

“Marriage re-Branded ~ God’s expectations for Marriage” [7.26.09]

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Best Buy [block letters w/blue]

BP=[once Gulf Oil, now a psychedelic burst]

KFC = [once deep fried in trans-fats, now a NEW & Improved Colonel Sanders]

DUCATI MOTORCYCLES [now streamlined]

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There’s 1 area in the life of the church that is in a desperate need for an overhaul, which needs to be re-Branded, it’s the state of marriage among believers.

There’s some pretty ‘goofy expectations’ out there when it comes to marriage

Answers little children gave about what to expect in dating & marriage:

1<sup>st</sup> question asked = What do most people do on a date?

It’s kind of interesting to get a child’s perspective on this issue.

- Martin [age 10] says, “On the 1<sup>st</sup> date, they just tell each other lies. That usually gets them interested enough to go for a 2<sup>nd</sup> date.”  
Martin’s apparently done a fair amount of dating in his [10 yrs] of life.

Next question [big debate] = Is it better to be single or to be married?

- Anita [age 9], “It is better for girls to be single, but not for boys. Boys need somebody to clean up after them.”
- Will [age 7] “It gives me a headache to think about that stuff; I’m just a kid; I don’t need that kind of trouble.”

Another question = How do people in love typically behave?

- Wendy [age 8], “When a person gets kissed for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, they fall down & don’t get up for at least an hour.”  
Wendy has very high expectations...little concerned for her husband ☺

Last question = What are surefire ways to make someone fall in love with you?

Guaranteed - - foolproof ways...

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A favorite response is Camille, age 9 = “Shake your hips & hope for the best.”  
Very concerned for Camille ☺

Children are not the only ones who have ‘goofy expectations’ for Love & Marriage:

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As a result, the state of marriage is now in decline. Countless people have lost perspective on importance & permanence of marriage.

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(R) Matthew 19: 3 – 9 = (v. 10) or p. 749 in pew Bible

[12] Disciples said, "...if this is the case, it is better not to marry."

In other words, Christ's vision of the meaning of marriage was so vastly different from the disciples; they could not imagine it to be a good thing.

If that were the case back then with the sober-minded Jewish world in which they lived, how much more will the remarkable view of marriage in the mind of God seem unintelligible to the world we live in?

This is the reason we OPEN UP the BIBLE & teach each week; God's Word gives us insight to things that are confusing.

I know that there are literally dozens of you who are in desperate need of some DIVINE HELP in your marriage. Some of you listening to this msg, are in a marriage that is hanging on by a thread. Maybe nobody knows it...Your marriage looks good on the outside; but your situation is unstable & you are looking for hope.

I've got GOOD NEWS! Please understand that the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead can RESURRECT your relationship...if you both call on Him & trust His WORD!

Let's allow God's word to re-Brand the sacred institution of marriage: it can be much better than you've ever imagined!

- I. Foundational refreshers' = What makes a marriage unique & set apart?
  - A. Marriage is viewed as a Covenant Commitment:
    1. Marriage was established by God @ creation = Adam & Eve
      - a. Marriage begins w/a commitment to be husband & wife for a lifetime.
      - b. (R) Malachi 2: 14 or p. 729 in pew Bible
      - c. Marriage is viewed as a 'covenant commitment' in which God stands as a witness to the sacred vows of marriage.
    2. re(R) Matthew 19: 6
      - a. God mysteriously makes two individual's into 'spiritually one flesh'
      - b. In God's sight when you say your wedding vows; make this covenant before Him - - you have a new status; husband & wife together.
  - B. Marriage is some kind of public commitment
    1. Some kind of public commitment is necessary for outsiders to treat a married couple with respect & proper esteem as no longer single.
      - a. Sexual intercourse does not constitute a marriage as was evident from the conversation between Jesus & the woman @ the well in [John 4: 18]
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2. She was living with a man but that did not mean she was married to him, for there had been no public commitment recognized by God or by the community.

