

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

05.05.2023 | Wisdom for Marriage | Proverbs 12:4, 10-15; 28:13-14; 31:10-12 | Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning I want to invite you to turn with me to Proverbs chapter 12. Proverbs chapter 12 is where we are going to start this morning but we're actually going to look at a few different verses in the book of Proverbs. Normally when we come to the word as a church I really like to have one passage of scripture. I really come to believe that expository preaching which aims to take a passage of God's word and expose the spirit's intended meaning of that text for us as God's people is really what I should be doing during our time. So that's the way that we typically spend our time in God's word is with one passage of scripture really allowing God to speak to us from that passage.

When we come to the Proverbs and specifically as we're coming to the section where we are seeking to glean wisdom from Proverbs for different areas of life just based on the way the Proverbs are written there's going to be some times when we go to a few different passages to try to get an understanding of the wisdom that the book has for us on a particular topic. So today we're going to be doing that as we look at this topic of marriage. So if you haven't been with us we've spent about a month in the book of Proverbs kind of laying a foundation really seeking to understand what wisdom is why we would want it and what draws us away. And even last week looking at the draw and the eventual destruction that sin brings when we are drawn away from the path of wisdom that God has for us.

But now we want to turn to some particular areas of life both I think our relationships and our individual lives to see what the book of Proverbs has for us. And so today we're going to begin with the topic of marriage. What does Proverbs have to teach us in terms of wisdom for marriage. Now surprisingly I think if you were to read the book of Proverbs you would find that there's not as much in the book of Proverbs about marriage as you might expect. You might think well marriage is really important in the Christian faith and a book like Proverbs that has a lot of wisdom surely would have a lot about marriage. Well actually if you remember that the book of Proverbs is written as a father writing to his son or really writing to the next generation. Being aimed at young people there's not a lot in the book that's specifically about here's exactly what a husband should be doing and exactly what a wife should be doing. Although there's some of that but really it's about preparing someone for marriage. A lot of the language in Proverbs about marriage is about finding the right person or seeing the way that God's leading you to the right person in marriage. And so there is something to be said for the way Proverbs is preparing us but I do think a lot of the teaching in Proverbs and a lot of the wisdom for godly living applies to a godly marriage. And I think it will be instructive for us as we look not just at what Proverbs says specifically about marriage but about wise and godly living.

But today I also want to just help you to consider the fact that we are talking about marriage and maybe for some of you it feels like this topic is not really for you. Namely because maybe you aren't married. I mean we have children and youth in our services who think often maybe that marriage is just way out in the distance. We have others who maybe you would think that marriage is somewhat in your near future which I would say I think the book of Proverbs has a lot for you. There's probably other people that if you were to look at your life you would see maybe God doesn't seem to be showing you that marriage is in your near future maybe is in your future at all. And you would wonder do I really need wisdom for marriage. The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 13 that marriage should be held in honor among all God's people. There's this call for the people of God to hold marriage in honor because God designed marriage. God instituted marriage. I believe that God sees marriage as beautiful and God sees marriage as being held in honor and so he calls us as his people. The whole body of Christ to hold marriage in honor. And we live in a world that frankly I think dishonors marriage in a variety of different ways. So many times even within the church there are ways that we do not honor God in the way we speak about marriage or in our own marriages or the way that we view marriage. And so I believe that the topic of receiving wisdom for marriage is one that is needed whether you are single or married whether you are divorced or widowed whether marriage seems to be in your future or not whether your marriage is currently really healthy or really struggling. I believe that God's wisdom for us on this topic is really important as we will see I think it's instructive to each one of us about what we are building our lives upon. So let's go to the text for this morning we're going to begin in Proverbs chapter 12 verse 4 but then we'll move a little bit through the book of Proverbs so you might have to turn a couple of pages and it will be up on the screen for you.

So Proverbs chapter 12 verse 4, Solomon says an excellent wife is the crown of her husband but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones. Just a few verses later in Proverbs 12 picking up in verse 10. But the righteous escape from

trouble from the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied with good and the work of a man's hand comes back to him. The way of a fool is right in his own eyes but a wise man listens to advice. To go towards the end of the book in Proverbs chapter 28 just to read a couple of verses that I think will be instructive for us a little bit later as we consider this topic of marriage. Verses 13 and 14 of Proverbs 28. Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Blessed is the one who fears the Lord always but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity. Then to the last chapter of Proverbs chapter 31 a beautiful section that we won't read the whole section but just the first few verses verses 10 through 12. An excellent wife who can find she is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trust in her and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not harm all the days of her life.

