

Mixtape: The Soundtrack for Marriage

Everyone Marries the Wrong Person

Glen - July 29

Series Big Idea: All of us who have been married, at some point, wonder if we married the wrong person. Or we put off marriage because we fear we might choose the wrong mate. Or we consider divorce convinced we got it wrong. Fact is, there are a lot of reasons for these concerns. Nobody will ever be the perfect mate or find the perfect mate. We all have our hurts, hang ups, bad habits and issues. And compatibility is a fallacy that if relied upon will set up for failure. And trying to change our partner to become the “right” person is also recipe for disaster. God intended marriage to be mysterious. That mystery is that two people become one and stay as one. In this series, we are going to put together a “mixtape” of biblical ideas that can provide a “soundtrack” of songs to help us live the mystery of having a thriving marriage as we learn to stay in love and stay as one.

Message Big Idea: The fact is if we are or will get married, we will marry the wrong person. What we mean is that we’ll never marry the perfect person. Every couple, to some extent, is a union of very different people. We are not compatible. Marriage is hard and it takes work. We are tempted to focus on why we married the wrong person and their hurts, hang ups, habits and issues that make them wrong. But if we are going to learn to love like Jesus and learn to stay in love, we need to start with ourselves. Part of the mystery of marriage isn’t about finding the right person. It’s about becoming the right person.

Main Idea: The mystery of marriage isn’t finding the right person, but becoming the right person.

Main Text: Ephesians 5:31-33

Supporting texts: 1 Corinthians 7:28

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Glen started his teaching with the statement; “We all marry the wrong person.” What do you think he meant? In what ways do we marry the “wrong” person? Share your opinion on the idea.
2. The Bible says that those who marry will face many troubles (1 Cor. 7:28). If you are married, what are some of the biggest challenges you have faced or are facing in marriage? If you are not married, from your observation of others, what are the biggest troubles couples face?
3. Paul says that the mystery of marriage is oneness (Eph. 5:32). How would you describe what “oneness” looks like in human marriage? How would you describe what “oneness” looks like in our spiritual marriage to God?
4. The first of several principles to experience the mystery of oneness is to not focus on finding the right person, but becoming the right person. What is it about you that is your greatest hindrance to becoming one with anyone - God, a friend or a marriage partner? What inside you do you need to address? How will you get help and invite God to transform you?

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Main Idea: The mystery of marriage isn't finding the right person, but becoming the right person.

Message:

Today we are starting a new series that several of us will share in. We have called this series *Mixtape*. It's a term from the 80's that folks still use. Back in the 80's people would take some of their favorite songs from different artists and put them on a cassette tape [Holding] to share with others. Anyone here ever make one with your favorite love songs to give to your special person? While we are past the day of cassette tapes, people still create a mixtape, just in a digital way.

Over the next few weeks, we want to share with you what we believe to be some of the best ideas or best songs, if you will, for what can help us unlock the mystery of having marriages that don't just survive, but actually thrive. We'll look at how to go from falling in love to staying in love. We want to dive deeper into the mystery of oneness in marriage. And I know that today we have folks here who are married, divorced, single and widowed. We've tried hard to keep that in mind and worked to make this meaningful and relevant for everyone.

So let's start with some good news. With over 1500 matchmaking websites online, it is easier than ever to find a mate. While finding a mate can be a challenge, our biggest challenge is staying in love. Getting connected isn't the only challenge. Becoming one is the ultimate challenge.

Once you marry, sooner or later, you'll discover that you married the wrong person! Yes, I said that right! If and when we marry - **We all marry the wrong person.** Now that line should cause some great conversation today over lunch or dinner! All of us who have been married, at some point, wonder if we married the wrong person. We discover huge gaps between what we expected and what we actually got. Our mate isn't as much fun as we thought. They spend too much money. They don't pick up their underwear. They are too invested in their family or they let their ex or step kids disrupt the peace. They are too moody, too angry, too whatever...

Or we put off marriage because we fear we might choose the the wrong person. Or some of us have or are considering divorce; convinced we married the wrong person.

And this isn't just my opinion, this is what the Bible says. I just love the honesty, authenticity and how real the Bible is. Here's what the Bible says about marriage in **1 Corinthians 7:28 - But those who marry will face many troubles...** Troubles come with marriage. Marriage is hard! It's hard to stay in love because the one we married doesn't have it all together. Remember, no one marries the right person. No one marries someone who's got it all and is perfect and complete.

