

Marriage: Understanding and Appreciating Roles - Part 2

by Shane Idleman

A strong marriage is built on understanding and accepting God's design for men and women in marriage, and living out their roles in humility and obedience to God's Word.

Duration: 46:11

Scripture: Psalm 51:1, Ephesians 5:25, Ephesians 5:33

Topics: "Marriage Roles", "Covenant Unity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and fulfilling roles in marriage according to God's design. It highlights the significance of husbands loving their wives sacrificially and wives respecting their husbands, focusing on the impact of preconceived notions and unrealistic expectations on marital success. The sermon stresses the covenant nature of marriage, the need for realistic expectations, and the detrimental effects of divorce on the unity of one flesh. It calls for repentance, thankfulness, and prioritizing God's will in marriage to build strong, lasting relationships.

Transcript

I didn't get through all of part one, and you'll see up there it's part two, understanding our roles as husbands and wives. How do we, what's important, about understanding our roles? I think a lot of it has to do with when a person goes into marriage, their preconceived notions or their ideas about marriage are going to play a huge role on the success or failure of that marriage. It's going to play a huge role on unrealistic expectations or realistic expectations.

You're going to go into the marriage, I'm going to go into the marriage, all of us expecting certain things. So if we understand how God created us, and see that's the key. When we talk about men and women in our roles and different things, there shouldn't be this big division and confusion and confrontation.

It's how did God design us. It's like one body. Is the head any more significant than the arms? I mean, it's all functioning.

God has designed the certain parts of the body, certain parts of the marriage, the man, to lead in certain areas. And we talked last week about, you know, the marriage being a contract or is marriage a covenant? See, that's a big thing in contracts. You guys who write contracts up a lot, I've done that plenty of times

and I continue to do so.

Contracts are all about protecting me. It's about protecting me. Where a covenant is about an agreement to help a mutual benefit.

God gave us, He gave a covenant to Abraham and to Noah and to David and the new covenant. Thank God for the new covenant. It isn't trying, God's not trying to protect himself.

A covenant is where He's saying, I will do these things for you. And that's what marriage is. We have to remember it's a covenant where a man and a woman come together, till death do us part.

We make our vows and these things God takes seriously. I believe that He takes marriage very seriously because He put that union together. He put the church together.

He put marriage together. It's a covenant that we make with one another. And I know a lot of this seems maybe a little weighty to singles or those dating, but you have to remember when you go into marriage, it's important that you have realistic expectations and you've thought it through.

You said, okay, I know what this involves. I know what I'm saying. I know what I'm agreeing to.

I know what I'm promising. I know what I'm saying in this covenant. Because if you look at Hollywood, it's like, sure, it helps my career one month and I'll divorce you next month.

Marriage has become trampled upon. What God has ordained in our culture now is frowned upon. And we talked about that last week.

I put this up there just in case. And what happens when we're talking about roles between men and women, we have to understand that bad examples have tarnished the relationships. Bad examples of Christian men who are domineering, forceful, quoting scriptures, throwing the Bible at their kids, yelling, screaming at them, saying, you will submit to me I'm the man of this house.

And then the media picks this stuff up and then you see awkward things happening in the Midwest or this and that, where men were quoted as, you know, quoting the Bible before they killed their five children. You know, it's just ridiculous stuff that people do in the name of Christianity. And that role of the man and domineering.

And it's given the church and men a bad rap on what truly God has called us to do. Because if we understand what he's called us to do, and those two things we talked about last week, brief, brief recap, and I'll go right into this new message. But we are to submit, and I talked about that word in the Greek, potazo.

We submit. We submit to the needs of our family. I submit to my wife and children.

Do you realize that? I don't walk around and do this, do this, do this, do this, do this. I submit to their needs. What do they need? What do they need in a husband and a father? And then I lead the family.

So it's through servant leadership. As I submit to their needs, recognizing that God has given me the leadership position, then they want to follow a man who has direction, a man who has purpose, a man who wants to benefit, the mutual benefit of the family. That's a husband's role.

He submits to the needs of the family. And he ultimately submits to Christ. And then from that flows everything else, the direction of the marriage.

