

Session Two: Marriage

(Source: Wangerin)

Scriptures:

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25

Matt 19:1-12

Malachi 2:10-16 cf. ABreaking faith@ idea = 5 times in these verses

(Do an overview some time during this session on the Genesis passages to lay the foundation).

Questions:

- What makes a successful marriage?
- When does marriage begin?
- What was it like in your home of origin?

Introduction:

- An overview of Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-28.
Big Idea: AMarriage is God=s idea and ideal. If we follow His principles and plans, He will provide for us and prosper us in our marriage, thereby making the ideal the real in our marriage.@
 - Marriage, Family and Sex are God=s ideas
 - He intended marriage to be a permanent, monogamous, heterosexual relationship
 - The marriage relationship is a partnership involving:
 1. Priority of the relationship
 2. Unity in the relationship
 3. Purity of the relationship
 - The couple needs to leave others, cleave to each other and weave into one
- The cycle of Covenants, Grace, Empowerment and Intimacy . . . Balswick
- The Elements or Essentials of a Successful Marriage: Wangerin

Six Tasks:

The Foundation of Forgiveness

1. Truthfulness and Dependability
2. Sharing the Work of Survival
3. Good Talking and Good Listening
4. Making Love
5. Healing
6. Gifting and Volunteering

(I will only touch on the above briefly, since we will deal with them in greater

detail during the sessions to come).

When does marriage begin?

Not with . . .

1. Two people falling in love with each other
2. Two people making love with one another
3. With the engagement
4. Two people setting house keeping with each other
5. Before the couple met and smiled with each other . . . "in heaven@

But with . . .

1. The vow
 - It begins when two people make a clear, unqualified commitment and promise to each other to be faithful to each other until the end of their days.
 - This vow when heard, permits enduring and endearing trust.
 - This promise made, promise heard, promise witnessed, remembered and trusted, is the foundation of marriage (p. 18)
 - This is a moment of historical and spiritual significance to be remembered for the rest of the couple's life.
 - It must be made consciously and in full knowledge of the implications.
 - This vow marks the point of the relationship between the couple when it changes from one of accidental growth, to one of careful conviction and responsible stability and trustworthy promise. (p. 18)

It is normal and healthy for one to enter into marriage with a certain amount of fear. It is time to be concerned if a couple enters into it without any reverential fear or reservations.

One enters into it with fear because of the enormity, totality and the irrevocability of the commitment. One is fearful because of the uncertainty of the future.

Four Characteristics of a Marriage Vow:

1. It is a total commitment to each other
 - It is a commitment of all one has and all one is and will be.
 - It includes one's worthiness, and goodness, as well as one's weakness and sinfulness
2. It is a timeless commitment to each other
 - It is a commitment of all one has and is and will be for as long as one shall be.
 - We never marry a part of a person, but the whole person.
It is a package deal.

These two characteristics make marriage both marvellous and holy. They make us hilarious and cautious at the same time.

The two other characteristics are not intrinsic, as totality and timelessness are. Nevertheless, they are essential. Without them, we are reckless children entering into marriage, gambling our lives and our peace with the poor odds in a wedding (p. 23).

3. It must be made with a personal and strong faith in God.
 - Faith is necessary because only God can help with the relationship, the future and all that it holds for the couple.
 - The vow is one that must be made in the presence of God, based on the promises of God and kept by the provisions of God.

4. Forgiveness of each other
 - For a healthy marriage, a couple will need both the forgiveness of God and the forgiveness of each other.
 - There will inevitably be problems. This is normal when two sinners live together. When they rub each other the wrong way, there will be friction.
 - Forgive is a practical and necessary tool of marriage. "It is the single most significant tool we have for meeting and healing the troubles which marriage shall surely breed between us." (p. 24)

Assignment:

1. Using Genesis 1-2; Song of Songs and Matt 19. What would you include in your marriage vows, if you were to write them out?
2. Complete and Discuss the Bible Study: The God Designed Marriage (*Appendix I*)