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Have I totally discouraged you? That's not my intent. The reason why we are doing this series is that I believe God created marriage to help us discover and experience a profound mystery. Let's look for the mystery of this thing called marriage. Turn to **Ephesians 5:31-33 (pg. 801 - NIV)** - ³¹ ***“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”*** ³² ***This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.*** ³³ ***However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.***

Paul says that marriage is a profound mystery. He's actually talking about two kinds of marriage at the same time. He's talking about a marriage between a man and woman and our spiritual marriage to Jesus. He wants us to see the amazing and mysterious parallels and the common theme of oneness.

The Bible often describes our relationship with God like a marriage. We become one with God in a committed relationship when we make the decision to follow Jesus. In our spiritual marriage with God, we make the commitment to him to live together and share life as one forever. We commit to loving God to the best of our ability. And we make our marriage vows in baptism when we promise to join, follow and love Jesus with our all for all times. A spiritual marriage! And Paul says that our human marriages are to be patterned after the mysterious oneness we have with God.

So, let's be clear. Just what is the mystery of marriage? The mystery of marriage is that we become one and maintain that oneness as we love and respect each other. **The mystery of marriage is two becoming one.** The mystery of marriage is being able to stay in love and staying as one. Now, there are several keys to doing that. And that's what we'll look at for a few weeks.

So Paul makes this super bold claim that two can become one. He makes that statement from the scripture. Paul quotes Jesus who quoted Genesis 2:24. It was God's design that a man and woman separate from their family of origin and become one. Okay, let me pause here before we go further. Many marriages struggle because one or both spouses didn't separate enough from their parents. In marriage, mom and/or dad no longer have primary influence into our lives. If that's you, please get help. We can love, respect and honor our parents, but there comes a time we must make our own decisions and form our own family. There is such a thing as a healthy and necessary separation or distance from our parents.

But the leaving our family of origin is to become one with our spouse. It is totally amazing, crazy (in a good way) and mysterious how two people who are very different can be one. It's a miracle. It's a mystery, that two separate unique people who are different in gender, family background, personality, and so much more can experience a unity and oneness. The oneness that God talks about isn't just being physically close and intimate. It includes that for sure, But it also means sharing life together. Oneness is

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finding a common purpose with God's values. Oneness means we are in this together to help and serve each other. I started by saying that we married the wrong person. That's true. But that's the mystery - two different people who in many respects are wrong for each other can become like one. They can have a unity that is stronger than anything on earth.

How do we get there? Like I said, we are going to look at several key things needed for oneness over the next few weeks. But today, here's what we are going to focus on. This is a key to learning to become one. **The mystery of marriage isn't finding the right person, but becoming the right person.** We discover the mystery of marriage as we look at ourselves. The secret to staying in love is first about us. The barrier to being and maintaining oneness and unity is to some extent an issue in us. We need to commit to growing to become more and more like Jesus if we want to have any hope of experiencing the oneness of marriage.

The problem is that many of us have an assumption that for a couple to be one and have a good marriage they must be compatible. It's actually impossible to think we can find someone who is the right one who completes us. No human can complete us...sorry Tom Cruise. We want humans to do what only God can do! This false assumption sets us up for false expectations. While we may have things in common, inevitably we'll discover our differences like he or she talks too much, or not enough. He or she shares too few emotions or too many. He or she creates too much drama, Someone doesn't help enough with house or kids. Someone works too much or doesn't help with finances or spends too much. And often one wants too much sex and the other too little - so they think. In conflict one yells while the other withdraws. One picks stuff up and one throws stuff everywhere. And on and on. So we wonder; did I marry the wrong person?

You don't see anywhere in the Bible that encourages us to find the person we are most compatible with to marry. Compatibility is NOT the key to oneness. If compatibility is the main criteria you use to find a life-long mate, then you are setting yourself up for failure. Compatibility isn't wrong. It can be a great starting place in a relationship. It just isn't enough! Eventually, we'll discover all the ways we are different and rather than accepting the differences. We allow those differences to divide us.

When looking for a mate, some people focus on finding someone like them - that compatibility thing. I'm a odd duck. You already know that. I actually asked Jolene, my wife of 38 years, to marry me because I knew we were very different. So I did the opposite of many. I wasn't looking for someone compatible, but someone different. I didn't want to marry someone like me! I have enough of me! And I like adventure so I decided marrying someone different would be an adventure. Wow, was it ever! More than I bargained for.

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After we married, those differences began to irritate me and I was sure that she was the one who was wrong and needed to be fixed. After we discover we married the wrong person, we try to change them. That was a disaster. In fact, it just highlighted all the more how different we were.

There were some painful moments when I wondered if I married the wrong person! But it was those very differences that God has used to help me learn to be more accepting and appreciative of differences. I grew up being uber independent and self-sufficient. I still struggle with that. But in marriage, I learned that I actually needed her and her different ways of looking at life and how she managed life. I discovered that we were much better together - if I would accept and honor her differences. While she didn't "complete" me, she did bring much needed balance to my life. And I did the same for her. We learned to become one. We are still learning all these years later how to become one. It took a lot of years to begin to experience the mystery of oneness.

