It's the most intense training you can opt into (children are more intense but not all of us can have children). Think about learning unselfishness.

- **We are born self-obsessed** - child development teaches us that babies initially assume other people just disappear from existence once they are out of sight. No one needs to train a toddler to be more selfish.
- **Siblings** - Then one day we realize we have a sibling or siblings and that forces us to share stuff. Boy is that irritating.
- **Plant** - Then we grow and move out and get a plant. If we get super selfish and forget about the plant, the plant dies (funny relationship advice about men & plants).
- **Puppy** - Then we get a puppy. Super cute until you can't sleep, and it poops on the floor. Suddenly you have to get a puppy sitter when you go on vacation, you have to get home to let the dog out, food and water, buying stuff, etc.
- **Marriage** - Then you decide to get married. Oh boy. That other person comes in your space and screws up all your routines. They take your stuff. They want to know where you are all the time. They tell you how to spend money. They take your bedcovers. Bottom line, it's Not just about you anymore.
- **And kids?** Don't even get me started. Nothing will demand that you grow up faster and get less selfish than kids. That's why next week I launch a 2-week series on parenting.

3.) **a place to meet core needs** - Eve (a person) was created and given to Adam (a person alone) to help meet a core human need of community.

- **Clarify** - the solution is relationship and community not marriage. Jesus and Paul were single and full. Marriage is one key way to create significant community. But anything incredibly significant has its challenges.
 - **Marriage doesn't solve your problems** -It brings its own unique set of challenges. I know people who right now would list their marriage as the single greatest pain and problem in their life. It tops their prayer list every day. They desperately want to be free of it but can't. They wish to be single. Paul addressed a tiny part of the burden of marriage in 1 Cor 7:28-35, actually referring to being single 11x's in the chapter.
 - **What Marriage Can Be** - But if stewarded, if managed, if invested into and cherished, marriage can create one of the most significant human relational structures possible. And we have a lot of marriages at Bridgeway doing this very thing.
 - **And that's what Marriage is supposed to be: a blessing.**
 - **It takes a support system** - One of the biggest problems for marriages in our society is the isolation and distance encouraged. Marriages aren't designed to handle at of the weight of another person. We need families, wise counsel, mentors, friends, encouragers, church. We can't do it all on our own.
- **Too many people distort this last one #3 and think it's all about OUR Wants and Needs.** This distortion is actually, in my opinion the number one reason for the divorce rate being so high and so many marriages being so dysfunctional. **It's all about self and expectations.**
 - **A.) Self simply asks the question: are you selfish or selfless?** - the true answer to that will dramatically affect the health of your marriage.
 - **B.) The second is expectations.** What you think marriage is for will shape the choices you make every day.
 - If you think marriage is about meeting all your needs you will be disappointed, angry and bitter.
 - If you think that marriage is about nothing more than coexistence it will die on the vine.
 - If you think that it's about changing you into the person God designed you to be, you'll be pleasantly surprised.
 - If you think that it's God's opportunity for you to care for and tend a beautiful gift that's supposed to bless you for the rest of your life but will require hard work and attention, then you will thrive.
 - **The right baskets for the right needs.** (His Needs, Her Needs).
 - **Spouse basket** - contribution to the home; love (1 Cor 13); friendship, respect, intimacy, etc.

- **Self basket** - anything that starts with self: self-esteem, self-confidence, self-care, etc. Physical, emotional and psychological health is your role.
- **God basket** - the Big Issues: contentment, satisfaction, joy, peace, faith, etc.
- **Comparison Danger** - Learn from other marriages but don't compare.
- **Perseverance** - The lost art of perseverance will get you the maximum blessing out of your marriage. There's glory on the other side of the trial (valley to tablelands). If you give up in the tension, you reap waste. If you transform it and remain you reap redemption.
 - **Whose been married the longest here today?** Have you ever had really hard times? How many?
 - **The Problems with Divorce:**
 - a. It's breaks a covenant that God locked down
 - b. It harms His children
 - c. It disrupts the unity of the church
 - d. It mars the image of God to the world

Communication: The Key to a Good Marriage

- **The key to a good marriage is what?** If you are between the age of 35-70 you will answer this the same way. What is it? Communication. Communication is critical to good, healthy relationships and marriage is no different.
 - **Blueprint example** - Right. Why? Blueprint example. What are we building? What do we need?
 - **Human communication 101** - encode, send, decode, receive (respond the same way). Rules for doing this well.
 - **Adjusting for Bias**
 - **#1 principle of making and keeping friends** = it's give & take. Share and ask. Receive & give. Lead & defer. Invest & withdrawal. Ask questions and share your thoughts.
 - **We cannot impart what we do not possess (diagnostics)** - You can't communicate your thoughts, heart and feelings unless you know what those are. Pastor Brian highlighted the incredible value of diagnostic tools to learn about yourself and your partner, like personality tests, and communication style tests, motivation tests or read gender studies. A great book is The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman.

- **It's irresponsible** to try to build your marriage without studying how God made the two of you.
- **God & Israel's Seriousness about Marriage** - Deuteronomy 24:5 *"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."*
- **Cutting to the Chase** - I'll give you a quick cheat sheet on the differences between men and women. Everyone needs to be loved and respected, but there are some unique typical designs in gender.
 - **Men's Core Need = Significance** (holistically)
 - **Women's Core Need = Security** (relationally)
 - **God's Command of Men Need = Respect**
 - **God's Command of what Women Need = Love/priority**
 - **Men Need their Egos Massaged (Tony Evans)**
 - **Women Need their Hearts Massaged (Tony Evans)**
 - It's why the Christian book and video series, Love & Respect did so well.

Conclusion

- **Is It Too Difficult?** - some of us are thinking, *'oh Pastor, that all sounds good, but it's all too hard. I'm too tired of battling. I'm too tired of being the only one that tries. I've lost hope that it will ever be great.'* My response is first, *'I am so sorry that you are hurting and feel that way,'* and my next one is the solution:
 - **Marriage Must be Fueled by the Holy Spirit**
 - **God's More Motivated** - Just like your faith, the health of your key relationships is more God's idea than yours, so it means that He's more interested in it thriving than you are.
 - **Holy Spirit Forms Us** - It means that since your key relationships will always be better the more you and your partner are like Jesus, then the only One who can make you more like Jesus is the Holy Spirit.
 - **As you and I fall in love with Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to shape us from the inside out, the more lovely we will be.** That will always transform a relationship.