

# Introduction

\* What do you hunger for?  
- Romance; security;  
companionhip; sex

## 1. The Delay of Marriage

(1) The background

SLIDE #1 - Median age graph

(2) The reasons

1. 60% of those over age 30, who waited or haven't, cite their parents

2. Establish themselves

(3) The implications

Two congruente graphs

1. Children later - fertility issues

2. Divorce rise (more entrenched)

## 2. Unwillingness to "Leave"

(1) Our portraits  
- Culture - Parents

(2) Our priorities

1. Leave & cleave

# I. The Call to Hold Fast (v31)

## 1. You need to "Hold Fast"...

The phrase "Hold Fast" traces back to Norwegian and Dutch sailors who had the saying "houd vast" meaning "hold tight". Upon first impression, the meaning of hold fast seems obvious, but to a sailor, "fast" is a term meaning to make tight. If a sailor was to make fast the line, it would mean to make the rope tight. Sailors, being a superstitious group, began to tattoo "hold fast" on the four front-facing fingers of each hand. This was done as a reminder that no matter what, the sailor would not let go.

SLIDE #2

(1) In the same way, your marriage is like that ship.

(2) You have a responsibility to make sure your marriage is fast... tight... secure

Ecclesiastes 4:12 - And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

(3) Good marriages hold-fast w/ both hands

There is also an understanding among sailors that when on deck, you dedicate a hand for the ship and a hand for you. That means in order to help your crew you must make sure that you are taken care of. A ship needs every member in an emergency and if you are washed overboard you are no help to anyone. Because of that fact, you always secure on hand to the ship. Once you are secured and ready to take on the waves you can use the other hand to help yourself and crew. That working hand is used to ensure the ship and all of its crew will successfully make it through the storm.

1. Is your marriage single-handed?

(4) When storms hit, your marriage won't be secure if you're not secure

Acts 20:28 - Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

1. Your own, personal, spiritual life is the primary safeguard in a secure marriage.
2. Spouses should care (v28-29)

## 2. ... so you can be "one flesh".

Genesis 2:23-24 - Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

### (1) One flesh is not one persons

1. Distinct personalities
  - Humor; likes; tastes
2. Distinct ideas
3. Distinct gifts
4. Distinct Faith
5. Distinct identity

### (A) One flesh is about "becoming"

1 Peter 3:7a - likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman...

1. Becoming one priority
  - Parents, kids, friends

### 2. Becoming one mind

Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...

Php. 2:2 - Complete my joy by being of the same mind; having the same love; being in full accord and of one mind.

### 3. Becoming one heart

Jer. 32:39 - I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.

### 4. Becoming one way

- Not a modern marriage
- Not a traditional marriage
- A reflective marriage

### 5. Becoming one body

- Sexual fidelity; open marriage

1 Corinthians 7:2,4 - But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband... For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

## II. The Conviction to Leave Free (v31)

### 1. Holding on requires letting go

#### (1) Letting go of relationships

1. Your spouse is your priority
  - Not parents, not kids, bro's
2. Young people struggle w/ this
  - Priorities means cuts
  - John Wooden - cuts

#### (2) Letting go of activities

- TV, hobbies, gaming, social media

#### (3) Letting go of dreams

- Independent software mogul, Instagram influencer, own your own business
- Go home! Get another job!

#### (4) Letting go of sin

Hebrews 12:1b -...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely...

1. Marriage reveals how destructive your sin really is

Holding fast to your spouse involves the daily discipline of making cuts and adjusting priorities...in other words, it is the willingness to let go of anything that inhibits your friendship with Jesus and to one another.

## 2. Letting go (leave) requires friendship

Genesis 2:18 - Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone..."

