

“Till Death Do Us Part”

Presentation Handout

The Tale of Two Marriages...

- I (presenter – David) will never forget Peter & Eunice. They were church members of mine years ago.
 - By the time I arrived as their pastor, Eunice had already begun developing signs of Alzheimer’s to the point, a few years later, she couldn’t recognize Peter anymore.
 - Yet, Peter told when I visited one time (as he lovingly and gently held her hand), “Pastor, I love her so much. And I will take care of her whether she remembers me or not. That is what I committed to do 60 years ago. And by God’s grace I will do it!”
 - And Peter did, though it wasn’t easy for him because He also had severe physical health issues. But with help from his adult children he took care of Eunice until she died—bathing her, changing her adult diapers, cooking, and/or loving her even when she asked him daily who he was.
 - Peter exhibited love and marital faithfulness in his marriage to Eunice, even though it was a sacrifice for him and Eunice couldn’t reciprocate anymore in return.
- Neither will I (presenter – David) forget their son’s marriage. Sadly, it was the opposite of his parents. His demanding, galling attitude and treatment of his wife and children led them to emotionally and physically distance at times.
 - The situation deteriorated to the point that the son’s daughter would not attend her own father’s funeral. How sad! Knowing the man, I could understand why.

TAKE-AWAY: The tale of two marriages, drastically different with two drastically different results. One involved loving, marital faithfulness to the very end. The other marital “unfaithfulness” in a broad sense, which destroyed the marital and family relationships.

These two marriages illustrate God’s blessing ideal for human marriages and the sad results when human beings don’t embrace His plan for marriage.

Marriage in God’s Eyes

- Metaphor/analogy of God’s covenant between His people and Himself *{Isaiah 54:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 19:6-9}*.
 - We see this throughout the Bible—revealing God’s loving, faithful commitment to those who claim to be His people, His followers.
 - God and/or Jesus are described in terms like, Husband or Bridegroom with His people being described as His bride or wife.
 - Also, God’s people/followers/believers’ spiritual unfaithfulness is described by the term divorce *{Jeremiah 3:8-9, 12, 14, 20}*.
 - God’s faithfulness to His covenant is forever etched in the minds of humanity as Jesus hung on the Cross dying for lost humanity. He was faithful to death—“till

death do us part”—so sinful human beings could finally comprehend His loving faithfulness to/for them!

God Everlasting Covenant

- **Chosen-ness** {*Deuteronomy 7:6-8*}
 - God chose Israel as a “vehicle” to choose all of humanity for salvation, if they would only say, “Yes!”
 - This choosing was a covenant of specialness that God bestowed on His people.
 - ❖ Who wouldn’t feel special, like being chosen first for a team at school recess.
- **Belonging** {*Exodus 1:4-6; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10; Revelation 1:4-(6)*}
 - When God chose His people they became part of something bigger than themselves individually—team “God” (not to be sacrilegious).
 - Every time an Israelite recited the words of God’s covenant, he/she understood it was for them personally, because they were there in essence—present in Abraham as his descendent—when God originally gave it to him {*Hebrews 7:1-10 (9-10)*}.
 - It is the same for New Testament believers. Paul reminded Gentile believers that they were now part of God’s family—the Church {*Ephesians 2:11-13, 19-22*} and the spiritual genealogy of Abraham {*Galatians 3:26-29*}.
- **Separate-ness** {*Ezra 6:21; Psalm 1:1-3; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18(17-18); 7:1*}
 - Embedded in God’s covenant invitation is the idea of separate-ness, which is not the same as exclusiveness—a “better-than-you” attitude. This meant:
 - The exclusive (in a good sense), faithful worship of God by His people as the only true God who was worthy of their worship {*Exodus 20:3-5*}!
 - His people lived a holy life by His grace that set them apart as exclusively (in a good sense) His because He was a holy God who they had a faith-covenant-relationship with {*1 Corinthians 3:17; 6:18-20*}.
 - Belonging to God can be accomplished only by separating from all that stands in opposition to Him! Thus, God’s people were to live in a way that would set them apart—distinct and separate—from the masses who worshipped other Gods.
- **Knowing God** {*Jeremiah 31:31, 33-(34); John 17:3*}
 - According to Greek thinking, knowledge is a matter of acquiring/collecting intellectual information that is usually divorced from relationship/experience.
 - However, for Hebrew thought in the Old Testament, the idea of knowledge is relational in the midst of information—experimental, not just intellectual.
 - So, when God says He knows humans it means more than He’s aware of them. No, it implies He cares, is concerned, or protective of them along with longing for fellowship with them.
- **Faithful, Steadfast Love** {*Psalm 89:20, 24, 28-29, 33-34; 103:11, 15-18; Isaiah 54:9-(10)*}
 - The Creator God pledged Himself to be faithful to His covenant-promise, which He always has been, even if it meant dying, which He did! Unfortunately, His people have mostly been unfaithful in response to His loving faithfulness.

