

THE MYTHS OF MARRIAGE

“The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.” —1 CORINTHIANS 7:4

Marriage brings us into a more intense proximity to another human being than any other relationship. There are layers upon layers that make us up, some of which we have not yet discovered, and it is often in marriage these layers become exposed.

One of the great myths about marriage is that it is a consumer relationship. In other words, it is about getting what I want and what I need. We marry for love, companionship, sexual satisfaction, children, a sense of identity and belonging. These are needs, desires and aspirations that are legitimate, but if our marriage is founded on “consumer” interest it will last only as long as our needs are met.

There are two conflicting ideas about marriage. One is that marriage is everything, but the idea that marriage is necessary to a fulfilled life is also a myth. Jesus was the most fulfilled man as God intended man to be; the most complete in Himself. The Apostle Paul was a single man and he extols the virtues of singleness. It is wonderful that someone loves us and wants to spend the rest of their life with us, but it is not necessary to a fulfilled life.

The other extreme is those who say marriage is merely a piece of paper. Do I need a licence to be sexually intimate with my partner?

How is that going to make a difference? The problem with this is that the sexual relationship cannot be detached from the real relationship where husband and wife not only belong to each other, but it is a union of heart and soul. Sex was not designed as an appetite to be satisfied, but to give expression to the deep intimacy of the soul. When that is broken, the sexual relationship may be functional, but it will simply be a mechanical process that will leave us empty.

We cannot come into marriage expecting all our needs to be met. The best preparation for marriage is in learning to be complete as a single person. That is not to become coldly self-sufficient, but learning to be self-sufficient in a wholesome way in order that we may give to our marriage partners. Marriage is not a consumer relationship, but a covenant relationship. A consumer attitude says, “You are here for me,” but a covenant attitude says, “I am here for you.” This is a beautiful picture of the relationship Jesus has with His church, and is God’s intention of what marriage should be. It is sticking together, working through the hard times and reaping the wonderful reward of looking back over the years, enjoying a marriage that has been built on both the pain and the joys.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, help me to keep the same love and commitment in my marriage as You have for your church. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Is my marriage more a covenant relationship or consumer relationship?