

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE
COMMON CHALLENGES TO UNITY PT. 2
SESSION 4B (Video 6 of 6)

III. Marital Unity in Finances

A. This brief outline is not intended as a comprehensive treatment of this topic. Rather, it is intended to provide some basic points of discussion for couples.

1. Your upbringing, personality and individual strengths and weaknesses will all have a role in determining your expectations about family finances.
2. You must use finances as another means of pursuing unity. You should work together on the same team and contribute your respective strengths to tackling financial problems. You will need to apply the other principles we have covered in these outlines to attain unity in finances.

B. Biblical View of Money and Stewardship

1. God and money
 - a. All of our possessions belong to the Lord, and our ability to obtain wealth comes from the Lord (Ps. 24:1; 1 Chron. 29:11-12; 1 Cor. 4:7)
 - b. Our trust is in the Lord not in riches (Mt. 6:25-34; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Prov. 16:3).
 - c. We must be faithful stewards of what God gives to us (1 Cor. 4:2).
 - d. Wealth should never be an end in itself (Prov. 15:16; Eccl. 2:10-11).
2. Family and money
 - a. The husband is responsible before God to provide for his family (1 Tim. 5:8; Eph. 5:29)
 - b. God teaches us to work hard to meet our needs (Prov. 13:11; 1 Thes. 4:10-12).
 - c. Contentment is a Christian virtue (1 Tim. 6:6-10; Phil. 4:11-13).
 - d. Generosity is a Christian virtue (Prov. 11:24-25; Eph. 4:28).
3. Priorities and money.
 - a. We are to give the Lord his portion of our finances first (Prov. 3:9-10; Mal. 3:8-12).
 - b. Wisdom teaches us to have a plan with our money (Lk. 14:28; Prov. 27:23-24).
 - c. Save (Prov. 6:6-8).
 - d. Beware of the problems with debt (Rom. 13:8; Prov. 22:7).
 - e. Get godly counsel in important financial decisions (Prov. 15:22; 19:22; 20:18).

C. Getting to the Root of the Matter

1. Root problems in financial tensions.
 - a. Pride (Prov. 18:12).
 - b. Selfishness (Phil. 2:3-4).
 - c. Idolatry (1 Jn. 5:21; 1 Tim. 6:10).
 - d. Laziness (Prov. 13:4).
 - e. Irresponsibility (Prov. 25:19).

- f. Men-pleasing (Gal. 1:10).
- 2. Pursuing spiritual fruitfulness.
 - a. Repentance (Ps. 139:23-24).
 - b. Study the biblical principles of finance (Ps. 119:9-11; Rom. 12:2).
 - c. Prayer (Phil. 4:6).
 - d. Planning (Prov. 6:6-8; 27: 23-24).

D. Financial Planning

There are a plethora of Christian resources available for practical instruction in personal finances. Look for books by Larry Burkett and Dave Ramsey.

IV. Marital Unity in the Sexual Relationship

A. The Bible gives us frank and helpful instruction on this aspect of marriage.

1. Biblical discretion and prudence are needed in addressing this area publically within the Church.
 - a. Some are too crass and lack biblical dignity. Such discussions can be perverse and degrading, which is why Paul warns not to even speaking about evil done in secret (Eph. 5:12).
 - b. Some are too prudish and lack biblical fidelity. The whole Law, which contains material about intimate matters, was read before the whole congregation of men, women, and children. The same could be said about the rest of Scripture, including Paul's epistles.
2. Every generation needs everything that the Bible teaches. In the present day of extremes God's people need a clear grasp of the biblical perspective on the sexual relationship in marriage.
3. God's people will have different comfort levels about how much should be discussed in a setting like our class. Consequently, I have included the material below for your edification, but we are not going to cover it in class.

B. Sanctity of Marital Intimacy.

1. It is ordained and designed by God and glorifies and pleases him when maintained within his prescribed parameters (Gen. 2:24-25, Heb. 13:4). In fact, the view that forbids marital intimacy is a doctrine of demons (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
2. Everything connected to the sexual experience must be limited to the marriage relationship in thought, sight, word and action (Ex. 20:14; Matt. 5:27-30; Prov. 2:16-19; 5:1-14, 20-23; 6:20-7:27).
3. All forms of sexual perversion transgress God's design even within marriage and are unlawful.
4. Self-control is what characterizes the courting relationship prior to marriage. For example, Scripture indicates intimate caressing is clearly not lawful and should be limited to after marriage (Prov. 5:17ff).
5. Earthly marriage points to a heavenly marriage, and earthly consummation is merely a precursor to a heavenly consummation (Rev. 21:2ff). The climax of pleasure expressed in the conjugal relationship is a tiny foretaste of the ecstasy of joy that awaits the believer in communion with God in heaven to come. The greatest delights in this world will pale in comparison to what the Lord has prepared for his people in glory.
6. The book of Song of Solomon, which is full of descriptions of conjugal

love, further establishes the sanctity of marital intimacy while conveying the story about Christ and his Church.