So I submit to you that when you see a leadership problem, often you see a problem with the relationship with Jesus Christ, because that's the foundation on which men lead. And I'm not saying, I'm not questioning salvation, I'm not questioning lukewarmness, I'm not saying any of that, but the foundation has to be Christ. And our relationship as men, the more we draw closer to Christ, the better we can lead.

That's a fact. The closer we draw to Him, the better we can lead. So He is our example.

Men submit to that, and women submit to the role of the man. And that word submit just means to yield or to accept. It doesn't mean to beat up or to dominate or like a boss or Donald Trump, you know, you're fired and all this crazy stuff, how we define, you know, the head of the household.

It's not a bad term. It just means the woman submits to that role. She accepts that God-given role and she submits and she allows the man to lead.

Doesn't mean hit her, doesn't mean abuse her, doesn't mean yell at the family. It just means I accept the role God has given you. I'm going to yield and allow you to lead.

You see how, and then the man leads according to the needs of the family and his relationship with Christ. You see how that all flows and fits into place? So these aren't bad terms. It's not submitting isn't, you know, like a doormat and you're just stepped on all the time.

It's submitting to the roles that God has ordained. The problem is many people aren't walking in those roles. I don't want to submit to a man who's not following Christ wholeheartedly.

I don't want to help this woman in love and cherish her who doesn't respect me. And it's this endless vicious cycle. Another person saying, I'll change when they change.

God's Word never says that. It always says, you change. You do what you need to do and let me work on the other person.

You might not see results right away. And that's why I love that movie Fireproof. You guys should rent it again and again and listen to that song.

While I'm waiting. He was changing. He saw no change in his wife.

She still filed for divorce. But he said, while I'm waiting, I will serve you. While I'm waiting, I will love you.

While I'm waiting, even though I don't see any results, that's what waiting on the Lord is. I'm going to obey your Word regardless if I see results or not. As a matter of fact, I will submit to you that that is true obedience.

I can obey the Word of God when I see the fruit. Oh, I love Morgan. Now she's respecting me.

That was easy. See, we're called to do these things when we don't see it. Well, I don't like it.

Well, that's not faith. That's not obedience. That's not surrender.

That's not servitude. And I brought up last week, if you look at Christ and the church as the bride of Christ, Christ has to deal with a backbiting, belligerent, naysaying, arrogant bride. Does he not? A bride that walks away from him, that commits spiritual adultery, that says, knock, knock, we're going to lock you out of our churches.

We're not going to trust in you and look to you. Look at the bride of Christ, the church, how he treats Christ. Thank God he doesn't have that attitude of, well, when they change, I'll change.

He's cleansed us. He submits to the will of the Father. And we are the bride of Christ.

Paul says it's a great mystery. Don't try to understand it. I've tried from different angles and my head just wants to explode.

How in the world could the church be metaphorically speaking the bride of Christ? It is a mystery, Paul says. So that's what we have to understand. And I know it's difficult, myself included, to serve someone when you don't get results.

But it dawned on me, if we're serving someone, we don't see results, we get upset, we had ulterior motives. That's not genuine servitude. Genuine servitude is I will serve them regardless of the results, regardless if I don't see the fruit of what I'm doing right away.

Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They should mount up on wings like eagles and run and not grow weary, waiting on the Lord. Those who are patient.

It's better to be patient than to conquer a city, the book of Proverbs says. So I just would encourage you, don't get in that mindset of, well, I'm not changing her. I'm not going to do it until he changes.

And then he's saying, I'm not going to do it until I see some change in her. And then you go back and forth and years go by and years go by and nothing changes. Everybody gets bitter, resentful.

The marriage is crumbling and falling apart. Well, you did this. Well, you did that.

And we get into this war. If we would just obey one simple scripture. Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church.

Wow, that's a tough one. As Christ loved the church and gave himself. The divorce courts would shut down.

They'd be full of the world, but not the things of the church. If husbands would love their wives as Christ loved the church. And I've said before, and I always need to put disclaimers on here.

I understand that there are situations out of some of your control or control of those listening later, that there's no fault of your own, that divorce has happened or separation. You've done all you can do. Take strength in knowing that God sees your heart.

God sees your heart. Like I wrote in the Valley Press today, that God, David was a man of war. God said to David, you can't even build my temple.

Get it ready. But you can't build it because you shed too much blood. You're a man of war.

