

Family Matters 2 Marriage Matters

Last week we said **our families are set apart for God's glory**.

The marriage covenant of Christ followers is **distinctive from the world** in both its **purpose** and its **features**.

- The designed purpose of a thing should guide the operation the thing.
 - Example: Take a **Shovel**. I could do a lot of things with a shovel... **cut down a tree**, **scrape the ice off my windshield**, I could use it as an **umbrella**. But that would be dumb!

A shovel was designed for the purpose of digging in the ground. Its features/attributes fit the purpose.

- When you understand the designed purpose of marriage and commit to that purpose the functionality and operation of the relationship becomes a joy!

Today: lets find the specific designed **purpose** of marriage and look at some **key features**.

How do we know that our Marriage Matters to God? The Bible links the marriage of believers to the **redemptive work of Jesus on the cross** and **His covenant relationship with His bride, the church**.

Even the best marriages in this church consist of **two imperfect people** who probably **still have sin issues**.

This means **there is always something to overcome** and **always something to surrender to God**.

In **Ephesians 5** the **Apostle Paul** gives us New Testament believers specific **revelation** and **instructions** for the **purpose of marriage** and the **roles/attributes** of a Christian Marriage.

Why should we listen to an old ancient apostle's teaching on marriage? **Hasn't his opinions aged out?**

The risen Jesus personally revealed himself to Paul and called and commissioned him to become a foundational Apostle to the Church. Paul was caught up by the Spirit into the 3rd heaven and received revelation of God's work among the Gentiles and he church. He went on 3 missionary journeys winning souls, planting churches and establishing structural leadership in those churches.

He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write 13 books of our New Testament.

His teachings are not just his opinions, rather his teachings come from **divine revelation**, and **they have authority over our Christian Walk**.

Paul's Revelation of Marriage.

Ephesians 5:21-23 NLT And further, (to husband and wives) **submit to one another out of reverence for Christ**.

- **"reverence for Christ"** is a key phrase for our a Christ Centered Marriage.
- Think of it this way, Christ Jesus wants to be honored in your marriage so much that you should **submit your life to one another as an act of worship to Jesus**. SUBMITTING to YOUR SPOUSE is an ACT OF WORSHIP.

When I prepare a sermon, it gets tested: Going to the Saturday Market with Kerri... **you don't have too... it REALLY means, I want you too!** Brothers, let me give you a **Husband Hack!** **Women have a coded language!**

Coded Language and you should always ask yourself, "what does she really mean" before you respond?

1. "fine" - this is the word women use to **end and argument when they are convinced she is right** and you need to shut up!
2. "five Minutes" – now, when she is getting dressed five minutes means **a half hour**... unless you are watching the game and she needs your help cleaning the house... in that case **five minutes really means five minutes** and not one second more!
3. "nothing" – **this is the calm before the storm!** This means something, and you should be on your toes. Because, arguments that begin with "nothing" usually end with "fine"
4. "go ahead" – brothers, this is a dare, not permission! Don't do it!
5. "don't worry about it, I got it" - this is another dangerous statement, meaning this is something she has asked you to do several times, but now she is doing it herself. **This will later result in a man asking his wife "what's wrong" only to hear her say #3 "nothing"**

Remember #3 that is the calm before the storm!

GREAT HUSBAND HACK - **Back to the market...** Kerri said, you don't have to go if you don't want too... It was raining... there was a race... maybe we should skip it. **Act of worship, act of worship!**

We put on a rain jackets and shopped in the rain! **Then Kerri's c group met at our house and she was a beautiful bride doing her beautiful things!**

v.22 For wives, this means submit to your husbands **as to the Lord**. **v.23** For a husband is the head of his wife **as Christ** is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church.

v.25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just **as Christ loved the church**. He **gave up his life** for her...

Marriage Matters to God because it is a picture of Christ's redeeming love for his bride, the church.

v. 28-30 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. **29** No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, **just as Christ cares for the church**. **30** And we (husbands and wives) are members of his body.

v.31-33 As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into **one**." **32** This (marriage) is a **great mystery**, but it is an **illustration of the way Christ and the church are one**. **33** So again I say, each **man must love his wife** as he loves himself, and the **wife must respect her husband**. **(this not aged out)**

PURPOSE DETERMINES PRIORITY **Our first priority in marriage is to illustrate and illuminate the glory of Jesus!**

This is what makes our Christ Center-ed marriage distinctively different than non-Christian marriages.

Go to a companion text in 1 Peter.

1 Peter 1:1 NIV Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, **to God's elect, exiles scattered** throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia...

Peter is writing to Christians who have been scattered abroad because of intense persecution. These **believers were living under harsh governments** which were **becoming increasingly hostile toward the church**.

1 Peter 2:13 NIV Submit yourselves **for the Lord's sake** to every human authority. (don't compromise, but be good citizens!)

1 Peter 2:15 MSG It is God's will that **by doing good**, you might **cure the ignorance of the fools** who think you're a **danger to society**. Sounds appropriate for today. The president and others the media have recently accused extreme conservatives (including devout bible believing Christians) as being a danger to society and democracy.

"For the Lord's sake"

1 Pet 3:1-7 ESV Likewise (for the Lord's sake), wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, **they may be won** without a word by the conduct of their wives, **2** when they see your **respectful** and **pure conduct**.

