

DOCTRINE OF MARRIAGE

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Marriage is a divine institution and as a Christian institution it is one of the most significant arena's in life for the demonstration of God's grace in the angelic conflict. Not only do you have an individual testimony in the Angelic Conflict, but you also have a corporate testimony in your marriage.

1. Overall Commands: These are mandates to all believers in all relationships

- a. Love one another as Christ loved the Church. 1John 3:16, John 13:34, 35.
- b. Submitting to one another in the fear of God, Eph. 5:21.
- c. Both husband and wife are to be mutually involved in intimacy.
- d. Both husband and wife are to love each other unconditionally, and impersonally.

2. Commands to the Husband.

1. Love your wife AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH. Most husbands can benefit from spending a good deal of time reflecting on the kind of love Christ demonstrated on the cross, the various attributes that are a part of that love, and how those attributes are evident in his own love for his wife.

2. Honor your wife, from the Greek word time [means to admire, to give deference to, to respect, and to value.] Honor means to demonstrate respect for her, value her as someone important, demonstrate that you hold her and her opinions and ideas in high regard. (1Pet 3:7)

3. The husband is to be the spiritual leader in the home; not simply in terms of getting the family to Bible class but to demonstrate the Christian life through the example of his own positive volition and application.

4. Husbands are to treat their wives with gentleness, kindness, respect, 1Pet 3:7.

5. Husbands are to be forgiving and to not be resentful or bitter toward their wives, Col 3:19.

3. Commands to the Wives

1. Wives are not commanded to love their husbands, but to respect their husbands, Eph 5:33.

2. Respect is a response term, but it is no excuse to say that my husband isn't worthy of my respect. She is to give deference to his wishes. Respect includes thoughtfulness, kindness, and generosity.

4. In order for Christian marriage to be successful their must be communication. When the husband is leading he does so without barking orders to his wife like she is some recruit, and the wife must learn to

communicate without being critical.

Service for the Lord By the Married

1. There is time consumed in making a marriage successful. You must spend time with your spouse, you must talk with your spouse, you must communicate and listen. I am amazed at how poor the communication is in most marriages.
2. There is time involved in training children.
3. Time consumed in providing materially for the family. His business cannot suffer. He must work, sometimes this involves 60 or 70 hours. On top of that he has family responsibilities.
4. Time for the Lord's service, prayer, prayer meeting, learning doctrine. The Lord must not be neglected.

Reasons not to get married.

1. Social pressure: Never get married because you think, "I'll never get another chance," or to solve problems, or to deal with loneliness, or because the other person seems to love you, or pregnancy. Don't marry to acquire social status or to improve economic situation in life. Don't marry someone because they are kind to you, or because they are sympathetic to you, or from gratitude.
2. Don't marry to solve a financial pressure in your life. Don't marry for a meal ticket, to improve your economics.
3. Do not marry to get into a country.
4. Don't marry on a wave of libido, sex is not love, it is only one of the many manifestations of love, don't confuse lust with love.
5. Age pressure.
6. Don't marry an unbeliever, or someone that isn't really interested in doctrine.
7. Don't marry with the attitude that you can get out of it if things don't work out.

Selection of a Life Time Partner

1. Falling in love is not always neat and logical. People often get married when their critical judgment is nullified by their emotions. This is why you should always begin a dating relationship by discussing critical issues in life, beginning with your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and Bible doctrine.

This provides two things,

- a. First, it will eliminate many people because they are in negative volition
- b. Second, it will lay the foundation for meaningful communication.

You must discuss backgrounds, family life, spend some time with each other's families and

observe the family dynamics, how does the father treat the mother and the reverse. Your spouse learned his ideas about marriage relationships from watching his/her parents.

Spend time in a variety of different situations. How does this person handle pressure, adversity, how do they argue, fight, etc.

Discuss views on child raising, discipline, if the person has been married before and has children that brings in another set of problems. How old are the children? How long have they been without the other parent, what were the circumstances of the parting, How does their parent want you to relate to them in terms of guidance, discipline, decision

Discuss views on politics.

What about your future? Discuss money, budgeting, ownership of property, investing, savings.

2. Important areas of compatibility:

Spiritual compatibility

Economic compatibility

Recreational compatibility

Mental compatibility.

Sin nature compatibility: By this I mean, you need to understand the trends in the other person, mental attitude sins, overt sins, anger, lust, jealousy. I don't mean you should have the same trends but understand their ways.

3. Do not marry someone with an addiction problem or personality prone to addiction: alcoholic, drug, gambling.

4. Men need to be ready to assume leadership role. They should be financially stable, and ready to assume the responsibilities of providing for a family.