But he said, but David, because it was in your heart to do it, I'm still counting it as righteousness to you because it was in your heart. So the spouse has done all they can do. Lord, he knows your heart.

If that spouse has walked away never to return, God knows your heart. You've done all you can do. And I've learned in marriage and divorce, separation, restoration, all those things, you cannot control the choices of another.

You can influence them. You can encourage them. But the choice to leave or to stay is up to them.

God can move. We pray for God to move and change that heart. But we can't carry years of regret around because of some choice of another person.

And that's what happens in marriage when it comes crumbling apart. The choices of one person affect the entire family. And that's what we're getting into part two, Ephesians 5.25. Many of us have read it, but we don't like to obey it.

And I don't know why. But we're going to read it again. Husbands, and this is marriage builders.

I thought of even a sermon on marriage builders and the next week marriage killers. You know, but that's not too encouraging there. You know, what builds the marriage, what kills the marriages.

But these are marriage builders. If you want to build your marriage, if it's on the brink of destruction and it's hanging by a thread, this is what you need to do. We need to humble ourselves, admit that I've been wrong, admit that I'm not perfect, and say I need to love you as Christ loved the church.

Show me, help me, forgive me for not doing that. You think your wife's going to get upset with those words? She might start crying. Because that's what she's been praying for, for a man to truly love her and guide her and lead her.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her. Christ sanctified the church. He gave her that quality of holiness, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Now I want to stop there for a minute. A lot of times, this is why I love for people to spend time in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, because this will jump right out at you. This is Old Testament imagery.

This is God decking His children of Israel with splendor and cleansing them and washing them with the word, setting them apart, come out from among them, be holy. So this is just Old Testament imagery that Paul is using. And that's what Christ does.

As husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. And then he goes in and talks about what Christ did to the church. What did Christ do, basically, for the church? He died upon a cross so we could stand before God, guiltless, holy and sanctified and set apart because of what Christ did.

So I want to submit to you that the husband loving your wives as Christ loved the church, you are setting the spiritual condition of your home. Christ set the spiritual condition of the church because of His death on the cross. So men, contextually, the spiritual condition of our families is up to us.

The ball rests squarely in our court, it rests on our shoulders, that we are in charge and in control of the spiritual condition of our home. And I often say that the family is a thermostat to the heart. If you want to know, if you want to know where men's spirituality is, stick a thermostat.

I'm sorry, a thermometer. I'm getting confused. Thermostat, we turn on and off.

Thermostat just regulates. A thermometer will check that condition. If you look at the home, if the home is flourishing, and again, not perfection, and not, oh, all my children are great, this and that, but is it flourishing spiritually? Are you investing into them? And I've reminded my wife this week, too, a lot of times when we work with our children, we're not going to see immediate results.

What farmer plants a seed and then goes out the next day and wants to reap the corn from it? That never happens. We are planting seeds into our children that will bear fruit later. We are planting seeds into our spouse that'll bear fruit later sometimes.

And words, do you realize, are like a checking account. You can make deposits or you can make withdrawals. Words, the life and death are in the power of the tongue.

We can bring life to our marriage or we can kill our marriage. Think about that. Nowhere are men told to exercise your headship.

Nowhere. You can't show me one verse where God says, men, exercise your headship, have dominion over your wife, and you show her who's boss, make sure she submits. Nowhere.

We're called to love our wives. God'll say you're the head, and that's about it, then love your wives. Raise your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, that's right, but then love your wives.

We are commanded to do that. And my concern is, what's happening is we don't truly understand this word love. Yeah, I work hard to make a living, that's not loving your wife.

Do you know how many marriages have been destroyed because men have sought careers outside the home and made that their first love? And the family just becomes a consideration, and they're chasing the almighty dollar, they're making a name for themselves. So it's not just bread winning even though that's vitally important. Love encompasses many things, and I just want to read really quick from 1 Corinthians 13.

You guys, if you have your Bibles, it's 1 Corinthians 13. If not, I'll read through mine. It's a New King James Version.

Now you have to understand, Paul is talking to the church in Corinth, and he's talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Very controversial topic, right, in the churches today, in many cases. I'm not sure why, but it is.

