

## Happy to be Stuck with You – Essential Commitments of a God-honoring Marriage

### Gen 2:21-24

2<sup>nd</sup> week into our All in the Family series – discovering biblical principles for marriage and relationships

Big picture – Working our way through Titus in order to Spread the Word

The truth of who God is and what he desires/requires in our lives

As Paul writes to Titus telling him what to teach in establishing churches

We're stepping off for a short series on each of those topics, digging deeper and bringing the whole word of God to bear

Last week – looked at God's purposes in marriage

Satisfy our desires and need for companionship, partnership, relationship, intimacy

This week, we're going to look at the same passage in **Gen 2:21-24**

All kinds of formulas for success in marriage

50/50 plan – If you do your part, I'll do mine and meet you in the middle

Sounds good, but destined to fail because . . .

Your "halfway" isn't the same thing as my halfway

It fails to anticipate the pride/selfishness you bring to the table

I'm not doing it if he doesn't; I'm not sticking neck out any more than I have to

It's dependent on the other's performance – you'll be disappointed at least once

So the 50/50 formula for success is a loser

Mathematical formula

**Read article** – *Formula for a Successful Marriage* (DiscoveryChannel.ca, 9/11/03)

**Equations** – Thought it was a joke; Until I watched the video of the mathematician describing the formula – Dude, stick to math

If you're going to be able to say like Huey Lewis and News – "I'm so happy to be stuck with you" . . .

You have to reject the 50/50 plans; Bypass all the formulas

Stick to the essential *commitments* of a God-honoring marriage

The first of which is to . . .

### **Receive your mate (v21-23)**

God made Eve, brought her to Adam (22), and he received her (that's the gist of v23)

In naming her like himself, he was not only saying – she's like me, but I accept; I do

He recognized that God made them for each other; That she was God's provision

And he received her; The implication is that Eve did too

Many couples never experience that

They never experience the joy of realizing that God must have brought them together . .

Because they don't acknowledge God or his part in their marriage in the first place

Taught a pre-marital class

When tell them that one of the essential commitments of a God-honoring marriage was to receive their mate, they'd look at me funny

That's not a problem; I can't wait to fully receive my mate and live life together

They were right – receiving your mate before you are married is usually pretty easy

It's the next 50 years that sometimes present a problem, and require a conscious commitment on your part

It's when your spouse rubs you wrong that you need to continue to receive them

When you find out things about them you wish were different

When you see weaknesses that you didn't know existed

When skeletons from their past show up (relationships, lifestyles)

That's you need to make a conscious decision to receive them as God's provision in your life

It's not a one-shot deal when you first meet or get married

Need to continually accept one another's strengths *and* weaknesses, successes *and* failures, homeruns *and* errors

Trusting that God uniquely designed you for one another

Receiving your mate is an ongoing commitment of your will that's absolutely essential for a strong, healthy, God-honoring marriage

If you've slipped in that recently, start afresh by sitting down and asking each other . . .

### **Assignment #1**

#### **Do you feel received and accepted by me?**

Recommit to receiving one another, just as God made you

Ask God to forgive you for quietly rejecting your husband/wife over time

Ask for their forgiveness too

Second essential commitment of a God-honoring marriage is to . . .

### **Leave your parents (v24)**

24 – *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother*

Doesn't mean you stop honoring your parents (Ex. 21:12)

Doesn't mean withhold help from them when they need it ( Mk 7:9-13; 1 Tim 5:8)

It means . . .

#### • **Cut the cords of dependence and allegiance!**

You must cut the cords of dependence and allegiance to your parents

If don't, you'll undermine the relationship/oneness you're to build as husband and wife

You say, "But that sounds so harsh" – it's not harsh

It's God's design; He commands it – *a man shall leave his father and mother* (v24)

### **Rope; Signs**

Severing the cord of *allegiance* means shifting your priority, loyalty, and accountability to your spouse

Your wife/husband come first, before your mom/dad (priority)

Side with and support your spouse before your parents (loyalty)

You no longer answer to your parents for decisions, you answer to your spouse (acc.)

Severing the cord of *dependence* means that you rely on your spouse first and foremost for financial and emotional support

There's nothing wrong parents helping kids get started in marriage

But if it continues, if it's never phased out, it's not healthy

Had friends whose parents bought the *wife* a new van every couple of years

It was divisive; But the husband was both too greedy to refuse it, and too weak to deny them the month-long visit that came with it

When trouble comes up, who do you call first? Your spouse or your parents?

When you have good news to share, who do you call first?

If the answer is your parents, you haven't left them

Becky and I made a commitment early on that we wouldn't go to our parents with anything that we hadn't already gone to each other with

Especially if we had a fight or disagreement

It's one of the *few* things we did right in those early years, and it saved us much in-law heartache over time

Sever the cord of financial and emotional dependence

Don't think that just because you're a 1000 miles away you've cut the cords of allegiance and dependence

Distance has nothing to do with it; Especially in this day and age of communication

You can be just as dependent 1000 miles away as you can be next door

Nor does time have anything to do with it

I originally thought only young married's struggled with this until I started running into couple after couple who still struggled with it after being married for years and years

One such couple who had been married 20 years, still hadn't cut the cords

Husband called his mom daily; She still told him what to do (and he did it)

She was his go-to person instead of his wife

No wonder their marriage stunk

Doesn't happen by itself

The ropes won't sever themselves; *You* have to **cut them** – each of you

**Both** you *and* your parents **must cut them**

*Both* of you must recognize and accept this shift in allegiance and dependence

Otherwise, one will become disillusioned, hurt, and angry

That may require a talk

If that doesn't work, write a letter and draw a firm line with clear boundaries

Leaving your parents means cutting the cords of dependence/allegiance, and . . .

