

Marriages Are Made In Heaven, But Lived On Earth!

- A. In nearly every wedding there is some recognition that marriages are made in heaven, & while that is true, they lived in a turbulent world.

There is an old farm house nestled into the brush & trees where my dad was raised. There was a time when the lawn was full of children playing on tree swings & tumbling on the grass, while the adults sat on the front porch visiting. My family has pictures of that scene when the trees were small & the paint on the house was bright white. But no one has lived in that house for many years. It has become dilapidated. There is hardly a chip of white paint remaining. The roof is sinking in, the porch is buckling, & the trees are blocking the view.

Marriages are a lot like houses if you don't maintain them they can fall apart.

1. A lot of people settle for marriages like that; they don't maintain them so they fall apart.
2. I don't know of any relationship where such high expectations can be met with such bitter disappointment as in marriage.

[Let's begin by considering the reasons *why* marriages need maintenance, & then we'll consider *how* to do that.]

I. Reasons For Marriage Maintenance

A. *Feelings Diminish.*

1. The number one question asked of marriage counselors is, "Why don't we love each other like we used to?"
2. Do you remember the intense feelings you once felt for your spouse?
3. The Scripture recognizes & promotes romantic love.
 - a. Rachel "*was beautiful of form & appearance*" ([Gen 29:17](#)). Jacob "*served [Laban] seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her*" ([29:20](#)).
 - b. Song of Solomon is a book dedicated to the happiness of romantic love ([2:3-5](#)).

3. Romantic love is wonderful & powerful, but it's a lot easier to fall into romantic love than it is to remain there.
4. Husbands & wives should look at marriage as if they were pioneers leaving for a new adventure, full of hope, but expecting difficulty.
5. Many people enter marriage under the spell of romantic love, not realizing that building a marriage takes a lifetime of work & constant maintenance.

B. *Familiarity Breeds Carelessness.*

1. How did you take care of your first car? How long did that last? What happened? You knew the car was valuable, & you appreciate what it did.
 - a. But what was at first an uncommon delight became an ordinary duty.
 - b. Jesus said of Judas, "*Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me*" (Psa 41:9; John 13:18).

- c. Familiarity, in marriage or any relationship, tends to diminish devotion.

C. *Fatigue Sets In.*

1. When you first began to date the one you married, didn't you devoted a great deal of time & energy into building that relationship?
 - a. But shortly after the wedding, the reality of hard work & fatigue set in.
2. In a marriage there is so much to do, & so little time to do it, it just wears you down.
 - a. Maybe you reached a point in your marriage where you took one another for granted. "He knows how I feel." "She knows I love her."

A man who took his wife to the doctor because he was concerned about the way she had been acting. The doctor gave her a physical, & said, "Your wife is perfectly fine." The man said, "Then why is she so sluggish & depressed?" The doctor gave the woman a hug & a kiss on the cheek, & she immediately came to life. The doctor looked at the husband & said, "She needs that three times a week." The husband said, "I can bring her Tuesdays & Thursdays, but Saturdays I play golf."

3. Marriage is NOT like a toaster oven that you just plug in & use once in a while; marriages require maintenance – an investment of time & effort.
4. So before you get fatigued by the duties & chores that call you, & the hobbies that interest you, try placing maintaining your marriage at the top of your priority list (we're coming to how to do that).

D. *Flaws Become Apparent.*

1. "Marriage does not change you, it merely unmask you." It unmask the imperfections you were trying to hide from your future spouse.
 - a. That's why the best marriages are between two good forgivers. *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you"* (Eph 4:32).
2. Commitment to marriage will require that you learn to be thankful for your spouse in spite of the flaws you discover.

E. *Faith Fails.*

1. Christians often get disillusioned with marriage, & so they just decide that applying God's principles is just a waste of time.
 - a. They may say something like this, "This marriage is just not enough for me. I need more out of life."
 - b. Well guess what? Marriage is not supposed to be "enough". In fact, nothing created is ever enough, including marriage.
2. The only way to have a fulfilling marriage is to have your heart filled with the love of Christ.
 - a. In **Ephesians 5:22**, *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."*
 - b. In **verse 25**, *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church."*
 - c. Paul even said, *"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ & the church."* (5:32).
 - d. The remarkable bond between Christ & the church is mirrored in the union of a husband & wife – is it any wonder then why Satan is going to attack marriage?