You know, the gifts cease, are they still active? This is a little weird, that's not happening, you can't heal today, everything. So he's talking about the gifts of the Spirit. And then he goes, you know what, let me show you a more excellent way.

Because they were getting caught up in all of these things, and all of these tongues and prophecy and words of wisdom. Paul said, definitely seek gifts, but let me show you a more excellent way. And Paul says, though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, if I have not love, I become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

It means it's nothing. It's like, though I speak with boldness and speak the truth of God, if I have not love, it profits me nothing. A lot of times when I talk to some of these younger pastors coming up and they want to talk to me and this and that, I say, listen, you can preach as well as Whitefield, Moody, and Spurgeon.

You can be well read in all 66 books of the Bible. But if you have not love, you're nothing. You are a modern day Pharisee telling people off.

You must weep before you whip. You must be broken before you can preach. Don't go up here and start slamming people like a shotgun approach.

You have to have love. Because a lot of people can spurt out truth. They're real quick to judge and criticize, but that love is what sets it apart.

Love underscores everything. As a matter of fact, if I just preach the gospel or if I just talk about the word of God with no love, people are, it becomes repulsive to them. Because love is that one ingredient that stirs a pot and makes people say, okay, I see what you're talking about because you genuinely love me.

So Paul's saying you can speak with the tongues of men and of angels. It doesn't matter if you don't have love. He says, and though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, but if I have not love, I have nothing.

And though I bestow all my gifts to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, if I have not love, it profits me nothing. Here it is. Love suffers long.

That's a sermon in itself. Love suffers long. It goes back to what I was saying earlier.

If the other person isn't changing, it doesn't matter. True love waits, right? That's not a little cliché. That's true, true.

I love the spouse. I'm going to pray for them. I'm going to long, their long suffering is a fruit of the Spirit.

I'm going to suffer long and hope for the best in my spouse. See the best in my spouse. It's difficult, isn't it? Because the flesh wants to do just the opposite.

As soon as you treat me wrong, I'm out that door. As soon as you're not nice to me, I'm filing divorce papers. But Paul says, love suffers long.

And he goes on to say all the different things. Love suffers long, it is kind, it doesn't envy, it doesn't boast, it's not proud. And then at the end he says, love never fails.

Love never fails. Husband, that's one way to build your marriage. And this verse actually, believe it or not, blows my mind because Paul is saying, you can pretty much do anything.

Have your body to be burned. If you have not love it, profit you nothing. Speak tongues of men and of angels.

If you have not love it, profit you nothing. You can have great faith and understand all mysteries and say mount and be moved into the sea. But if you have not love it, profit you nothing.

You can give all your things to the poor. Have your body to be burned upon a stake as a martyr. If you have not love, you have nothing.

So men go through careers, go through ministry. Do you know pastors' marriages are falling apart just like everybody else's? Because they're pursuing ministry. Ministry, recognition, notoriety, aren't I great? Yeah, yeah, I got a family back there, but God knows I'm doing His work.

No sir, your relationship with your family must stem from your relationship with Christ. Then flows to the ministry. We have it backwards many times.

We pursue the ministry while the family falls apart. And I am shocked and I am saddened at many of the biographies I read. With many of the men I love to read were not godly men.

Well, I would say they were godly men, but they were failing at home many times. I remember I put down A. W. Tozer's biography and I said, oh my Lord. His wife would say, I know Tozer loves Jesus, but I don't know if he loves me.

The kids don't see him because he's pursuing ministry. I can take you to the biographies of George Whitfield. His son died, and as he was preaching a sermon, he could hear the bells in the background of his son's funeral.

Didn't go to the funeral, he had a preaching engagement. I've got 1,200 pages of journal notes and different things, very little are said about their families. C.T. Studd on the mission field.

Not good with his wife and kids. Because we're following ministry and we think that God's work is so important that it can cost us our family. And that's just a frightening reality.

And again, I don't want to bring these things up. I love these guys, but you're reading, when you read about them, you can go online and Google the marriage of John Wesley. Not good.

Not good. Always fighting, always bitter. I think we forget that our family must be the gauge upon our spiritual life.

I can look at a man's spiritual life by looking at his family. If anybody doubts that, just look what the Word of God says, love your wives as Christ loved the church. And what I think is happening is ministry, or if you have a career, that is easy for men, isn't it? I'm getting a paycheck.

