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Introduction

The Westminster Catechism asks: What is the chief end of man? The answer: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." I like John Piper's version. "The chief end of man is to glorify God BY enjoying Him forever." If we intend to glorify God in our lives, then surely Marriage for God's Glory should be a high priority in our lives. We live in a day when it seems all the arsenal of darkness and destruction has been unleashed against the institution of marriage. The church at large today basically has the same standard for the sanctity of the marriage vow as the world. I think its time for revival in our thinking about marriage!

Marriage for God's Glory is built around the application of the gospel to this vital building block institution. One of the most important and valuable legacies a couple can leave for the next generation is a marriage that preaches the truth about Jesus Christ. How is that to be done? What is God's purpose of marriage? How can you and your wife demonstrate the mysterious oneness of Christ and the church? Can a marriage that has gone sour be revived and glorify God? Is there any hope if you've fallen out of love with your spouse or he or she has fallen out of love with you? The answers to these questions and more are clearly answered in the six-tape audio series, Marriage for God's Glory. We hope this study guide will be useful in working through these messages and being a conduit of God to bring more glory for Him to your marriage.

Chapter 1

Who's Leading Your Marriage?

Introduction

1. One of the great things about being a Christian is that we have a clear vision from God as to our purpose in any area of life -- to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
2. That raises an appropriate question: Who is the leader in your marriage?
 - A. Jesus Christ
 - B. The husband
 - C. The wife
 - D. The kid's sports schedule
 - E. The husband's business
3. Perhaps it is best to consider defining the term "leader."
 - A. In hiking:
 - B. In politics:
 - C. In the army:
 - D. In an orchestra:
 - E. In farming:
 - F. In construction:
4. But what does it mean to be the leader in marriage?
 - A. It's the one who...
 - B. It's the one who...
 - C. It's the one who...
 - D. It's the one who...
 - E. It's the one who...
 - F. It's the one who...
5. So, who is it in your marriage?

Jesus Christ is to be the leader in your marriage.

1. If he isn't the leader, then your marriage is sure to be divided and at the worst, to fail. If he hasn't been the leader, then you know the source of your problems in your marriage.

2. What does it mean that Jesus is the leader of your marriage?
 - A. For the both of you:

 - B. For the husband:

 - C. For the wife:

Second, let's look at what God has to say about this issue from the perspective of jurisdiction and vision. Who is to be the leader?

1. It is also important to understand and apply what the leader says about the order and operation of a marriage that brings Him glory. From the beginning, God established who was to be the leader in the marriage and family with one sovereign act: He made Adam before Eve and gave the first revelation of His will to Adam to give to Eve and the rest of the family. Gen. 2:7, 18. 21-25; I Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:12-13

3. What does it mean to be the leader or the one who has jurisdiction?
 - A. Gen. 2:7.
 - B. Eph. 5:25-30.
 - C. I Cor. 11:3

4. How does a man do this?
 - A. Core attitudes necessary for husbands.
 - B. Through discipline, prayer, and relationship with other men who have the same vision, purpose, and commitment.
 - C. Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Tim. 2:8
 - D. With his wife:
 1. He listens first to his wife--
 2. He listens to the Holy Spirit--
 3. He listens to other believing husbands--

4. He listens to God's Word again--
 5. He communicates God's Word and the vision
 6. He prays with his wife and family about that vision
5. How does a wife not do this?!
- A. She looks to Jesus as her Shepherd and Guardian. 1 Peter 2:21-25
 - B. She sees her husband as simply a channel of Jesus' guardianship.
 - C. She submits to her husband as to the Lord as she is filled with the Holy Spirit. Eph. 5:24
 - D. She humbly views herself as a channel of blessing to her husband by giving to her husband what God gives to her to help him. Gen. 2:20
 - E. She is to have a quiet spirit trusting in Christ. 1 Pet. 3
 - F. She helps him lead the family by fulfilling God's vision for the family and by assisting and following her husband's lead.

If we're to have marriages that bring glory to God and that can provide a foundation for generations to come, they must be marriages in which Jesus Christ is the leader. He has given revelation about the order that pleases him in marriage. As we conform our lives to His ways, we glorify Him in our marriages.

Study Notes.....

Chapter 2

God's Purpose for Marriage

Introduction

1. What is God's purpose for marriage?
2. Why is it important to know what God's purpose is for marriage?

First Purpose: Marriage is a means of grace to conform each one into the image of Jesus Christ. Rom. 8:28-29

1. It's not for the purpose of conforming our marriage partner into our image.
2. We read in Rom. 8:28-30 that God is working all things to the end of conforming us into the image of Christ.
 - A. Your mate is God's perfect vessel for giving you someone through whom you may know Christ.
 - B. When something occurs, we should ask, how is God using this to conform me to His image?

Second Purpose: Marriage makes the gospel relevant and revealed. Eph. 5:32

Third Purpose: Marriage creates a team to accomplish God's work. Gen. 2:15-25

1. It pleased God that man not be alone to face his responsibilities.
2. It pleased God that man leave his parents for the purpose of acquiring a helper to accomplish God's work. 23-25
 - A. Wives:
 - B. Husbands:

There you have the two primary purposes of marriage found in the Scriptures.

- A. There are other things that we want to get out of a marriage or that we might think are goals for a good marriage.
- B. Love, friendship, endurance/faithfulness, etc. But all of these tend to be by-products as we seek to be like Jesus Christ.

Study Notes.....

