

Discussion Questions for Sunday, May 24, 2015

Marriage: Cultivating God-Ordained Oneness (Genesis 2:18-25, Ephesians 5:22-33)

1. Why Marriage?
 - Partnership: Genesis 2:18-23. The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Fit for...suitable for...Corresponding to... Adam and Eve were different, but with a God-ordained purpose—that the two might fit together perfectly. Eve was a "suitable" companion. Matthew Henry, said it well: "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be beloved."
 - Procreation: Genesis 1:28. Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. This is how we all came into the world.
 - Purity/Protection: 1 Corinthians 7:1-7, Genesis 2:25. Naked and not ashamed. Depriving is epidemic in marriage, which is why God says don't disobey Him and do that.
 - Praise: Genesis 1:26-27. Mirroring God's image, reflecting God's glory in the covenant.
2. Discuss the covenantal nature of marriage and why it prohibits divorce. Marriage is a covenant, not a contract (Matthew 19:1-12). RE: Divorce - What God has joined together let no one separate. Divorce allowed because of hardness of heart. COVENANT WITH GOD AND MAN.
3. Discuss the following:

Most of the time, instead of oneness, when contemplating marriage we come face to face with our self-centeredness. 2 Corinthians 5:15 says "and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised." One of the best titles for a marriage book that I've seen in recent years is... "What did you expect?" You married a sinner so don't expect them to be perfect. God is in process of sanctifying both of you (if you are both believers).
4. Review the elements necessary for Cultivating Oneness.
 - Receive your spouse - Genesis 2:21-25. As a gift from God. God's provision for your need.
 - Leave your parents – Genesis 2:24. Leaving your parents means you cut the umbilical cord of allegiance and dependency and you still honor them. The fifth commandment stands (Exodus 20:12).
 - Cleave to your spouse – Genesis 2:24. Marriage relationship is a new and primary responsibility. Hold to, be joined to, means to stick to like glue. A permanent indissoluble union. Divorce is not considered. As far as emotional attachments are

concerned, the new unit takes precedence over all previous and future relationships. Some marriage partners continue to place greater weight upon ties with parents than with the new partner. This is a recipe for disaster in the marriage and is a perversion of God's original intention of "leaving and cleaving." A similar problem can develop when a spouse begins to draw closer to a child to meet emotional needs rather than to his or her partner.

- Become One Flesh – Genesis 2:24. How? Via the process of receiving, leaving, and cleaving. Becoming one is a summary statement of the process of receiving, leaving, and cleaving

5. Focus on marriage roles. Ephesians 5:22-33 and Colossians 3:18-19.

Wives are to voluntarily submit to their husband's leadership. Submission means she honors and affirms her husband's God-given leadership and helps him fulfill his role by voluntarily submitting to his leadership. A woman that fears God has no trouble submitting under His authoritative Word.

There is a role distinction between men and women in the marriage relationship and expects the man to assume a role of leadership. Yet Paul carefully qualifies the kind of leadership the husband is to provide. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

Parallel to the wife's duty is a husband's duty to sacrificially love his wife. Not merely affectionate feelings or physical attraction, but unceasing care and loving concern for her entire wellbeing that shows itself in sacrificial service. Mirroring Christ's love for the Church that led Him to a bloody Cross, a husband is to seek to lead by serving, not embittered against his wife in thought, word, or deed. Christ-like sacrificial love for his wife will keep her wellbeing and good in view at all times.

6. How are the 19 words of Colossians 3:18-19 an apt summary of the 200 words of Ephesians 5:22-33?

7. The concept of Oneness boiled down to one simple word...UNITY. To be one means that you are unified. That's it. No secret code. It takes a lot of hard work yes, but no secret handshake. Think about it. God is one. Perfectly unified in and of himself. Three in one. Working for his sovereign good purposes in every place in an all times. Even the voluntary subordination in the Godhead of the Son only doing with the Father tells him to do, and the Son sending the Spirit. Jesus prayed in John 17:17 that the church would be one. Unified, moving together in common, serving God's purposes in each generation. Trinity as a model for relationship. God is one. Church is one John 17. Married people are one. UNIFIED. So if you were married, or anticipating marriage, you are to expect to work together and do the hard work of unification. Where you concentrate your efforts in a direction that honors God and is obedient to His Word. One flesh speaks of a complete unity of the parts making a whole. Like a cluster of grapes. Like one God in three persons. Deuteronomy 6:4. The marriage union is complete and whole with two people. Most common problems in marriage, the most

pervasive issues in marriage, the biggest deals in marriage, have to do with a lack or absence of unity.

