



A Marriage that Lasts

Sunday, February 4, 2018

Open in prayer

Ice Breaker: What's your favorite object in your house and why?

- Whether married or single, do you think it's possible for spouses to be best friends? Should a spouse be your best friend?
- What do you think are the greatest causes of struggle in marriages?
 - Money problems, Affairs, Interfering ex-partners, Differences in sexual libido, Children from previous marriages¹
- It is said that the first year of marriage is the hardest. Do you think this is true? Why? If married, was this true for you?
- What expectations of marriage do we learn from our culture?
- Pastor Loren said, "There is no doubt that marriages are struggling. Families are hurting. In fact, the enemy of our soul has an all out assault on the family." What would you consider an assault on families today?
- Where do you believe the idea and framework for marriage comes from?
- How does the biblical definition of marriage differ from our culture's definition?
- Pastor and writer Gary Thomas says, "What if God's primary intent for your marriage isn't to make you happy . . . but holy?" How are holiness and happiness related?
- *Pastor Loren said, "There are some of you who are frustrated in your marriages, you are hurt, you are empty, you are discouraged, and you are tempted to give up. That's exactly what Satan wants you to do. So, recognize this is a spiritual battle."* How do we fight spiritual battles in our families?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:7-8

Psalms says God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. **God's Word illuminates our next steps. Things work better when we do them God's way.** Principles from God's Word will help single people to prepare for marriage and will help married people to have healthier, God-honoring marriages.

Key Verse - 1 Corinthians 13:7-8 - "Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

- How does one's personal spiritual preparation affect the quality of one's marriage? What are areas that we need to surrender to God to have a healthy marriage?

1. Put Jesus at the center of it all.

- Psalm 127:1 - "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain."

¹ theindependent.com, [The Nine Most Common Reasons People Get Divorced](#)



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- Matthew 6:33 - "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
- Matthew 22:37-38 - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. Love your neighbor as yourself."

This is true for every area of your life, but especially for marriage. If you leave Jesus out, it is bound to fail.

- Gary Thomas says, "With God as the center of our relationship, I ask myself: *How does God feel about the way I'm treating my spouse?* " How do you think asking yourself this question would change your behavior?²
- *Pastor Loren gave the example of a three-legged stool to illustrate what a good marriage needs to stand: Physical intimacy, Emotional intimacy, and Spiritual intimacy. Discuss these three areas. Which do you think is the most difficult for couples to achieve? Why are all three important? How are the three areas similar? How are they different?*

2. Make a life long commitment to your spouse.

"Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your life." (Ecclesiastes 9:9 NIV)
Not just a commitment on the good days, but also on the bad days. You can't have a great marriage until you throw the possibility of divorce out of your mind.

Affirm your commitment, especially in front of your children. Why do children need to be affirmed of their parent's commitment to each other?

3. Learn to celebrate your differences.

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."
(Romans 15:7 NIV)

- Pastor Loren said, "God will bring someone in your life who is different than you." What would it look like to celebrate each other's differences?

4. Work on communication.

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." (James 1:19 NIV)

- Pastor Loren said, "The average couple spends 4 minutes a day in meaningful conversation." How

5. Feed the fire of romance.

² Gary Thomas. [God's Presence in Your Marriage](#).



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“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.” (Song of Solomon 8:6 NIV)

It's not the fireplace's fault if there is no fire.

- Read and discuss Isaiah 62:5, 54:5, Ephesians 5:25. How is marriage a picture of God's relationship with us?

We can love our marriage partner in a God honoring way, because of the way God has shown his love to us.

- **God's love is a choice**
 - Love is not a feeling, it is a choice. Your feelings will lie to you. Feelings follow action. Action does not follow feeling. I don't feel like loving them.
- **God's love is sacrificial**
- **God's love is forever**
 - despite all of our mistakes

Reflection: Is there a broken relationship between you and God? Is there a non-existent relationship between you and God? Prayer for salvation.