- **Erase your expectations**

Most of us come into marriage with preconceived notions of how things should happen

Like family traditions, birthday's, how towels are folded, how the lawn should look, when dinner should happen, how the food should taste, who should cook it

If you hold tightly to those expectations because that's the way *your* parents did it, you're never going to be satisfied

You must let go of how your parents or family of origin did things, and establish your own traditions, your own ways

Doesn't mean you can't have some of the same traditions your parents did

The key is deciding on them *together*

And holding your tongue when your wife doesn't fix jello salad like your mom does

Begs the question – How do I know if I've left my parents?

How do I know if I've cut the cords and erased my expectations?

Ask your spouse – they'll tell ya'

## Assignment #2

### Have I completely left my parents?

Wives, for some of you this may be particularly difficult, because you haven't, and you don't want to hear it

And realize that your husband yearns to be your first priority

If the answer is no, or not completely, do what you need to do

Because the commitment to leave your parents is essential to a God-honoring marriage, and foundational to establishing oneness with your spouse

Receive your mate; Leave your parents; and third . . .

### **Cleave to your spouse (v24)**

24 – *Therefore a man shall . . . hold fast to his wife*

Sometimes translated cleave; To stick like glue

Hold fast (Heb) – to pursue hard a firmly joined state like a continual pressing

Carries the connotation of a permanent bond, not meant to be broken

That's commitment

That kind of commitment in marriage is referred to as a *covenant*

Mal 2:14 makes clear when says – *she is your companion and your wife by covenant*

That's not familiar to most of us

Most of us think of commitments in terms of *contracts*

Agreements based on mutual convenience

To some extent that sounds like a marriage

The difference is that contracts are drafted to *protect* each party and provide an *out* in case of a default or an unforeseen circumstance

That's not at all what God intends in marriage

He doesn't intend for you to go into your marriage with an *out* in mind if spouse flakes

He doesn't intend for you to get married with a mindset of *protecting* yourself and your interests, should something go wrong

Prenuptials are out – because they're agreements of escape/protection

While most of us don't live under prenuptial agreements, we far too often entertain *thoughts* of protecting ourselves and getting out should things go bad

That's not the kind of commitment God intends for your marriage

He intends that your marriage be based on promises that last for a lifetime, regardless of your spouse's performance or outside circumstances

Just because your husband has checked out emotionally, doesn't give you the right to check out physically

Their attitudes are not your responsibility

Your responsibility is to cleave to them for life

That's God's intent for marriage

What's more, your marriage is a 3-way deal

Whether you realized it or not, when you stood at the altar and made your vows, you were invoking God's presence in your marriage (because it's his thing)

Mal 2:15 – *Did he [God] not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union?*

Rhetorical question intended to communicate that God joined you together, and joined *with* you in your union

Which means that . . .

- **Your marriage is a sacred, three-way, unconditional promise of life-long commitment between you, your spouse, and God.**

**Close**

Elders up front

That doesn't mean that divorce is never allowed

It *is* allowed in 2 cases –

Hardness of heart due to infidelity (Matt 5:32; 19:9)

Abandonment by an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:12-15)

It's allowed, but never intended (Mt 19:8)

Mal 2:13-16 tells us that the one who initiates a divorce for unbiblical reasons –

Brings violence (judgment) on themselves; Shows they are faithless to God

If questions – pick up a copy of “God's Intent for Marriage/Divorce” (Mal 2:10-16)

Resource table (*free* this week); Online (Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>)

Essential to a God-honoring marriage is the commitment to cleave to your spouse

It's dependent on whether you receive your mate and leave your parents

Final assignment is to sit down and verbalize your commitment to one another

### **Assignment #3**

**(1) I love you**

**(2) I'm committed to you for life**

**(3) I'll do whatever it takes to have a God-honoring marriage**

I'm giving you these assignments to help some of you improve, and others to *break through* in your marriage

Fully aware that some of you don't like your wife/husband anymore

Haven't for a long time; Not really interested in doing anything about

If you are, you're pretty sure you couldn't say some of these things if your life depended on it

Humble yourself; Ask God for help; Trust him for the results as you receive, and leave, and cleave – that honors God

### **Lord's Table**

As you come to the Lord's Table, and remember his love for you . . .

Examine your heart in all this

Confess your sins to God and get right with him

If accepted Jesus as your Savior and follow him as Lord of your life, please join us

If haven't accepted Jesus – let the bread and cup pass

Let us be a witness to you of our love for Christ

After we **pray** . . .

Distribute the elements; Hang on to them; We'll take them together

Bread – Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Cup – As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death [his sacrifice for your sins] until he comes.