

Better Marriage Part 2

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

Bottomline: A ‘Better Marriage’ is a Marriage (Husband and wife) that follows Jesus

Bottomline: Better Marriages result in better Families

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

Divorce

Marriage in crisis

Lost spouse

Long to be married

Young people not even thinking about marriage

Established last week: Marriage is AWESOME, AND CHALLENGING - loving someone means we are vulnerable, and sometimes get hurt

- CHALLENGE FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK!
- ONE thing that your husband could do to make you feel more loved, valued and cherished above anything else?
 - Deadline Extension - do it this week!

Scripture today from a book called Song of Songs

- Give a little History about book

Song of Songs 2:2-5,8-10,14-16a New International Version (NIV)

He 2 Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the young women.

She

3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my beloved among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.

4 Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love.5
Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love.

8 Listen! My beloved! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains,
bounding over the hills.9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows,
peering through the lattice.

10 My beloved spoke and said to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one,
come with me.

He

14 My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the
mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is
sweet, and your face is lovely.

15 Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our
vineyards that are in bloom.

She

16 My beloved is mine and I am his

Common Ground: Most of us don't talk like that about our spouses anymore, mostly
because now we know them really well now, and we're tired.

Monica's post on Facebook, "I am not an early bird or a night owl, I am some form of
permanently exhausted pigeon."

Over time, if we're careful and not intentional, we lose that loving feeling, oh, that loving
feeling, we lose that loving feeling and before we know it, it's gone, gone, gone, woah...

Our spouses are the people we have entered into covenant (promise) with to share life,
good and bad, until we die, so, might as well make the best of it! We want to help you
get back to the honeymoon phase, get back to a greater level of passion and adoration
and love and level of intimacy. There are some basic Biblical principles that God has
given us, and hopefully, as you think through some of these you might could identify

some challenges that you need to overcome or some changes or adjustments you need to make that could help you get an increased level of intimacy with your spouse.

'Better Family' Kingdom Principles:

Obedience [hit hard last week]

- To Lord first
- Ephesians 5:21-33
- Who we love and have authority over us
 - Love your wife as Christ loved the Church
- Submit to each other out of reverence for Christ

First Fruits

- Scripture, Jesus and marriage
- **Matthew 19:4-6** "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'^[a] 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'^[b]? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."
- God gets first fruits; the first/best to marriage (not left-overs but don't give your wife/family your 'last fruits')

Worship Note: Give God your **first** fruits, but don't give your marriage your **last** fruits

- Spouse is next most important relationship after Jesus
 - NOT kids first, then give marriage what you got left
 - BEST gift we can give our kids is a Godly marriage and example
 - Relationship Flowchart [Parents this week, kids next week]
 - Counselor!
 - Triangle / hierarchy of relationships
 - Be willing to let your spouse know if you feel you or your family are only getting 'last fruits'
 - Includes time, attention, energy, intimacy

Forgiveness

- **Matthew 18:21-22** Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.[Or *seventy times seven*]
- Be generous with forgiveness; called to forgive as Jesus has forgiven us
- Steve McIntyre
 - Come home everyday and say, "I'm sorry" - can bank on having done something wrong
- Sometimes there are super challenging things in a marriage that needs forgiveness...
- "Unforgiveness is the like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die" - and in this case, you gotta live with that other person! So while it may hurt them a bit, ultimately going to hurt you way more, and serve to undermine your marriage

- **Things Wives Want**
- In the
- *Chicago Tribune*,
- Cheryl Lavin lists the things women want:
 - **1. Don't ever lie to us; we always find out.**
 - 2. If you're in a bad mood, we're going to assume it's our fault. So, tell us what's bothering you.
 - **3. Quit complaining about your boss. Find another job.**
 - 4. Sunday is usually the only day we can relax. Be flexible about the all-day sports rule.
 - **5. Buy yourself some decent clothes.**
 - **6. Pay attention. We like to give clues. "Susie and Bob tried a great new restaurant" means "Why don't you ever take us anywhere nice?"**
 - 7. Yes, it's true. Sometimes we like to call up and talk about nothing. Get used to it.
 - 8. We are self-conscious by nature; we can't help it.
 - **9. The kissing must never stop.**

- 10. If you ask us what's wrong and we say nothing, ask us again. And this time, look sincere.
- 11. When we say something, it's necessary for you to respond. At the very minimum, nod your head.
- 12. Real men run dishwashers and dust.
- 13. If you only knew how much a tender word, a thoughtful act, an unexpected gift means to us, you would do it, and your life would improve exponentially.
- 14. When no one's home, stand in front of a mirror and practice this until you can say it in public, "I was wrong."
- 15. After you've mastered that, work on, "I'm sorry."
- Cheryl Lavin, "The Things Women Want," *Chicago Tribune* (5-7-00)

Worship Note: 2 important words for marriages: "**I'm sorry**"

And 3 equally important words, "*I forgive you*"

Sowing and Reaping

- **Galatians 6:7-9 (NIV)**

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
- What are you sowing into your marriage, honestly?
 - What sow in, what we reap
 - Fruits of the Spirit
 - Anger, resentment, unforgiveness, mistrust, bitterness

Abiding

- John 15:5 (NIV)

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me

and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

- Abiding individually in Christ, and as a couple in Christ
 - Praying for and with spouse and family

Worship Note: Pray **for** your spouse; Pray **with** your spouse

Challenge: PRAY FOR AND WITH YOUR SPOUSE
Monica's answer

Awkward at first, and enemy doesn't want us to

"Bonus Advice, Free of Charge"

- Get marriage counseling - it helps!
- The need for 'Intimacy' doesn't diminish - it helps!
- Know your spouse's love language, and act on it - it helps! [small group study?]

Closing