5. Women should be ready to adapt themselves to the man and the Lord's leading in his life. In an age when many women are taught and trained to have a career and to be career oriented it can frequently occur that her career goals and his career goals conflict. The man's career, if he is in the plan and will of God, is the only issue.

Women should not marry until they meet someone to whom they are willing to surrender their freedom, someone who will not abuse their leadership role, someone who has a basic understanding of the biblical responsibilities of a husband, someone they can respect and who's leadership they can follow. Women need to be able to define what it means to be a submissive wife and to follow the leadership of the husband, what it means to adapt themselves to their husband. The husband isn't the one who should adapt to the wife, her abilities or her earning potential. The woman should also make sure she understands what the man thinks it means for her to be submissive.

6. It is better to be single than to be married to the wrong person. Better to be single than stupid.

Marriage Failure

1. Marriage is a divine institution for unbeliever and believer alike.
2. In the New Testament marriage for believers takes on an additional and higher significance. In marriage the believer has an opportunity to be a corporate testimony in the angelic conflict.
3. However, it takes two to make a marriage successful and only one to destroy it.
4. One of three things can happen when a marriage becomes difficult:
 - a. First, you decide to stay with it and endure the situation providing it does not involve physical abuse, sexual immorality, or drug abuse, and you are not in danger of being defrauded financially. So you operate on the principle of blessing by association and hope to have an impact on the person for Christ.
 - b. Second. Separation, Biblically the right of separation is recognized. But you have to take into account state law regarding legal separation, community property. By separation here it may mean a legal divorce, but no biblical right to remarry.
 - c. Divorce with the freedom to remarry.
5. In a mixed marriage the unbeliever makes the decision. The divorce gimmick: one party manipulates the other party into a divorce so that technically they don't look like the guilty party.
6. Biblical divorce provides the right to remarry.
7. Divorce and remarriage were permitted under the Mosaic Law, one exception Deut 24, 3,4.
8. In the Old Testament the man always initiated the divorce, but the principle works.
9. In John 4 Jesus recognized that the woman at the well had had five separate marriages and was no longer married to any of them. This recognizes the legitimacy of divorce and the subsequent marriages.
10. Divorce and remarriage for:

Adultery, that is unfaithfulness to the marriage contract, Matt 5:32, 19:9, not simply an act of sexual infidelity.

Desertion: 1 Cor. 7:15, remember a person can desert a marriage mentally or emotionally.

Divorce gimmick, one person can so emotionally badger or manipulate the other that they end up initiating the divorce, and the other person looks like the innocent party.

Physical abuse, protection, child abuse, sexual abuse, drug abuse, financial abuse. If you remarry a divorced person and either of you or both of you do not have a biblical cause for the previous divorce then the law of the status quo comes in plus confession and forgiveness. Confess it, move on, God forgives and the issue is behind you.

The Doctrine of the Dance

For the comparison I am not talking about the modern form of dancing where two people get out on the dance floor and simply gyrate around completely independent of one another, each doing their own thing regardless of the other. Although this is analogous to most modern marriages, two people living together but each so wrapped up in their own activities, dreams, and desires, that they mistake cohabitation with true marriage. In this analogy I am referring to any form of couple's dancing, such as ballroom dancing, where there are clearly defined rules, steps, and movements and both people must work together to achieve the desired effect. Dancing involves teamwork with clearly defined rules and roles for each member of the team. When the rules are followed and when each person fulfills his role the result is a fluid movement of grace and beauty. When one or the other messes up or tries to fill the role of the other the result is catastrophe. Rules, the man leads, the woman follows, the man holds the woman a certain way, and the man begins on the left foot, the woman on the right.

Christian Marriage involves teamwork with clearly defined rules and roles. Eph 5:22-33; Col. 3: 18-4:1; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