C. Marriage is not for everybody

1. Somewhere along the line, marriage became the normal - - expected result of everyone who breathes.
  - a. To be single in our culture is to be somehow lacking; this gets communicated all the time...movies, books, TV, sometimes @ church; I'm so sorry - - please forgive me if you have ever sensed this in my teaching.
  - b. When you add the enormous pressure in our culture to be sexually active outside of marriage, then singleness can be an intense challenge.
  - c. Married folks too often forget this unspoken pressure.
2. Be encouraged Jesus Himself lived a single life. He was fully human, the Bible says, He had all the desires anybody else has.
  - a. If He were @ our church today, He would not attend a young married class or small group.
  - b. Jesus would be in our Singles Ministry; serving & doing life alongside of this wonderful group of people ☺

Jesus plan & vision for His bride = the church to be a community made up of married people & single people alike that value & respect each other & genuinely seek the best for one another!

There is not 1 married couple engaged in this conversation this morning that doesn't long to for a marriage that is FRESH & IMPROVING filled w/hope

If you will prayerfully consider applying the following principles in your marriage, I believe God can work a miracle in your relationship with your spouse!

II. (1) Theological Principle to Embrace

- A. 1<sup>st</sup> principle = There is a God to whom we are ultimately accountable
  1. This is an odd but necessary place to begin when approaching marriage.
    - a. As Christians we believe that, "In the beginning, God created the heavens & the earth," & after this, "God formed the 1<sup>st</sup> man from the dust of the ground & God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life & the 1<sup>st</sup> man became a living soul."
    - b. Bible teaches that, "God looked upon all of His creation & saw that it was not good for the 1<sup>st</sup> man to be alone."
    - c. To meet this basic need God performed the 1<sup>st</sup> operation in history, He opened up Adam's side & took a rib, began to create a companion. Beautiful symbolism of God intended equality!
  2. Adam awakened from his surgery & there was Eve standing right before him.
    - Keep in mind Adam had only seen ghastly hippos - - apes - - pigs; now standing before him was the 1<sup>st</sup> woman he'd ever seen & she was absolutely gorgeous; perfect, untainted by sin; standing right there wearing nothing but a smile ☺

- God communicated clearly with Adam & said, “Adam, this is what I want you to do. I want you to cling to your wife & become one flesh,”
  - & Adam said, “Lord, I love you 😊” to prove how much I love you I will practice 1<sup>st</sup> time obedience - - what a wonderful idea! God then formed the 1<sup>st</sup> marriage!
- B. Then God held Adam & Eve accountable for their behavior.
- God made it clear to them that they could eat of any tree in the Garden except the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil.
    - He said, “Now if you eat of that tree...when you eat of it you will die.”
    - Later, Adam & Eve chose to disobey & they were cast out of the Garden & they eventually died.
- C. The Bible makes it clear that God is going to hold us accountable for our behavior.

II Corinthians 5: 10, “For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.”

- When you became a Christian, God forgave you all your sins, but He is going to judge your works & reward or deprive you accordingly.
  - (R) I Corinthians 3: 10 – 15 or p. 871 in pew Bible
  - [Sobering thought] = How we live as Christians is one day going to be evaluated & compensated in heaven.

So, what does this have to do with marriage?

1. If you really believe that one day you are accountable to God, then your marriage relationship becomes the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important relationship in your life.
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> relationship is your relationship with God.
2. A profound understanding & fear of God is exactly what many marriages need today; because without it, the gospel is diluted down to mere human relations & loses its biblical glory.
  - Without a respect & healthy fear of God you will be tempted to think that your wrath - - your anger - - against your spouse is simply too big to overcome!
3. Don't neglect - the same God who resurrected His son Jesus from the grave has the ability resurrect your relationship with your spouse.

Your spouse was intended from the very beginning to be a blessing and pure gift from God

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