I'm getting recognition. I'm building a 401k in retirement. I'm getting noticed.

I'm going up the ladder of success. But the family, raising a family is hard. Some days I wonder if we're going backwards.

The kids aren't listening. They're throwing fits. We can't do this.

I think we're going backwards. But it's hard. I don't see any results.

Where are the results? And when you do things like this, you live in a fishbowl. Everybody's watching you. I go to Trader Joe's and some guy stopped me.

Hey, I listen to your testimony online. Nice to meet you. And I go into some other store yesterday.

Oh, I saw your testimony online. I don't even know. It's like a fishbowl.

Everything I do is being weighed. Everything, how I treat the kids, what I talked about with Morgan. You go out in public, it's a fishbowl.

And it's hard because sometimes you're just like everybody else, you know? And I see the kids sometimes acting up and say, are we going in the right direction? But I have to remember that's the hardest job in the world. And the most important is raising those. God has told us to raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord, not provoking them to anger.

Look throughout the Old Testament, fathers raising their children, mothers raising their children, helping and coming together. So I'm just concerned that we put all these other things ahead as the family falls apart. And I've seen it more times than I can mention.

You would be amazed at the condition of most homes of successful CEOs or entrepreneurs who are working eight hours a day. They have no marriage. It's falling apart.

They have no life. The spouses are a mile apart. The kids don't even know their dad.

They live in the same house, but they don't even know him. And that's what's happening because we're pursuing all these things. And then Paul goes on to say in verse 28, he said, in case you didn't get this, Christ dying for the church, sanctifying her in the same way husbands love your wives as your own body.

He who loves his wife loves himself. That's amazing. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it.

So the way you treat yourself is a way to treat your wife, treat your spouse. The same way we treat ourselves is the way we should treat our spouse as Christ does the church. Verse 30, Ephesians 5 still, because we are members of his body.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. When a husband and wife become together, they become one flesh. It's not a husband has his own life and wife.

No, it's one flesh, one goal, one aim, one job description. It's to help raise his family. It's to love the Lord for the glory of God.

We come together as one flesh. This is a mystery and it is profound, Paul says. It means you're not going to understand it.

And I'm saying that this refers to Christ and the church too. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself. Here comes another difficult scripture.

Don't plug your ears. And let the wife see that she respects her husband. Very interesting, very interesting.

He says love your wives, but wives respect your husbands. So obviously husbands have a problem loving their wives, and obviously wives have a problem respecting their husbands. I don't know, just call me silly on this one, but that's what it looks like.

You don't need a degree in church systematic theology or divinity. You don't need to unravel the Greek. Women, respect your husbands.

Husbands, love your wives. Really, those are the two key issues. When those are in sync, you'll have a healthy marriage.

When Christ is the foundation and the husband is loving his wife to the best of his ability, repenting when he messes up, falling forward, trying to lead the family, and the wife respects that role, nourishes him, cherishes him, appreciates him, those two things are marriage builders. That's hard to tear that apart. But let's look at this real quick.

The husband is addressed first. Did you notice that? Husbands, love your wives, and Christ, love the church. And then he says, oh, by the way, why? Because leadership is addressed first.

Leadership is addressed first. Then it all falls in place. You ever notice when a sports team is doing bad, who do they go after? The coach.

When a company's going under, take out that CEO. They go for the leadership. Throughout the Old Testament, too, God would have harsh words for the leadership because as the leadership goes, so goes the people.

Jesus even said, strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter. It all starts with God has given man the role as leadership. So from that, leadership is going to flow everything else.

So that's why the man is addressed first. You set the tone, you lead by example. And then he says, the two shall become one flesh.

This is why, may I be honest with you, this is why divorce is so hard. I remember listening to Focus on the Family years ago, and they were interviewing a lady who actually was in the concentration camps in Germany. And she said that the pain from her divorce was worse than the concentration camps.

Another lady who lost her husband to cancer said the divorce would have been worse than losing her husband to cancer. See what happens? The one flesh, you can't just get over it. The kids will get over it, they'll be fine.

No, they won't. No, they won't. The damage is often irreversible.

