

First, Biblical Foundation

- 1) What Did You Expect? == Reality Check → Everyone's Journey Is Different → Ours Less Perfect
- 2) We Were == **Young People—Young Christians** → 23 & Before 24 == Had Baby
 - a) Small Confession == Had No Earthly Idea What I Was Doing!
- 3) Little Trepidation @ Teaching Class → Reality Is == May Go Home & Have Fight Tonight
 - a) Reality == Still Do Not Have It All Together → 27 Years Last June → Planning On 40 More
 - b) I Can Still Be == Real Jerk Sometimes
 - c) Still (At Times) == Proud—Selfish—Self-Riteous—Defensive—Condescending—Mean—Use Imagination
 - d) Harvey—*“Our lives are complicated; “careening” is probably a better word. Our marriage is a rich, sweet chaos. But our journey is sustained, through the grace of God, by a passionate companionship that grows deeper every year.”* (31)
- 4) Lynne & I → Rough Start → Tough Seasons → Saving Grace == **Striving To Follow Jesus**

Second, Biblical Foundation

- 5) Marriage Is God's Idea → Regulated By His Commands == Must Determine To Do It His Way
 - a) Everything In Our Marriages == Has Reference To God == Lives Are Open Before Him
 - b) Heb 4:13—*“No creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”* == In Hearts & Minds == Must Bring God Into Everything
 - c) Every Fight → Every Issue == As Much == Probably More == Betw/ You & God → Than Spouse
- 6) David == Ps 51:4—*“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight”*
 - a) Every Time Sin Against Spouse → Sin Against God
 - b) Every Time == At Odds == Hear God Saying == Figure It Out == Move Towards Her
 - c) Audibly == Not Quite → Following Jesus ==
- 7) Harvey—*“How a husband and wife build their marriage day-by-day and year-by-year is fundamentally shaped by their theology. It governs how you think, what you say, and how you act. Your theology governs your entire life.”* → If
 - a) Problem Is → We Don't Follow Jesus & Obey His Word At Home → Way Treat My Spouse
 - b) Problem Is → Often Believe Lies == Live Accordingly To Lies → Not According To His Word
 - c) Great Deal of Marriage Counseling → Calling People To Stop Being Full of Selves = Obey Jesus
- 8) Christ-Centered → What Does It Mean For Marriage To Be Christ-Centered
 - a) Call To Discipleship → Follow Jesus At Home → Every Word—Every Command—Like Christ
 - b) Want To Serve & Please Him → Way We Are Married == Way Love & Serve Spouse
 - c) Like Christ → Humble & Gentle of Heart → Think Like Jesus → Obey Jesus → Please Jesus
 - d) Christ-Empowered → Find Power To Love—Serve—Deny Self—Forgive—Believe—Humble Self, etc.
 - e) If Living Self == Demanding—Critical—Self-Protecting → If For Jesus == Giving—Humble—Self-Denying

Third, Marital Love

- 1) Marital Love == Not Less Than Christian Love In General == It Is More
 - a) More == Physical & Sexual Relationship Reserved For → Celebrated In Marriage
- 2) At Foundation of Marital Love == Love & Life Described In All of Bible → NT
- 3) Fruit of the Spirit at Home → Love—Joy—Peace—Patience—Kindness—Goodness—Gentleness—Faithfulness—Self-Control == Is This How Treat Your Spouse
- 4) Pray for one another
- 5) Confess to one another
- 6) 1 Cor 13:2, 4-8—*“but have not love, I am nothing...Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at*

wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”

- a) Keeps No Record of Wrongs == Every Couple In Crisis == Long-Long List of Wrongs
 - b) Faith Believes All Things → Love Never Fails → Hope Never Dies →
- 7) Indifference & Hopelessness Are Unchristian
- a) “What do we need to do? I am willing to do anything...”
- 8) Col 3:12-13—“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

Fourth, Marriage As A Covenant

- 1) “Friends & Family, gathered here today in presence of God & all these witness to join together”
- 2) Mal 2:14—“The LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.”
- 3) Covenant → Set of vows made to another before God & Community == Love—Honor—Cherish
 - a) A covenant is intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman. Marriage is a **vow** to God, to each other, our families and our community to remain steadfast in unconditional love, reconciliation and sexual purity, while purposefully growing in our covenant marriage relationship.”
 - b) Promise of Future Love → Promise of Companionship → Promise of Friendship
- 4) For God’s Glory
 - a) For Our Good → His Glory → God Most Important Person In Marriage
 - b) To Break Faith—Covenant W/ Spouse == Break Faith—Covenant W/ God at Same Time
 - c) Protects Us From Placing Personal Need → Personal Comfort → Even Happiness At Center
 - d) Glory of God Overrides All of These → Rather == All of These Serve Glory of God
- 5) Honor God—Christ In Way Married → Way Love My Spouse
 - a) Do Marriage Before Him → Vows We Took == In Name of Father, Son & Holy Spirit
 - b) Do Marriage According To Him → Live Out Bible → Christian Life == At Home
 - c) Do Marriage With Him & By His Power
- 6) Vow Was Till Death Parts Us → Never Threaten Divorce → Opposite == Reiterate Promise of Staying
- 7) Vow Was Not → To Not Divorce == Your Vow Was / Is To Love → Do It Until Death Parts You

Finally, Marriage As A Picture

- 1) Eph 5:32—“This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”
 - a) Great Drama Being Worked Out In Every Christian Marriage == How Jesus Loves His Church
 - b) Harvey—“What we believe about God determines the quality of our marriage.”
 - c) How Treating Your Spouse Reflects What You Think of God
- 2) Marriage == God’s Idea → Even When Instituted At The Creation == Christ & Church In Mind
 - a) Husband Is Christ → Wife Is The Church == Gives Some Sense of Relationship Roles
- 3) John 17:9—“I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me”
 - a) Your Spouse Given To You By God → Knew Just What You Need → For Shaping of your Soul
 - b) Believe This With All Your Heart → Then All Your Problems Are Betw/ You & Giver
 - c) Learning To Live With & Love Them Like Christ == Sanctification
- 4) Path to growing Marriage == God Is Involved In Every Moment ==
 - a) What God Doing? == Make It What You Are Doing
- 5) Most Important Ingredient In Growing Marriage == Growing Christians == Personal Walk W/ Jesus

Bibliography

Chapell, Bryan, Each For the Other, Baker Books.

Chandler, Matt, The Mingling of Souls, David C. Cook

Harvey, Dave, When Sinners Say I Do, Shepherd Press.

Keller, Timothy, The Meaning of Marriage, Dutton.

Thomas, Gary, Sacred Marriage, Zondervan.

Thomas, Gary, Sacred Influence, Zondervan.

Smith, Winston, Marriage Matters, New Growth Press.

Tripp, Paul David, What Did You Expect, Crossway.

VanVonderen, Jeff, Families Where Grace Is In Place, Bethany House.