

## Primacy of Marriage

Definition of PRIMACY - The state of being of first importance,  
 † Preeminent.

- † God Himself determined that "It is not good for the man to be alone." (Gen 2:18)
- † God Himself specifically designed Eve to complete Adam as his wife.
- † And God Himself performed the 1<sup>st</sup> wedding ceremony, presenting Adam's newly formed wife to him, much to his joy. (Gen 2:22-24)

So our marriage, as a divinely ordained institution, should be of highest importance to us as men of God as we seek to glorify Him in our daily life. But even unmarried people are blessed by contemplating how much Jesus Christ love us, His church. Understanding His love for the church, His bride, is crucial in the ministry of love. Christ is our model!

What does the current culture have to tell us about Marriage?

Some trends 1960 - 25% divorce rate

Present - about 50% or 1 out of every 2 end in divorce

-In 1960 about 75% of all US adults were married.

-Today it is less than 50%

-In 1960 the number of people living together out of wedlock was negligible - not even hitting the radar

-Today 25% of women 25-40 yrs old are living with someone and over 50% will at one time move in with a man out of wedlock.

- Culture today presents a picture that most marriages are unhappy so ***living together*** provides you the opportunity to "kick the tires" to see if this person will meet your needs and requirements. Especially the romantic and sexual chemistry since that is so important.

-The key to a successful marriage is finding the PERFECT compatible soul mate.

Example of an ad from a "Christian" dating site...

Someone who won't change me

Someone who accepts me JUST as I am

Someone who will affirm me and not seek to change me and release me to be myself and not shackle me.

Shows us just how self-centered we have become as a society and how much fear there is in marriage and how it might interrupt my happiness! Wow!

-FACT --Those who live together 1st are statistically more likely to get divorced than those who do not move in together until after they are married.

-The earlier sex is introduced into the relationship, the more likely the relationship will break up.

Fact that runs against the tide of the popular culture..... 2/3 of marriages that say they are unhappy if they stay together to work it out after 5 years they say they are in fact HAPPY.

Piles of data that shows that married people have a longer life spans and live healthier mental and physical.

-Children who grow up in a home with parents that stayed married have a 200-300% more likely chance of positive life outcomes.

So the culture, on one hand, is down on marriage and yet, the reality is that it provides real benefits.

From a **liberal Christian point of view**..... It's all about having my spoken and unspoken needs, desires, & fantasies met and oh by the way I want this person to be a "Christian". This bolt-on-Christianity is not biblical Christianity but merely a tag line or at its best- pick and choose religion.

## PRAY

As we've seen – culture says Romance is key to relationships -

Let's look at things from a **biblical perspective**....

**Worship** is the key to marriage. Godly husbanding does not begin with loving your wife; it begins with loving God. The truth that a man should love his wife "as Christ loves the church" is a jewel of truth in Eph 5.

**FIRST** – How many married? How many unmarried want to get married some day?  
How many want to glorify God in marriage? How many believe our marriages could be even better?

It starts first with who we are:

Dead in your trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3)

or

By God's grace...Alive in Christ (Eph 2:8-9)

† We can't and won't Glorify God in our marriages without the foundation of having Christ as our Master.

† Saturate our minds with the gospel & with proper Theology, continually.

Again – **Jesus is our great model** of:

Unconditional Love - Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Sacrificial Love - 1 Peter 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, **Christ gave fully of Himself**

Voluntary Love – Eph 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her

1 John 2:6 says “Whoever says he abides in Him, ought to walk in the same way in which HE walked.”

How ??

- Study Gods Word(with our wife, in a small group) 2 Tim 3:16-17 & 2 Tim 2:15
  - Read books by Godly reliable authors
  - Be at church, be an active listener, make application of what you learn, discuss with wife and kids and others Hebrews 10:24-15
  - Attend Sunday School
  - Serve 1 Peter 4:10
  - Be hospitable 1 Peter 4:9
- † Love & keep earnestly loving 1 Peter 4:8

Fill our minds and heart with the Word and its standards for our lives and pray for the Lord's help in living then as He calls us

This is hard!!! We struggle, the truth is there are no 2 totally compatible people so sometimes we succumb to the flesh and we sin.