Sure, there's God's grace and love and mercy and he'll help rebuild and restore you in every peace and joy, of course. But when the two become one flesh, and it's like me ripping this Bible apart. We'll just get over it.

No, it's done. The damage is done. That's why it's so hard, because death is final.

You expect maybe a father or grandfather to die, it's final. But divorce wasn't meant to do that. Two people come together, one flesh.

That one flesh, when it breaks apart, there's pain. More than most people even know. Divorced people are some of the most hurt people on the planet, because lives have been shattered, dreams have been destroyed.

All hope is gone. All this time invested in the person they love and trusted in is now gone. How do you minister to that? Well, of course, you minister the good news of the gospel and the healing power of God's love and his forgiveness, but that's why you don't just get over it.

And I'm tired of talking to couples, saying, oh, the kids, I know they're young, but they'll grow, they'll get over it. No, they won't. No, they won't get over it.

Their mommy and their daddy are breaking apart, and the kids will be scarred emotionally, relationally, probably spiritually. You have to understand that your choices have ramifications. Those who are considering divorce, there will be a wake.

The grass is not greener. Life is not going to be a bowl of jellies and nice and easy and fun now. Now, I know there's some people in abusive-type relationships that they've got to separate, they've got to get out, they've got to get out quickly because there's things that are in harm, or their children.

I understand all that. But as a whole, that's why divorce is so hard. The two become one flesh.

Try just ripping the arm off or having surgery, cutting it off. That's what happens. This isn't a game.

Folks think, oh, I'll just try it out and see if it works. No. When you go in to say, I do, you better know what you're committing to because it's a covenant that God honors.

Once that happens, the two are one flesh. It's a mystery. We don't understand it.

And what happens when that flesh pulls apart immediately? Immediately, I've got to find somebody new. I've got to find somebody new. I've got to start dating.

I've got to start meeting somebody new. And what happens is, they're not in God's will. Instead of waiting on the Lord, seeking Him, they rush into a new relationship and then another relationship and another relationship and another relationship, trying to fill that void that will never be found apart from seeking wholeness from God alone.

I mean, it's, what is it, nine times out of ten you see somebody separate? Within a couple of months, they're dating somebody? They're just separated. But now they're dating somebody. What happened there? Because they're trying to find, oh, this person must be, this, I've got to find this person, I've got to, and they go around from relationship to relationship to relationship.

Now, there are teachers. I don't know how many of you have heard of John Piper, who teaches, and you can get a, go online, it's a good article on eleven reasons why he believes that remarriage to someone else other than your spouse is never biblical, unless that spouse dies. And he goes on to say, why is that Paul said you're not under bondage in such cases? Yeah, but it doesn't say you can remarry.

Why is that Jesus said you're released because of adultery? Yeah, but it doesn't say you can remarry. But then you look at John MacArthur or contemporary Mark Driscoll for the younger kids, or you go down the list, and a lot of these men are divided on this issue. And only God truly knows.

Only God truly knows. But the whole point was that is God takes this seriously. Marriage is a covenant and an agreement.

And divorce is not the answer. Often it's, it's, it's, it's, it becomes worse. It becomes more of a nightmare.

And you ask people if they're on their second or third or fourth marriage. They don't want to admit that they were wrong. The grass isn't green.

They deal with the same issues many times. And again, I know if you've went through that, if those who are listening have went through that, God will restore your life. He will rebuild you.

There is hope without a shadow of a doubt. I'm not minimizing that. But I do want to emphasize the fact that this scripture says that the two will become one flesh.

And when that comes apart, there's scars to carry for the rest of your life. But Jesus can help you carry those scars and carry that burden. Cast all your yoke or cast your cares upon me.

I will carry them for you. But that's why it's so important that the marriage that you work on it. The Focus on the Family did a survey many years ago, and they studied, I think it was, I don't know how many couples, I don't want to say the right, right number, but let's just say 2,000 couples.

And then, I don't know, years later, they interviewed many of them again, and they found that the ones who held together were happier five years later. Because they held together. They weathered the storm.

They rode it out. They didn't ride the love emotional roller coaster. I don't love you anymore.

We never should have got married. I think we were just friends. We made a mistake.

Will you love me initially? Yeah, but I fell in love. See, all these emotional things come in. The pull of the world pulls us apart.

