

FAMILY: God's Way

A Love Affair With Your Spouse!

Ephesians 5:25

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

Marriages that begin well don't always stay that way or end that way. Begins: flowers, love notes, breakfast in bed, opening doors. Later: sleep back to back, takeout, sweat pants, slammed doors. How can we prevent that from happening??

- I. Magnify Your **COVENANT.** (v.21,25)
- II. Multiply Your **CREATIVITY.** (v.28-29)
- III. Maximize Your **CHRIST-CENTEREDNESS.** (v.31-32)

I. Magnify Your Marital COVENANT (v.21,25) - ***"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church...Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.."***

In today's culture, wedding ceremonies happen in some strange places:

- Bungee jumping..Airplane...Roller coaster (appropriate!)
- ***A 42 year old man living in England, named Mitch Hallen, who had been divorced twice, decided on Valentines Day to marry "Sony Widescreen". It was presided over by a priest, he had a dozen of his friends there, rings where put on top of the television set two gold rings, and he said, the article said, "He took vows of high fidelity, sort of a spin on fidelity, and this is what he said after two divorces and failed romances he had given up saying, "My TV gives me countless hours of pleasure without fussing, fighting, or backtalk."***

However, a COVENANT can makes a marriage stable:

- Word ***"covenant"*** is used 313 x in the Old Testament!
- Implied here in the Ephesians 5 section.

- It is the Hebrew word **"בְּרִית"** or **"b'ëriyth"** and means *"a formal agreement, between two or more parties, with binding legal force"*

Concept of COVENANT runs Genesis-Revelation: a "crimson thread":

- GOD: a covenant God! (*Always relates by Cov*)
- The Bible: a covenant book! (*313x*)
- GOD's people: a covenant people! (*8 Covenants*)
- Marriage: a covenant act/covenant promise!
 - **Somebody imagined a conversation that Adam might've had in the garden of Eden with GOD.** *All the animals were brought by GOD, Adam looked them over, he named them all, but then the Bible says, "Among the animals there was not found a helper that was suitable for him." So Adam said, "God it's not that I'm ungrateful, these animals are great, but I'd really like someone more like me, only different, soft, and tender, and beautiful, and sweet." GOD replied, "Well, Adam, something that wonderful is going to cost you an arm and a leg." Adam thought about it for a while, and then simply asked, "What could I get for just a rib?"*
- Marriage not just **"a part"** of life; it's an **"all in"**, total commitment every day!
- No **"back door"** or **"escape hatch"** in biblical marriage: **"Till death do us part!"**

Biblically, Marriage is an all important COVENANT in God's eyes:

- **Mal 2:14** - *"Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant."*
- Biblically speaking , Marriage is a binding Covenant between the husband, the wife, and GOD Himself!
 - **Prov 2:16-17** - *"To deliver you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words, who forsakes the companion of her youth, And forgets the covenant of her God."*

Safety and intimacy begin, when the Marriage COVENANT begins

- **Ruth 1:16** - *"For wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I*

- will lodge; Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God."*
- **Heb 13:5** - *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

The idea of "Testing the waters" is culture, not COVENANT

- Preponderance of research shows successful marriages are entered into by people with a strong sense of permanence:
 - *"People living together first before marriage are more apt to fail in their marriage than couples who move in together after they have said their vows." - Sociologists*
 - *"Studies show us, based on 50 years of scientific research, that couples who live together before marriage have a 50 percent greater chance of divorce than those who don't. Those who cohabit also have a less satisfying and more unstable marriage. Research has found that those who lived together later regretted having violated their moral standard and felt a loss of personal freedom to exit out the back door. Furthermore, they felt that they had stolen a level of marital intimacy that was unwarranted at that point." - Sociological Study*

II. Multiply Your Marital CREATIVITY (v.28-29) - "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church."

- Sensitive, biblical topic, but it does have a very important place and priority in biblical marriage.
 - *There was a woman who was feeling lonely in her marriage, her husband made an appointment at a counselor's office. The counselor was a trained psychiatrist, trained to listen, and make an evaluation. And as he listens to the couple describe their relationship, eventually the counselor said to the couple, the treatment that I prescribe for you is quite simple. The Doctor stood up, went over to the man's wife pick her up, embraced her in his arms and gave her a big kiss then he step back to see that woman blush, swoon, smile, took her completely off guard. And he said to the husband, "You see that is all that it really takes to put zing back in your marriage." The husband watching the whole time absolutely expressionless said, "Great doc, I can bring her in on Tuesday's and Thursday's."*

- **#1 - Marital Sex Is GOD-GIVEN.** - Sex in Marriage was God's idea - and it was a great idea!!

Gen 2:25 - "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

Heb 13:4 - "*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled..*"

"Pleasure is God's invention, not the devil's." - **C.S. Lewis**

Devil always likes to hijack what God invents, and distort it.

- **#2 - Marital Sex Must Be GOD-GOVERNED.** - It needs to operate with the boundaries set by God's Word!!