★ SLIDE # 3  
★ Martin Luther & Katharina Von Bora

### II. MARTIN LUTHER BIO

- A. Easter morning (12 nuns) -- 12 fish barrels.
- B. [REDACTED] was nearly struck by lightning so he committed himself to ministry as life as monk.
- C. Vow of poverty and celibacy
- D. Nearly drove himself mad studying bible realizing how woefully short, he in fact, fell
- E. Severe depression - harm his body (penance, atone) - hours in confession
- F. Dawning/Awakening - Habakuk (quoted in romans, galatians) - the righteous shall live by faith - that's how I'm saved.
- G. This began the protestant reformation. Nailed his convictions to a door, on a church, in Wittenburg. (95 theses).
- H. Like a bulletin board or Facebook wall, it's where you post something you wanted others to discuss.
- I. Led to massive alteration in how people view salvation (catholics)
- J. This is the time of Gutenberg and the printing press, Copernicus, Galileo...a massive season of revelation and change...Luther is at the forefront of that spiritually.
- K. Concludes: Marriage is a good thing and kids are a blessing.
- L. The teaching of catholic church: best life of all was one of a priest/ monk, nun. A life of total celibacy/poverty viewed as devotion to God.
- M. That marriage and kids were sort of base instincts...and for those who couldn't withhold their passions and desires, were less mature and so it served a purpose. But the holiest people of all would be chase virgins, living in poverty all of their lives devoted to God.
- N. Martin Luther decided, that's not true.

- O. And he quit being a monk. Decided that enjoyment could be part of his life.
- P. And he wrote a little track called "On Monastic Vows" - renounced his vows and encouraged other monks and nuns to do the same.
- Q. For priests to leave the priesthood and nuns to leave the convent.

### III. MARTIN LUTHER AND KATHARINA VON BORA

- A. This little track found its way into one particular convent [REDACTED] with about a dozen nuns, most young -- its a good thing to get married, good thing to have babies.
- B. Wrote a letter to luther to break them out - which was a illegal.
- C. So Luther devised a plan where a man who was supposed to be delivering food to the nuns on Easter, brought with him 12 empty barrels.
- D. Smuggled 12 nuns out of the convent.
- E. Most went back to their families and most were married off to start families of their own.
- F. With one notable exception...who no one would marry.
- G. [REDACTED] History records many reasons why this was true, with two being primary:
1. She was unattractive
  2. She was unpleasant.
- H. Luther said:
1. She was stubborn
  2. She had a lot of pride
- I. She was finally tired and bold enough to approach to the great Martin Luther a she told him:
1. "You know, my mom died when I was 6, went into the convent around 9 or 10, became a nun around 16. Now as a woman, I've read your biblical teaching and renounced my life as a nun, fled from the convent...you owe me a husband. And since you're single, if you don't find me one...you're going to be my husband."
- J. That's pretty bold for any woman in any time period. But especially in that day.

- K. Martin Luther said: "Good Lord, they will never thrust a wife on me."
- L. He did not want to marry, he was 40 years old and a virgin -- The OG 40-year-old-virgin.
- M. No one would marry Katharina. He was not interested in her, or attracted to her...but on June 15, 1525 he said "Will you marry me", she said "yes", they were married on that day.
- N. His friends wept bitterly.
- O. When they came to him and asked him "Why did you marry her", he said quote "To spite the devil."
- P. Which is the least romantic reason given, in the history of the world.
- Q. It's theologically correct, but no woman wants to hear that.
- R. And then she got pregnant, and this was quite a scandal, because there was a bit of an old wives' tale and folklore in Germany that the Antichrist would come from union between a rebellious nun and a renegade monk.
- S. She did give birth, and they ended up going on to have six children —three boys, three girls—and their thirteen-year-old daughter tragically died, and they write of this as a devastating season for them.
- T. They were very socially awkward, because they'd not been around members of the opposite sex, since, well, for her, since she was a little girl.
- U. So, the stories are told that she would be sitting with him, as a married couple, and not have any idea how to talk to a man, so she would just throw stuff out like, "Who's the King of Prussia?" Just trying—and he would be like, "What is this weird woman, addicted to Jeopardy, who I am married to?" She would just throw out these random statements. And they were very socially awkward.
- V. And when she moved into their home, it was a complete bachelor pad. It was an old monastery, and guys were coming and going, and she'd have up to one hundred people over for dinner a night, because the Reformation was sort of exploding out of their home.
- W. And he was such a nasty guy. He really was a bachelor. He slept in straw, but hadn't changed it for years.
- X. And so she cleaned up his house, threw out a bunch of stuff—I'm assuming burned the rest—and she turned it into a lovely home, and

then she planted a garden, because he had a horrible diet, destroyed his digestive tract.

Y. He had legendary flatulence. Actually, there are many stories in the Reformation just connected to that particular fact, that I would share with you, but we won't. And she was a bit of a naturopath, so she started growing vegetables and helping him to heal physically.

Z. And do you know what happened, over time? They really built an amazing friendship. And you don't get this from reading the theology of Martin Luther. He's usually just railing against the pope, which is fun, but—

AA. But when you read their letters—and I think there's a few dozen remaining letters that we have between them—the tone, over the years, gets really affectionate and sweet.