-Lose heart and give up? No !! Press on, confess (1 John 1:19) and get our eyes back to being fixed on Christ. (Phil 3:14)

Hebrews 12:12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, <sup>13</sup> and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

Our Marriages then are a place for our **Sanctification** - for us to grow in Christ as our sins are revealed and we rely on Christ, His word and the power of the Holy Spirit to mature us.

- Our **sins** are **revealed** because we are 2 sinners living together and our flesh desires its own way, yet our call and desire as believers is to be more and more conformed to the image of Christ.

- We rely on Christ as we study His life, the perfect plan of redemption and we submit ourselves to His authority.

❖ **Growth in maturity is our life long pursuit as we *deny self* and *live for Christ in our marriages* - Ephesians 5:25-33**

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

So how are you doing?

Application Time - Loving Your Wife as Christ Loves the Church

By: Larry E. McCall

If you are single, answer the following questions from what you have observed in other's marriages.

1. What aspects of being a husband seem to come easiest to you?
2. What do you think are some of the most challenging aspects of being a husband? What part of being a husband is especially difficult for you?
3. What attributes of Jesus' love for His bride - the church, especially grip you? Why?
4. What particular characteristics of **Christ's love** would you like for your non-Christian friends and relatives to see as they watch you relate to your wife?

**ACTION Steps**

Pray for humility in learning to become more Christ-like in your love for your wife.

Then: Without being defensive, ask your wife in what ways she would like to see you grow as a husband. Ask her if she would commit to praying for you each day as you seek to grow in your ministry of being a Christ-like husband.

Ephesians 5:25-33  
BREAK OUT QUESTIONS

Rating Scale																			
1	-	2	-	3	-	4	-	5	-	6	-	7	-	8	-	9	-	10	
Never								Sometimes											Always

1. Do you **die to self**, daily for your spouse?
  - How can you?
2. Do you **seek the best** for your wife and provide **time** & attention to ***model the love of Christ?***
  - How can you?
3. Are your wife's **spiritual well-being, comfort & physical needs** your priority?
  - How can you make this your priority?
4. Are you **tender** and **affectionate** towards your spouse?
  - How can you be more tender & affectionate?
5. Do you **attach strings** to your **servant leadership**?
  - Why?        How can this change?

*Do you do all of these because of your love for Christ and your love for your spouse or for any other reason (what's in it for me)?*

- Your relationship is not a 50-50 proposition;  
it is a **100% covenant commitment.**

How do you make your marriage of first importance – priority- when you work?

Work/Careers

-Does it define you? When you **meet someone new** here at the church or have someone over for dinner or lunch, is your description of self over the top in what you do for work?

Is the measure of success in your marriage your ability to do extra-curricular activities without your spouse? I am not saying smother each other, I am saying we need time and attention with our best friends (our wives).

Hobbies, Sports, Golf, etc.

We wear **many hats** as men - This is a blessing in many ways and a challenge

-Keep balance

-View life through the lens of **Husband, Father, Ambassador for Christ** all the time.

?? How many hours per week do you work in your chosen profession??

40-50-60 hours

We are called to work and provide 1 Tim 5:8 says

8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

We do have the opportunity and responsibility to be employees and employers that understand that our sovereign Lord has placed us in our positions and that we are to take our testimony seriously knowing that we are a reflection of Christ to lost co-workers, customers, and employers.

**Big Deal question** - Has your job become an **idol** of the heart where you find the greatest satisfaction, and you provide the highest level of commitment at the expense of your walk in faith and your role as Priest of your homes??

-What drives the big decisions for your life and that of your family?

-How do you order and prioritize your time at work and your time and attention with your wife, kids and ministry you serve in? (That should be the order).

