

Marriage from Ephesians

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Marriage from Ephesians 5:21-33

The destruction of marriage that so pervades the culture and the church today is a concern for us in who name the Name of Christ. All of us know the statistics. The divorce rate has risen 700 percent in this century in our country. Sixty percent of those who marry will experience divorce in their lifetime. The question before us is this: "How can I make my marriage distinctive and different in the eyes of God?"

1. This Passage tells us Marriage is a promise to God for life

In a cartoon I saw recently, the Pastor is up front performing a marriage ceremony. The caption reads, "And do you, Ann, take Arnold, to be your husband, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish, until such time as things get a little tough, you both get burned out, and your love turns to apathy?"

This may be humorous, but it reflects our cultural vows. You might ask, "How can I promise future love? After all, things change, people change, and circumstances change." This kind of thinking reflects the individualism of our culture. My individualism, my happiness, my personal peace are not on the list that Jesus told us to seek first.

2. The Spiritual Realities

Biblical love is not what love feels, Biblical love is all about what love does.

- A. Verse 21 – "BE SUBJECT TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF CHRIST" This is a "swing verse." It concludes what has gone before and introduces what comes after. The verb is **imperative**. If you remember your English, you have your main verb and then your gerund verbs (the "ing" verbs). From verse 21 down through verse 27, the main verb is **be subject to one another**. There are two (2) gerunds.
 - (1) Wives submitting to your own husbands (22)
 - (2) Husbands loving their wives (25)
- B. Three truths about Submitting
 - (1) A wife and her submission to her husband are seen only in the context of the husband's love to/for the wife. Why do you submit to Christ except that it is beneficial to you to do so?
 - (2) Submission has nothing to do with equality but everything to do with roles. There are role distinctions in the Trinity without implied inferiority

- (3) To understand this fully, we must understand what it means that Christ is the Head of the Church. The church depends on Him for growth strength, and guidance.
- C. Three Truths about Love
- (1) The husband is to love His wife as Christ loved the church. Verse 26 tells us that Christ gave the Church His attention
 - (2) Verse 27 – The husband must love the wife with an eye toward her spiritual growth and sanctification
 - (3) Husbands must love their wives as their own bodies, treating their wives as an extension of themselves.
3. MARRIAGE AS A WINDOW

Your marriage is a window through which others can look and see a view of your view of God. When marriages hit on hard times, the main culprit in the beginning of time is still the main culprit today. Adam and Eve had everything they could have ever dreamed of – yet they longed for more. God had already given to them perfect fellowship with Himself, **but because they allowed their hearts to be ruled for the sinful desire for more, SATISFACTION IN GOD WAS NO LONGER ENOUGH.**

We do not need to fear pleasure; we need to fear the alienation from God that corrupts our sense of pleasure and that makes the pleasure drive so potentially dangerous.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Read and discuss Luke 6:45. Notice that your outward behaviors originate within your heart according to Christ.
2. Read Matthew 6:24. Notice how good and proper desires can be sinful if they rule or master your life.
3. While it is not wrong to pursue the gifts of God, consider the difference between pursuing God for His glory alone versus pursuing God for His gifts.
4. How might you and your spouse build a new path for your lives and motives that are “far from her” (as described in Proverbs 5:7-14)? Spiritual adultery is a temptation for women as well as men!
5. Search your own heart for adulterers/adulteresses that seek to win over your affections day to day and confess them to your spouse.