

What Did You Expect?

Three Wisdom Perspectives

A. Recognize Your Unrealistic Expectations

- Three Causes
 1. Failure to use the Bible Biblically – when we're thinking about marriage we tend to focus only on the marriage passages, and we tend to neglect other passages that teach us about sin and grace, about the gospel
 - ✓ The marriage passages present for us the ideal – which of course is not bad, and we need to know what the ideal is – but we need to know the nature of our struggle against sin and self, we need to know how daily grace helps – and we find this in the totality of the Scriptures
 2. Romantic Delirium – particularly applicable to young, engaged couples – in the midst of the power of premarital romance, it's very hard to get yourself to want to take a hard and honest look at reality
 - ✓ The reality is that troubles will come in your marriage – sometimes from without, but most often from within – within your own hearts
 3. Failure to recognize the Already/Not Yet Difference
 - ✓ We live in the middle of what Christ has already accomplished and what he will finally accomplish – to state it another way, we live in a state of sanctification, not glorification – we are being set free from the power of sin, but we are not yet set free from it's presence

B. The Need for Prepared Spontaneity

- The truth is that you and I simply never know what is coming next! Last week didn't work according to your plan – and neither will this coming one.
- Acts 17:26-27 – God is the one determining our lives
- Daniel 4:34-35 – He does according to his will
- Proverbs 16:9 – The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps
- Since God is sovereign and working out all things according to his will and not ours, certainly we will face the unexpected – but that does not mean we have to be unprepared

C. Three Wisdom Perspectives

1. You Are Conducting Marriage in a Fallen World

- ✓ Someway, somehow your marriage is touched every day by the brokenness of our world. Maybe low-grade hassles – maybe major issues that have altered the course of your life and marriage – you cannot escape the environment God has put you in – a broken world
- ✓ Romans 8:22-23 – All of creation groans!
- ✓ 1 Peter 1:6-7 – What words describe the reality of this life? Grieved, trials and tested
- ✓ Grieved – can be over the momentary pain of little disappointments or the long-term mourning of a significant moment of loss
- ✓ Trials – things we would never have planned for ourselves but are inserted into our schedules – from the mundane to the major - illness, loss of income, car won't start
- ✓ Tested – “God decided to leave you in this fallen world to live, love, and work, because he intended to use the difficulties you face to do something in you that couldn't be done any other way.”
- ✓ Personal Happiness Paradigm vs. Personal Holiness Paradigm
- ✓ Most of us have a personal happiness paradigm for our lives – we are seeking to be happy. Not wrong in and of itself, it is just way too small of a goal
- ✓ God has a personal holiness paradigm – in his love he is working to change us, to drive out sin, to transform us and make us like Jesus
- ✓ The need is for us to get on God's personal holiness page – when we do life becomes more hopeful – what is happening is from God to mold me into what he created me to be

2. You Are a Sinner Married to a Sinner

- ✓ Both husband and wife bring something into the marriage that is destructive to what a marriage needs and how it should function – SIN!
- ✓ At some point we will all be selfish, we will all speak unkindly, there will be moments of jealousy, bitterness, frustration and conflict – it cannot be avoided!

- ✓ And so, you should never be surprised that your spouse is a sinner, that they might act with selfishness, speak harshly, etc.
- ✓ “If you minimize the heart struggle that both of you have carried into your marriage, here’s what will happen: you will tend to turn moments of ministry into moments of anger.”
- ✓ This truth must never be used as an excuse to defend our sinful dealings with our spouse – we cannot say, “What did you expect? I’m only a sinful human” as if that gives you the right to continue in sin

3. Third Wisdom Perspective – God is Faithful, Powerful and Loving

- ✓ And this faithful, powerful and loving God is with you in your struggle
- ✓ Acts 17:26-27 – God is not far from us!
- ✓ Psalm 145:13-21 – God is...
- ✓ Not only is he with us – he identifies with us – Hebrews 4:15-16
- ✓ Feel betrayed? Feel lonely? Feel misunderstood? Feel abandoned by men and/or God? Feel abused? Feel exhausted? Feel criticized? Your Savior can identify with you, comfort you help you run the race all the way to the end

Suggested Homework:

- Read chapter 1 if you have not done so and discuss it with your spouse
- Memorize Ephesians 4:31-32