

SERMON NOTES - Uniqueness of Marriage

Marriage is Unique for 3 reasons:

1. It represents God

Gen 1:27 NKJV - "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Eph 5:31-33/Gen 2:24-25 NKJV "31 *For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*" 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Ecc 4:12 NKJV - "Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

2. It's a COVENANT not a Contract

- Human parties & Governed by human laws / **God**
- Based on each doing their part / **Mission**
- For a set time / **forever**
- What can I get out of it - selfish / **Give**

3. It involves all 4 of the "loves"

- Storge - A family bond even if we don't have much in common. We are family and we are there for each other. A Human, family commitment. Parents, children, relatives, (even pets)
- Phileo - Friendship. Affection. Joy together. Things in common. We "click" and get on.
- Eros - sexual love
- Agape - self sacrificial love from God - 1Co 13:4-7

1Co 13:4-7 NIV - "4 Love is **patient**, love is **kind**. It does **not envy**, it does **not boast**, it is **not proud**. 5 It does **not dishonour** others, it is **not self-seeking**, it is **not easily angered**, it keeps **no record of wrongs**. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It **always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.**"

Summary of Agape from 1 Cor 13 =

- **Gracious, kind, forgiving.**
- **Other first. Sacrificial. Not selfish, competitive or egotistical.**
- **Committed.**

4. Practical applications

The VOWS we say and what they mean

Marriage Vows people say	What they often mean...
I promise	I really hope / wish
To love, honour, cherish	To FEEL these feelings, (responding to you meeting my needs)
For better, worse etc	And if you don't, or if things get too tough, I could always find another or move on. Obviously this assumes all stays good, then
Forsaking all others	it'll be forever, otherwise it's temporary.
Till death parts us	

4 signs of critical danger and possible solutions - John and Julie Gottman

- **Criticism** - attack their character. **Talk about yourself, your feelings, and things that make you upset rather than the other person.**
- **Defensiveness** - not being willing to take any blame. Attacking back. **Self reflection & Take some blame honestly**
- **Contempt** - treat them as worthless or communicate that. Respect. **Kindness.**
- **Stonewalling** - shut down. **A soothing break ... 24 mins - 24 hours.**

The “love bank” and some practical tips

- Men want Respect (admiration) & women want Love (significance, “specialness”, value)
- Both must take responsibility. Not being defensive.
- Respond with kindness, especially to bids/attempts for attention
- Give (put IN) vs 2 fleas one dog.
- Kindness and respect vs criticism, contempt, stonewalling, attacks
- 5 times more positive than negative events
- Resolve conflict & Leave forgiven things in the past. Bury it.

Conflict resolution:

- Focus on what's good
- Say “thank you”
- Describe yourself rather than describing your partner
- Work on problems & your marriage together rather than trying to change the other person

Forgiveness

Why? How ? It is essential to leave forgiven things behind and not bring them up..

Small group discussion guidelines

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do **PRACTICALLY** in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.