
Are You Ready for Marriage

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

Facts and figures tell the story of broken hearts in marriage and homes. A professor in the University of Southern California interviewed 100 marriages of 20 years or more. He concluded that only six couples were happily married. James Dobson declared that last year half of the brides at the altar were already pregnant. (How can this be with so much modern sex education?) Can you imagine the consequences of one half of all homes beginning with the biological pressures of a pregnant wife? Stop to think of the financial pressures of a new baby, not to think of the emotional strain of a baby at the most crucial time of the marriage adjustment.

Pregnant girls under the age of fifteen increased 600 percent in one year in California. The murderer Charles Manson was born to a 14 year-old prostitute. We wonder what is happening to our young people when one marriage in four involves a man who has been divorced and more include a woman in the same position. In millions of families one or both spouses bring the leftovers of another married life, with all of its habits, obligations, friendships, children and financial obligations. In most of today's marriages step-children are involved.

The most important lifetime contract for any human being is marriage. It is God's plan, and if we enter into it with a light a frivolous attitude, time will prove its devastation with the lives of those who hold marriage less than sacred. It is God's institution, ordained by Him. Most of us reading these lines have already learned by observation the heartaches brought upon innocent children because of the divorce of their parents.

The National Center for Health Statistics shows how common divorce has become in the US. The latest yearly count, for 1,079 totaled 1,181,000 new divorces. That was 4.5 percent above the preceding year and nearly triple the number reported 20 years earlier. Almost 1.2 million children joined the ranks of youngsters under the age of 18 who have divorced parents. Twenty three of every 1,000 married women experienced a new divorce. Twenty years earlier, the annual divorce rate was barely nine out of every 1,000.

Today's average church is strangely quiet about the portion of Scripture that says "No" to divorce. The fear of offending and losing support closes that portion of the Scripture to the pews. Is God quiet? Has He changed his position on divorce? Do we want our children and youth to accept it? Silence on the subject says "YES" to the popular trend away from the sanctity of marriage. We will answer to God for not declaring His whole counsel.

Definition

What is involved in marriage? It is more than a legal and social contract; it is a covenant made under God in the presence of His children. It is more binding than any other

legal contract. Marriage is God's plan for a total commitment of the TOTAL person for TOTAL life.

Marriage is desired and designed by God. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have domination over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" Gen. 1:28. "And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help fit for him" Gen. 2:18.

Marriage is determined by God. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her into the man" Gen 2:21,2. This same institution is defended by God. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife and were not ashamed" Gen. 2:24, 25.

We must be committed to building a Christian marriage. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" Eph. 5:25.

The man and woman who are going to get married should have identical convictions about God. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" II Cor. 6:14. Remember if your partner has no desire to please God, never will he or she desire to please you.

Mature Enough

Marriage is not child's play. There is no such thing as automatic happiness in marriage. It is a relationship that must be carefully nourished and worked upon. Age demands great adjustment for both parties. Marriage is one grand adjustment to each other. The girl with the princess syndrome is in for one great shock and disappointment. Marriage does not give the dreamy-eyed girl a crown. God says she is to be a helper to her husband, meeting his needs. What a rude awakening that can be! Mistaken ideas of marriage can wreck any relationship within one year. The husband is to express and demonstrate love to his companion. Remember it is easy to be in subjection to the person who loves you. It is equally easy to love the wife who is in subjection. (This is God's direction for both!)

Maturity or the lack of it is revealed more in marriage than any relationship. It is not taught by precept. It is realized as demonstrated by one to the other. Are you willing to assume complete responsibility for another person? If not, you are not in love and not ready for marriage. If the person you are keeping company with is not released from childish attachments, leave him or her alone with mother and daddy until ready to grow up. Are you ready to love and be loved with all of the potential of joy, happiness, sorrow, and heart break~ Are you equipped mentally and socially for a full time life of sharing all you have with another person? Have you been captivated by another individual? Is your supreme desire to make them happy and fulfilled for the rest of their sojourn on this earth? Are you willing to place the responsibility for their entire future in your own hands?

Immature Motives

Many marry to gain their independence and control from parents. All they do is move under another set of rules and regulations. These people conclude anything or anybody is better than mother and dad. What a price youth pay for bitterness toward their parents to enter their heart and life.

Emotional twisted values can ruin any marriage. This is the crowd that has listened to TV and attended the Hollywood movies. They have been taught that the satisfaction of sex is the one purpose of marriage. Actually it is part of the whole and not the most important. Money matters cause more divorces than sex. Sex brings little satisfaction unless mutual satisfaction, love, and respect are established in a relationship. If you doubt this, see what happens to your sex life the next go-around after a heated disagreement.

Many have a twisted concept of marriage. They will make it because mother and dad did. Few marriages today are buoyant, refreshing and filled with desire to meet the needs of the other person.

(Have you read my definition of love in the free printed radio message, "Am I in Love?" Social pressures of others' actions should not be a motivation for your marriage or an indication of your readiness for it.

The Word of God gives clear distinctives for the action of husbands and wives. Are you willing to hear and abide by them? If not, you have no help from God in your marriage. He does not bless or assist disobedient people. Until you are under His authority, you will not be under his direction. Want to go it alone? Look around! Many are and all can see the consequence.

Eph. 5:21-25, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

Eph. 5:28,29,31,33, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife, see that she reverence her husband."

Eph. 6:14, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (Which is the first commandment with promise), That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Marriage Difficulty?

If you are one of the many involved, I would urge you to do the following:

1. Every day read a portion of the Bible together and get down on your knees and pray for definite requests shared with each other.
2. Study a portion in the Bible that give direction for each member of the family and determine with the Lord's help to start acting properly. (It's what you DO that counts!)
3. Be wide open with one another in all areas of your marriage. Talk everything over together. Keep no question, idea, attitude, action or reaction from one another.
4. Place your money in mutual accounts and discuss all expenditures together. Have NO his or her money!
5. Determine with God's help to minister to your spouse. Make him or her the most important person in your life, second only to the Lord.

Some Questions

Are you ready for marriage? Face these questions and get them settled in your own mind and heart:

1. Are mutual interests more important than physical attractions?
2. Will marriage solve feelings of insecurity?
3. Should married people endeavor to change one another or accept each as they are?
4. Will two "opposites" get along well and make good adjustment?
5. How important is sex to a buoyant marriage?
6. Will the things that bother a person become dissolved in marriage?
7. Do engaged people have as much liberty with one another as the married?
8. Should a couple get married because of their pre-marital sexual relations?
9. Should emotional difficulties be ironed out prior to marriage?
10. Is there any scriptural allowance for a saved person marrying a non-Christian?
11. Does God choose a mate for us and all we have to do is locate that person?
12. How long after you meet a certain person will you "know" you are in love?
Do you believe every person should get married?
Should each partner realize their strengths and weaknesses prior to marriage?
13. Do you believe every person should get married?
14. Should each partner realize their strengths and weaknesses prior to marriage?
15. How long should a couple wait for children after their marriage?

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