

# The Lord Seeks a Godly Seed

## CLASS TWO

### After You Say, "I Do"

**READING:** Ephesians 5

• **SLIDE**

- We have spent some time considering the importance and spiritual significance of Marriage between a Brother and a Sister.
- We have tried to point out that it is not simply a matter of convenience or a choice that you make out of some blinding love for one another
- Marriage is a high ideal that God calls us to
- God does so for our own good, knowing that it is an great medium for one person to help another become the kind of person that God wants us to be... **A Godly Seed!**
- But, few of the things that we hold in such high regard are so poorly understood
- It struck me as I was preparing these classes, how often marriage is the topic of our classes and education, and how much we know about the concept of Marriage, and how **LITTLE** of it we actually practice in everyday life
- Let's be honest...
  - It struck me **PERSONALLY** how much I know about Marriage **ACADEMICALLY**, and how little I actually put into practice what I know - That is the point, isn't it?
- We all **KNOW** what is right and wrong
  - We all **KNOW** how to properly treat and respect our spouses

- But, when you've been working hard all week, and you've faced some serious issues at work that day, and you come home to relax only to find out that your spouse has overdrawn the checkbook – **AGAIN** – It's really hard to put what you know into action, and to respond in the most Christ-Like manner possible
- Our goal then is to simply remind everyone about some helpful hints in keeping a marriage happy and working
  - In hopes that consistent, continual reminders will eventually assimilate into our brains and ultimately affect our behavior
- As we consider what is required of us to make complete our vows, and to build “divorce-proof” marriages, it often comes down to a few simple things...
  - And actually **DOING** them!
- Thankfully the Scriptures are not silent on the issue, and much good advice and help are found there on the topic of Marriage
- One of my favorites comes from Ephesians, and I believe it really comes to life in a modern version
- **SLIDE**
- Ephesians 5:22 (Message)
  - 22)** Wives, understand and **SUPPORT YOUR HUSBANDS** in ways that show your support for Christ.
- Now that really puts a fine point to it, doesn't it?
  - You aren't doing this because he deserves it!
- You are supporting your husband because that is how you show your support for Christ
- Keep that in mind
  - It would be great if your husband was such a wonderful, caring and considerate person that you were moved and compelled to show him understanding and support
- But, even when he's not...
  - The Love and Commitment that you have for Jesus needs to compel you to be faithful and true to your vows

- Remember that the vow you have taken is a symbol of your commitment to Christ, and reflect that commitment in your service to your husband

- The husband does have quite a role to fill...

- **SLIDE**

- Ephesians 5:23-24 (Message)

- 23)** The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, **NOT BY DOMINEERING** but by **CHERISHING**.
  - 24)** So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands.

- Not by domineering, but by cherishing...

- The husband needs to lead his family, but he does so because he loves them, and wants only the best for them

- Look at the commandment to the husband:

- **SLIDE**

- Ephesians 5:25 (Message)

- 25)** Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church - a love marked by **GIVING, NOT GETTING**.

- Go all out in your love for your wife!

- Look at how Paul explains what that means:

- **SLIDE**

- Ephesians 5:26-28 (Message)

- 26)** Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. **EVERYTHING HE DOES AND SAYS IS DESIGNED TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN HER,**
  - 27)** dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness.
  - 28)** And **THAT IS HOW HUSBANDS OUGHT TO LOVE THEIR WIVES...**

- His words evoke her beauty...

- Dressing her in dazzling white silk...

- Radiant with Holiness...
- Not tearing down, but building up!
- It makes sense, seeing how it is **YOUR** wife!

- **SLIDE**

- Ephesians 5:28-30 (Message)

- 28)** ... They're really doing themselves a favor - since **THEY'RE ALREADY "ONE" IN MARRIAGE.**
  - 29)** No one abuses his own body, does he? No, he feeds and pampers it. That's how Christ treats us, the church,
  - 30)** since we are part of his body.

- Commit yourself **WHOLLY** to the **FACT** that this is going to be your **ONE** and **ONLY** wife, and you will be much more interested in taking care of her, and building her up to the best that she can be

- Paul continues...