There was a New York Times article written by columnist David Brooks that discussed what he said were three views of marriage that he sees really popular in our world. Says if you were just to kind of go and pick up a book on marriage from just the bookstore you'd probably find one of these views or maybe he would refer to them as lenses that present marriage in a certain way. Kind of give guidance for how to go about thinking about marriage and making a decision on who to marry. He said one of the lenses that our world presents to us is what he called the psychological lens. That's really the lens that says that you really need to find the right person. You really need to find the person that's compatible with you. He says that much of the advice found in the psychological lens is on looking at a person and seeing someone who is maybe agreeable or empathetic. Someone who is easily angered or someone who is very focused on themselves as someone that you might want to be careful of. He says one of the things that this lens often puts forward is the fact that most people actually don't change. You need to think that negative traits will somehow be lost at some point in the journey but a lot of times they stay and you need to really keep this lens. He says the second lens that a lot of people use to kind of view marriage and think about marriage is the romantic lens. He says this is the lens that we would often see in movies and hear about in songs. Really the idea of the romantic lens of marriage is that you would find someone that you are so passionately in love with that that that passionate love would be able to kind of fuse you together for the hard times. That you would have this person that you are just enamored by, you are connected with, that even when you have your differences, even when you make mistakes, that you have kind of been brought together in this romantic love and that is really the person that you need to look for. That is what your lens you need to view your marriage through. And then he said thirdly there is what he called the moral lens. He said the moral lens is really probably mostly held by religious people but sometimes secular people as well. And the moral lens is really the idea that marriage doesn't just exist for itself or doesn't just exist for procreation, having but that marriage serves a higher good. There is a purpose in marriage that is beyond just kind of self completion or self satisfaction, but really a giving of oneself to be able to have a good relationship. And he said to even make a difference in the world in your little corner of life.

You know I think it is kind of interesting is that if you look at the book of Proverbs, you actually see all three of these lenses actually somewhat presented. The book of Proverbs actually kind of speaks to the psychological lens in some way. Proverbs does say that there are certain people that you should consider being in a relationship with and there are certain people you should be wary about being in a relationship with. Bible does say you should look towards, use wisdom to find the right person to be your spouse. Proverbs also kind of speaks to the romantic lens. I mean in one passage that we will probably look at in a couple of weeks, Proverbs says that you should be intoxicated with your spouse. You should delight in your spouse. There really should be this emotional connection and this romantic love that is shared in marriage. Of course Proverbs also speaks to the moral lens I think. Proverbs says that marriage isn't just about self satisfaction, it is really about giving of yourself to another person for their benefit and for the benefit of the What's interesting is David Brooks in his column actually said that really you probably need all three lenses in some way. He said they're not mutually exclusive. You probably need them all in some way but he did say he thinks in our popular culture the psychological lens and the romantic lens have been really highlighted and the moral lens has been really neglected. He said perhaps that is why marriage in general is in decline in our culture because we've lost kind of this third view, this third lens of which to look at marriage.

I think what I think about is so good about Proverbs is it not only shows us how to have these three lenses together but it actually gives us even something deeper. You see Proverbs in the rest of the Bible doesn't just give you lenses by which to think about marriage but it also gives you a foundation for marriage. It gives you a foundation on which to build your relationships and it's really a foundation on which to build your whole life. That you will see that what this foundation that we are called to is one that is not just for married people but for all people. A foundation that gives you a stable

place to be able to walk with God in relationship that would then lead you into right relationships with others including yours. So what I want to do today is I just want to draw out two helpful truths about a godly marriage. A marriage that is guided by God and his wisdom that would be helpful for us as we think about the lenses by which we think about marriage and look at marriage but also the foundation for which we are building our marriages and our lives upon.

So the first kind of truth that I want to bring out for you is that a godly marriage ideally consists of two godly people. A godly marriage ideally consists of two godly people. Now I'll admit there's probably nothing remarkably profound about that point. Probably sounds like common sense. In fact if you read the Proverbs you'll probably find that a lot of the Proverbs kind of sound a lot of the Proverbs are not so much about giving you a new reality or a new understanding as much as it is about helping you see this is how the world works because God designed it that way. This is how God designed things to be. It's about helping you see some of the common sense applied in your life and in the world. But notice I say that a godly marriage ideally consists of two The Bible actually does give instructions for if you are a believer and you are married to a non-believer. The Bible gives instructions for let's say you are a godly person seeking to walk with the Lord but you are in a relationship with or married to someone who is not walking with the Lord. So there is a way to honor God in your marriage and to have a godly marriage even if only one of those people is really being guided by God. But I think in God's original design ideally a godly marriage consists of one godly man and one godly woman. Two godly people making up a godly marriage.