1. Teamwork is defined as A relationship between two individuals that is characterized by mutual cooperation and defined areas of responsibility and leadership directed to the achievement of a specified, common goal.
2. Two people cannot dance together without a common goal. Two believers cannot achieve a Christian marriage without a common goal, Amos 3:3 KJV. The goal of marriage between two believers is to produce a union of two lives which brings glory to God and is a testimony of divine grace before the human race and the angels in the angelic conflict. This can only be accomplished when both the man and the woman have as their personal goals the glorification of God.
3. Like any team, dancing has specifically defined roles for the two participants. In dancing, the male is the leader and the woman is the follower. This means the man initiates, plans, directs the movements of the woman. The woman is the follower. She responds to the leadership of the male and does everything he does only backward. In Christian marriage the husband is the leader, the one with final authority, and the one held accountable by God for the spiritual welfare of the family. In Christian marriage the wife is the responder. She is responding to God first and her husband second.
4. In the dance the leader and follower positions are not related to the skill level of the dancers. The male-leader may be less graceful and skilled than the partner, yet she yields to his leadership in grace. In Christian marriage the roles are not determined by spiritual maturity, emotional maturity, I.Q., leadership or management skills, or any other skills and abilities. The roles are determined by God who created the male soul to have its best optimal performance as the leader and the female soul to have its best optimal performance as the responder.
5. In dancing each person has specific footwork that must be learned and practiced in order to develop grace and fluidity. This demands thought and concentration. When emotion takes over mistakes occur. In Christian marriage each person has specific tasks and roles which they must learn and develop. It takes time, effort, hours of Bible class to grow to spiritual maturity, and along the way you will make a thousand mistakes which demand grace and forgiveness from the partner. Each partner must have as part of their attitude a desire, based on humility and teachability not arrogance, to help the other improve.

6. In dancing, the male who leads well can make his partner look graceful and keep her from making mistakes. However if his leads are too strong, she is overpowered and will look stiff and awkward, destroying all grace and usually making her uncomfortable if not creating some pain. Further he will destroy and prevent her from exerting her own style and grace under his leadership. If his leads are too weak the woman will not know how to respond and will be in a frustrating position of always trying to guess how to follow, she does not know which way to go and often trips and stumbles along the dance floor. The same is true of Christian marriage. The man who leads too strong is a tyrant and a bully and has no concept of grace, impersonal love, or humility. Usually weak and self-centered, operating on arrogance. Any man who hits a woman is a loser in life and failure in the marriage. The man who leads too weak will be run over by the wife, nagged, manipulated, and be made generally miserable.

7. The male as the leader plans and initiates the various moves, he must always be thinking 5 or 6 steps ahead. He must be thinking about where they are going on the dance floor, where other people or obstacles exist, and how to avoid them. He must maintain control because the woman cannot see where they are going. This implies that the man, as part of the leadership role, understands Christian marriage and where the couple is headed spiritually.

8. In the dance the leader must learn and study his partner to know how to lead her effectively. As the leader in the home and as an expression of aggressive personal love the husband must constantly learn and study his wife so that he can lead her effectively. This involves communication skills of listening, and honing his skills of watching. The highest goal is Christian marriage so being successful at this is ten thousand times more significant than any job you will ever perform.

9. The man must learn to listen to his partner. She and she alone knows how he is leading. If she says he is too harsh, he is for her. If she says he needs to be more firm in his lead then he must develop this without overpowering her. The same is true in life. Remember humility and teachability are part of grace-orientation. Grace-orientation is a prerequisite for impersonal love, the foundation of any successful Christian marriage. As the husband you need to listen to your wife, you need to listen between the lines, not just hear and react. No matter how much you think you are leading just right, she is the one who really knows.

10. The woman must learn to communicate to the man without challenging his tender male ego. Part of this means working on one thing at a time, don't dump on him, don't ever ridicule him or show any form of disrespect in word, tone, or look when any other people are around. The same is true in marriage. But if he is pursuing spiritual maturity and has genuine humility then he will get past his tender male ego which is nothing more than arrogance and the three arrogance skills.

11. The woman must learn to let the man lead. Nothing is more frustrating for a man then to fight a woman who is trying to back lead a dance. She must let him learn how to lead and to make mistakes. The Christian wife must learn to let the husband lead, to make mistakes, and to be vulnerable.

12. The woman is usually unaware of where the man is going and of his plans, she must therefore constantly be ready to respond and shift according to his lead, this means she must develop incredible amounts of flexibility. As the responder in the Christian marriage, the wife also must be flexible in relation to the husband's leadership. When she becomes

self-absorbed, arrogance takes over and she becomes inflexible, the result is a breakdown in the marriage and she goes into reaction instead of response.

13. The woman must continue to follow as best she can no matter how faulty his leadership. If the man is a failure in his leadership, she can still be a success in her role. In the marriage, her testimony in Christian marriage is not dependent on the male, but on her fulfilling her role responsibilities to the best of her ability.

14. Trouble starts when they quit thinking and start emoting, taking one another for granted and thinking things will just happen on their own. They won't. The moment you stop thinking you put everything in danger. Success ultimately is based on consistency and practice. Many mistakes are made, but as long as the goal is kept by the two, it can be accomplished. Never stop working on the basics, never forget the common goal.

15. As the two work together, mutual respect and admiration develop. Confidence increases.