

Heartbreak Hotel Series

Part 1: Home Sweet Home

Think About It:

The most important choice any husband and wife can make in their marriage relationship is to place God first in their lives. Placing God first in your marriage, even above your spouse, is not a competitive act but a complementary one. The marriage covenant is made with your spouse and with God, who instituted marriage. God expects married couples to remain dedicated to each other *through Him*. Putting God first assures that a husband and wife will put each other ahead of themselves in their marital relationship. There is no competition between God and one's husband or wife. Both God and our partner are honored when God is the director of our lives—and no less so in our marriage relationship. When we look to God to guide us in all areas of our lives and especially as our lives affect our spouses, happiness and security reign.

Discussion Starter:

If you had to define “marriage,” how would you describe it? What makes marriage unique and different from any other human relationship?

Further Exploration:

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14. Why is it important to avoid dating an unbeliever?

What are some practical ways you can acknowledge God’s authority in your relationships? How does the belief that He is present shape your interactions with others (friends, person you date, your spouse)?

Read Ecclesiastes 4:12, Ephesians 4:2-3, and 1 Corinthians 7:13-16.

- What does marriage look like between two believers?
- What does marriage look like between a believer and an unbeliever?

What do you do as a couple because of your faith? Do you pray together as a couple? Study the bible? Meet with other believers? Do you think activities of this kind have an important impact on the quality of your relationship?

Pray:

Lord, thank You for how You have made men and women to complement one another in ways that glorify You. Please forgive us for the times we have not been obedient to Your Word concerning how we are to treat the person of the opposite sex in an intimate relationship. Strengthen our marriages and cause couples to draw closer to You. Give guidance to those who are single and to those who are dating so they can make the right choices. Lord, with You at the center of our relationships, they can be healthy and fruitful. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Moving Forward:

For married couples, here are some great tips to consider:

1 – Pray with and for each other. Prayer is a powerful tool in any marriage, but too often it's put on the back burner and considered a last resort.

2 – Communicate with love and respect. How one person talks to his/her spouse can either damage them or build them up. When you are tempted to lose your temper or say something demeaning or sarcastic to your spouse, remember Ephesians 4:29, which says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (NIV).

3 – Be willing to give more than you get. Marriage isn't 50/50; it's 100/100. Both spouses should be fully committed to giving their all for the sake of glorifying the Lord in the marriage.

4 – Cultivate friendship. Most likely, if you're married to someone, you two started out as friends and hopefully you finish that way, hence, "til death do us part." Couples who keep their friendship alive also keep their spark alive, and that's something a couple should never want to lose.

5 – Don't ever talk bad about your spouse in public. Honor your husband/wife by being their cheerleader and trustworthy companion when he/she is out of your sight. People you talk to can get a sense about something not being right in the marriage if you are bad-mouthing your spouse.

6 – Keep your intimacy/sex life alive. When you live with someone a long time, it's easy to get too comfortable and become lazy when it comes to affection. We should not take for granted that we have so much time to choose when we can express ourselves in intimate ways with our spouse.

7 – Get the idea of divorce out of your mind completely. Be determined to work together until you find a solution for a problem than walking away when the going gets tough. Don't set yourself up for a failure. Remember that marriage is a covenant that reflects the union between

Jesus Christ and the church. We have the assurance that He will not turn His back on us. His grace and forgiveness is unfailing, which is the same mindset that we should have towards others, especially our spouse.

For single people, here are some tips to consider:

1 – Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. Take 2 Corinthians 6:14 seriously. When you date someone who does not have personal relationship with Christ, it's like playing with fire. If you fall in love, you could very well get burned.

2 – Put on the whole armor of God daily. Spend time with God often and make sure you are depending on Him to meet your needs of love and security. Take time to study Ephesians 6:10-20.

3 – Put obedience over passion. We all get tempted from time to time, but the authority of Christ needs to take precedence over your physical drives. Society says "give in to the moment." Christ tells you to be obedient to His Word.

4 – If you are dating, physical expression must be appropriate. Couples are not off the hook even if they are engaged. Physical intimacy should be in the context of marriage, not reduced to simple satisfaction of a personal need.

5 – Examine your personal motives. Are you seeking power and control, gratifying your own ego, meeting a selfish need, or genuine affection?

6 – Allow the Holy Spirit to direct you and lead you. The Holy Spirit can guide you about when and how you should start dating if you are truly seeking to be in an intimate relationship with someone. Moreover, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. If you feel convicted of certain behaviors, repent and stop doing them.