

WHEN MARRIAGE AND MERCY COLLIDE

The Power of the Gospel in Marriage

Laying the Foundation

A Gospel Starter-Kit for Marriage

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Oct. 18, 2009

Three Basic Tools for the ‘Marriage Tool Box’

I. You’ll Need an Authority that’s Bigger than Either One of You ~ *It’s Called the Bible*

Isaiah 66:1-2 “Thus says the LORD: Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist, says the LORD. But on this one will I look: on him who is humble and of contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”

II. You’ll Need a Purpose that’s Bigger than Your Own Needs and Desires ~ *It’s the Glory of God*

2 Corinthians 5:9 “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.”

I Corinthians 10:31 “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Ephesians 5:22-33 - The most notable thing about Paul's approach is that Christ is the reference point for all our actions in marriage.

- Wives are to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord" (v.22)
- Husbands are to love their wives "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (v. 25)
- Husbands should nourish and cherish wives, "just as Christ does the church" (v.29)

Ephesians 5:31-32 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

"This marriage between man and woman... is about something much bigger than the relationship itself. It points beyond them to somebody else - to God. The point of marriage isn't marriage. It's a picture. A display. A window that you look through to something else. A marriage has a mission. Too often the problem is that each person in that marriage has a mission . . . and it has nothing to do with God's mission...

A marriage is designed to counter all of this. Not to add to the brokenness of the world but to add to the 'oneness' of the world. This man and this woman who have given themselves to each other are supposed to give the world a glimpse of hope, a display of what God is like, a bit of [oneness] on earth." *Sex God*, Rob Bell, p. 152-153

“When we begin to orient our marriages around biblical truth, we see something amazing. Marriage was not just invented by God, it belongs to God. He has a unique claim over its design, purpose, and goals... That's right. Marriage is not first about me or my spouse... God is the most important person in a marriage. Marriage is for our good, but it is first for God's glory. This may seem odd, surprising, or difficult to accept, but it's a vital truth for every Christian married couple.” *When Sinners Say “I Do”*, David Harvey, p. 25

III. You'll Need a Supernatural Power that Dwarfs Your Best Intentions and Efforts ~ *It's Called the Gospel!*

Michael Horton tells about a woman who was struggling in her marriage... and she told his pastor friend that she decided to visit *his* church because her own church was in the middle of a sermon series on "How to Have a Better Marriage"... but she said [quote] "What I need to hear most right now is who God is and what Christ has done for me even though I'm a wreck. My marriage needs a lot of things, but it needs that more than anything else." *Christless Christianity*, Michael Horton, pp. 143-144

Putting the Gospel at the heart of a marriage means that...

- Broken people can be made new again
- Broken marriages can be reconciled and restored
- Shattered trust can be replaced with a spirit of unity
- Hurt and alienation can be replaced with warmth and intimacy

Jesus lived, died, and rose again not just for your future - but for the heart-breaking and life-altering things that you're facing right now in your marriage.

Gospel implications

Rate yourself on a scale on 1-10 as to how well you are doing at incorporating each Gospel implication into your marriage or close relationships.

- Because of the gospel... Christians have become new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). Therefore, in your marriage... your past does not define you... confine you... or determine your future.

I ----- I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Because of the gospel... you're forgiven (Ephesians 1:7). Therefore you can live free of all guilt and condemnation for every sin... and you can trust that God, in his mercy, will be gracious to you.

I ----- I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Because of the gospel you can forgive... just as Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:32). Nothing your spouse does against you compares to your sin against God. So all offenses... hostility...and bitterness that erupts between a Christian married couple can be completely forgiven and removed because of the gospel.

I ----- I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Because of the gospel... we're accepted by God (Romans 15:7). And that means we're not dependent on our spouse for approval... or to get our 'Love cup' filled.

I ----- I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Because of the gospel... sin's ruling power over you is broken (Romans 6:6, 14). That means you really can obey everything that God tells you to do in your marriage... regardless of the circumstance or situation.

I ----- I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Because of the gospel... you have access to God through Christ (Hebrews 4:14-16). That means you have direct access to God's throne of grace... and can at any time take any need in your marriage to the One who can do all things . . . the One who's able to do exceedingly, abundantly beyond . . .

I ----- I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Because of the gospel... you have hope (Romans 5:1-4). So you can endure any marital difficulty... hardship... or suffering... with the assurance that God is working all things together for your good (Romans 8:28).

I ----- I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10