



MARRIAGE THAT MAKES IT

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7:00 AM

A very lonely woman wrote the following letter to a well-known counselor.

"John and I were deeply in love when we got married, we struggled in the first 2 or 3 years with our financial problems, I loved him and I know that he loved me. But then something slowly began to change. I am not sure how to describe it, but I think it had something to do with his receiving a promotion about five years ago, and that required him to work longer hours. We needed the money so I did not mind the extra hours, but it never seemed to stop. Now he comes home late every evening, so tired, I can actually hear his feet dragging as he approaches the door. I look forward to his coming home each night because I have so much to tell him, but he never feels like talking. So I fix his dinner and he eats alone, of course I have already eaten earlier with the kids that night. After dinner he makes a few phone calls and works at his desk. Frankly, I kind of like his talking on the phone so I can hear his voice, then watches TV till he goes to bed, except Tuesday when he plays basketball with the guys or when he has a meeting at the office. Every Saturday morning he plays golf at the club with three friends.

On Sundays we are at church for a lot of the day. It is easy for us to go 2 or 3 months without an in-depth conversation. You know what I mean. I get so lonely in that house with those three kids climbing over me I do not know what to do. There are no women in the neighborhood I can talk to because most of them have gone back to work already. John never takes me

out to dinner anymore, and last month he forgot our anniversary. I do not think he has a romantic bone in his body, he would not know the difference between a rose and a carnation. And his Christmas card last month was signed just John. There is no closeness, no warmth and it is frankly more than I can handle."

The woman probably thought that she was alone in these feelings, but unfortunately, she is a part of a majority of women who are *physically* living together with their husbands, but *emotionally* are very far apart. It does not have to be this way. In this lesson on marriage, we will examine what it looks like to keep a marriage not only alive, but also flourishing over the years.

Warm-Up Question

- 1. Share how you met your spouse and what you did for their first date.**

Bible Study: Matthew 5:1-10 Read [Matthew 5:1-10](#)

¹Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

He said:

3 *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

4 *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

5 *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

7 *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

8 *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 5-7 is often referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. In this passage, Jesus teaches the disciples about life in the Kingdom. Jesus in this passage says your character, relationships, ethics, priorities and attitude towards others will be different than the world. He is beginning to help them to understand that as a Christ follower, you will live a life that is counter-cultural.

In this opening section, often called the Beatitudes, he speaks specifically about character. Marriage starts with who you are as a person and how you treat others. Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian author says, "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." Let's study this passage with the goal of changing ourselves.

2. What is the difference between the world's version of "blessed" and Jesus's version of it?

3. Walk through each of the beatitudes and discuss what it means and what it looks like in marriage.

4. How do the promises made after each beatitude encourage you? How can these promises influence the way we see the world and live in the world?

5. In what ways is the Spirit of God conforming you to the image of Christ?

6. Dan spoke of two cones that describe how God made your spouse. The more you try to move her cones, the greater the likelihood that she is going to try to move yours. Share with the group how you have tried to move her cones?

7. Dan points out the importance of listening to one another. He gives us the chair example as Jesus being in all our conversations. How would our conversations be improved if we always remembered that He is there?

8. Dan describes the importance of speaking softly in conversations. There is a tendency for husbands to raise their voice when trying to make a point. Dan points out that it never works. Share with the group the result of a conversation in which raising our voice was a part of it. What would the result have been if you had not lost your temper?

Recommended Reading:

The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman
The Meaning of Marriage by Timothy Keller
Sacred Marriage - Gary Thomas

Scriptures: Scriptures

[Ephesians 5:25](#), [Mark 10:45](#)

Quotes:

“The real transforming work of marriage is the twenty-four-hours-a day, seven-days-a-week commitment. This is the crucible that grinds and shapes us into the character of Jesus”

Gary Thomas, Sacred Marriage

“Talk daily, Date weekly and Retreat yearly to keep your marriage growing and alive.”

– Steve and Colleen Sonderman