BB. There are occasions, too, where she saved his life. She had a dream that he was going out to preach, and men were lying in wait to murder him, and so she told him, "Honey, I don't think you should go," and he didn't go, because he trusted the Holy Spirit in his wife. And he got a letter, saying, "It's a good thing you didn't come. It was all true. You would've been killed."

CC. She became a great confidante and ally. As he's writing letters, and books, and treatises, oftentimes, she was literally just sitting at his side as his friend. And so she's included in some of his correspondences to others, you know, "Katharina's here. She says hi."

DD. **They were friends.** In the letters, he calls her:

1. "Lord Katie,"
2. "dear rib,"
3. "the empress,"
4. "my true love,"
5. "my sweetheart,"
6. "gracious lady,"
7. "wise woman,"
8. "doctor,"
9. "your grace,"
10. "holy lady,"



11. "dear wife,"

12. "a gift of God."

EE. He had a lot of nicknames for his lovely wife.

FF. And what I love about her, as well, is she had a really strong sense of humor, irony, and sarcasm, which was necessary for a big personality like Martin Luther.

GG. So, once in a while, he would start to pick at her a little bit, and she would just look at him and say, "Obviously, you didn't pray about that sermon you're about to preach," and she would really sort of hold her ground.

HH. And there was one occasion, where he would get very melancholy, very depressed. He would go into serious bouts with depression, and she knew how to snap him out of it.

II. One occasion, the story is told that he was away and returning home, and she dressed in all black like a mourning widow, and opened the door, and he was sort of shocked. And she was standing there, and he asked her, "Who died?" And she said, "Well, if the great Martin Luther is this depressed, I just assumed that God has died." She had a flare for the dramatic and the comedic.

JJ. And what happened to Martin Luther is that what started out as, "We're not really friends. We don't really like each other. I'm not really interested in her, but I kind of need to marry her, because I did jailbreak her out of a convent," turned out to be one of the most glorious marriages, outside of the Bible, in the history of the world.

KK. I would go so far as to say that their marriage is the most important marriage, the most influential marriage in the history of the world, outside of the Bible, because now the view of Christian maturity was a husband and wife loving one another, and they had a friendship in a day when marriage was primarily functional.

LL. One of the things noticed is that through the course of their life together, his thinking about marriage and his teaching on marriage changed.


MM. It went from, "Well, it just exists to keep us from carnal passions and to give us legitimate offspring," to it really being about friendship.

## SLIDE #4

NN. And the laws were changed, and the view of marriage was changed, and life, as we know it, regarding a healthy biblical view of Christian marriage can, in large part, be attributed to the Luthers.

OO. And here is a statement that he gives a little later in his life about his wife: *"There is no more lovely, friendly, and charming relationship, communion, or company than a good marriage."*

PP. What he's talking about is friendship.



### IV. FRIENDSHIP

- A. Unlike the culture, we don't have friends with benefits—one friend, married friend, with non-medical or dental benefits. That's what we're talking about.
- B. 187 books on marriage, not one significant chapter on friendship.
  - 1. Separate verses on friendship and marriage as though separate.
- C. John Gottman, a sociologist and researcher, who, with more than 90 percent success rate, can predict divorce, says that men and women want the exact same thing. Men and women are very different, but there's one thing that they hold in common, and that is by 70 percent, the most important thing to men and women is that their spouse be their nearest and dearest friend.
- D. It is possible to have a great theology of marriage and not a friendship. It's possible to know all the verses on roles, and gender, and not have a friendship.
- E. We want you to believe all that the Bible has to say about marriage, and in your marriage, we want you to be friends.
- F. **SINGLE PEOPLE DATING:** This starts when you're single: only dating someone who's friends with Jesus, and then becoming friends with them, and building that relationship on those two friendships.

### III. The Commitment to Trust Full (v32)

1. Jesus left heaven, so you can too

(1) What is your Heaven

1. Job?
2. A place?
3. A dream?
4. Lifestyle?

(2) Friendship isn't about them helping you get what you want... it's them becoming what you want.

- 1- Willing to give up all else that gets in the way.

2. Jesus holds onto His spouse, so you can too

Psalm 139:9-10 - If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

(1) If things are hard, He holds on to you

(2) When you're rebellious & stubborn  
" " " "

(3) When you're lost & lonely  
" " " "

Psalm 107:9 - For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

(4) Hold Fast - w/ both hands

Hunger for friendship w/ your spouse?  
You can make sure of it by hungering for Jesus