### My Story

- Suzanne's quits job and stay home when 1st child born
- I soon after move from a salary position as Service Manager to a 100% commission sales job. Over the next 5 years, I build a great client base, make a great income, and create an environment where I believe I am indispensable to the success of my office and team. *(Looking back, I clearly see I was way out of balance but at the time my lack of focus on my maturity in Christ and my wrong thinking that it was all about me in my providing)*
- At my oldest's 4 year birthday party, by God's grace I began to wake up and see things for what they were. I had made my focus on being a great provider and I was missing the mark in growing in my faith and love for Christ and certainly not loving and leading my wife and kids as the bible called me to.
- Conversation at the party turned to me, Jason's daddy, and Jason very quickly responded that Daddy doesn't live here, Daddy lives at Simplex. Although many laughed and thought this was funny, I was broken hearted and fought back the tears of regret, and repentance as I realized I was trusting in self and the temporary not the Lord.

Psalm 20:7 says - Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

- I determined to cut back my hours as I was leaving the house every day around 6AM and getting home around 930PM so I could spend time with Suzanne and our two boys before they went off to bed.

- My mother-in-law asked Suzanne if I was working less and home more and Suzanne responded, "Yes, how do you know?" She replied, I can tell, the boys talk about daddy now and they never used to.

-There are a lot of lessons and details I don't have time to share but what I will say is we have an awesome and patient and forgiving God that continues to shape me more and more to be conformed to Christ.

-I also have a loving and forgiving wife who has come along side me in my quest to lovingly lead our home and have us all grow in our family priority of Glorifying God in all things.

As Vodie Baucham said in this chapter, "Our careers exist to serve our families, not the other way around."

Our union is with our wives, not our jobs.

-Our desire should be for our wives to grow in faith, our children to be saved and for our family to pass this legacy to future generations and beyond.

- **Key point** - take the lead and don't be a passenger as your family bumps down the road of life.

-Do it now! We need to be "**all in**" for Christ as **He is our Head** and be a man and sacrificially care for our wives and train up our kids.

- We live busy lives, if we let it, they are too busy.

Put on your family calendar, family time to pray, read the word, play, or it just might not happen.

-Action step for us - **Ask your wife** about **your spiritual leadership?**  
Discuss plans on new things you both would like to implement in the home.

Men if we are to go the distance with our wives, we need to make sure we have the right mindset - Who can read

Proverbs 18:22

*He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD.*

Proverbs 12:4 An excellent wife *is* the crown of her husband,

But she who causes shame *is* like rotteness in his bones.

Proverbs 31:10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth *is* far above rubies.



Our focus on our children must be a priority and must come after our wives. This order ensures that the home puts Christ first by being marriage-centered not child-centered where all decisions are made in order to accommodate the kids and their desires, expectations.

### PREPARING OUR KIDS FOR MARRIAGE

It goes back to where we started, the Gospel! PRAYER

Share it, explain it, and teach them to serve Him. Prov. 23:6

† Start when they are little and fully dependent on us and we pour the truth into them and we show them our need for a savior as we all sin.

1 John 3:16-18 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

†	Serving,	Obedience to God's Word,	Deny Self
	John 13:15	1 John 2:6	Luke 9:23

† Place focus & attention on Godly character  
-Beginning with us as parents - Our kids see us for who we are.

† Family pursuit of growth in Holiness of Character

- It's a heart issue for all of us.
- Do your kids see you & your wife working out your faith with fear & trembling?
- Every day – not just on Sunday.
- High view of God & His Word.

† Be involved in the entire journey. (*Briggs refers to as a mine field*)

- Relationships - purposeful - Godly character would consider marrying?
- Recreational dating sets up false expectations with no level of commitment. (Practice Ground for divorce.) Cuteness, fun, nice- Doesn't get to the heart of character.  
Get to know as friend, minister together, ...

† Counsel your sons & daughters as Solomon does.  
*Proverbs 18:22; Proverbs 12:4; 1 John 3:16-18 (already mentioned)*

† Sufficiency in Christ! **2 Corinthians 9:8** And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all **sufficiency** in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.  
2 Corinthians 12:9