

FOUNDATIONS OF A GREAT MARRIAGE
KEYS TO BUILDING MARRIAGES THAT WON'T CRUMBLE
2/6/2023

I. Introduction

- A. Two things the Bible teaches that marriage can be: _____! Marriage can be _____!
• *"He who finds a wife finds a treasure, and he receives favor from the Lord." (Prov. 18:22 NLT)*
• *"It's better to live alone in the corner of an attic than with a quarrelsome wife in a lovely home." (Prov. 25:24)*

- B. The quality of marriage depends on the inner expectations, commitments, and habits we bring into marriage. That is why when it comes to a happy marriage the first step is not finding the right person on the outside but letting God prepare us to be the right kind of _____ on the inside (Matthew 7:24-27).

Great marriages and families aren't created by things or feelings we have on the outside but great character and commitments we make on the inside.

- C. We want to see from the life of Ruth how she let God prepare her and Boaz not only for a great marriage but to build a legendary family.

Some special things about this story:

1. It isn't just a great romance story; it is a great _____ story.
"So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten..." (Joel 2:25 NKJV)
2. It is a story of how God's plans for blessing our families go way beyond us and even our lifetimes. All of the nations of the earth eventually were blessed through Boaz and Ruth's relationship.
3. We see the principle that the choices we make early for God which are hard and inconvenient, create incredible options and _____ later for unimaginable favor. Ruth had no idea that her sacrifices as a daughter-in-law would be an incredible opportunity as a wife and mother. (Faithful in little/ruler in much)

II. Keys to a great marriage and blessed family that we can learn from Ruth

- A. She made an unconditional _____ to be with God and His people.
You can't be in the world (serving its idols) and build a great marriage and family for God at the same time.

"Look," Naomi said to her, 'your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same.' But Ruth replied, 'Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live; I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!' When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more." (Ruth 1:15-18 NLT)

- B. Ruth and Boaz both gave up the right to _____ something happen. But sought God's will and let God give, in His time, whatever _____ desired. *"Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 10:39 NIV)*

- C. Both she and Boaz saw their marriage as a covenant not as a _____.
Differences between a covenant marriage and a consumer marriage
"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two become one flesh. This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:31-32 NIV)

1. It is first of all an agreement and a partnership with _____ of the relationship not just with another person.
 - *"May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us." (Ruth 1:17)*
 - *"What God has joined together let not man put asunder." (Mark 10:9)*

We are heirs together of a promise that God has for us and we can trust Him to fulfill and protect. If we just keep Jesus at the center.

2. It is based on a promise and a commitment not _____ and self-interests.
 - a. Covenant love is not defined by what we feel, or what we get in return for investment; it is defined by what we are willing to _____ and how we are committed to do what we promise. *“This is real love-not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.” (1 John 4:10 NLT)*

In a consumer relationship, we feel in order to love. In a covenant relationship we _____ in order to feel. You can and probably will fall out of “like” but you don’t fall out of God’s kind of love. Actions of love given when they’re not deserved create a bond of love.
 - b. It is the promise of our love that makes it safe to be _____ and to not have to love as a performance. *“They were naked and not ashamed.” (Genesis 2:25)*

“A marriage promise builds a sanctuary of trust in a jungle of unpredictability.”
-Lewis Smedes

We love for better or for worse, because often it is the ground of the worst that becomes the bed for the _____ that cause a marriage to thrive.
3. At the core of the covenant of marriage is to devote ourselves to a life of radical sexual faithfulness and _____ to the spouse God has called us into covenant with even _____ we meet them. Our radical faithfulness in heart, thoughts, mind, emotions, as well as body is at the core of pursuing a marriage that God can bless and use.
 - *“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.” (Ephesians 5:3 NIV)*
 - *“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman.” (Job 31:1 NLT)*
 - *“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.” (1 Corinthians 6:18 NIV)*
 - *“And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. 6:11 NIV)*

III. How can we be the kind of person that can keep this kind of covenant?

- A. It is in receiving the _____ in what Jesus did for us, that we receive the forgiveness and power to be free from the guilt and bitterness that can poison our relationship. It is through grace, we can find the value and worth that allows us to not expect or demand a spouse or anyone to fill the hole that _____ can fill.
- B. It is in grace that our selfish and self-centered self can be disempowered so that we can live to _____ and their best interest with a love that we are receiving from above. *“And he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” (2 Corinthians 5:15 NIV)*

The grace of God causes the covenant of marriage to not be a contract I try to keep but a covenant God empowers me to walk in.

(Answers: I. A. Amazing, awful B. person, redemption, opportunities II. A. commitment B. make, He C. contract, God at the center, feeling, give up, love, real, resurrections, integrity, before III. A. grace of God, only Jesus B. serve others)