- **SLIDE**

- Ephesians 5:31-32 (Message)

- 31)** And this is why a man leaves father and mother and cherishes his wife. No longer two, they become "one flesh."
  - 32)** **THIS IS A HUGE MYSTERY**, and I don't pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is **THE WAY THAT CHRIST TREATS THE CHURCH.**

- Paul admits what men have known for thousands of years...

- Marriage is a **HUGE MYSTERY**

- Beware the man who claims to understand it

- It is a complex and confusing relationship
  - It can be wonderful, rewarding and fulfilling, agreed...

- But, it is an extremely complicated, multi-faceted, most "human" of all relationships

- The only one clear thing is:

- The way that Christ treats the Ecclesia
- That is our goal and our guide

- **SLIDE**

- Ephesians 5:33 (Message)

**33)** And this provides a good picture of how each husband is to treat his wife, **LOVING HIMSELF IN LOVING HER**, and how **EACH WIFE IS TO HONOR HER HUSBAND**.

- If we get confused about how to act...
  - We turn to the question that often helps us in times of confusion:

- **SLIDE**

- **What Would Jesus Do?**

- Let's consider some of the essentials of a Healthy Marriage
  - And let's ask ourselves, **"What would Jesus do?"**
  - Let's apply ourselves to determining what is the Christlike way to act
- A Healthy Marriage takes our effort and energy
- It doesn't just happen!
  - Just because you are both baptized doesn't ensure a Healthy Marriage
- You have to work at it
  - Like all living, growing organisms, you need to **CULTIVATE** it!
  - Adding nutrients, water, time and attention...

- **SLIDE**

- 7 Essentials to a Healthy Marriage

- **SLIDE**

**1)** A Healthy **EXPECTATION** of What Marriage Should Be

• SLIDE

2) A **REALISTIC** Understanding of Love

• SLIDE

3) A **POSITIVE** Attitude and Outlook Toward Life

• SLIDE

4) The Ability to **COMMUNICATE** Feelings

• SLIDE

5) An Understanding and **ACCEPTANCE** of Gender Differences

• SLIDE

6) The Ability to Make Decisions and **SETTLE** Arguments

• SLIDE

7) A Common Spiritual **FOUNDATION** and Goal

• SLIDE

1) Healthy **EXPECTATION** of what Marriage is

- No matter how long you have been married, if you continue to labor under some immature, and false expectations of marriage, you will never be happy
- Here are the 4 most common Myths about Marriage

• SLIDE

1) Married People Expect the **SAME THINGS** from Marriage

- Based on our own personal upbringing, schooling, parental roles, etc., we all have different expectations of what marriage is
- It's a crisp, sunny Sunday Afternoon in late fall
  - **YOUR** Father would always go outside and rake leaves on days like this

- But, **MY** Father would always sit by the fire with a cup of coffee and watch football games all day
- You are going to expect something totally different to happen on September 30<sup>th</sup> than I am...
- The more openly you discuss your expectations of marriage, the more likely you will develop a vision of marriage that is your **BOTH** of yours, and not that which you inherited

• **SLIDE**

2) In Marriage, Everything **GOOD** in the Relationship Gets **BETTER**

- Marriage means giving up your self-seeking lifestyle and coming to terms with new limits
- Marriage often involves many unexpected inconveniences
- Marriage often means accepting things that aren't as good as you would like
- No matter who you fall in love with, sooner or later we fall out of love with them, if the relationship continues long enough
- The Honeymoon always ends, and we eventually come to see our partners as who they really are
- A divorce attorney told me that the #1 reason people split up is that they refuse to accept the fact that they are married to a human being
- This letdown, this disenchantment requires you to move into deeper levels of Intimacy

• **SLIDE**

3) In Marriage, Everything **BAD** in Your Life **DISAPPEARS**

- No matter how good the marriage is, it is not a substitute for the difficult work of inner spiritual healing
- Too often people get married to further their own well being, not to take care of their partner's needs

- The baggage you carried around before you were married does not get left behind on the honeymoon
- Marriage **CAN** become a powerful healing agent over time, but it is still going to require you to do the work

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4) My Spouse will Make Me **WHOLE**

- Marriage challenges us to new heights and calls us to be the best person possible, but neither marriage nor our partner will magically make us whole