3 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—**4** but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. **5** For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, **6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and **do not fear anything that is frightening**.

7 Likewise (for the Lord's sake), husbands, live with your wives in an **understanding** way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the **grace of life**, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Our second priority in marriage is to help our partners become the best version of the newly created persons God has called them to be.

This is very radically different than the world's view of marriage.

In the world, we find a person we are attracted to and then we marry them with the hope that they will make us happy forever.

It is a **me-centric priority**. *They must do what makes me happy*. If they cease to make me happy, I'm out!

That is not the purpose of marriage... **Your happiness is important**, but in a Christ-exalting marriage **your happiness is a by-product** of you finding oneness with your spouse while glorifying Jesus together.

Christian Distinctive: **Because of Jesus, I already have everything I need for happiness and a fulfilled life**. Jesus has already provided for me what my spouse could never give to me.

- **Jesus is the only one who knows me completely and still loves me perfectly.**
 - In Christ, I am loved forever; accepted forever; forgiven forever!
- This love we have from God is a deep rich resource from which we can draw out love, acceptance and forgiveness and offer it as a gift to our spouse.

Our third priority in marriage is finding the harmony of Oneness which comes from embracing and operating in our God-given roles.

1) For the Wife

1 Pet. 3:1,2 NIV Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, **2** when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

a) **Out of worship for Jesus, wives submit to your husbands.**

i) Say it this way, **wives for the Lord's sake, out of your worship of Jesus, offer to your husband the gift of submitted heart.**

(1) **This is not a subservient brow beaten will. This instead the gift of respect.**

(2) Remember Ephesians 5:33 **So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.**

ii) **Men this means your wife is giving you submission and respect as a gift! It is hers to give and not yours to demand!**

CORRECTION: if you are a man and you think you have an authority to demand unconditional submission, then you are not a loving husband, you have become a carnal tyrant and that's not worship!

How is demanding submission a picture of the gospel? How is that illustrative of Christ love for His church?

b) Ladies: **Embrace the mission.** Your family is an assignment... your marriage is one too!

i) **If any of you have a husband who is an unbeliever, don't leave him, love him.**

ii) **Now here's a warning to the singles listening today. Avoid missionary dating!** Don't presume that you will be able to win an unsaved boyfriend after you marry him.

c) **Wives put the priority on the beauty of the inner heart!**

Peter is not saying to the wives you can't enhance your beauty. He is simply amplifying **Proverbs 31:30 ESV Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.**

d) **Wives trust God! don't fear what is frightening.**

5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, **6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you **do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.**

i) The fear that is frightening to women is that if they submit their in the marriage they will be controlled and possibly even abused by a controlling bully of a husband.

ii) Brother's your assignment is to remove the fear from her life and help her flourish!

(1) As she offers you the gift of submission and respect, return the gift with sacrificial love!

iii) **One more thing about Sarah! She was in no way Abraham's lesser.** Did you know that Sarah is listed in the **Hebrews 11 Hall of Faith?!** By faith Abel; By faith Enoch; By Faith Noah; By Faith Abraham; and By Faith Sarah receive power to conceive because she considered Him faithful who had promise.

2) For the Husband

Likewise husbands, (for the Lord's sake) live with your wives in an **understanding** way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the **grace of life**, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

a) **Husbands you are a home builder! Don't leave this heavy task only to the wife.**

i) **Pro. 24:3 NIV** By **wisdom** a house is built, and through **understanding** it is established. This your assignment.

b) **Live with your wife in an understanding way.**

i) **Men know your wife!**

- (1) Know what she likes and what she doesn't
- (2) Know when she is uncomfortable and when she is filled with joy.
- (3) Men we should be able to look across the room and know what she is feeling!

(a) No way P Ron... do you know how many times my wife has given me the wrong signals.

ii) **use your wisdom and understanding** so you can **move in with your strength and love her well**, protect her well. Don't leave her unprotected or unsupported.

iii) **Weaker Vessel?** is Peter saying the wife is a lesser vessel? NO

(1) **In scripture when the word vessel is used in context with service it has to do with the physical.** Typically, men are built stronger. More muscle mass, more lung capacity, more physical strength.

(2) **Men just honor your wife by doing the heavy liftings.**

(a) **Wives let your husbands bless you.**

(b) **Story:** (don't worry, I got it) Kerri impatient with the cat sand. She drops a 50lb bag onto the dolly and hit smashed her in the face! I was so upset! **Not our finest moments either!** She's crying and I'm yelling at her!

iv) **Men use your physical strength in a way that will bring help to her and not harm her!**

(1) **How did Jesus honor His bride (the church) with His strength?**

- (a) He used his strength in the garden when He prayed not my will but thy will!
- (b) He used his strength to endure ridicule and mocking, when he wore a crown of thorns!
- (c) He used his strength to take the punishment of our sin with lashes on his back.
- (d) He used His strength to carry a cross up a hill where he would use his strength as nails are pounded into his wrist.
- (e) Jesus loves us so much that He used His strength to hang on a cross until the full punishment for Adams sin and my sin and your sin and the sins of the entire world came upon his back.

And in that moment, He died! So we might live!

Now, husbands to use your strength to love her like Christ loves us! and there is grace for every wife to not be frightened by her role.

You can use a Shovel **to Plant Something Great** or **to Dig a Grave.** Which will it be? **Choose the right purpose!**