

THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE



The Secret of Marriage



Which of these TV families is most like your family?



THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE



Marriage is Sweet!



- Choose one piece of candy
- Use it describe your current (or ideal) relationship or marriage.
- Example: This Hershey's Kiss reminds me that I appreciate little ways my spouse shows me affection.



Foundation for this Class

- For both married and unmarried people
- Based on teachings of the Bible
- True for the book, true for our study



Introduction

- "A man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery — I am talking about Christ and the church."
(Ephesians 5:31-32)
- How is marriage mysterious to you?



God Created Marriage

- "Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame." (Genesis 2:22-25)

Journal Questions:



- How can this passage teach you about relationships with: The opposite gender? Your parents?
- What significant event happened soon after this passage? How has that changed things?
- Notice how God understands Adam! How well does God understand *your* needs and desires?



THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

Decline of Marriage


- "...the assumption [is] that most marriages are unhappy... The problem with these beliefs and assumptions, however, is that every one of them is almost completely wrong." (Keller, 15)



THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

The Surprising Goodness of Marriage

- "Married people experience greater physical and mental health. Also, marriage provides a profound 'shock absorber' that helps you navigate disappointments, illnesses, and other difficulties." (Keller, 17)
- "Studies show that spouses hold one another to greater levels of personal responsibility and self-discipline than friends or other family members can." (Keller, 17)



The Surprising Goodness of Marriage

- "All surveys tell us that the number of married people who say they are 'very happy' in their marriages is high—about 61-62 percent—and there has been little decrease in this figure during the last decade. Most striking of all, longitudinal studies demonstrate that two-thirds of those unhappy marriages out there will become happy within five years if people stay married and do not get divorced." (Keller, 19)



Influences on Marriage

Discussion Questions:

- Where do you typically see examples of marriage?
- Where do you most often hear about marriage?
- In what situations are you most likely to talk about marriage?



The History of Marriage

- "Instead of finding meaning through self-denial, through giving up one's freedoms, and binding oneself to the duties of marriage and family, marriage was redefined as finding emotional and sexual fulfillment and self-actualization." (Keller, 21)
- "Marriage used to be a public institution for the common good, and now it is a private arrangement for the satisfaction of the individuals. . . . But ironically, this newer view of marriage actually puts a crushing burden of expectation on marriage and on spouses in a way that more traditional understandings never did. And it leaves us desperately trapped between both unrealistic longings for and terrible fears about marriage." (Keller, 23)



The Search for a Compatible Soul Mate

- However, sexual attractiveness was not the number one factor that men named when surveyed by the National Marriage Project. They said that "compatibility" above all meant someone who showed a "willingness to take them as they are and not change them." (Keller, 24)



Making Men Truly Masculine



- "This is a significant break with the past. Traditionally, men married knowing it would mean a great deal of personal alteration. Part of the traditional understanding of marriage was that it "civilized: men." (Keller, 25)



Making Men Truly Masculine

- "But Lipton argued that marriage was traditionally a place where males became truly masculine: "For most of Western history, the primary and most valued characteristic of manhood was self-mastery... A man who indulged in excessive eating, drinking, sleeping or sex—who failed to 'rule himself"—was considered unfit to rule his household, much less a polity." (Keller, 26)



Closing Reflections

- How is it meaningful to you that God created marriage?
- What is something new you have learned about marriage today? How has your view of marriage been impacted or changed?
- What is one way today's lesson/discussion can help you be a better spouse, friend, or family member?



WE'LL SEE YOU
NEXT WEEK!



The Secret of Marriage (Part 2)