

Marriage

Having been the Executive Director of a marriage and family retreat ministry for the decade of the 90s, I've seen it all. In a society where it seems anything goes, marriage as God intends has taken a big hit. From living together before marriage to prenuptials to protect assets, from same sex marriage to same day divorce, from chain link polygamy to one night stands marriage as the foundation of the family is on shaky ground. Statistics reveal over 50% of legally sanctioned secular marriages end in divorce with those in the church over 55%. No wonder both young adults and older partners seek alternatives to better enhance their chances of a successful relationship. With the coming of another round of June weddings, is there any wisdom from the Word of God that might help those who are taking the plunge or at least thinking about it?

Just before the fall of Adam and Eve the Bible says, *"And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man and brought her to the man...For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave (be glued) to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."* (Genesis 2:23-24) The Hebrew word for man is *ish* for woman *ishah*. The two originate from the same root word—the same source. Christian marriage is God's way of establishing oneness not only between two spouses but with Him as their Source as well. Marriage is a three-way reality that provides the means to happiness for the couple and their offspring. It also provides the basis for God's blessing to rest not only upon them but upon society and the church.

Why are we missing the blessings in marriage as God intends? Jesus addressed this in Matthew 19:3-8 with these words, *"Do you not know God who created man and woman said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave (be glued) to his wife; and the two shall become one...What therefore God has joined together (made one), let no one separate'."* What He said then still applies now. Then why the epidemic of divorce in our nation? Those listening to Him said, *"Why was it established that one could divorce?"* He said to them, *"Because of your hardness of heart."* In the Scriptures the heart was not the center of the emotions but the epicenter of the truth. In this "me" oriented nation the truth about marriage has been lost. When a society turns away from the truth and no longer embraces it what God intends for good no longer gets through.

Marriage is a three-way street not a two-way street between two people committed to love, honor, respect, and care for the other and also to love, honor and respect God within their marriage. When this happens marriage "works" the greatest possible blessings for all concerned from spouses to families to church to society. Want to enter into marriage on the best possible grounds? Want to renew and enrich your marriage bringing it into the happiness God intends? Then take the focus off yourself and put it on your spouse and on God and watch what happens. I guarantee you won't be sorry.