- His people's unfaithfulness is described as spiritual divorce, which breaks the covenant and limits/prevents the covenant blessing benefits.
 - ❖ This is why there were covenant curses/consequences for breaking the covenant {*Leviticus 26:14-44*}.
 - ✓ In other words, whoever broke the covenant stepped outside its terms and ceased to be a beneficiary of its promise {*Psalms 89:30-32*}.
 - ❖ This breaking of God's covenant was also equated with disobeying His law {*Leviticus 26:15-16*}.

TAKE-AWAY: Human marriage is based on God's covenant, making it special and holy too!

Human Marriage—Reflection of God's Covenant

[Acknowledge insights from: Dr. Loren Wade in *Marriage & Covenant: Reflections on the Theology of Marriage*]

- **Chosen-ness** {*Genesis 2:24a*}
 - A man leaving father and mother implies a choosing of her, even over family and friends, which says a lot considering that in the Old Testament Hebrew mindset family was very important, children were an extension of the parents.
 - This decision creates a marriage-band/circle that excludes all others from their marriage, even children and extended family.
 - ❖ If this does not occur the bond between the husband and wife will not be strong and appropriate boundaries will not be in place to safeguard the marriage, making it a priority.
 - ✓ Which could later lead to isolation, extended family controlling the marriage-family through enmeshment, the exclusion of the other spouse from family decisions, regulating the other spouse to secondary importance in the marriage, etc.
 - The marriage and the new spouse is prioritized as important—"chosen!"
- **Belonging** {*Genesis 2:24b-c, 25*}
 - This belonging is described by the words "cleaving" and "one flesh."
 - This doesn't mean one spouse's appropriate independence, individuality, and identity are absorbed in or controlled by the other spouse.
 - However, it does imply a team mentality: "Team _____," much like the Godhead—Father, Jesus & Holy Spirit, three separate beings working together in a "team" mindset to accomplish agreed upon common goals.
 - Each marriage partner has one another's "back" in an united front for the marriage and family. If there is a disagreement/issue, it is worked out privately in a way that doesn't embarrass the other publicly!
 - The meaning of this word "cleaving" is best illustrated by two pieces of paper being glued together.
 - ❖ It implies an experience of growing intimacy where each spouse can be themselves without feeling violated, ridiculed, shamed, etc.
 - ✓ Moses describes this through the language of "nakedness" and not being "ashamed" {*Genesis 2:25*}. This high level of intimacy is scary because it involves vulnerability.

