

Marriage is the answer. It is the answer to some of life's most pressing questions:

- 1) What is the greatest reward under the sun? Marriage
 - a. *"Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given you under the sun; for this is your reward in life."* (**Ecclesiastes 9:9**)
- 2) What is the solution for loneliness? Marriage
 - a. *"It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him. The Lord fashioned into a woman the rib He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man."* (**Genesis 2:18,22**)
- 3) Where is love most sincerely and selflessly fulfilled? Marriage (**Ephesians 5:28-29**)
 - a. *"So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church."*
- 4) When does life become "very good?" According to God, the answer is: in Marriage (**Gen. 1;27,31; 2:24**).
 - a. *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to His wife; and they shall become one flesh... God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."*

And let me be clear. Perhaps not too many years ago this distinction would not be necessary, but times have certainly changed. **Traditional Marriage** is the Answer. That is, the relationship that God built!

- One man lawfully wed to one woman - *"God made them male and female... leave...be joined...one flesh."*
- Authority Roles Honored - *"Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head...woman"* **I Co. 11:3**.
- Until death do they part - *"What God has joined together, let no man separate"* **Matthew 19:6**.

Modern Marriage, however, is not the answer. It is man's design and in many ways sets itself against God's way:

- Any two people who love each other (no matter if lawful right exists / man and man...)
- Where Equality has replaced Authority roles (All authority, roles and responsibilities are shared equally).
- Until one of us decides this isn't working (Like when Brad Pitt married Jennifer Aniston - see how it goes).

Each of these approaches comes with its own set of "rules of engagement." For the traditional marriage from God, the Bible is our guide and gives tremendous truths to make the family work. (*Wed. night*).

But Modern Marriage, as taught by book authors, talk show hosts, and co-workers, has an entire set of rules derived from the mind of men. And while some advice is actually productive, (Dr. Phil - consider every idea the best one ever for 15 minutes), there are some major MYTHS this approach teaches that even God's people have often come to believe. And this is how God's plan gets slowly affected.

Tonight, I'd like to share three of those Modern Marriage Myths with you:

(*things our culture accepts as normal and true... and even helpful... but things which God would deny...*)

- 1) Absence makes the heart grow fonder (culture teaches separation and finding peace apart is a good way to cope with one another's faults and build the desire to be together.
 - a. False. Separation, and finding satisfaction apart... to eventually lead to satisfaction together is a faulty premise. Sure, being apart can make us yearn to be back together... but being apart as a TOOL to make us want to come back together does NOT work! (fix for trouble)
 - b. **Strength is built upon Togetherness.** One flesh does not grow in unity by virtue of separation, but working together! (**Gen. 2:23-25**) Physical, Mental, Social, Spiritual
 - c. **I Cor. 7:3-5** - context is sexual unity, but applicable in many marriage areas - Deprivation does not create a desire to be together... but an OPPORTUNITY for Satan to fill that void with something, or someone else! (could create a new normal, a separated one)
 - d. **Ecc. 9:9** -- Notice the words "ENJOY" and "REWARD." Those sound great. I want to enjoy life and have reward for all I do... now notice the word "WITH" the woman you love. God wants us to seek the fulfillment for desires, emotional strength and happiness, in our relationship together... not by running away for the weekend or planning vacations apart.
 - e. Quality, rewarding interaction makes the heart grow fonder! Lots of one on one communication.
- 2) Money is the #1 cause of marriage failure
 - a. Must say, many do fight about money. It is like DEBT, BANK ACC, STUFF are like three kids we are fighting over how to raise. ... And blaming things on money is just an easy copout: money can't speak up and say, "sorry but this is on you guys." And, easier to say it is the money strain than to be honest and say, "I am the reason this isn't working!"

- b. But to say that our troubles are connected to money issues is a dangerous belief.
 - i. One, we are saying our marriage cannot improve without money change.
 - 1. So we both separate for extra work to make money (see point a).
 - 2. Or things don't change, or get worst, and what happens to marriage.
- c. Truth: Attitude is Everything (concerning money or any other issue). **v.6-7** – Contentment!
 - i. **I Tim. 6:9-10** – It is an unhealthy relationship with it that causes problem. A longing, desire and love for things that makes it more than it ought to be.
 - ii. If this passion for it becomes more important than my faith, my spouse... I will fight those to protect it. ... Issue is with the affection, not the object of it.
- d. But when my attitude is right: and contentment is our love, God's good gift, YOU... then money is minimized in importance and doesn't affect us! -- Like three kids... it is not the kids, but our attitude toward one another in dealing with them... so too with money.
- e. **I Tim. 6:17-19** – *When my attitude is right, and I can think clearly enough to relegate money to nothing more than a bonus blessing that I only have to serve others... I will not overlook or undermine the true blessings in my life... and I would never hurt the one I love to protect my love for something. The truth is, I only have money and goods for the purpose of serving them!*
- f. **Eccl. 15:17** – *“Better is a dish of vegetables where love is, than a fattened ox served with hatred.”* Longing for the fatter OX will not help make the dinner pleasant. The OX is not a factor.... At all. It is the longing and desire for LOVE and companionship... regardless of what is on the table!
 - i. Some of the greatest, most fulfilling marriages I've ever seen are by those who look back over their life and say: *“we lived in a shack... but didn't know we were poor. We now live in a nice home, but don't know we are rich. We are together... and that's all that matters.”*

3) Marriage is a 50/50 proposition

- a. We are talking about how far you are willing to go to pursue what is right: Pop culture teaches you should go half-way... and then expect them to come the other half...
- b. The false idea has perhaps grown out of modern marriage ideas. Marriage is not about roles: God, Husband, Wife, but about equality, an even split: a partnership. So, it is run more as a business than a relationship from God. In business, each partner does half the work. But in business, if one partner fails to do their share, the partnership fails. Such is a standard in modern marriage.
- c. So, marriages when real, critical emotional issues on the line... a line is drawn and I am only willing to go half way, make concessions, and then wait for you to do the same. (1% short = failure!)
 - i. *Whole marriages like that... hands extended, waiting... or people divorce.*
- d. **Love Bears ALL Things.** It is not partially invested, but fully. Not bearing some, but ALL!
- e. For a lesson on the extent which love will go, consider your Husband (**Revelation 21:9-11, 4**).
 - i. How far was Jesus willing to go for you, before you'd gone any distance at all for Him?
 - ii. And if He'd gone half-way and extended His hand, how many could have reached Him?
 - iii. Love your wife, love your husband, like Christ loves the church!
- f. **I Pet. 3:1-2** – But love and service in marriage is not defined by compromise or limits, but unconditional godliness to the fullest degree.... A “100/100 proposition” if you will... as is illustrated in this passage about ungodly mates.
 - i. *If they go 50% to what is right, you go 100%. If they go 0%, you go 100%. It is about what is right, proper and godly. And you don't get them to come to you from the 50 yard line!*
- g. World would not teach this... but PRIDE and Step for Step... get love of God into your marriage!

Conclusion: (Psalm 127)

Unless the Lord build the House -- *Bible plan for marriage*

They labor in vain who build it – *Modern marriage*

--- If we believe the lies, we will act on them, and our results will be no different than those in the world.

--- But if we see through the false ideas and stand for what is right

We will Work through our Problems TOGETHER.

We will not let money or children or any outside influence tear us apart.

And each of us will be willing to go the whole way, all in, to make our marriage work and be very good!

--- But don't forget, from our family fundamental story this morning, the first step is a personal decision to be FAITHFUL, RESPONSIBLE, and if necessary, PENITENT.

The world wouldn't call that normal, and that's why it's going to work. Act now.