And so that leads to a couple of applications. One that should mean that you should seek a godly spouse. That's one of the applications of this truth. If ideally a godly marriage consists of two godly people then you, if you are considering marriage, should seek a godly spouse. Again if you read the book of Proverbs you'll find that it's mostly written towards kind of young people preparing them for life. And so much of the language is about this, about seeking a godly spouse. About finding the person that would be right for you in terms of God's wisdom, in terms of God's leading. If we go to that last chapter in Proverbs, Proverbs 31 verse 10 it says, "An excellent wife who can find, she is far more precious than jewels." Solomon is saying to his sons, "An excellent wife is the best thing that you could have. More valuable than any amount of money, more valuable than any amount of possessions that An excellent wife, a godly wife is a true joy, truly valuable in this life." And I think the same thing would be said if he was writing to a daughter about seeking a spouse, an excellent husband. As a giver of life, as a bringer of joy to you. Or to go back to Proverbs chapter 12 where we began in verse 4. He uses that phrase again, "An excellent wife." And this time he says, "Is the crown of her husband. But she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones." Here's where you start to understand maybe what does it mean to be an excellent wife or an excellent husband. He doesn't just mean like I think excelling at maybe all things in life, but I think he means excellent according to God's view. A godly wife, a godly husband is like a crown. It brings you honor, it brings you life. It's like a rare jewel to find. But one who is not godly, he says, it's like a brings out of your life. It's like a rotteness to your bones.

Now some people would probably say that this way of thinking about marriage and relationships is kind of close-minded. To speak to Christians and to say you should really only look towards other Christians, other people who are walking with God in a relationship as potential people that you would want to be in a marriage relationship with. A lot of people would say that's kind of close-minded. Are you really saying that people who aren't Christians can't be good people? Well, no, I'm not saying that. I think people who aren't Christians could really be good people in a lot of ways. I know a lot of non-Christians who have a lot of good traits as spouses. They can be loving and supportive and they can be caring in a number of ways. But what I would say is it's really about what is the foundation of your life and what will be the foundation of your marriage. What's going to be the framework that you work upon? I mean if you think about it, if you are a Christian, so you've kind of said that my life is built upon my relationship with God, do you think that it's then wise to become one with, join in this marriage relationship with someone who is building on a different, someone who doesn't believe in God that way.

One time a young couple came to me for advice. They were dating. They had been dating for a long time and they were thinking about their future together. One of them was a believer and one of them wasn't. And so they came and they were asking me questions about how to make kind of some of these decisions about their future. They couldn't quite decide on when to get married, if and when they were going to have kids, how they were going to pursue careers, where they were going to live, some of those things. And so they just thought maybe I would have some wisdom for them. And I tried to kind of walk them through some of those things, but what I really came down to the fact is that I think they had

two different foundations or frameworks that they were building their lives around. One being a Christian was really seeking to build her life around what God wanted, what God was instructing her to do. The guy wasn't a Christian, so it really wasn't part of his framework or foundation to think about life and their future in that way. And what I tried to tell them is I said, "Listen, just because two Christians get together and get married doesn't mean that they will never have conflict and disagreements like you're having. My wife and I are both Christians and we have disagreements all the time. We have disagreements about how to make some of these big decisions in life just like you're having. But what is different is that we both have a common framework or foundation. We know we could go to God's word and say, "Does God's word have anything to say about this situation, about this decision that we're making? Does God's word have anything to say about the way that we're treating each other?" We have this foundation that we can share and without that common foundation I think you run into a lot of problems. That's why the Bible would give instruction about not being unequally yoked, not being in this type of relationship with someone who is not sharing that foundation with you.