And if you didn't listen to the message I gave on destructive influences, I would encourage you to listen to that again. I'm getting a lot of positive feedback from people not realizing that they're allowing destructive influences into their home. That's why we're seeing divorce, an epidemic.

That's why we're seeing half of marriages end in divorce, because destructive influences are coming in and pulling that marriage apart. And that's what happens, because if we're not grounded in the Word of God, we're not studying the Word of God, we're not broken and humble. Husbands aren't loving their wives and wives aren't respecting their husbands.

And we're not walking in the role that God ordained. The pull of the world just pulls it and pulls it and pulls us away. And that's what happens.

So Paul's saying, listen, you two will become one flesh. Now let the wife see that she respects him. Oh, goodness.

Let the wife see that she respects him. And this word respect is very simple. I'll get right to the point.

It's a feeling of deep admiration for someone based on their qualities or their achievements. It's due regard for the feelings and rights of others. You might say, well, Shane, I don't have admiration for my husband anymore.

I don't. I don't admire him. What he does, I don't look up to him.

I need help in this area. I don't. So this definition doesn't fit me.

Well, that's fine, but let's keep reading. It's an act of the will and it's not simply an emotional or physical response. Just like love, even though you don't feel it, you don't fall out of love.

Love doesn't leave. We leave love. The same thing with respecting one another.

Actually, your husbands are called to cherish our spouses. I wish I had time to get to that verse. And as a weaker vessel and honoring them and showing them the due respect and the wife responds to that sometimes and sometimes not.

And that's how she respects her husband. It's admiration for him. It's an act of the will.

It's not simply an emotional or physical response. So think about that. While we're waiting for them to change, they're not going to change anytime soon.

God calls us to still love the wives and respect the husbands. And in closing, I want to bring up two things. If you're not leading according to God's word, you're not leading.

If you're not leading according to God's word, you're not leading. That's just the simple truth. We're playing a role that we're not truly lined up with God's will.

We have to be leading our families. And the next thing with women in this role, if you're not allowing him to lead and respecting his role, then you're living outside of the framework of God's design. As Jordan comes up and concludes with the worship, I'm going to conclude really quick on this issue because why don't we start thanking God for our spouses instead of complaining? Why don't we start thanking God for what he's given us, blessed in this nation, blessed with our spouse, blessed with kids.

Look at our kids. Look at our families. Why don't we start thanking God for them? Thank you for these things.

Because when you put a spirit of thankfulness in you, it's hard to stay bitter and resentful. Do you realize that this is why the children of Israel never went into the promised land? And this is why many of us will never experience that freedom in Christ. We'll never experience true joy, true love, true peace.

Because there's no thankfulness. We're bitter. We're upset.

We're angry. We walk around, oh, this guy, I can't believe this ball and chain. Where'd that come from? Old ball and chain.

Got to carry this around for the rest of my life. Where's the thankfulness in there? When the kids are running around, I often remind myself, I tell Morgan, at least we're not driving down to children's hospital holding my four-year-old as she dies of leukemia. Can you imagine? Or burying my seven-year-old in a little casket up here? There's too much to be thankful for.

Take a trip to a third world country, a missions trip, and watch them look for food in the dump. Their bathroom is a hole in the floor, in the dirt, with all kinds of mice and things coming into their house. We live in the most blessed nation on the planet, with the most blessed kids, with the most blessed families, with the abundance.

And we walk around like the children of Israel complaining and bickering and whining about everything. I'm preaching to myself, and just in case you're asking, yes, I do that too. Absolutely.

And it's got to be repented of. Think about how much we should be thankful for. The vehicles cost more than their houses.

A year's salary in some places. Make it \$1,200 a year. We need to be thankful for our marriages.

God brought somebody to help chisel and shape the character, and shape your character. Not somebody just like you, but somebody difficult and challenging, because it is the only person who will get to the heart of the issue. I believe that God brings two people together, and God is going to use the other person to help conform the other person into the image of Christ more than anything else.

The challenges that I face with Morgan, or she faces with me, God is using that more than anything else. More than my workplace, more than ministry, more than anything else to conform me to the image of Christ. So I ask you, are you living for the things that Christ died for? In our marriages, are we living for the things that Christ died for? He died for these things.

