

Survivors

“The Assault on Marriage”

The Words of Jesus, Matthew 19:6 – “So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Hebrews 13:4 – “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

1) The Attack on Marriage

a) Blatant: The serpent in the garden

i) The serpent questioned 2 things: God’s love and God’s authority.

Genesis 3:1-7 (NLT) - The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, ‘Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?’

²‘Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,’ the woman replied. ³‘It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, “You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.”’

⁴‘You won’t die!’ the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵‘God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.’

⁶The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.”

Satan’s Plan of Attack

(1) Exaggeration: The serpent exaggerated God’s warning: “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

God doesn’t want you to enjoy anything in life! No, that’s not true! When God places a restriction, He does it for our protection, not to be cruel or controlling.

(2) Distortion: The distortion was, you will be better off once YOU get the knowledge to decide what is right and what is wrong.

- (3) Separation: The serpent knew (from his own experience) the consequences of this marital rebellion would separate the first couple from God.
- (4) Desperation: As the result of their sin we find them desperately trying to cover the shame of their nakedness while hiding from God.

Question: Is marriage better off done God's way or not?

ii) The Controversy of Gay Marriage

- The announcement in the Tennessean last month regarding Grace Point Church in Franklin, TN and its decision to now support Gay Marriage
- The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee Presbyterians voted last month to change the definition of marriage from a "civil contract between a man and a woman" to a "unique commitment between two people." The results of the last months vote was 92 yes, 84 no.

The serpent is now in the church trying to distort the truth and destroy the beauty of the God-given gift of marriage.

Today the Bible, to many, is seen as a harsh, out of date, unloving book of insensitive restrictions.

Pastor Tim Keller says it best, "God put guardrails around sex because it is the most delightful yet also most dangerous of all human capacities."

Paul, the apostle, tearfully warned the leaders in Ephesus that the church of God was "bought with His own blood" and that after he left "savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!" (Acts 20:28-31)

Romans 1:21-28 – **21** For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Claiming to be wise, they became fools, **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images... **24** Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, **25** because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator... **26** For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; **27** and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and

receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. **28** And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.”

(1) The Church of Jesus Christ needs to find a balance between a clear biblical conviction about the sinfulness of homosexual behavior and patient compassion to come alongside those who have homosexual desires.

(2) All people need a powerful encounter with Christ’s transforming love and power.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 – “**9** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, **10** nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God. **11** And such were some of you. 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.”

(3) We are a collection of people with differing genetic, hormonal, environmental disorders that incline everyone of us, in varying ways, to do sinful things in that list. But we will not justify our sin; instead we will find our justification in the forgiving and transforming power of Christ Jesus!

This means we should not in any way desire to drive homosexual people away. In fact, we want to be a church where homosexual people can either overcome their sexual disorder, or find the faith, courage, help and power to live a victorious, joyful, celibate life in spite of the disorder.

b) Subtle Attack: The Serpent in the Culture

i) There are normal common challenges faced by the healthiest couples: differences in family backgrounds, problems with in-laws, financial matters, differences in religious backgrounds, differing temperaments, irritating habits, varying approaches to raising children, and the complex area of sex.

ii) There are subtle lies of the enemy that become unholy beliefs.

Six Myths about Marriage:

(1) The Perfect Person Myth: This myth says, if you marry the *right* person you will have a wonderful life together.

(2) There is a More Perfect Soul Mate Out There Myth: When you discover that Mr. Perfect isn't so perfect and Mrs. Perfect isn't so perfect, there is a human tendency to wonder if, perhaps, you married the wrong person.

(3) The Religion Doesn't Matter Myth: whether you marry a Christian or not, it doesn't really make any difference. It will all work out okay.

Your relationship with God is the most powerful and intimate relationship of your life. It is grieving to a dedicated believer when that relationship is not shared with their spouse.

(4) The Red Carpet Media Myth: Have you ever looked through the pages of People Magazine? The media mega stars look so happy and so awesome!

(a) Lighting, camera angles, beauty aids, cosmetic surgery, and artistic airbrushes can make man and/ or a woman look incredible.

(b) The truth is that every one of us has our needs. All of us have battles with weight—too little or too much. Everyone of us is either too tall or too short, has too much hair or too little, is too rich or too poor. Every one of us yearns to be accepted by God and by each other.

(c) We should take care of our bodies because:

(i) We are the “temple of the Holy Spirit” and we should honor God with our bodies.

(ii) We should honor our spouse because they deserve our best effort, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

(5) The Incompatibility Myth: It's impossible for us to get along because we have become incompatible.

(a) The number one reason cited for divorce --- “incompatibility”.

Incompatible: Unable to exist together in harmony

(b) Incompatibility is a word that we have created to give us an excuse to get out of a relationship at which we are unwilling to work.

(c) Married couples need to throw that word right out of their covenant.

(i) Delight in your differences.

(ii) Work through your troubles.

(iii) Celebrate your victories.

(6) The Hyped-Up Romantic In-Love Myth: We are not “in love” with each other any longer.

(a) C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* wrote, “Being in love is a good thing, but it is not the best thing. You cannot make it the basis of a whole life. It is a noble feeling, but it is still a feeling. Now, no feeling can be relied on to last in its full intensity, or even to last at all.... In fact, the state of being in love usually does not last.... But of course ceasing to be ‘in love’ need not mean ceasing to love”.

(b) There is a science to the in-live euphoria that occurs in our bodies.

A recent BBC article stated that the events occurring in the brain when we are in love have similarities with mental illness.

(i) Dopamine - Also activated by cocaine and nicotine

(ii) Norepinephrine - Otherwise known as adrenalin, starts us sweating and gets the heart racing.

(iii) Serotonin - One of love's most important chemicals washes over our brain and may actually send us temporarily insane.

Upstreet Class: Advice on How to Have a Healthy Marriage

* Give presents on Valentine’s Day to your love. Don’t judge your husband/wife. On wedding day, give a 20 layer cake. (Shelby, 3rd Grade)

* Don’t get nervous in front of the lady. Don’t get nervous. Smile and be happy. Be as happy as you can be. (Addie, 2nd Grade)

* Don’t talk too much. Don’t judge your husband. Let your husband watch TV. (Reese, 4th Grade)

* No biting and hitting. – (Cameron, age 6)

* Never get advice from someone that’s in 4th grade and under. (Julie, 4th Grade)

2) Five Ways to Survive the Assault on Marriage

Matthew 19:6 – “So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Hebrews 13:4 – “Let marriage be held in honor among all...”

a) Be protective of your marriage.

i) The serpent is still trying to separate you from God and from one another.

ii) Avoid risky situations.

(1) Long lunches with a co-worker

(2) No exclusive friendships with the opposite sex

Most people do not plan to be unfaithful.

b) Be positive.

Phil 4:8 – “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable... pure... lovely... think on these things.”

i) Look for what is right in your spouse and tell him or her daily.

ii) People who have love affairs are often looking for appreciation and affirmation.

c) Be polite.

1Corinthians 13 says, “Love is kind... not rude... not resentful or irritable...”

i) Always talk to your spouse with respect.

ii) Be careful what you say to each other and how you say it.

d) Be playful.

i) Make fun things happen, work on your sex life, and make sure humor is a mainstay in your marriage.

ii) Schedule time to play with one another, and have a “date night” once a week or at least once every two weeks.

e) Be prayerful.

i) Pray for your spouse in your alone time. Report back the things you have been praying about.

Prayer and communication about prayer, helps build intimacy.

ii) Pray with one another frequently.