So Proverbs is constantly putting before you this call, "If you are considering marriage, seek a godly spouse." Before you consider maybe other aspects or lenses that you would look through, psychological lens. Is this person compatible? The romantic lens? What are our feelings? The lenses are left out. But is this a godly person? Is this person sharing that foundation with me of what we want to build our lives upon? Proverbs is constantly saying, "Finding that type of spouse is a jewel. It is a treasure and it really only comes from the Lord." So one verse that we didn't read that might just be helpful is Proverbs 19.14. If you just want to make a note of it, I think it will be up on the screen. Proverbs 19.14 says, "House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord." Meaning there are certain things that you can inherit from your family, but to really find a godly spouse is given to you by God. Meaning if you desire at all to seek a godly spouse, you should pray. Pray that God would lead you to a If you have children, pray for your children to find a godly spouse. Pray for your friends, your fellow members of the church, that God, if He is leading them into marriage, that they would find a godly spouse. But of course, as I've said, ideally it consists of two godly people. It takes two to make a marriage. So you can't just seek a godly spouse, but you yourself must strive to be a godly spouse. So this is the second part of this kind of application.

If we're thinking about what Proverbs has for us, the wisdom for a godly marriage of being guided by God, we think it consists of two godly people, then you must seek a godly person to marry, but you should also strive to be a godly spouse. I think this is especially important if you're already married, that you would be living as a husband or a wife in the way that God would call you I think it's also important even if you're just preparing for marriage. I think a good question to ask yourself is, am I a godly spouse that someone would seek? I mean, if someone was listening to Pastor Ben's message and saying, seek a godly spouse, would they look for someone like me? Am I living that type of life, a life that is honoring to the Lord, that is helping build upon this foundation, that my relationship with God is foundational to all that I'm going to do? And again, if you read the book of Proverbs, I think that you'll find that a lot of it is simply calling you to godly living. A lot of it is applicable whether you're single or married, but perhaps some of the wisdom in the book is particularly helpful for knowing what does it look like to be a godly spouse. So if you're asking yourself, well, how do I seek a godly spouse? Is it just someone who claims How do I know if I'm living as a godly spouse? There's probably a lot that we can look at in the book of Proverbs, but I included those verses in chapter 12 because I just wanted to draw out of them a few places where we could get some descriptions about what does it mean to be a godly person that particularly might be important in the marriage relationship.

So, Proverbs chapter 12, starting in verse 10, it said, "Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel." Now, I have to tell you, I was in the office this week and some of the office ladies were helping put together the notes in the bulletin, and they were reading the verses that I had included and knew I was talking about marriage, and they were kind of curious as to how this verse applied. They were wondering, are you going to present the idea that the wife is the beast and the husband needs to care for her in this way? No, that's not what I think this verse means. Proverbs 12, 10, it is speaking about a righteous person, and what it says is that the righteous person has regard for the beast, meaning the animal in his What it's saying is that a godly person is someone who is gentle, thoughtful, maybe even to the lowliest creature. But then it contrasts that. It says the wicked person, the mercy of the wicked person is cruel. In other words, the person who is not living according to God's design, even their nice times are mean. Like even their mercy is cruel. In other words, I think what it's saying is a godly person is one who is going to be gentle and kind. And I think when you're looking for a godly spouse or you're striving to be a godly spouse, that's a good characteristic. Is this person gentle and kind?

Maybe you would really consider, are they gentle and kind to all people? Maybe not just ones who they think were going to help them out in a certain situation or those who they would consider friends. But if the example here is being kind to even an animal, do they show that type of compassion and care for. I've often heard it said that you can tell a lot by a person by the way they treat old people and young people. Do they care for children? They care for those who might need some help? If someone is not kind to others, that might be a warning sign that that's not a godly spouse that you should seek. If you are a spouse, and maybe I could speak especially to men. If you are a husband who is not gentle and kind to your wife and to your children. If you are constantly tearing them down with your words and what you do rather than building them up, you are not living as a godly husband and father and you need to repent. There's this characteristic here in verse 10 of being gentle and kind and thoughtful to those around them.