8. POISONOUS UNITY KILLERS. Marriage killing lies.

The "I'm a victim/I'm a martyr" syndrome. God has ordained marriage and you have got to decide that you are going to cultivate that no matter what. You're not a victim. Lay down your life. The victim mentality leads you nowhere good. Whether single, married, divorced. You are not a victim. You are a victor. More than conquerors through Him who lived us.

- The "I deserve to be happy" worldview. It's a mindset that basically says "Doesn't matter what the word of God says, my subjective feelings rule."
- The "God is unfair/God doesn't know what He's doing or what I'm suffering" lie. That's the person who in effect is saying "I'm God and I know better than God."
- Think of yourself first. When one of the partners begins to go their own way and seek to gratify themselves rather than to glorify God. Use I and me and mine as often as you can.
- Make every effort to get your needs met. When they begin to think of themselves as more important than the other, when God has clearly given us the pattern of thinking of others is more important than ourselves.
- Make unfair judgments. Get your exercise jumping to conclusions. Assume the worst rather than the best.
- Refuse as many reasonable requests as possible.
- Live as separately as you can.

Instead...

- Love Jesus more than anyone or a thing. Colossians 1:18
- Fulfill your servant role to sacrifice and submit.
- Love your spouse and meet their needs.
- Be patient as God works on their heart.
- Forget about yourself.

9. The 3 Exhortation:

Believe the Gospel and find your identity in Christ.

The counter-intuitive nature of the gospel message needs to be applied to our lives and especially our marriages. Can you see your deep awareness of your sinfulness and your deep gratitude for God's grace in Christ and shedding his blood in your place for your sin and granting you eternal life, gives you a great incentive to seek to have the best marriage you can have? All to glorify God. And for the good of your spouse. You are led to live daily in grace and gratitude with a humble heart. Making the Gospel real. That is the power and beauty of the Gospel. When you're aware of your own sin and need for a savior, you are led to live daily in grace and gratitude with a humble heart.

Shock the World...and trust the power of Christ

Husbands and Wives are called to honor-inducing terrifying work. Risk. Husbands...SACRIFICIAL LOVE. Wives...SUBMISSIVE RESPECT. That is quite shocking to the world. Beautiful marriage, what it was meant to be. It's just not the kind of marriage that most of us have. So many professing Christians don't enjoy but endure marriages that are less than ideal in their eyes and in their opinion of fault lies with their spouse. God's command concerning the tree (2:16–17) makes clear that man is capable of receiving and understanding moral instruction—and is responsible for his actions. If we disobey God, we will surely die (2:17). When you sin against God by disobeying His Word you harm your relationship with Him. Shock the world...The world does not fully understand marriage, because it does not fully understand the Gospel. Sacrificial love and submission are crazy thoughts to the world. You can and should live in the power of Christ.

Enjoy your marriage or singleness...and long for Christ's return.

Seriously. This life is not all there is. It's a temporary earthbound life and your marriage is a temporary earthbound marriage. That pictures a greater eternal marriage. Glorify God...don't gratify self. You won't enjoy oneness with your spouse if you are locked in on their faults and your innocence. If the peace of Christ is not ruling in your heart (Col. 3:15), you won't thank God for your spouse and will repeat the same mistakes over and over again. Repent and reconcile, then rejoice in what God will do when two people want what He wants. Earthly marriage starts with a ceremony, heavenly marriage ends with a feast (Revelation 19:6-10).

10. How would you answer and personally interact with a person who has one of these responses to this sermon:
 - "I understand what God's Word says but my situation is unique and horrible and I have no desire to work at it or stay in the marriage."
 - "That's just too idealistic."
 - "But you don't understand what I have endured."
 - "I'd love to practice this if my spouse were willing." (Hint on this one: check out 1 Peter 3:1-7)
11. You need a new vision for what God intends first in your own heart and then in your marriage. How much poison are you allowing into your marriage that you think isn't going to affect it? What kind of poisonous marriage killers are present in your marriage?
12. Pray through the GCO prayer guide together.