- **Separate-ness** {*Genesis 2:24*}
 - Separate-ness involves “leaving” with the idea of exclusiveness, which in this case is good and essential.
 - It means each spouse is fully committed to the other, breaking off all intimate, exclusive relationships with the opposite gender to protect the new marriage relationship.
 - ❖ This doesn’t mean the couple doesn’t have friends of the opposite gender but not exclusively by themselves, but together as a couple.
 - This exclusiveness/“leaving” also involves thoughts/imagination as Jesus reminds us {*Matthew 5:27-28*}.
 - ❖ It would imply guarding the avenues of the soul—sight, etc. against pornography, sexually stimulating media—TV shows, movies, social media, etc.
 - ❖ Guarding work relationships with the opposite gender—avoiding the appearance of evil.
 - This separate-ness creates a holy matrimony—a sanctuary/“holy ground” where only the husband and wife reside in holiness and purity {*1 Thessalonians 4:3-5*}.
- **Knowing** {*Genesis 2:25; 4:1*}
 - The biblical understanding—Old & New Testament—of knowledge as relationship, not just the intellectual acquiring/collecting of knowledge, is seen in the application of the word “know” in the Bible for sexual intercourse {*Genesis 4:1*}.
 - Thus, this intimacy of the sexual relation cannot be isolated from the total intimacy of mind, body, and spirit in marriage. It’s becomes God’s gift of bonding for the husband and wife if it’s in this context of complete intimacy.
 - Spouses can only have true intimacy if they are vulnerable with each other physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually!
- **Faithful, Steadfast Love** {*Ephesians 5:25-32*}
 - According to Greek thinking, each spouse are themselves—-independent/isolated islands from one another, concerned about themselves, etc.
 - If this is the controlling mindset in a marriage, then each spouse will live in in a perpetual attitude of he/she doesn’t provide for my needs, they don’t do things right, etc.
 - Irritations will build, frustrations will rise, and isolation will ensue, which could lead to finding another to “fulfill” my needs. This is the “seedbed” for adultery.
 - But, if God’s love is the controlling factor in a couple’s marriage then they will be willing to work through issues, forgive one another, be patient with each other, try to understand what the other spouse might be experiencing, and provide comfort, help, etc. to the other spouse {*Ephesians 5:25, 28-29, 33*}.
 - Neither, will God’s faithful, steadfast love demand, control, or coerce! Instead, invites and sets loving, appropriate boundaries.
 - ❖ This is how the biblical concept of submission works
 - ✓ First, it’s starts with mutual care for one another in the Lord, not the husband forcing the wife to submit to his every demand/wish {*Ephesians 5:22, 25*}. Interestingly, Paul seems to address the husbands more than the wives. Something to remember, husbands!

- ✓ Second, the husband is to love and cherish his wife, as Christ Jesus does for her {[Ephesians 5:28-29](#)}. Husbands should be concerned for their wives, more than themselves {[Ephesians 5:25-27](#)}.
 - ✓ Husbands, if you treat your wife this way, she will submit as unto the Lord or as in the Lord, to your spiritual leadership, the same as she submits to the care, love, and leading of Jesus in her life.
- God’s love will also produce loving/cherishing and respect.
- ❖ Husbands, you are called to love and cherish your wives as someone special that you can’t wait to be with, someone that you are attracted to, someone you support, someone you care for, someone you are willing to help in everyday issues, etc. The 5 love languages ([5lovelanguages.com](#)) developed by Dr. Gary Chapman can help husbands, particularly, love and cherish their wives, and wives their husbands too:
 - ✓ *Affirmation* –share heart-felt appreciation for something your wife did, said, etc. Thank you! or I appreciate this!” goes along way.
 - ✓ *Gifts* – wives love simple little gifts (flowers, short text messages, sticky notes on their bathroom mirror, etc.) that remind them you love and cherish them and have been consistently thinking of them.
 - ✓ *Acts of Service* – do little things that need to be done—chores around the house, folding laundry, picking up your stuff/junk, washing the dishes or loading/unloading the dishwasher so she can sit down to rest, completing something on that “honey-do” list, or taking her to her favorite restaurant.
 - ✓ *Quality Time* – give your wife your undivided time—no social media, work, etc.—where you spend time doing what she would like to do—maybe shopping, taking a walk/hike, talking/listening to her heart, sharing feelings, etc.
 - ✓ *Physical Touch* –wives generally respond to face-to-face time more than husbands do. This is where you, husbands, sit down with your wife, holding them, looking into her face, softly caress her, hold her hand, etc., hear her heart, share feelings, etc.
 - ❖ Wives, your husbands need respect as men to know you love them {[Ephesians 5:33b](#)}. This is different than how your husband shows you love or cherishing. Here are some male-adaptions (could be for women too) from Dr. Alan Parker ([heartthirst.com/blog - 2/5/17](#)) based on Dr. Chapman’s 5 love languages:
 - ✓ *Admiration* (Affirmation) – husbands feel love by being respected for who they are and for what they have accomplished.
 - ✓ *Achievement* (Gifts) – help your husband get that longed-for tool, or finish a project, whether that’s some extra time at the office or around the house. This will be a gift of love to him.
 - ✓ *Dominion* (Acts of Service) – is shown when the house is in order, the children are happy and obedient, and/or food is on the table. This is not a “throwback” to the 50’s with the wife slaving away at home. Wives, simply ask: What can I do in 30 minutes to restore “dominion?” It could be a few minutes doing a quick cleanup before your husband gets home, or taking the kids for a walk so he can chill for a few moments when he arrives home.

