

“Better Marriage Part 1”

Working definition of “Better Family”: A ‘Better Family’ is a family (whatever the makeup) that chooses and strives to be ‘more excellent’ together by following Jesus and applying Kingdom principles to family dynamics

Bottomline: A ‘Better Family’ is a family that follows Jesus

Recognize that there are many dynamics going on in here today:

Divorce

Marriage in crisis

Lost spouse

Long to be married

TENSION/COMMON GROUND

Marriage is many things

- Marriage is a promise of love.
- Marriage is a commitment to life.
- To the best that 2 people can find & bring out of each other
- It offers opportunities for sharing and growth like no other relationship can equal.
- Marriage has the potential to deepen and enrich every facet of life. Happiness is fuller; Memories are fresher; Commitment is stronger.
- It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing love through the seasons of life.

Marriage is the BEST thing I’ve ever gone; and the HARDEST thing I’ve ever done

- Hard because we’re 2 imperfect people trying to get things right; Wesleyan notion - we’re all striving to become like Jesus (sanctified/Perfected in love) and while maybe we can sorta hide just how not perfect we are to other people, we can’t hide from our spouses that we’re not perfect yet because we live with them! They are fully aware! And our imperfections (our non-Jesus-likeness) have a tendency to bring out their imperfections (non-Jesus-likeness) and things get messy...which is partly why we’re talking about marriage

Worship Note: Better **Marriages** result in better **Families**

Genesis 1:27 (NIV)

27 So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

- New creature= Hebrew word for adam not male or female, but a collective noun, single human being
- Here we see that men and women are created equally
 - Females are created in God's image
 - Males are created in God's image
- Genesis 2
 - More detailed account
 - Adam=Human= formed from clay and God breathed into its nostrils the breath of life
 - After everything created in the creation story in chapter 1, God says 'it is good', after creating the human he says 'it is very good', in Gen. 2:18 God says 'It is not good for the human to be alone'
 - Ezer Cenegdo
 - Ezer= translated helper a lot of places, but also can be translated power and strength and that is the way it should be here
 - Cenegdo= like, as; This created being would be like Adam
 - Equal created as the same, facing one another as equals
 - From the side
 - Not a rib necessarily
 - Bone of bone, flesh of flesh
 - Human also
 - Been taken from the side of the human
 - What was left was human, what was created was human
 - 1st woman taken out of the 'man', every man (and woman) since has been taken out of woman

- Genesis 2:24 (NIV)

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

- Man was to leave
- God did not intend women to be the servants of a male-dominated extended family
- God did intend every woman to be the co-equal partner with husband, in new independent household
- God did intend every man's 1st human loyalty and devotion to be redirected from parents to his wife
- God did intend for husband and wife to rejoin as one flesh, literally and metaphorically

Worship Note: Men and women were both created in the **image** of God; they were created **equal**, but were not created the **same**

- **When lead family, Co-leading (Kris Vallotton)**
 - **Depending on strengths and gifts is who takes the lead in certain situation**
 - **We SUBMIT to one another Depending on strengths and gifts is who takes the lead in certain situation**
 - **SUBMIT - synonym that is really helpful is the word YIELD**
 - **We YIELD to one another depending on strengths and gifts is who takes the lead in certain situation**
 - **Works in my marriage**
 - **We YIELD to one another depending on strengths and gifts**
 - **There are things our wives are better at because of how God made them, and things we are better at because of how God made us but regardless**
 - **We need each other; we were made for each other...we compliment and we complete each other**

And Better Marriages equates to Better Families

Ephesians 5:21-33 - Instructions for Christian Households

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

- Mutual Submission (Greek= 'to be subject to')
 - YIELD to one another
 - This verse= we are to be subject to each other
 - While specifically talks about wives in following verses, it does refer to husbands and wives in this verse
 - Ecclesiastes= 3 fold cord
- Recognize that this passage and other passages of the Bible are tough and we may not like
 - Have to wrestle with
 - We are explaining these verses,
 - Challenge you to read it for yourself
 - Not okay to 'skip' passages
 - Recognize that the Church and others have used this passage abusively and harmed women

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing[b] her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body

- Husbands are called to love their wives like Jesus loved the Church
- Husbands, be like Jesus - simple! Except for the fact that Jesus was humiliated, stripped, beaten, and crucified for His bride
- He loved His bride, cherished His bride, Valued His Bride more than He valued Himself
- Husbands are to show costly faithfulness through sickness as well as health and love his wife with Christ-like sacrifice
 - I wonder if our wives knew every day in the marrow of your bones without a doubt that your husband loved you like Jesus loves the Church, I wonder how that might change the dynamics of a marriage? If the love of Jesus undergirded our marriages as it does the Church, I wonder if there

would be more a supernatural ebb and flow between husbands and wives that just happened without us having to think much about roles?

