



Battle of the Sexes- Session 4

How We Love: Romans 5:7; Ephesians 5:22-33

Introduction

Begin your group time by reading the Top 10 Marriage Myths below:

1. Marriage benefits men more than women.
2. Having children typically brings a married couple closer together and increases marital happiness.
3. The keys to long term marital success are good luck and romantic love.
4. Only pretty people get married.
5. Couples who live together before marriages and are thus able to test how well suited they are for each other, have more satisfying and longer-lasting marriages than couples that do not.
6. It's better to walk away when your marriage hits a rough patch.
7. Marrying puts a woman at a greater risk of domestic violence than if she stays single.
8. Married people have less satisfying sexual lives and less sex than single people.
9. Marriage is just like the way that Hollywood portrays it: little accountability and a lot of stress-free living.
10. People who are married have less conflict in their lives.

Were there any of these myths that stood out as being ridiculous? Any that you can see people choose to believe? Why are people deceived today about what true marriage is to be?

Part of the problem with marriages today is that, from the start, couples have not understood their mission. We often love our spouse superficially, only in the way we want to be loved. God's love, however, belongs in an entirely different category from human love, for Christ did not die for righteous people, or those who are lovable, *but for sinners!* That is, for ungodly, unrighteous people living in willful rebellion against Him.

While God's righteousness and justice led to his plan of salvation through the death of Christ, it was his love that motivated this plan. The gospel gives us a blueprint for how we should love our spouse. "You cannot say too often that marriage is a model of Christ and the church." Christ died for the church. If we loved our spouse the way God loved us, we would live with the end in mind.

1. Marriage is...

Have a volunteer to read Ephesians 5:22–33.

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to

their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Paul now applied his teaching to particular life relationships. Wise believers filled with the Spirit who mutually submit one to another are to live out these truths in household relationships. Three relationships are addressed: wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters. In each of these relationships the first partner is exhorted to be submissive or obedient. The second person in the relationship shows submissiveness by Christlike love and concerned care. All relate to one another as service to the Lord. All concerned experience personal worth, value, security, and significance when these reciprocal relationships are exercised under the lordship of Christ.¹

From the text, what key words describe how a man should treat his wife? What does that look like in a relationship? Why is it important?

What does respect look like within a marriage?

What makes you feel the most respected? What makes you feel the most disrespected? Why do we struggle to say or listen to what we understand respect to be?

Here is the first takeaway for how marriage can be defined biblically: Marriage is a stage for displaying the beauty of the Gospel: the whole point of physical marriage is that it illustrates a spiritual union.

What does this mean?

- Becoming one flesh is more than physical sex: (Gen 2:24, Matt 19:5, Mark 10:8, 1Cor 6:16, Eph 5:31) Becoming one flesh means that marriage, and sexual intimacy within marriage transforms, and binds, people supernaturally. Therefore, marriage is designed for companionship, procreation, and proclamation.

- Becoming one Spirit in Christ has profound implications for our flesh physical unions.

- To the Married- Believer: The glory of the gospel has been revealed through the illustration and application of marriage. Therefore, when we are living for the glory of God when we are seeking to love our spouses in the way that God intended.

- To the Single: As someone that may be pursuing marriage, no one who is a Christian should ever marry a person who is not a Christian. [2Co 6:14 NIV] “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?

¹ Dockery, D. S. (1998). [The Pauline Letters](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (p. 580). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?" Therefore, we are pursuing the glory of God in our personal lives until God provides the mate or we find our satisfaction in our relationship with Him.

- To the Skeptic: No one will ever be able to understand the truest, deepest meaning of marriage who is not a Christian. [1Co 6:17 NIV] "But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit." Therefore, marriage is to be defined in our lives not by the world but by Scripture for its fullest understanding.

Notes from the Sermon:

2. Marriage takes...

Have a volunteer to re-read Ephesians 5:33 and Matthew 5:46-47.