- ✓ *Shoulder-to-Shoulder Time* (Quality Time) – wives do an activity together with your husband—working on a project, a hobby, or attending a sports event—instead of expecting him to face you and just share their feelings.
- ✓ *Physical/Visual Touch* – Touch is often interpreted differently by men and women, i.e. romantic gestures for the wife tend to be a hormonal injection for the husband—meaning: women are like crockpots and men are like microwaves. Once the husband is on, he’s on. However, once a husband is on, he’s the most vulnerable. Also touch can be visual for a husband—so changing out those sweatpants for that special dress, throwing that flirtatious look, or having an intentional wardrobe malfunction could make your husband feel like he’s hit the jackpot.

Theology of Singleness

- One’s marital status does not define the quality of life or the identity of a person.
- Not everyone has to be married to be content.
 - It seems for some singleness is a calling and/or spiritual gift from God {*Matthew 19:10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:7-9*}.
- Marriage is not necessarily the answer to one’s aloneness. Connectedness and companionship with others is.
 - An individual can be married and still alone if the marriage is dysfunctional or there isn’t connection/oneness among the husband and wife.
 - When God said, “It is not good that man be alone” He was not addressing his marital status but the fact he was alone.
 - God made human beings for connectedness, companionship, not aloneness or isolation.
 - Aloneness and isolation can be two big reasons people struggle with discouragement and depression.

Breaking the Marriage Covenant

- Throughout the Old Testament, particularly, we see over and over, God’s people Israel breaking God’s covenant though He’s continually faithful {*Leviticus 26:1-13; Isaiah 54:9-10; Lamentations 3:22-24 -> Leviticus 26:14-39; Isaiah 50:1-3; Jeremiah 3:6-13*}.
- Using marriage language to describe His covenant with His people, God also uses the language of divorce to describe His separation from them because of their continual, stubborn breaking of His covenant in rebellion against Him.
- I (presenter - David) want to acknowledge that many of you may have endured a lot in a bad marriage that you didn’t deserve. This I’m sorry for!! I can’t understand all you have experienced. What we are about to study is not meant to downplay your experience or pain.
- Both Moses and Jesus make it clear that a marriage—the marriage covenant—like God’s covenant can be broken by one or both of the marriage partners/spouses.
 - Moses says it is because of *indecency* that one is permitted to get a divorce, though it was not God’s original plan {*Deuteronomy 24:1*}.