- Sex **WITHIN** marriage vs. Sex **OUTSIDE** marriage

- **"Water" - Prov 5:15-18** - "*Drink **water** from your own cistern, and **running water** from your own well. Should **your fountains** be dispersed abroad, **streams of water** in the streets? Let them be only your own, and not for strangers with you. Let **your fountain** be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth.*"

- **Sex Inside Marriage:** Pure water from a well, Delight, River

- **Sex Outside Marriage:** Polluted water from a sewer, Destroy, Swamp

- **"Fire" - Prov 6:24-28** - "*To keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids. For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. Can a man take **fire to his bosom**, and his clothes not be burned? Can one **walk on hot coals**, and his feet not be seared?"*

- **Sex Inside**

Marriage: Fireplace, Contained, Controlled, Warmth, Satisfaction

- **Sex Outside Marriage:** Fire on the couch: burn the house down

"Conflicts, quarrels, bitter words will in time have an adverse affect on sexual harmony. One reason why it appears that sexual adjustment is difficult to achieve is that failure in any one of several of the other major areas of marital life is reflected in physical relationships. Generally a couple which has achieved a satisfactory cooperative framework in which

to face all of their problems will find a minimum of difficulties in coming together sexually." - James Peterson

If you want to have a satisfying sex life, try tenderness the other 23 ½ hours of the day

- Men are microwaves; Women are Crock Pots
- Men are aroused quickly and visually
- Men don't necessarily require touch
- Men must always guard what they see and think about

- Women don't get stimulated visually
- Women need soft touch, tender words, meaningful activities
- Physical enjoyment can't be rushed; must be cultivated tenderly
- Husbands who are kind only in the evening to get sex create resentment

III. Maximize Your CHRIST-CENTEREDNESS (v.31-32) - "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

- **Make Jesus the primary LOVE of your life, and let Him meet the DEEPEST needs that you have, the deepest needs that ONLY JESUS can satisfy. This will free you to simply enjoy your marriage partner, and have a "LOVE AFFAIR" with your spouse!!:**
 - Jn 4:13-14 - "Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst."

- **Jesus can supply to you the things that desperately need and crave from your spouse, but he/she is simply not able to provide:**
 - REST (Mt 11:28-30) - "Come unto Me..."
 - PEACE (Jn 16:33) - "...in Me you shall have peace.."
 - POWER (Phil 4:13) - "...do all things thru Christ.."
 - LOVE (Jer 31:3) - "I have loved you..an everlasting love.."
 - PURPOSE (Mt 6:33) - "...seek first the Kingdom.."
 - ENCOURAGEMENT (Mt 25:21) - "His Lord said..Well done..."

- **Wives**, be like MARY, who lovingly sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to His Words!
 - Lk 10:39 - "Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word."

- **Husbands**, be like **DAVID**, who passionately and zealously chased the heart of God!
 - **Ps 27:1** - "The LORD is my light and my salvation; *Whom shall I fear?* The LORD is *the strength of my life*; Of *whom shall I be afraid?*"
 - **Ps 23:1** NLT - "The LORD is my shepherd; *I have all that I need.*"

Years ago, in 1980, man by the name of Jim Newick was with his wife, and another couple, walking by Spirit Lake in the state of Washington. They were hiking together through the pristine forest. It was simply beautiful - the fir trees, the clouds, the blues sky, picture perfect. Every thing was great... except for Jim. Unbeknownst to his wife or friends, inside of Jim a storm was raging, because Jim had the burden of knowing, that at that very moment, he had an active malignant tumor growing inside of his body, threatening to kill him.

As the two couples continued walking, they came to a large beautiful waterfall, and underneath this water fall, was a perfect little mountain cottage. They came to learn that the cottage was for rent, so Jim's wife ran into the cottage to book a weekend stay, in the next several weeks. However, the cottage was booked up for an entire year already. She said, "Oh well then we'll reserve it for this time next year."

Outside the cottage, Jim was a sweating nervous wreck. The fir trees didn't look beautiful to him, the clouds weren't pretty anymore. Jim started sweating and got very nervous all of a sudden. The other couple said, "Jim what's wrong with you? What's going on?" He said, "Listen, my life is hanging in the balance! My wife is in there making reservations for a year from now, but I'm going to be dead by then!" Jim then told the couple about his malignant deadly tumor.

It turned out Jim had it all backwards. One year later, he was alive and growing stronger, but the mountain, the cottage, the waterfall, were all gone. That mountain, Mount St. Helens, had violently erupted, taking with it, the buildings and most of the mountain itself.

Ironically, what seemed to Jim to be strong, stable, forever was simply gone. But what Jim thought was temporary, frail, and passing.. still existed!

There's a spiritual lesson in this story: Many times we're focusing on the wrong thing! We mistakenly focus on the temporary and passing "stuff" of this short life, and not on what really matters, on what will last forever!

SOME APPLICATIONS:

#1 - Magnify Your COVENANT - Stay true and faithful to the binding promise that you have made - to your spouse, and also to GOD!!

#2 - Multiply Your CREATIVITY - Have fun in your marriage romantically, and be sure to maintain frequent and healthy intimacy with your spouse. It can repair and even revive a troubled marriage!!

#3 - Maximize Your CHRIST-CENTEREDNESS - Make Jesus the primary Lover of your heart; get your deepest need met by Him, and satisfied from Him, freeing you to simply enjoy your marriage partner, and have a "love affair" with your spouse!!