33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Jesus demonstrates that love through common grace for all humanity in his good provisions in nature (the sun shining and rain falling, v. 45). "What reward will you get?" (v. 46) parallels "What are you doing more than others?" (v. 47), suggesting not the idea of compensation for doing good but the recurrent theme of the believer's distinctiveness.² These ideal carries over to marriage in that we love not for our own compensation or for our own reward but out of a desire and compassion of the other person.

Why do you think men and women are different in what they need from their spouse?

Why is it important to communicate and "build up" our spouse? Has that been a struggle for you? Why? How can you change that?

The second takeaway for how marriage is to be defined: Marriage should mirror God's love story for us in Christ!

Part of the problem with marriages today is that, from the start, couples have not understood their mission. We often love our spouse superficially, only in the way we want to be loved. When we understand about love we have to recognize some basic truths? 1. We often love others only in the way we want to be loved. 2. We must learn how to love others well.

Review the Five Love Languages from Dr. Gary Chapman's book:

The Lord of all the earth often seems to put people together in marriage who are wired differently. As a result, either we grow to complement each other by learning to give intelligent love, or we incinerate the marriage on the battlefield of insistently different demands.

² Blomberg, C. (1992). [*Matthew*](#) (Vol. 22, p. 115). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

1. The Love Languages are:
 - i. Words of affirmation – using words to build up the other person. “Thanks for taking out the garbage.” Not – “It’s about time you took the garbage out. The flies were going to carry it out for you.”
 - ii. Gifts – a gift says, “He was thinking about me. Look what he got for me.”
 - iii. Acts of Service – Doing something for your spouse that you know they would like. Cooking a meal, washing dishes, vacuuming floors, are all acts of service.
 - iv. Quality time – by which I mean, giving your spouse your undivided attention. Taking a walk together or sitting on the couch with the TV off – talking and listening.
 - v. Physical touch – holding hands, hugging, kissing, etc, are all expressions of love.

After reviewing the love languages, write down which language you like to be shown and which one you believe your spouse likes to be shown?

Which one of the love languages do you feel represents how you like to be shown love? Why?

Which one of the love languages do you feel your spouse desires to be shown love with? Why?

Why is it important to know how each person likes to be shown love? How will this help you moving forward in your marriage and relationship?

Notes from the Sermon:

3. Marriage is for...

Have a volunteer to read Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.³

God has already proved his love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. It is unnatural to think that one person would volunteer to die for another, even if that person was good or righteous. In a godless culture, “What’s Love Got to Do With It?” is a valid question. But in God’s world, in Paul’s day and in ours, love has everything to do with it. The Holy Spirit tells us continually of God’s love for us (poured out is perfect tense of *ekchunno*; past action with continuing results) and points our thinking back to the space-time reality of that love—the day Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for even the unloveable.⁴

The final takeaway is that marriage has a mission to help us learn to love and grow couples spiritually in a unique way.

³ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Ro 5:8). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

⁴ Boa, K., & Kruidenier, W. (2000). [*Romans*](#) (Vol. 6, pp. 162–163). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

What does sanctification (growing) in marriage look like?

- Becoming what we are and marriage is one of the tools God uses to grow us- 2 Cor 5:17
- Marriage with the end in mind focuses on mutual sanctification. Heb 10:24
- The mission of marriage is an impossible task, yet we are called to it. Jer 32:27; Luke 1:37

From the text, how did God show his total commitment to demonstrate love to us? What impact does that make for your marriage?

How would your marriage be different if you became less selfish and more sacrificial?

If you were to tell someone how you would be able to tell if two people are married, what would you say? How much would you describe their actions? Why does love involve action as well as our emotions?

How do you want your marriage to grow over the next year?

Notes from the Sermon:

Application

A. Marriage with the end in mind means understanding the goal of marriage. The end goal - Where are you going?

B. Marriage with the end in mind focuses on the return of Christ and the fulfillment of THE MARRIAGE that our marriages represent. How will your marriage demonstrate the gospel this week?

c. Spend intentional time praying for your spouse (or future spouse)? Pray for their holiness and purity. Pray for their personal spiritual growth. Pray for their love to grow for you.