• **SLIDE**

- **ENMESHED** relationships are characterized by a reliance on your spouse for continual support, assurance and wholeness
- These people are dependent on their partners for happiness, and resist pursuing personal growth
- This is usually coupled with low self-esteem and a sense of inferiority

• **SLIDE**

- **ENMESHED** Relationships are like **THE LETTER A**
- **DISENGAGED** relationships are the opposite of this
- This term reflects the isolation and independence of spouses who are attempting to earn their sense of wholeness by relying on no one – even their own spouse

• **SLIDE**

- **DISENGAGED** Relationships are like **THE LETTER H**
- A sense of wholeness can never be achieved in either an **ENMESHED** or **DISENGAGED** relationship
- Both are deeply flawed and dangerous



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- Wholeness is only found in **INTERDEPENDENT** relationships
- An **INTERDEPENDENT** Relationship is one in which two people with self-respect make a commitment to nurture their own spiritual growth **AS WELL AS** that of their partners

- **SLIDE**

- **INTERDEPENDENT** Relationships are like **THE LETTER M**

- **SLIDE**

2) A **REALISTIC** Understanding of Love

- There are 3 Different Parts make up a Healthy Relationship
- All 3 work together to form sort of a Triangle

- **SLIDE**

- **Eros** – Passion –The Motivational Side of the Triangle
  - Passion is vital to cause a relationship to grow
  - But, Passion is self-serving until it is linked with Intimacy – Phileo

- **SLIDE**

- **Phileo** – Intimacy – The Emotional side of the Triangle
  - Love without Intimacy is simply Hormones
  - Phileo – is the intimacy of a “best friend” or “soul mate”
  - You have to take emotional risks to allow Intimacy live
  - Fear will drive it away, & no marriage can survive without it
  - A lack of Intimacy is the #1 enemy of marriage
  - Without Intimacy you never truly become “one flesh”
  - You never merge or bond regardless of how much Passion

- **SLIDE**

- **Agape** – Commitment – The Cognitive side of the Triangle

- This is the love that does what it needs to do because it **KNOWS** that it is the right thing to do

- Even if it doesn't **FEEL** it

- Commitment secures love for our partner when passion burns low and turbulent times overtake our Intimacy

- These three work together in a Triangle

- Unhealthy Triangles include:

- **Romantic Love**

- All Passion and Intimacy with no Commitment

- **Foolish Love**

- All Passion and Commitment with no Intimacy

- **Companionable Love**

- All Intimacy and Commitment with no Passion

- Keep all **THREE** healthy:

- Cultivate **PASSION**

- Practice Meaningful Touch

- Plan Mutually Enjoyable Experiences (Date Night!)

- Compliment your Partner **DAILY**

- Cultivate **INTIMACY**

- **REALLY** listen to your partner

- Focus on Commonalities

- Explore Spiritual Matters together

- Cultivate **COMMITMENT**
  - Assess the high value of commitment
  - Meet your partner's needs
  - Honor your partner's promise – Trust and respect them

• **SLIDE**

3) A **POSITIVE** Attitude and Outlook Toward Life

• **SLIDE**

- Happiness in Marriage has nothing to do with **LUCK**, and everything to do with **WILL**

• **SLIDE**

- Everyone faces all different kinds of troubles and trials, the bottom line is Happy Couples **CHOOSE** to be Happy
- No one can make another person unhappy

• **SLIDE**

- Take **RESPONSIBILITY** for your own feelings
- Victor Frankl was an Austrian Psychiatrist who was captured and tortured by the Nazis – After they killed his parents, his sister, and his wife, he said,
 

*“The one thing you can't take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me. The last of one's freedoms is to choose ones attitude in any given circumstance.”*
- Not that I am trying to compare your marriage to a concentration camp, but he also said,
 

*“When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves.”*
- You can't change your partner – You've tried for 20 years! – You really only have one viable option left!
- Concentrate on that reality, and move forward with a positive outlook