There's too much at stake, folk. There's too much at stake. Marriages are falling.

Families are disintegrating. The nation's in turmoil unlike anything they've ever seen before. There's too much at stake.

The lives of our children. The lives of our future marriage, of our future kids. If your kids are grown, there's too much at stake.

You need to spend time with them. Put the right priorities back. I just heard on the radio the other day that the devil uses busyness.

And the guy said, no, busyness is of the devil. When we're too busy to start putting the first things first, we are failing in our roles. And the devil will come in in our nation, especially because we're so blessed, and he'll make us so busy.

And I see it can happen in my own life, but I'm not careful. I'll wake up and my daughter's 18 and she's moving out. And I blank and it was yesterday.

Priorities. You've got to begin to put first things first. Put your relationship with Christ first and foremost.

I cannot express that enough. This is the foundation on which your life must be built. Man, you need to be spending time in this.

You don't get it by osmosis. And I'll tell you what, I'll be completely honest with you. Me preaching to you tonight, if you're relying on that to get you through all week, you're in trouble.

You should be diving into this tomorrow morning. Repenting of everything we've talked about. If it's piercing your heart.

Wise, if you're not respecting your husbands, repent of it. God knows you're not fooling anybody. If husbands don't love their wives, God knows.

Oh, he knows my heart better than I know my heart. And that's what this time of worship is for. We just want to take this time and repent.

And Lord, we want to get right with you. And if there isn't areas that need repent, you just need to be restored and rebuilt. You need God to just shelter you.

You went through a divorce, you're hurting. Let God do that during this time. This isn't just something we throw on to the end of the service.

This is part of the service where God changes and breaks a heart. Let me just conclude in prayer. Lord, I just ask you tonight, Lord, that you will take us into the holy of holies, Lord, by the blood of the Lamb.

Lord, let us experience you. Lord, show us your power tonight. Lord, if there's areas that men need to improve in, Lord, show them tonight.

Lord, there's areas that women need to respect their husbands in. Lord, show them tonight. Lord, have us repent of these things and come out.

Lord, we're sinning against you. Lord, we're sinning against you. And I pray that you'd use this time to restore.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. You know, I just, as I was saying that, I just thought of David when he sinned against Bathsheba and he had his, he had her husband Uriah killed.

I find it funny that God said against you and you only have I sinned. Wait a minute. He just committed murder and adultery all in the same week.

He said to you and only have I sinned. Joseph, when he ran from Potiphar's wife, what did he say? He said to God, how can I do this great wickedness against you? Folks, we're holding bitterness in against our spouse. We're actually holding it against God.

We're sinning against God. He commands us to do these things in a spirit of love because he knows it'll restore our marriages. So if you all want to just stand up right now, we're actually going to be in the back corners.

I think we'll have some over here and I'll be over here with Morgan. And we want to pray for you guys if you need prayer. But you can cry out in your seats.

You can pray to God in your seat. You can just say, Lord, I need you. I want to turn everything over to Lord.

Take my marriage. Take me by the hand, Lord, and guide me through this. I need you.

And I want to read this verse that I read last week and it struck so many hearts and I want to read it again. Out of the depths, I cried to you, O Lord. Hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness. Therefore, you are feared.

Look to that and look to him tonight. You know, as we conclude tonight, too, I would just encourage you guys to talk to your spouse. If there's any areas, just say, you know, I'm sorry.

I apologize. You know, I've done. I can tell Morgan I apologize for snapping or getting upset or irritable.

Forgive me for that. It's refreshing because that repentance opens the heart. That's how God created us.

He didn't create us to hold all this bitterness and unforgiveness and anger inside. He created us to ask for forgiveness, repent, and then feel times of refreshing. The best times we've ever had in our marriage, often are times we've worked things out and asked for forgiveness and back on the right track.

The worst times are when you hold it all in. Bitterness, resentful, angry. I don't want to deal with you.

I don't want to talk to you. I love you, but I don't like you right now. But we weren't created to be like that, folks.

And I just I just want strong marriages here. Marriages where the man is humble and broken and where the woman wants to follow that type of leader. So as we conclude the service, I would encourage you to talk with your spouse tonight and just just ask for forgiveness in any areas.

And that's going to conclude.

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