

life groups discussion guide
series: Make Love Work
title: “Put a Ring on It”



April 17, 2016

Reading Matt 19:4-6

4 “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them **male and female**,’⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?’⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Discussion:

How are the members of marriage described in verse 4?
Why is this such an unpopular view of marriage?

People often use their own conscience to determine how God should reign. For example, it is not uncommon for people to say, “My god is not intolerant of other religions and lifestyles.”

What should we use as our moral compass, if not our own consciences?
How is creating a god that fits to our conscience (and contradicts the Word of God) a form of idolatry?

Reading Malachi 2:14-16

13 Another thing you do: You flood the LORD’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. 14 You ask, “Why?” It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your **marriage covenant**. 15 Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth. 16 “The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,” says the LORD Almighty. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

Discussion:

How is the bond between the husband and wife described above in verse 14 (hint – its bolded)?

Polls indicate that the majority of people (even Christians) view divorce as a viable alternative if spouses become incompatible. Why is this view, a contract view and not a covenant view?

Read the passage below describing God’s covenant with Solomon. It details the disaster that will occur if the covenant is broken. In light of this, how seriously should our marriage covenant be taken?

1 Kings 9:6-9

6 But if you or your descendants turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. 8 This temple will become a heap of rubble. All who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?' 9 People will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them.' ”

Discussion:

Discuss the passage below and how this also is applicable to the marriage covenant.

Ecc 5:4-7

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. 5 It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it. 6 Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? 7 Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore fear God.

In *Lasting Love*, by Alistair Begg, he lists 3 biblical reasons for marriage. Furthermore he says that marriage mirrors the relationship between Christ and the church, and for this purpose, is not to be taken lightly, but regarded in sacred reverence. The benefits are:

1. The lifelong help, comfort and companionship that husband and wife give to each other
2. The wellbeing of family life: so that children which are a gift from God can be trained in a family setting
3. The well fair of society, which can be healthy only when strong marriages are present.

Not only must a strong foundation and deep regard be held for marriage vows, but constant care must be given to the marriage relationship. See the below quote from Alistair Begg, and discuss.

“If we are ever going to be realistic in preventing in our own experience the tragedy, heartache, and carnage of marital failure, it is imperative that we recognize something that is fundamental: Namely, that when marriages disintegrate, it is not usually as a result of a bizarre event, like a scud missile from an unexpected source out of the blue, but in most cases, when the ceiling caves in on a marriage, it is on account of the fact that there has been a slow leak somewhere in the attic that has gone undetected for long periods time, and it is for this reason that vigilance of the most careful sort is imperative in the most routine things of life.”

Discussion:

What routine maintenance can we perform on our marriage to ensure that our relationships do not erode over time?
What hedges can we put in place to safeguard ourselves from temptation?
What can you start doing today to become a better helpmate to your spouse?