



THEOLOGY OF MANHOOD

SESSION 4

**MARRIAGE: A SACRIFICIAL, UNCONDITIONAL,
ONE-FLESH WITNESS OF THE GOSPEL**

Marriage...

...a sacrificial, unconditional, one-flesh witness of the gospel

Marriage as Covenant

Marriage is a Holy Covenant before God between one man and one woman, whereby one man and one woman commit before God to become one in every way. You promised to become one in every way: physically, spiritually, and legally.

Marriage and The Gospel

The one-flesh covenant relationship of marriage proclaims the gospel as the man and woman embrace their distinct roles of 'husband' and 'wife.' The husband displays Jesus' love through a self-giving, unconditional commitment to his bride. The wife displays the Church's trust in Jesus as she intentionally places herself under her husband's leadership and provision.

Marriage and the Church

For our church to be healthy, our marriages must be healthy. Marriage is to be a picture of the gospel. Each marriage in our church is meant to witness the gospel. A church who has a low view of marriage essentially has a low view of the gospel.

Marriage and Men

²⁴ *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

- Genesis 2:24

Marriage and Single Men

Age 32 is the new average age of marriage

Problems

- Immature men
- Vulnerable women
- Sexual immorality
- Porn addiction

Solution

- Raise and disciple men toward the responsibility of marriage

Questions

If married, briefly discuss how you met your wife, how long you have been married, and the greatest joys you have experienced in marriage.

If single, what questions do you have regarding pursuing marriage?

Authority in Marriage

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...*

– Ephesians 5:23

Good Leader or **Bad Leader**

Overbearing Tyrant vs **Passive Pushover**

Sacrificial Love

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

– Ephesians 5:25

The limitless, self-giving love of the cross defines a husband's love for his wife.

- Sacrificial love is meant to be hard
- The warfare is in the inconvenience

Single Men: How do I prepare myself for marriage?

Embrace inconvenience.

Unconditional Love

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.*

- Ephesians 5:26-27

God made an **unconditional promise** to Jesus' sinful bride to make her pure by meeting all the conditions on her behalf. He has sealed this promise in blood at the cross.

Conditions Change, but Love Doesn't

Single Men: Embrace the responsibility of unconditional commitments

One-Flesh Commitment

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.*

- Ephesians 5:28-30

You are not bound to anyone or anything before the Holy God of the universe, the way you are bound to your wife.

Love Her with the Gospel

The greatest way to love your wife as yourself is by committing to make sure she is experiencing the love of God in Christ found in the gospel.

- Does she know the gospel?
- Does she feel the gospel?

- Does she hear the gospel?

Questions

How do you drift toward what's easiest and away from inconvenience in your marriage?

What are specific ways a wife should experience the gospel through her husband's leadership in the home?

How might a married couple see themselves as distinct individuals as opposed to 'one flesh' before God?

Single Men: What are specific ways you can begin to embrace inconvenience and cultivate unconditional commitments in your life as you prepare to pursue marriage?

Marriage as Mission - Love as Your Witness

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.

- Ephesians 5:31-33

The gospel is the mystery unveiled by marriage...

Your marriage is meant to unveil the mystery...

You either witness the truth or a lie...

If marriage is our mission, marriage must be the priority in our home, around which all other plans, goals, and dreams revolve!

Questions

In whose marriage have you seen a picture of the gospel? How might you personally encourage them in light of the way God has used their marriage in your life?

What specific plans can you make to ensure your marriage is your priority?

HOMEWORK

Read: Genesis 1:26-31, Revelation 19:6-10, Ephesians 5:22-33

Sacrificial Love

Most husbands tend to lead in one of two extremes: a demanding tyrant or a weak pushover. From which extreme do you tend to lead?

In what specific areas do you lean toward tyranny?

- Finances
- Parenting
- Church
- Schedules
- House work
- Other _____

In what areas do you tend to be a pushover?

- Finances
- Parenting
- Church
- Schedules
- House work
- Other _____

Instead of tyranny or being a pushover, what would sacrificial love look like in each of these areas?

- Finances
- Parenting
- Church
- Schedules
- House work
- Other _____

What specific actions can you take that may be uncomfortable for you so that you may effectively lead your wife spiritually?

As the protector of your wife, are there ways in which you should step in to protect your wife mentally, physically, and emotionally?

Are there ways in which you are holding back, distracted, or just being lazy because you are refusing to sacrifice to provide more or better for your wife?

Unconditional Love

What about your relationship with your wife has exceeded your expectations?

What about your relationship with your wife has fallen short of your expectations?

What are the biggest life changes throughout marriage that have affected your relationship with your wife?

What will you say to your wife and do for your wife to turn from the sin of loving her conditionally and embrace the unconditional love of the gospel?

One Flesh Love

Ask your wife the following questions so that you may in turn encourage her with God's love for her in Christ.

- Do you believe God loves you unconditionally?
- Do you genuinely believe God has forgiven you for your sins?
- What things do you do believing God is more happy with you when you do them than when you don't?
- Are there areas in which you feel like you are failing God?

Take some time and pray with your wife, specifically encouraging her with gospel truths (God's love, forgiveness, and acceptance based on Jesus and His work for her).

One of the ways your wife will feel or experience the gospel is by initiating reconciliation. Is there a lingering conflict you need to address? Should you be asking for or granting forgiveness? What step will you take today to initiate reconciliation with your wife?

Marriage as Mission - Love as Your Witness

What are the greatest threats to overwhelming the centrality of your marriage in your home?

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| • Finances | • Schedules |
| • Parenting | • House work |
| • Church | • Other _____ |

Plan to Make Marriage the Mission

Daily

15 minutes in prayer

Time: _____

Weekly

30 minutes talking about your relationship

Day & Time: _____

Monthly

A date without kids

Day/Date: _____

Annually

Days away together (from and without the kids)

Dates: _____

Signature

Husband _____

Wife _____

Talk with your wife about other changes you can make together to assert your marriage as the priority in your home.

For Single Men

When you think about the prospect of getting married, do you think about a pursuit or something that might happen for you by chance?

What is your purpose behind remaining single? Is this biblical? Is it just wise? Is your motive to serve self or Christ?

If you are dating, what are the biblical reasons for delaying marriage with this person? Why do you believe it is wise to continue to date and not marry?

If dating, what are your boundaries to remain sexually pure? Are they realistic?

Are there ways you are dependent upon your parents or others that are keeping you from pursuing marriage and then caring for a wife?

What steps can you take to establish a healthy independence as a man?

What ways can you begin to cultivate sacrifice in your life through choosing inconvenience for others?
