

GENERATION NEXT: Marriage

The cultural view of marriage has shifted and changed. The Church is being pressed by the culture to accept some of these changes. Marriage is still popular but the definition of marriage, the expectations for marriage, the roles and responsibilities within marriage all seem to be changing. In our country, on average, 13,000 couples will get married every day in the month of June. Marriage still has value but what the culture thinks of when it thinks of marriage is not Biblical. Some of this nonBiblical thinking in the culture has impacted the Church.

Here's the main point of today's message on marriage:

Myth: Marriage is a contract
Gospel: Marriage is a covenant

An extension of the concept of marriage as a *contract* is to FIND the right person.
An extension of marriage as *covenant* is to BE the right person.

A covenant is an oath-bound relationship between 2 or more people. The unique aspect of the marriage covenant is that it's entered into by husband and wife with God Himself as witness. In this way, marriage is a mirror of the gospel. The gospel is the story of God's unconditional love toward people inside of a covenant relationship.

Consider this pattern in Scripture:

A man will leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife – Genesis 2
A man will leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife – Matthew 19
A man will leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife – Ephesians 5

This is the model of marriage that we are to pattern in our own lives. This is the picture of a man who leaves the lifelong relationship of parents so that he can establish a new lifelong relationship with a woman who is his wife. This covenant of marriage is marked by a commitment of unconditional love.

You can't find a definition of marriage in a single statement. However, when the model is presented as the norm and this model is affirmed throughout the pages of Scripture then you can know this: The model is the definition.

There is yet another challenge to marriage.

If you are married ...you are a flawed person who is married to a flawed person and you live in a fallen world where the devil is after you. It helps to know that your imperfections are being targeted by God for His transforming work.

God's goal for marriage is unity. The devil's goal for your marriage is disunity. God wants to bring you together to echo the gospel prayer of Jesus – may they be one. The devil's strategy is simple: Divide and conquer.

The gospel helps us to understand marriage and marriage helps us to understand the gospel.
Tim Keller, Meaning of Marriage

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. Begin with general reflections. What did you hear? What did you like? What was hard?
2. Pastor Karl mentioned three different approaches to marriage through the years in our culture:

Pragmatic - survival
Love – shared love
Self-Expression - self

In what ways are you familiar with these approaches?

What has been or presently is our culture's approach to marriage? Your approach?

3. Can you see evidences in our culture that there has been or presently is an emphasis on finding the right person? While being particular about who you marry is a very wise and good thing, how does the gospel bring the additional responsibility to be the right person?
4. What would you suggest to a young single adult who came to you looking for advice in terms of someday getting married? Keep in mind that the desire to marry is a good desire, as in Prov 18:22, so you're not going to talk them out of a desire to marry; you are going to guide them; help clarify their thinking and approach. What's your advice to this young person who wants to marry someday?
5. How can a married Christian become more of the "right person" that he or she needs to be? Where does this type of internal change come from? Have you seen this in your life or in anyone else?

If you have time...

What do you think of this statement made by Tim Keller: "*The gospel helps us to understand marriage and marriage helps us to understand the gospel*"?