

## "Till Death Do Us Part: What You Need to Know to Make Marriage Last"

Genesis 2; Mark 10

### I. Introduction

- A. Why is it that so many people who begin a marriage relationship so well end up so miserable?
  1. The permanence of marriage can feel very heavy, especially in comparison to the failure of marriages around us
  2. There is one divorce every thirty-six seconds in the United States—nearly 2,400 divorces every day and 16,800 divorces every week
  3. The average marriage that ends in divorce lasts about eight years
- B. Because the trend toward divorce continues to worsen, it causes society to question whether marriage is reasonable
- C. Most marriage research is about failure—all the reasons it doesn't work; the good news is that though marriage is on the endangered species list, it is not doomed
- D. Healthy, vibrant marriage doesn't just happen—it's the deliberate result of determined people willing to make it work through God's grace and strength
- E. Marriage is the only game in which both players can win, but to do so, they have to understand what a marriage is, what a marriage does, and what a marriage needs

### II. Understand What Marriage Is (Genesis 2:24)

- A. The first poem in the Bible is found in Genesis 2:23
  1. In English, this poem does not sound romantic—the emotional element to it that is captured in the Hebrew is lost when translated to English
  2. John Calvin translated it this way: "Now, at length, I have obtained a suitable companion, who is part of the substance of my flesh, and in whom I behold, as it were, another self"
- B. There are three aspects of marriage:
  1. Leaving
    - a. Marriage begins by severing one relationship in order to solidify another relationship
    - b. The couple has to cut the cord of dependence on their parents and establish a new first loyalty
    - c. This is illustrated by the ceremonial giving away of the bride by her parents
  2. Cleaving
    - a. Marriage requires a deep, determined commitment of permanence
    - b. The Hebrew word is *dabaq*—to cling to or to follow hard after an indissoluble union
    - c. The idea of permanence is all but gone; humans have changed God's blueprint in order to add a back door: divorce
  3. Weaving

- a. "And they shall become one" (v. 24)—the *becoming* takes a lifetime; it's not instantaneous
    - i. Basic level: the physical, sexual union
    - ii. Deeper level: everything is shared
      - I. Bodies (see I Corinthians 7:4)
      - II. Possessions
      - III. Insights
    - iii. "It is the type of relationship that is shared with no one else other than one's mate. It is a partnership in every area of life, for as long as both partners live. In other words, there is absolutely nothing about which one spouse can say to another, that's none of your business. The wife has complete and unfettered access to every area of her husband's life, and so, also, the husband to every area of his wife's life. There are no locked doors or secret hiding places" — Wayne Mack
  - b. Continue to add points of strength to the marriage relationship; this produces longevity and makes the relationship immovable
  - c. A marriage is not held together by chains; it is held together by threads—tiny threads woven together every day, every week, every month, over years
  - d. That makes it absolutely immovable and strong over a lifetime
- III. Understand What Marriage Does (Genesis 2:25)
- A. Leaving, cleaving, and weaving produces intimacy
    - 1. The idea of intimacy is symbolized by Adam and Eve's nakedness—open and unashamed before each other in an open and unguarded relationship
    - 2. This is not just a physical intimacy; this is the deep and rewarding connection between a husband and wife physically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially
  - B. Marriage is infinitely rewarding at its best, but indescribably oppressive at its worst; what makes the difference is intimacy
- IV. Understand What Marriage Needs (Mark 10:9)
- A. Jesus linked a human experience with a divine covenant
    - 1. Marriage is more than just a piece of paper
    - 2. When a couple gets married, they need to understand that their decision to be joined invites God into the process, who Himself then joins them together
  - B. God elevates the commitment of marriage and transforms it into a covenant
    - 1. Marriage is a sacred union
    - 2. Marriage needs this recognition—it's a covenant (see Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14)
  - C. Marriage needs to be protected
    - 1. From outside forces or people who would want to tear it apart
    - 2. Don't let anything or anyone drive a wedge between you and your spouse
      - a. Lovingly set boundaries with parents
      - b. Don't shelve your marriage for the sake of child-centered parenting
        - i. Child-centered parenting produces narcissistic children with no coping skills
        - ii. Puts a strain on the marriage, because the children have been placed above the spouse

3. Every other relationship in your life has to take a back seat to your marriage relationship
- D. Marriage reprioritizes everything and everyone in your life
- V. Conclusion
- A. How to make your marriage last:
1. Laugh—laughter needs to be a daily part of your marriage; couples who laugh are couples who last
  2. Absolve (forgive)—marriage is a union between two sinners who need to be relentless forgivers
  3. Study each other—discover each other; discovery is better than trying to change the other person (see I Peter 3:7)
  4. Time—marriage takes time; marriage takes top priority of your time
- B. For better or for worse
1. More couples will survive if they understand that the better may come after the worse
  2. Do the hard work, because it will get better

**Figures referenced:** John Calvin, Wayne Mack

**Cross references:** Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14; I Corinthians 7:4; I Peter 3:7

**Hebrew words:** dabaq

**Topic:** marriage

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