C. Unity in the Sexual Relationship.

1. Sex should be a tangible expression of an inward reality – physical unity should be a manifestation of true, personal and spiritual unity in the marriage (Gen. 2:24-25).
2. When a couple engages in sexual relations without unity in their relationship they are in essence lying. Conversely, when true unity exists, then the sexual relationship has greater meaning and pleasure.
3. In practice this means a couple should resolve any outstanding conflicts before sex, rather than using sex as a means to cover up disunity.
4. Most problems in the sexual relationship, apart from potential physiological problems, are related to other areas of disunity within the marriage, rather than to sex itself.
5. When you are first married it is essential to establish patterns of open communication in this aspect of marriage – before, during, and after sexual relations. Discuss what is most meaningful to each other.

D. Blessings of the Sexual Relationship.

1. The sexual relationship is a gift of God that is intended to bring pleasure to the Christian couple (Prov. 5:18-19). The word “satisfy” in v. 19 means satiate.
2. Paul says that undue abstinence, except in special circumstances, should be avoided (1 Cor. 7:3-5).
 - a. Paul says that the gift of regular marital intimacy is a practical way of resisting the Devil. For those who are married, pent up, unsatisfied desires provide occasion for undue temptation.
 - b. Consequently, frequency is mutually determined by both husband and wife being willing to *give* to the other. At times this could involve Providentially determined instances of necessary abstinence. Under normal circumstances it will entail mutually agreed upon regularity because both spouses belong to each other. Note Paul’s explicit instructions in 1 Cor. 7:3-5.
 - c. It is never a matter of taking or withholding. It is a matter of seeking to outdo one another in giving what the other wants (Rom. 12:10).
3. The sexual relationship should not be one-sided or self-focused (Phil. 2:2-3). Paul specifies that it is intended to bring blessing to both the spouses (1 Cor. 7:3-5). This is a special way of “giving” of oneself to your spouse. In practice this means, for example, that a husband’s sacrificial love will be manifest by working to make sex equally pleasurable for his wife and ensuring that her needs are met in the process.
4. Men and women are created differently. Getting to know your spouse includes learning how those differences manifest themselves in the sexual relationship.

E. Further Study of the Sexual Relationship.

1. Ignorance and misguided feelings of “taboo” hinder rather than help growth in this aspect of marriage. It should be an area where openness and communication between spouses is pursued. It is a God-given, God-glorifying aspect of Christian marriage.

2. *Intended For Pleasure* by Dr. Ed Wheat is a good resource on the sexual relationship from a Christian perspective, though you may not agree with everything he says. I recommend that couples buy this to take and read together on their honeymoon. It answers most of the questions and details related to the physical aspects of the sexual relationship.

Conclusion

- A. We will end where we began. There is hope for those tempted with hopelessness. For those who are struggling in marriage, you can take great hope.
1. God's Word is sufficient to address all of our problems (Rom. 15:4; 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).
 2. God's grace is sufficient all our needs (Phil. 4:19; 2 Cor. 12:9). The believer's sin is solvable (Rom. 5:20). God's Spirit can produce growth and change.
- B. I realize that we all live very busy lives. But God has established the marriage relationship as a priority for Christian couples. Since, a godly marriage has to be cultivated, and since priorities are what you do, then there has to be a self-conscious decision to devote time and effort to these matters (Jas. 1:22-25; Mt. 7:24-27).
- C. You have 26 pages of outlines filled with Scripture passages to review. Go through them with your spouse and discuss the ways in which these biblical principles need to be practically implemented to your specific marriage.
- D. Our ultimate goal is not happiness and bliss in marriage, though that is a precious by-product of gospel fruitfulness. The chief end of marriage is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. May Christ be the one who has all the preeminence in our marriages (Col. 1:18).