[Is your marriage a little like that old farm house in Merkel?
Does it show signs of neglect? Are you going to move out?
Or are you going to remodel?

Well God can put life back into a dead marriage. He
breathed life into the first marriage between Adam & Eve, &
it was a beautiful thing before sin entered the picture.

In Genesis, the Divine Architect of marriage established a
foundation upon which great marriages thrive.]

II. Tools For Marriage Maintenance

A. *Companionship: "I Need You."*

1. The only thing "*not good*" in all of creation was
Adam without Eve (**Gen 2:18**).
 - a. God used loneliness to create a thirst for
companionship in Adam.
 - b. God paraded every living thing in front of
Adam to show him that nothing could take the
place of the woman.

2. Then God created woman from the rib of man; she
was always by his side & next to his heart.
 - a. Adam immediately recognized his unique bond
with her; he exclaimed, "*This is now bone of
my bone, & flesh of my flesh.*" (**Gen 2:23**).
 - b. They were alike, yet wonderfully different;
uniquely created for companionship; they
needed each other physically, emotionally,
spiritually.
3. The problem is that our modern society works
against marital companionship.
 - a. Today, husbands & wives are like marbles in a
bag, they rub up against each other briefly, but
otherwise they live in their own worlds.
 - b. As a result marriage becomes unsatisfying, &
the home becomes a toxic environment for the
raising of children.
4. So the #1 tool for maintaining a joyful marriage is
acknowledging our natural & spiritual needs.

- a. The woman needs the sacrificial & nurturing love of her husband, & the husband needs the respectful admiration of his wife (Eph 5:22-33).
- b. They are “*one body*” – they need each other.
- c. The quickest way to strengthen your marriage is to let your spouse know that you need him or her in every way.

B. *Loyalty: “I Am Yours Alone.”*

- 1. Adam & Eve only had eyes for each other.
 - a. Eve did not long for Adam to be as good looking as someone else, & Adam wasn’t unsatisfied with Eve’s figure.
 - b. There was no insecurity in their relationship. They were solely committed to each other.
- 2. Commitment is difficult in our society because we are bombarded with so many choices.

- a. Many give up on their marriage when they think they have found someone better, but marriage is not about collecting a trophy: getting the most gorgeous or handsome spouse.
- b. Marriage is about loving & committing yourself to one person completely! This is what provides security in marriage that will build a relationship of trust.
- c. Husbands & wives need to tell each other, “You are the only one for me,” & mean it, not just as some romantic sentiment.
- d. Don’t even entertain alternatives in your mind.
 - 1) Take a picture of your family to work.
 - 2) Talk about your family & the church.
 - 3) Don’t run down your spouse to others.
 - 4) Speak of your love for your spouse.
 - 5) Remember your vows.

C. *Honesty: “You Can Trust Me.”*

1. For a long time Adam & Eve knew nothing about dishonesty & deception.
 - a. *“They were both naked, the man & his wife, & were not ashamed” (Gen 2:25).*
 - b. They had no inhibitions because they had nothing to hide.
 - c. It was only after sin entered the picture that man became skilled in the art of the cover up, deceit & dishonesty.
2. A secure marriage is one where both parties can be completely honest & transparent with each other.
3. In what other relationship can we say, “This is who I am, please accept me & patiently help me be a better person.” – “I trust you with that knowledge.”

D. *Spirituality: “I Love The Lord First.”*

1. At the beginning, Adam & Eve’s relationship was perfect because it was a spiritual relationship; they had unbroken fellowship with God.
2. Great marriages are made up of two people who pursue God.
 - a. As they grow closer to Him, they grow closer to each other.
 - b. They love & are devoted to each other despite their flaws, because they love & are devoted first to the Lord.
3. The most important point in this lesson is to remember that if you want to maintain a marriage as God would have, then you must come to grips with the fact that your spouse belongs first to the Lord ([Eph 5:25-28](#)).

CLOSING

- A. We have discussed 5 reasons marriages need to be maintained & 4 tools we should use to do that.