

June 2009

From the Pastor



Three "T's" for Marriage (Part One: Biblical Support)

June is a big month for marriages. With that in mind I thought it would be good to write about three things that help make a marriage grow. These are from a sermon that some of you have heard before but we need to be reminded of these three "T's."

Before I get to the three "T's" it is important to see that according to the Bible **the goal of marriage is to be one**. Here are two passages from the scriptures that point this out. The first is Genesis 2:20-25.

20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.²² The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:20-25 NAU)

This is at the point of creation where Adam is still all alone. He has just named all the animals. Imagine the scene. Adam has spent time with every creature on earth. It must have been a great time! To spend time swimming with the dolphins, running with the cheetahs, petting the bears. But after all that fun, he watched as they played together and he noticed that none of them were like him. And he was lonely. And God saw this and He felt for Adam and so God put Adam into a deep sleep.

God went to work. While Adam was under heavenly anesthesia God operated on him. God took a rib and created Eve. And God brought this beautiful woman to Adam. Adam looks at this creature and says; "Now you got it! Now we're happenin'! This beats anything I've seen all day!"

After this comes an editorial statement from God. Verse twenty four tells us God's intent for marriage. It explains why God made a man and a woman. There are three commands in this verse. First, a man (and the woman) is to leave his parents. Second, He is to unite with his wife. Third, the two shall become one flesh.

Marriage has a goal. The goal is to become one. This is more than just physical intimacy. The goal is to be one in everything. The first marriage was involved in, as the Net Bible calls it, "Divine Surgery." [1] This set the pattern for how marriage is to be understood. The goal of marriage is to be so much as one, that even your DNA would be one. That is why marriage is to come before a parent-child relationship.

The passage ends with how open this relationship was. They were totally exposed to each other and they were not ashamed to be this open.

Now let's look at the New Testament and see what Jesus has to say about marriage. Look at Matthew 19:4-11.

4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,⁵ and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH '?⁶ "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."⁷ They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?"⁸ He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way."⁹ "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."¹⁰ The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."¹¹ But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. (Matthew 19:4-11 NAU)

The religious leaders had just asked Jesus whether a man could divorce his wife for any cause. Jesus doesn't answer their question right away. Instead He gets to the heart of the question, and that is, "what is the purpose of marriage?" He starts in verse four by asking, "Didn't you read that God made man and woman?"

And in verses five and six Jesus explains why God did this. Now understand this is God explaining why He made a man and a woman! God is going to tell you the purpose of marriage. A man is to leave his parents and be joined to his wife and the two will become one. Sound familiar? Then Jesus continues this idea and explains oneness in verse six. The husband and wife are no longer two, but one. And what God joined, no one is to separate; implying that these two are inseparable.

If the purpose of marriage is to be one, why divorce? The religious leaders caught what Jesus was saying. Their next question was, "If this is the case, why did Moses permit divorce?" They caught that Jesus meant that a married couple is so united, and so one, that they were not to divorce. And if that's the case, why did Moses allow it?

Jesus speaks to this question. Now that the religious leaders understand that God meant marriage to be one, Jesus can address divorce. Jesus starts by saying that divorce is not God's desire. That's not what God planned in the beginning for marriage. Now you may ask, if this is the case, why is there divorce? God allowed it because of the hardness of our hearts. We are sinners and so God gave the victims of sin a way out of a bad marriage. But divorce is only for the victim of sin.

Jesus made is very clear that divorce is only for the victim. If anyone divorces someone for any other case than adultery, then that person is sinning. Jesus made is very clear that the marriage bond was God-made and was a bond that was never to separate.

When the disciples heard this, they thought, "It's better to stay single, marriage is tough!" And Jesus did not correct them. He said basically, not everyone can accept the high standards that God set for marriage. The standard for marriage is oneness; never separating! That is the purpose of marriage. To be so united that nothing can break you and your spouse apart.

With these two passages as our foundation I think you see that **the goal of marriage is to become one**. With that in mind I have three ways that couples can work toward oneness in their marriage. There are all sorts of others things that could be added to what I'm going to say, but for me, these are the three basic things needed for a marriage toward oneness; time, talk and touch. As I put it, becoming one takes; time, talk and touch. We will start to look at how to practically live these out next month.

In Him and for His glory,

