

I. Intro

A. Text: **1 Thess. 3:11–3:13, 4:1–3**

¹¹ Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, ¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. (1 Thess. 3:11–3:13)

¹ Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ² for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality. (1 Thess. 4:1–3)

B. Series Overview

1. Marriage Crisis
 - a. 50%, 60%, 70%
 - b. Selfie Generation

II. Body

A. Before God called mankind into marriage, God called man unto Himself.

- a. *¹⁸ And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone... (Gen. 2:18a)*

2. Much like our assumption that God created man because of loneliness.
 - a. God never needed anything in order to feel complete and validated.
3. God wasn't lonely. Neither was Adam (in his unfallen state).
 - a. God created Adam with only 1 need: God Himself.
 - b. Every evening (in the cool of the garden) God would sit down and personally hang out with Adam.

- i. Before God called Adam to marriage (before He fashioned Eve from Adam's rib), God called man to Himself.
 - ii. And then God made an everlasting covenant with man (uniting Himself with man forever).
- B. One of the most indisputable evidences for the existence of God: A people (Israel).
 - 1. Other pagan gods/idols are identified as the god of the sun, moon, rivers, etc.
 - a. In contrast, Jehovah-God chose to be known as God of a people... a family.
 - i. God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
 - 2. God chose a people, a family in which to make His name famous!
 - a. God chose family (specifically through the institution of marriage) to make Himself known throughout the earth.
 - i. Marriage mirrors God's covenant commitment to a people who don't necessarily deserve His love.
 - b. God chose family (through the institution of marriage) to make Himself known in the earth.
 - 3. Myth: God designed marriage to bring mankind happiness.
 - a. God doesn't have anything against happiness.
 - i. He is the God of delight.
 - b. He created you that you might experience unadulterated delight in him alone.
 - i. "*The chief end of man is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever.*" (Westminster Catechism)
 - c. We've assumed the source of our pleasure and delight would be the person who sleeps in our bed and shares our last names.
 - i. We delight in God.
 - ii. As we delight in Him, He delights in us.
- C. God chose the family relationship to make Himself known in the earth. And God chose that same family relationship to make us more like Him in the earth.

1. God's Will (**1 Thess. 4:1-3**)

*Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ²for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification... (**1 Thess. 4:1-3**)*

- a. God's ultimate will for your life is sanctification (holiness).

Sanctification (hagiosmos #38): *holiness, to be set apart, to be distinguished, to be different in character and activity.*

- b. The end game for our lives is not personal happiness, but personal and eternal holiness.

- i. Whether married or single... holiness.

2. For centuries, Christians have viewed celibacy as the ultimate mission field to develop holiness.

- a. The most holy thing you could do was isolate yourself and become a monk or a nun.
- b. The church has urged married people to mimic single believers as much as possible without totally neglecting their families.

3. In view of our common call to Holiness...

- a. What if we in this generation began to look at marriage the same way that Medieval believers viewed monasteries?
- b. What if God gave us the institution of marriage, not to make us happy. But to make us holy?

4. Holiness is non-negotiable.

- a. How/ Where we work it out this holiness can vary depending on your gift. (**1 Cor. 7:7**)

*"For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that." (**1 Cor. 7:7**)*

- i. Singleness is a gift whereby we walk out the Holiness that God has called us to.

- b. My opinion: Marriage is also a gift whereby we walk out what God has called us to: Holiness.

i. It's better to marry than to burn... (**1 Cor. 7:9**)

*If you have the gift of marriage, then God has given you marriage to develop some things in you that you may not have developed otherwise (as you serve your spouse in a sacrificial way).

III. Conclusion: Marriage Is the Testing Ground To Develop Sanctification

A. The Marital Relationship is the Ideal Location to Develop the type of Character that Jesus Prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount

1. Go The Second Mile

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. (Matt. 5:38-42)

a. If they demand your shirt... overcoat too.

2. Race To Go To Low

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. (Matt. 5:43-44)

3. Remove Traces of a Critical Spirit

"Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matt. 7:1-5)

- a. Judge others with the same standard that you want to be judged.

- 4. Run to Forgive When Forgiveness is Unfounded

²³Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
(Matt. 5:23-24)

- a. Point of contention for many married couples in church.
- b. If you get to the altar... the place of worship and remember that your spouse has something against you...
 - i. Be reconciled first and then.
 - ii. Take care of home first and then.
- c. Paul told Timothy that if a man does not know how to minister at home, pastor at home, deacon at home... How can he take care of the house of God? **(1 Tim. 3:5)**

B. Home is the Ideal Place To Display the Type of Character that Jesus Has Toward Us

- 1. Sacrificial in His Love
- 2. Patient, Kind, Longsuffering
- 3. Fights for our Greatness
- 4. Persistent in His Perseverance
 - a. The Bible never promises a crown (reward) to those who are the most happy
 - b. Persistence in marriage requires a perspective that is bigger than what we see right now in the natural.
 - c. God is looking to model in marriage, His Enduring Love that will not bend to adversity and disappointment.
- C. Marriage is not the source of the believer's happiness. Marriage is the primary proving ground wherein God produces sanctification (holiness) in the life of the believer.