- - [Don't raise your hand!] but I wonder how many wives feel that their husband loves the kind of love and devotion of Jesus for His Bride, with 'Christ-like sacrifice'? How many wives feel loved, valued and cherished above anything else in her husband's life?
 - [You can raise your hand on this one!] Are there any wives here that could think of ONE thing that your husband could do to make you feel more loved, valued and cherished above anything else?
 - Not just something you WANT him to do, like put down the toilet seat or clean up the clothes on his side of the bed, but something he could do occasionally (not like everyday or anything) that would really validate that he loves you as much as Jesus loves His bride?
 - Husbands, your homework this week is to ASK your wife that question TOMORROW, and see what happens
 - Wives, your homework this week is to come up with a REAL answer sometime later today - pray about it

When it comes to verses 21-24 and that word submit that crops up 3.5 times, we recognize that the word 'submit' can give people an adverse reaction - we think this is in part because:

- 1. We read this guidance through a natural lens as opposed to a spiritual lens
- 2. We don't step back and take the passage as a whole
- 3. These verses have been abused and used to control and manipulate for years and years, which is contrary to the spirit of the passage
 - Submit does not mean 'Lord over'
 - Submit not mean slave or to impose strict rules and expectations on your wife

Albert Einstein - was a bit of a romantic...

Einstein was a bit of a bufoon when came to marriage - Listed Marital Expectations for His Wife

A collection of Einstein's letters auctioned off in 1996 contains a list of marital expectations for his wife, Maliva Maric. The list includes daily laundry "kept in good order," "three meals regularly *in my room*," a desk maintained neatly "*for my use only*," and the demand that she quit talking or leave the room "if I request it." The marriage ended in divorce, but the list lives on as an illustration ... of assumptions commonly held about marriage in 1914.

Compared with Einstein's requirements, modern marital expectations have surely evolved for the better. Or have they? A recent [insightful study](#) theorizes that as people abandon religious institutions, they start expecting romantic relationships to satisfy a host of needs that formerly were satisfied through religion. If you think clean laundry and regular meals require effort, try meeting the demands of relationship-worship today by providing transcendence, unconditional love, wholeness, meaning, worth, and communion.

- Submit does not mean take advantage of
- Submit does not mean treat like property, or garbage, or like your spouse is somehow 'less than'
- Scripture is pretty clear that women are not 'less than' men - men and women are created equal, but not the same

What do we do with these verses? 'Wives, submit to your husbands', "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" - that's a tall order

- Which makes me wonder, "Is that doable? Can a husband love his wife the way the Lord loves the church?"
- If it is possible, it's certainly not our 'human condition'; it's something that we strive for and grow towards - it's the standard, and I would propose that it is ONLY possible by God's grace and God's help, and if the Husband strives to have the heart and mind of Christ, has placed himself under the authority of Jesus, and has the indwelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit...
- Our human condition is that we don't want to submit ourselves to anyone or anything. We want to rule ourselves and do what we want to do. My struggle of putting myself under the leadership and authority of Jesus has diminished over time - because through God's love and presence, through God's grace, and through growing in knowledge of the Word - I have come to KNOW and TRUST the character of Jesus, and I know without a doubt that Jesus loves me and that Jesus has my best interests at heart and that I am safe in His hands. Jesus is able to do for me what I can not do for myself. I'm not worried about Jesus 'doing me wrong' or 'messing things up'; I don't struggle with Jesus' competency when it comes to leading me or my family. 'And so I say willingly, "Jesus, I place my life in your hands and I am more than OK with following your lead and placing myself under your authority. I yield to your leadership.
- If we say, the Church needs to submit to the leadership and authority of Jesus Christ, no one has a problem with that right?
- If we say that we need to submit to the leadership and authority of the person we work for, we don't have a problem with that right?

- If we say, military has to submit to the leadership and authority of the platoon leader, we don't have a problem with that, right?
- If we say, "wives submit yourself to your husband," In our post modern society 'Houston, we have a problem!'

It makes me wonder, if it is God's order and hierarchy for a wife to submit or 'yield' to her husband and her gut reaction is 'Oh no he didn't!' no way!' why would that be the case? I'm not a wife, so I can't speak for anyone, but I can pose questions:

- Are you unlikely to yield to your husband because of abuses in the past? Maybe you've even seen that abuse within your own family of origin?
- Is it because of the human condition - 'No one puts baby in a corner! I rule me, end of story!'
- Is it because you don't trust your husband's character, or know without a doubt that your husband loves you with a sacrificial-he-would-die-for-me-kind-of-love?
- Is it because you don't believe he has your best interests at heart or that you are safe in his hands?
- Is he not able to do for you what you can not do for yourself?
- Or is there some part of you that thinks he will do you wrong, or mess things up, or you worry about his competency when it comes to leading you and your family?
- Are you just not OK with placing yourself under his lead and authority?
- And is that because of something about you? Or is it because he hasn't shown that he loves you like Jesus loves the Church?
- Or He hasn't placed himself under the authority of Jesus, and has yet to have the heart and mind of Christ, and the indwelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit...

This kind of seems like a package deal...I can't expect my wife to follow my lead if I am not following the lead of Jesus and through God's help loving her the way Jesus loves the Church. I can't expect her to follow my lead just because the Bible says she is supposed to anymore than she can expect me to love her just as Christ loved the Church and give myself up for her like Jesus gave himself up for her just because it says I am supposed to in the Bible. We need God's help for this to become a reality, but I think we can expect that if our marital relationships truly functioned like Jesus and the Church, we would have infinitely better marriages and infinitely better families

- Triangle - Jesus is the foundation, then the parents, then the kids
- Partly why the Word includes aspect of submission, we believe, is that if everyone is leading, nobody is following, which means nobody is leading, and there is chaos

- When it comes to the marriage itself, it says plainly “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church”, and “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord”
- When it comes to any group or team or organization or family or church, there is an order put in place to help things not be chaotic

.31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”[c] 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Closing