Yes, we married or will marry the wrong person, in the sense that they have hurts, hang ups, bad habits and issues. But their stuff, their baggage brings out our stuff and our baggage. When we think we've married the wrong person, we go to the place where we assign most, if not all, the problems to them. Or when we are looking at someone we might marry, we worry about their issues and we pull away. The point is that we think they are the problem. We almost never start with us. We almost never get to the place of looking at what our hurts, hang ups, habits and issues are. We struggle to really love because we don't look inside us to find out what holds us back. We struggle to get to oneness because there are things in us that keep us apart.

Marriage becomes one of the very best places we learn to love like Jesus. It is not the only way, but it does force us to eventually look at ourselves and learn to love. Besides following Jesus, marriage is THE hardest thing we'll ever enter into. It is understandable that some of us put off getting married or getting remarried. In marriage we are making a huge commitment. We will be spending our life with someone. We share our life - all of it. We are together all the time. We can't escape that we've taken on a huge responsibility for that person. Becoming one is difficult, rare and takes lots of effort, selflessness and sacrifice.

But it is in marriage that all that's in us - good and bad - will be exposed. And all that is in the other person will cause some things to come out of us! And that stuff that comes out of us like anger, impatience, fear, or selfishness is not coming out primarily because the one you married is wrong! For me it was my extreme self-sufficiency and independence that became so glaring. And my pride was exposed. I really thought my personality and my way was the best way. Marriage brings out what is inside of us - the stuff we brought into the marriage. Maybe it was hiding inside. Maybe not. But we all have stuff inside us. And marriage will bring out whatever is inside.

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Before we talk about how to put the other person first, I believe we need to look at ourselves first. That's hard, but you have such a better shot at fixing yourself than fixing your spouse. I've already made my point that trying to change our partner to become the "right" person is a recipe for disaster. You see... **The mystery of marriage isn't finding the right person, but becoming the right person.**

If you are in a relationship, whether you are just dating or getting to know each other or you've been married for awhile, the challenges you will face are God's way to help you, grow you and take you to a spiritual depth you won't likely discover on your own. God wants to use the hard times to bring about a oneness that is powerful and oh so fulfilling. **The mystery of marriage isn't finding the right person, but becoming the right person.**

When I began today I said this series and these principles are for all of us. A lot of us here are single. I'm so grateful you are here. And I know this series might be hard to listen to and process. But please don't check out. First, God will use you to help and guide other folks, married and single. What we are talking about is relevant to your world.

And maybe you are cautious of marriage. That's actually really good. But caution is different than fear. So if now or someday you are considering marriage, do what you can do right now to grow yourself to become more and more like Jesus. Do the hard work of looking at yourself to deal with whatever is inside you that will hold you back from being one with someone. We have classes. We have lots of groups. We have plenty of opportunities to grow. You have to decide to work on you, no one can force you. Take our Compass, a tool online we've designed to help you identify where you might need to grow.

Now, don't misunderstand. It's more than okay to be and stay single. A couple of years ago I did a message from 1 Corinthians 7 where Paul affirms the amazing opportunity of being single. I encourage you to read all of 1 Corinthians 7. The Bible encourages both marriage and being single.

Married or single, how can you give serious attention to becoming the "right" person? Where do we start? It always starts and ends with an intentional effort to become more and more like Jesus. And we never learn to be more like Jesus alone. If you've got stuff that is really messing you up and hindering you from the mystery of oneness, ask for help. Our pastors and peer counselors can help set you on a good course of growth. We have tons of classes that can help. And one of the most powerful ways God helps us learn to both grow and love is by hanging out with others who are committed to learning to have thriving marriages. We won't learn how to love or what oneness is alone. We need a spiritual community - a small group of folks we share life with. Today you'll have an opportunity to discover some small groups that focus on living like Jesus and having a healthy marriage.

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Also in September we'll be having a marriage seminar. On Friday September 21st we are offering the Love and Respect event. To find out more, go the big cassette tape in the lobby to find out more. And also while you are there, get the number to text to win a dinner and a movie.

Want a great marriage? Want a great life? It all starts with you and Jesus. Today, what is the one thing, the one next step that you'll take to let Jesus shape, change, fix, and transform you? Take a class? Join a group? Get a counselor or mentor? What will you do to become more like Jesus so you can connect better with your spouse or anyone for that matter. **The mystery of marriage isnt finding the right person, but becoming the right person.**