

Life is Messy

According to Google (and where else would I go for biblical advice), the Biblical reasons for marriage center on glorifying God by reflecting His image, providing companionship to combat loneliness, mirroring the union of Christ and the Church, raising godly offspring, and experiencing intimate partnership, sex, and mutual help as designed in Genesis. Marriage is seen as a divine institution for mutual support, fellowship, and a deeper walk with God, fulfilling purposes like companionship, procreation, and representing Christ's love

Despite God's design for marriage, we are human. Barna research group tells us that even evangelical Christian marriages end in divorce about 40% of the time. I have read it is higher than that. It is lower among those who attend church regularly.

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Marriage is a covenant between a man, a woman and God. It is a blessing. Some days it may not feel like that. The old saying "Familiarity breeds contempt" comes to mind. The more you are around someone, and comfortable, the easier it is to disregard them, be rude, insensitive and unloving. I know this, because I have done it. If you have been married a long time, you probably have too. It's a sin and like all sin, once we realize we have fallen, we pick ourselves up, ask forgiveness (from God and spouse) and try to do better. Marriage can be a wonderful thing. Someone to share things with. But the bible also we should not be "involved" with people who are not believers.

2 Cor 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

I didn't know this when I married an adorable guy that my dad said looked like trouble. (I THINK he was kidding). Roger had been raised

Lutheran, but he had never made that commitment to Christ. The first few years of our marriage were tumultuous. But when he came to Christ, he did it with his whole heart and changed our lives forever, for the better. From the start it was like a 2nd marriage. We went to marriage seminars, bought videos and taught classes. We even took lay counseling. We wanted to help people improve their most important relationship this side of heaven.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Because the family is at the very foundation of our society, God has always made it a priority. The Bible speaks of it in so many places. That is exactly why we need the 3rd strand. We need God in the center of it. If you have a Godly marriage and especially if you do any kind of ministry, the enemy will look for ways to distract you from the calling of your marriage. The more he can erode that relationship, the more ground he takes. I can tell you that the basis of lay counseling is pointing the couple to Jesus. When I went to counseling, the Christian counselor pointed me towards Christ every time I spoke. She had the perfect verse for every comment I made. And she was right. Jesus IS the answer.

Lord, life can get messy. So many people think it is easier to give up on their marriage than to fix it. But most of the time, this is not the case.

Help us to seek you in all situations. When we are hurt, tired of fighting, help us to remember when our love was new and full of hope. Amen.

Shirlene Peterson