

WHEN MARRIAGE AND MERCY COLLIDE

The Power of the Gospel in Marriage

Adding Mercy

The Exceptional Sweetener that Makes All the Difference

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“All the wonderful diversity (in this case, a polite word for our personal quirks, weaknesses, and sin patterns) that was kept refined and subdued before the wedding tumbles out of the closet after the honeymoon. We begin to see each other as we really are - raw, uncensored and in Technicolor. If our eyes are open, we discover wonderful things about our spouses that we never knew were there. We also discover more of the other person's weakness... Without mercy, differences become divisive; sometimes even ‘irreconcilable.’ How many [married] sinners who say ‘so long’ would remain as lovers who said ‘I do’ if they understood the place of mercy in marriage?” *When Sinners Say "I Do"*, David Harvey, pp. 80-81

I. Mercy Makes All the Difference in Your Marriage

“Mercy is the kind, sympathetic and forgiving treatment of others that works to relieve their distress and to cancel their debt.” Taken from “*The Devastating Glory of Mercy*” message, Marriage and Mercy Conference, January, 2009, Paul Tripp

In other words ‘mercy’ only becomes mercy when it gets dispensed... and poured out in my relationships.

There’s a direct correlation between the mercy you’re dispensing and the joy you’re receiving in those relationships.

Luke 6: 27-38

James 2:13 “For the judgment is without mercy for him who did not DO mercy...”

- God didn’t just think about mercy, He didn’t just embody mercy - He DID mercy by sending His Son to the cross for us.

If you’re struggling, then look at how Christ relates to us.

Hebrews 4:15-16 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

The mercy you're getting from Christ ought to be showing up in the lives of those around you, starting with those closest to you.

"I scarcely ever extended to Phil the grace I enjoyed with the Lord. Instead, I was frequently more like the man in Jesus' parable, who, after he was forgiven a great debt, went out and beat his fellow slave because he owed him some paltry sum." Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Helper by Design: God's Perfect Plan for Women in Marriage*, p. 54-55.

II. Your Mercy Dries Up without a Fresh Appreciation & Awareness of God's Mercy to You

And you have to stay humble and grateful to stay fresh and aware of it.

Lamentations 3:19-23, 31-32

Matthew 18:31-34 ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed."

God takes this issue of mercy very seriously. His warnings against those who refuse to pass it on to others are very sobering.

- So where's the mercy in your life?
- You say you know Christ... where's the mercy... why isn't it spilling over onto those around you?

What Jesus was teaching in Matthew 18 is that the mercy of God expressed TO us makes a claim ON us! God commands this mercy to be passed along, starting with those closest to you.

III. Your Mercy Will Empower You to Forbear

Colossians 3:12-13 “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”

A. Showing Mercy Means You’re Willing to Suffer Because of Their Sin

It means you won’t walk away - and so your life will still be troubled by their sin. It will affect YOU, but that’s what it means to do mercy.

B. Showing Mercy Means You’re Willing to Wait

Doing mercy means living with a process mentality, not an event.

I Corinthians 13:4 “Love is patient, love is kind...”

“The first two characteristics of intimate love are a complementary pair. Love is patient and kind. Patience is perhaps the most difficult of all. It calls us to move toward our spouse by not moving at all. It insists that we wait on our spouse. Our natural tendency is to jump in with both feet. We want a problem corrected immediately. We want to remove annoyance in a second. Patience is a gift that says: ‘I will trust that God is up to something; I will not insist, demand, or expedite change, I will wait.’ If patience is trust in God’s good plan, then kindness is a taste of that plan, which can be seen in the Cross. Kindness is the gift of mercy. It seeks to transform our spouses by offering them what is undeserved and unexpected.” *Intimate Allies*, Dan B. Allender & Tremper Longman, p.243

“True mercy only ever begins when you come to the end of yourself. I am called to give gifts that shock me and I turn around and see the richness of the Gospel. But as we give and we give and we give, we don’t become poor - we become rich.” Taken from “*The Devastating Glory of Mercy*” message, Marriage and Mercy Conference, January, 2009, Paul Tripp

For Personal Reflection:

1. How much mercy have you been pouring on your marriage, or your most important relationships?

2. Are you responding to other's weakness and sin the way Christ responds to yours?

3. Do you sympathize with others, and do they get mercy from you the same way you're getting mercy from Christ?

4. How strong is the connection between God's mercy to you?

5. Is mercy showing up in your marriage and home, is it being passed along, and poured out on others? If not... why not?

6. Do you make it a habit to give your spouse what they don't deserve?