Then verse 11 seems to kind of switch directions totally, but I think it also applies to what it looks like to be a godly person. I think in today's language we call this adulting. Like he says the person who knows how to be focused on doing the work that God has given him will have what he needs. The person who is easily distracted, kind of not knowing how to focus and do the work that they are supposed to do, they will not have the things that they need. If you are seeking a godly spouse, you would want to seek someone who is able to do the things God has called them to do. To be focused on what God has called them to do. To be able to provide for a family. Let us jump down to the end of that passage in Proverbs chapter 12 and verse 15. It says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice." I would say an important marker of a godly spouse is to listen to others, especially to your spouse. If you have someone that you are considering marrying and you find that they don't listen to others, what makes you think that they are going to listen to you as their spouse one day? It is something that you need to consider and you have to ask yourself, as a spouse, as a person, am I willing to listen to others? We said from the beginning that wisdom in the book of Proverbs is marked by humility. That the one who thinks he knows it all is actually the fool. The one who is wise in his own eyes is the person who lacks wisdom, but the person who realizes that there is more to learn. The person who is willing to listen, that is the true wise person. If you are a spouse who is constantly explaining away your spouse's concerns, if they raise a red flag and you just tell them you're overreacting, you don't know what you're talking about, that's a concern. You should be able to listen to others as a godly person. As a godly spouse, you should seek to be able to listen to your spouse and be guided by them through God as a person that he has brought into your life. All of these, I believe, are important characteristics of both a godly husband and a godly wife, but also godly people in general.

If you go to Proverbs chapter 31, it's a well-known passage. We just read the last few verses of it, but it's this beautiful poem about a godly woman. A lot of times people will read it as if it's the example only for godly women, although some people see it as another personification of lady wisdom, meaning it's maybe not just a call for women, but a call for all people to live in some of these ways. But no matter what, it certainly sets out a good example of how to live, but I've often heard from some women that it sets the bar so high. I remember hearing from my mom one time about reading from Proverbs 31 and just thinking, "Gosh, I'm supposed to do all these things?" I mean, she's up before the sun is up, she's caring for her husband and for her kids, and she's working outside the home. It's like all these things that a woman is called to do. And I would just draw your attention to verse 30 in Proverbs 31. Just to summarize that whole section, it says. I'll just say women, you may not always be up before the sun. You may not always have every meal prepared and caring for your husband and your kids and working outside the home and doing it all with strength and dignity like Proverbs 31 But if you fear the Lord, you're exactly what God wants you to be. If you're walking in a right relationship with Him, that's who He's calling you to be.

I was so thankful and encouraged just to hear about women coming to our women's conference this weekend, just to be able to hear about the way God is working in the lives of women in our church and to see how many women, I think, meet this description of fearing the Lord. But of course, just like Proverbs 31 does, anytime you read, really, the book of Proverbs at all, you start to see the ideal and you start to realize how far you fall short. I mean, so many times we read about the ideal for our lives or for marriage and we realize, I'm not living as the godly spouse. I'm not living as the godly woman. And this is where I think we need a foundation that goes deeper than just the lenses for which to look at marriage. That more than just needing even a moral lens that would tell you to be self-giving in your marriage for the good of the relationship, you need a framework too and the foundation for our lives and for our marriages must be the gospel.

And so I would say a godly marriage is built upon gospel principles. A godly marriage ideally consists of two godly people, but a godly marriage is also built upon gospel principles. When a man and woman stand at the altar and get married in the wedding ceremony, they are entering into, I think what the Bible says, is a covenant. And the language of their vows reflects this covenant. They say things like, "For richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health." That is covenantal I've often heard it contrasted with contractual language. Contractual language might be, "Well, as long as you do this, then I will do this. As long as you provide in this way, then I'll respond in this way." But the covenantal language is quite different. It doesn't say, "Well, as long as you do this," it really says unconditionally, "I am going to do this. I am going to love you and be there with you no matter what life may bring or no matter what may happen in our relationship." This type of covenant, the Bible says, is meant to be a picture of the gospel, of God's unconditional love for his people. And so if marriage is supposed to be a picture of the gospel, then I think it's important that marriage is built on principles of the gospel.

And we see a couple principles of the gospel in Proverbs 28 that I just want to draw out for you and then bring the points of application and we'll close. In Proverbs 28, those verses we read, it says, "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Blessed is the one who fears the Lord always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity." This idea of concealing or confessing, the idea of not hardening your heart, I think are gospel principles that I want to draw out for you to consider about marriage. What does it mean for a marriage to be built upon the gospel? Well, there's a lot we could say, but two applications would be to confess regularly. At the heart of the gospel is a call to confession. Bible says for you to be saved, you really don't have to do anything to earn it. Jesus already did that. But one of the prerequisites to being saved is that you must confess you need to be saved. You must confess you're sick in order to be healed. You must confess you're a sinner in order to. Bible says here in Proverbs that there's really two options you have when you sin. You can either conceal or you confess.