- This word literally means: “a matter of nakedness.” In *Deuteronomy 23:12-(14)* this word refers to “excrement.”
- Jesus says it’s because of **sexual immorality/immorality** that one is permitted to get a divorce, though again, it was not His original plan {*Matthew 5:31-32; 19:9*}.
 - It would seem that “indecenty” and “sexual immorality/immorality” are similar or the same in nature/meaning.
 - In *Mark 10:2-12*, Jesus does not give a reason for divorce, like He did in *Matthew 5 & 19*. He just mentions, it happens.
 - What He does say is: Moses gave the Israelites permission to divorce—husbands divorcing their wives—because of the “hardness of their hearts,” not for a biblical reason {*Mark 10:4-5*}.
 - Yet, for Jesus this was not His original ideal as He quotes *Genesis 1:27 & 2:24* to reiterate that His original desire for marriage was for it to be a lifelong union until death ends it—till death do us part,” not divorce {*Mark 10:6-9 -> Genesis 1:27; 2:24*}.
 - This is why God says He **hates** divorce {*Malachi 2:13-(16)*}. It destroys/mars/disfigures the beauty of the oneness He created as a blessing for a husband and wife, along with their children if they have them.
- Paul reiterates Jesus command to not get divorced as a convenience/default response {*1 Corinthians 7:10-11*}.
 - He doesn’t state any reason for divorce, like indecenty or sexual immorality/immorality as Moses and Jesus did, because Jesus already made it clear in {*Matthew 5:32; 19:9*}. He seems also to simply state it happens {*1 Corinthians 7:11*}.
 - Instead Paul clarifies what a divorced husband or wife should do after a non-biblical-convenience divorce (no sexual immorality/immorality involved)—remain single/don’t get remarried or be reconciled to one’s original spouse, if that former spouse hasn’t remarried {*1 Corinthians 7:11*}.
 - ❖ According to Jesus if a believer gets a non-biblical-convenience divorce and then remarries, they commit **adultery** {*Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12*}.
 - ❖ Does this mean a husband/wife should remain with their spouse no matter what they may negatively endure? No!! Of course not!!
 - ❖ So what is their recourse in this non-sexual immoral situation? Get a legal separation with the idea of setting a boundary so the other spouse understands the severity of what they are doing or not doing with the hope of reconciliation {*1 Corinthians 7:11*}.

TAKE-AWAY: We’ve discussed not getting a divorce—negative, unfortunately. But, how does one divorce-proof (and affair-proof too by implication) one’s marriage?

Divorce-proofing One’s Marriage

- Commit to a team mentality—three becoming one in Jesus.
 - Couples only loose and Satan wins, when they fight one another—seeing them as the enemy.
- Grow together in worship and doing things together—life and isolation steal connection.

- Busyness -> disconnection -> isolation -> adultery/divorce
- Deal with the stuff through prayer, Christian counseling, mentors, etc.
 - If physical issues just don't go away, so we go to doctors, why would relational issues just go away, see a Christian counselor..., please **DEAL** with them!!
- Don't share your spouse's faults or your marriage situation with someone, particularly of the opposite gender.
 - "Hashing" your spouse's faults with someone else ("thrashing" your spouse) only creates a greater distain for him/her. Also, this is how emotional affairs begin!
- Guard the "avenues of the soul"—the "grass is not greener" on the other side.
 - Hiding in pornography or in an affair or other addictions/sin will not fix one's marital issues or create connection. They only produce greater isolation, etc.!
- Pray, pray, pray to grow personally!
 - The Holy Spirit can only personally work with and through us if we are openly connected to Jesus through Him!

What We've Learned? How Should We Live?

- **God views marriage as a holy covenant-commitment based on His faithfulness and steadfast love.**
 - In God's eyes, then, marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman until death ends it. So, entering into marriage or selecting a marriage partner should be taken seriously with much prayer!
 - Husbands and wives should be committed to make their marriage work in a way that glorifies God, blesses them, and nourishes their children, if they have them.
- **Divorce is not God's ideal option for marriage. He actually hates it!!**
 - So, it's not a whim-thing based on: "Well, I guess, it didn't work out."
 - Sometimes, ones' "spouse-picker" is "broken/damaged" because of bad past life experiences. Please, get good Christian counseling help to heal!!
- **God does not command marriage partners to live in abusive, life-threatening, toxic situations!**
 - Yet, this doesn't free one to get a divorce, either. Instead, there's legal separation with the idea of setting boundaries to help the other spouse recognize and own his/her destructive behavior with the prayer and hope of reconciliation!
- **God is a God of mercy and forgiveness, who is willing to forgive individuals who get a non-biblical-convenience divorce and then get remarried.**
 - After Divorce Help/Healing
 - Jesus forgives!!
 - Jesus can heal the deep wounds and help one learn after a divorce.
 - Even if one remarries against the biblical command, Jesus can forgive.
 - One can live committed to their new marriage partner.

LIVING CHOICE: Will you by God's grace, commit to let God lead you in your marriage—working through issues, bringing healing, reconciliation, setting boundaries, divorce-proofing it, etc., so it will be the blessing He desires for it to be?