• **SLIDE**

4) The Ability to **COMMUNICATE** Feelings

- Couples report that the #1 problem they face in Marriage is a “breakdown in communication”
- Women and Men speak different languages
- When a woman says, *“Do I look fat in this dress?”*
  - Every guy knows that she is **NOT** really looking for an answer to that question...
  - Every smart guy hears, *“Will you please reassure me that you still find me attractive?”*
- When a marriage is disintegrating, the partners conclude, *“We just don’t talk anymore”*
- Actually the non-talking is not a lack of communication, but a very powerful form of negative communication
- Silence is not the cause of poor communication
  - The Fear of Pain is
- The Emotional Pain of feeling inadequate, vulnerable or fearful is what we are trying to avoid
- True love doesn’t hurt each other, or use someone’s confessions against them in future situations
- Create an environment where you are free to honestly speak to each other without condemning and criticizing each other
  - In an environment like this communication will grow and not shrink
- 3 Simple Rules for Successful Communication

• **SLIDE**

- 1) Use **“I”** Statements, not **“You”** Statements
  - “You” Statements are Relationship Bombs

- You don't really **KNOW** what the other person was thinking, or what their motivations or reasons were for their actions
- Instead of saying, "*You are selfish*"
  - Say, "*I feel like you don't care about me when you act that way.*"

• **SLIDE**

2) Practice **REFLECTIVE LISTENING**

- We've all sat through the workshop before...
- But, it really does work
- Reflective Listening lets the other person know that you have heard what they say, and that you understand their message
- Don't worry about whether or not you agree with it!
- Simply assure them that they have been heard
- Men, especially, want to solve the problem, and really they should have been concentrating on just hearing it
- Wife: "*Look at this! I just picked this dress up at the Dry Cleaners and there is a big stain on it! I was going to wear this dress tonight!*"
- Typical Husband: "*Just wear a different one!*" - **OOPS!**
- Smart Husband: "*I'm so sorry. I would be upset also!*"

• **SLIDE**

3) Communicate through **TOUCH**

- Physical contact is a powerful means of communicating and a gentle and supportive way to portray positive emotions
- **EVERY** conversation goes better when you are sitting close and holding hands

- Sometimes arguments will push people apart, and one partner will respond negatively when trying to be touched
- Push through that and you will find that the argument will resolve much quicker

• **SLIDE**

5) An Understanding and **ACCEPTANCE** of Gender Differences

- Not only are Men and Women simply different, but they also have different Biblical Roles
- Psychologically, women frequently find their sense of identity through relationships with others; men often find their sense of identity through being separate
- There is an inherent completeness when a man and a woman marry
- Our partner makes up for what we lack
- But, unfortunately, we too often evaluate their behavior according to our own gender specific standards
- So, here you go guys...
  - The answer to the age-old question:
  - Trust me... I didn't know this – I had to look this one up!

• **SLIDE**

- 3 Things a **WOMAN** wants

• **SLIDE**

1) To be **CHERISHED**

- Let your wife know that she is number **ONE** in your life
- That you would rather spend time with her than with anyone else

• SLIDE

2) To be **UNDERSTOOD**

- Let your wife know that her feelings are validated and accepted

• SLIDE

3) To be **RESPECTED**

- Take your wife seriously, honor her wishes and opinions, and include her in the decision making

• What about the Guys?

- What is it that a Man wants?

• I know what your thinking...

- *“Men only want two things: Sex and a Sandwich. And right now, I’m not that hungry.”*

- While it is true that Men tend to be more Physical in their needs, it is also true that Men are greatly affected by their emotions also

• The **MAJORITY** of Affairs are not begun because the man is not getting his **PHYSICAL** needs met at home, but, believe it or not, because he is not having his **EMOTIONAL** Needs met

• SLIDE

• 3 Things a **MAN** Wants

• SLIDE

1) To be **ADMIRE**D

- Men derive their worth more from what they **DO**, while women derive their worth more from what they **ARE**
- When a man does not receive admiration from his spouse for the things he’s done, then he stops trying

• **SLIDE**

- 2) To have **AUTONOMY**
- Unlike women, when men face stressful circumstances, they generally need a little time on their own to work it out
  - Give them some time to decompress before asking them something

• **SLIDE**

- 3) To Enjoy **SHARED ACTIVITY**
- Men connect to a woman emotionally by doing things together
  - Remember, men like to achieve
  - Cultivate the things that you can enjoy doing together