And I think one of the principles of the gospel is to confess and therefore I think one of the principles in marriage should be to confess regularly. I think it's really important that you confess your faults and your sins to your spouse on a regular basis. And here's why I would say I think it's helpful to do it regularly. One, I think it prevents the hardness of heart that is talked about in verse 14. And it prevents some of that long draw and destruction of sin that we talked about last week. So many times I think regular confession can help guard against some of the sins that come down the road that would cause even more damage to a person or to the relationship. I mean just to give you an example, most people that I've talked to didn't just immediately jump into an adulterous relationship. They didn't just immediately have an affair. It almost always began in small ways with lustful thoughts, with an inappropriate emotional relationship, with boundaries being crossed. And if at any point in that time they would have confessed to their spouse, those things were happening, it would have been really hard. It would have brought some difficult conversations out, but I think it would have prevented a lot of pain and damage to the relationship.

Confessing regularly can prevent a hardness of heart and a going down that path to the destruction of I think also confessing sin regularly helps you to make sure that you are keeping the focus on what God wants to do in you and not just in your spouse. So many times I think in marriage, because you're a rounded person a lot, you can contribute the struggles and the problems in your marriage only to the other person, to their faults and their sins and their weaknesses. The Bible says that the word of God is meant to be a mirror and not a magnifying glass. Meaning we shouldn't look at God's word and say, "Here's what my spouse needs to hear from God." I wish the Spirit would say this to them and they would listen. What we need is God to show us what we need to change. When we focus on confessing regularly, we are taking our attention off of our spouse's weaknesses and sins and putting them back on God, what are you seeking to do in me in this relationship? How have I failed to be the godly spouse that you are calling me to be? But in order to be this type of spouse that can confess, to be able to have this type of vulnerability, it needs to be a safe space. And so I would say along with confessing regularly, I would say forgive mercifully. A gospel principle that's important I think in our lives and in our marriages is forgiveness. He says whoever confesses the sins and turns from it will receive mercy. The question is if your spouse was to come to you and confess their sins to you, would they be met with mercy? Would they be met with forgiveness? That has to be a part of the marriage relationship for there to be really a gospel foundation. That has to be part of the relationship for confession to happen.

Now I think I always need to make it really clear, I'm not saying that we should excuse all sin or that there shouldn't be any consequences to sin. Please don't hear me saying that if your spouse is mistreating you or even if your spouse is

abusive towards you, that you just need to forgive and keep going on with it. God wants you to be safe and cared for. The church wants you to be safe and cared for. Forgiveness doesn't mean we excuse every sin. It doesn't mean we just allow sin to continue. A lot of times when sin has been confessed there will need to be new boundaries. There will need to be trust that's restored. But I do believe that the gospel calls us to forgiveness, specifically to forgiveness towards a spouse who is confessing. To be able to forgive someone shows them that unconditional love that God has for them. Ideally again the marriage is the picture of the gospel. That someone is allowed to be imperfect, to be sinful around you and yet you love them still.

One of my favorite books on marriage is Tim Keller's *The Meaning of Marriage*. One of my favorite quotes from the book, it's one of often quote in wedding ceremonies. He just says this, I think it will be up on the screen for you so you can follow along. He says, "When over the years someone has seen you at your worst and knows you with all your strengths and flaws yet commits him or herself to you wholly, it is a consummate experience. To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us. I love this picture of marriage, to be able to be fully known and truly loved. But of course he says that is really just a reflection of what it's like to be loved by God. Meaning you don't have to be married to experience that type of unconditional love.

Marriage is only a picture of the gospel but it is not the gospel. Even as our brother Sam prayed earlier for marriages, he said we don't want to make marriage an idol in our lives. We would never want you to think that you could only experience this type of unconditional love when you find that right godly spouse. Rather you find it in the true and better spouse, the groom of the church, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Bible says that he is better than the best husband. He is gentle and kind. He knows all of your sins, all of your weaknesses, all of your flaws and yet he loves you. In fact he loves you so much that he laid down his life for you. And he's inviting you into this relationship that can be the foundation of your life. To know that you are unconditionally loved by him, equips you and empowers you for the godly living that Proverbs is calling you to. Which means it also equips you and empowers you for a godly marriage. Marriage is a picture of the gospel and the gospel is the power for marriage. As we make the gospel the foundation of our lives we will be godly people who live godly lives. And when we make the gospel the foundation of our marriages we will have godly marriages that are an honoring to him, good for those in the marriage and are held in honor among those who are able. To make the gospel the foundation of your life, make the gospel the foundation of your marriage.