• **SLIDE**

- 6) The Ability to Make Decisions and **SETTLE** Arguments
- The good thing about marriage is that once you get married, you never have another argument again, right? **RIGHT!**
  - There are always going to be disagreements in every marriage
  - What are the **TOP THREE?**
    - Money – By **FAR** the Number One Topic of “Discussion”
    - Sex – Like the discussion on money, it often evolves around quantity
    - In-Laws – I am **NOT** going there today!
  - The key to a good marriage, is not to think that you can somehow miraculously avoid ever fighting, but learning **HOW** to fight a fair fight
    - 5 Suggestions for a good, clean fight



• **SLIDE**

- 1) Don't **RUN** from Strife
  - Don't bottle it up - it just gets worse

• **SLIDE**

- 2) **CHOOSE** your Battles Carefully
  - Some things should be changed and some things simply overlooked

• **SLIDE**

- 3) Define the Issue **CLEARLY**
  - Don't get 45 minutes into it, and say, "*What were we fighting about?*"
  - Clearly define what the problem is, and stay on topic

• **SLIDE**

- 4) State your Feelings **DIRECTLY**
  - Using "**I**" Statements instead of "**You**" Statements
  - Let them know what is bothering you

• **SLIDE**

- 5) Give Up on **PUT DOWNS**
  - You know more about this person than anyone else
  - You know what hurts them more than anyone else
  - Be careful what you say! Fatso!

• **SLIDE**

- 7) A Common Spiritual **FOUNDATION** and Goal
  - Marrying someone in the Truth is only **HALF** the battle

- Because no one stays the same person they were on their Wedding Day
- You both need to develop in the Truth together
- Invest time to make sure that the **SOUL** of your Marriage matures as you both do
- God designed us with a aching, longing soul thirsting to be made complete
- Marriage can make that longing soul feel better for a while, but it can only truly be satisfied with a healthy relationship with God
- You will feel incomplete and unsatisfied no matter what marriage you are in, unless you have found fulfillment in fellowship with Christ
- Cultivate **THAT** as a couple, and you both feel better about each other
- 3 Things to cultivate the spiritual foundation of your marriage:

• **SLIDE**

1) **WORSHIP** Together

- Always go together and be together around the Lord's Table

• **SLIDE**

2) **SERVE** Together

- Find a service or ministry that you can give to the Lord that you can do together

• **SLIDE**

3) **PRAY** Together

- At least once a day

- A Healthy Marriage takes our effort and energy

- It doesn't just happen!

- **CULTIVATE** these 7 Essentials to a Healthy Marriage, and your Marriage will **REAP** the rewards for years to come

• SLIDE

1) A Healthy **EXPECTATION** of What Marriage Should Be

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2) A **REALISTIC** Understanding of Love

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3) A **POSITIVE** Attitude and Outlook Toward Life

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6) The Ability to Make Decisions and **SETTLE** Arguments

• SLIDE

7) A Common Spiritual **FOUNDATION** and Goal

• I just want to leave you with some wonderful words from 1<sup>st</sup> Peter...

• SLIDE

• 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:1-8 (MESSAGE)

1) The same goes for you wives: Be good wives to your husbands, **responsive to their needs**.

• SLIDE

2) There are husbands who, indifferent as they are to any words about God, will be captivated by your life of holy beauty.

3) What matters is not your outer appearance -the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes –

4) but your inner disposition. **Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in.**

• **SLIDE**

- 5) The holy women of old were beautiful before God that way, and were good, loyal wives to their husbands.
- 6) Sarah, for instance, taking care of Abraham, would address him as “My Dear Husband.” You’ll be true daughters of Sarah if you do the same, unanxious and unintimidated.

• **SLIDE**

- 7) The same goes for you husbands: Be good husbands to your wives. **Honor them, delight in them.** As women they lack some of your advantages. But in the new life of God’s grace, you’re equals. **Treat your wives, then, as equals** so your prayers don’t run aground.

• **SLIDE**

- 8) Summing up:  
Be **AGREEABLE**,  
be **SYMPATHETIC**,  
be **LOVING**,  
be **COMPASSIONATE**,  
be **HUMBLE**.

• **SLIDE**

**Amen.**