Chapter 3

The Foundation of the Home

Introduction

1. Your marriage provides the basis for security in the hearts of your children that is necessary for optimum learning and preparation for life.
 - A. The media elite in the last decade have done everything they can to redefine family and devalue the idea of a nuclear family where a husband and wife for the nucleus of the family.
 - B. Children are affected by your marriage relationship.
 - C. The Bible makes this clear when from the beginning of time, God's Word protects the sanctity of marriage. Jesus affirmed the importance of the marriage to the home and family. Matt. 19:4-6
2. Your marriage provides the basis for the spirit in the home.
3. Your marriage provides the basis for the acceptance of the gospel in the hearts of your children. Eph. 5:25
4. Your marriage provides the framework for effective ministry from your home to the body of Christ and the lost.
5. Your marriage provides a basis for hope in your children. Col. 1:3-5
6. Your marriage provides the primary sex education for the next generation.

Your marriage is the foundation of your home and for many homes to come.

Study Notes.....

Chapter 4

Called to Be One

Introduction

1. One of the great mysteries in the Scriptures is the mystery of the spiritual union of the believer with Christ.
2. Just as mysterious is the spiritual union of a husband and wife.
3. I would like for you to consider our oneness with Jesus Christ and how it is reflected in our marriages.
4. What does it mean to be one with Jesus and one with our wives or husbands?

The calling of God to be the bride of Christ is an irrevocable call of God to oneness. So also the calling of God to marriage is an irrevocable calling to oneness. *Rom. 11:28-29; 2 Tim. 1:9; Matt. 19:3-6*

- A. **A calling: An irrevocable act of God that establishes a special relationship that has responsibilities, privileges, and promises that provide hope for the future.**
 - I. Your first calling is as a son/daughter of your father/mother.
 - II. Your second calling is usually as a son or daughter of God.
 - III. Your third calling is usually as a husband/wife.
 - IV. Your fourth calling is usually as a father/mother.
- B. Each of these relationships is specifically considered an act of God.
- C. God's Word reveals that the act of marriage is an act of God—"What God has joined together" and that it is irrevocable—"let no man separate."
- D. This calling is a calling to oneness. For God said, "and the two shall become one flesh." God sees them as one, not two.
- E. It is affirmed in I Thess. 4:2-8.
 - I. We see Paul reiterated a command of the Lord.
 - II. God's will is that you possess your wife in sanctification and honor.
 - III. Your marriage has to do with your relationship with God.

- F. We can make a difference in the next generation that has not started down the road of sanctioning covenant breaking for the sake of personal happiness.

God does not think of us as separate from His Son -- ever! *Nor should we ever think of ourselves separately from our mates.*

1. He never thinks of us apart from Christ. 2 Tim. 2:13; Rom. 8:38
2. How does "twoness" thinking affect our lives?
3. How does "oneness" thinking affect our lives?
4. **In the same way...**we should not think of ourselves as separate from our mates...ever!

In our oneness with Christ, His glory is ours and we are His glory. *The same is true with our life partners.*

- A. We are going to be revealed with Him in glory. He shares His glory with us. Col. 3:3-4 (*So also the husband is to share His glory with his wife*)
- B. In some sense, we are the glory of God and in the same sense a man's wife is the glory of her husband. 1 Cor. 11:7; John 17:22

Our lives are wrapped up in our oneness -- Who He is defines our identity. *In the same way, our identities are wrapped up in our oneness with our mates.*

- A. "To know Him is to know us. To know us is to know Him." John 14:9; 10:30
- B. Our lives are defined by His life in us. Gal. 2:20
- C. Our standing before God is defined by our oneness with Him. Eph. 2:5
- D. Our names are linked. John 17:11

Why is it important to understand that marriage for the glory of God depends on the two being one?

1. To think as two instead of as one is to plant the seeds of divorce and adultery. Mark 10:8-12
2. Regard for our oneness is important to our health and welfare. I Cor. 11:27-32

May God plant this seed in our hearts and grant us repentance and grace that we might live no longer for ourselves, but in the oneness designed by God for His glory. Remember that our oneness with our mates is like our oneness with Christ.

1. We are to think of our marriages as a calling of God to oneness.
2. We are not to think of our mates as separate from us in any way.
3. Our oneness with our mates is our glory.
4. Our identity is wrapped up in our oneness with our mates.

Understanding and living this way is important because...

1. To think as two is to plant the seeds of divorce and adultery.
2. Oneness thinking is important to our health and welfare.

Study Notes.....

- C. Then ask for God's grace to recognize how the spirit of idolatry has affected your relationship with your spouse. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you. Rom. 8:12
2. Forgive yourself and your spouse's idolatries that have caused hurt, bitterness, distrust, and perhaps even led to marriage failures. I Cor. 6:9; Col. 3:13
3. Be filled with God's kind of love. It's the key to your assurance before God. I John 4:7-8; 16-19
 - A. To be filled with God's kind of love you must first know by experience His kind of love through Jesus Christ. I John 4:9-10; 13
 - B. To be filled with God's kind of love you must practice looking to Him as the source of everything in life. I Jo. 4:15; I Cor. 6:8; Col. 1:17-19; 2:9-10
 - C. To be filled with God's kind of love you must be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. Eph. 5:18, 22-25, 32-33; I Cor. 12:31; 13:13

Advice from a repenting idolater

1. Determine that you will view each day as an opportunity to live out your repentance of idolatry in your relationship with your spouse. Look for ways to give expecting nothing in return.
2. Realize that it glorifies God that you have a repentant heart for the rest of your life. This fosters a humble spirit.
3. Don't be discouraged when you recognize the spirit of idolatry at work in your own life or that of your spouse. It's God's way of sanctifying you.
4. Practice rejoicing and delighting God's love as your highest aim in life.

Study Notes.....

Chapter 6

Preaching Christ in Your Marriage

Introduction

1. Daily we preach Jesus thru our marriage. Eph. 5: 22-33

A. Husbands, you are preaching about Jesus' love for His bride.

B. Wives, you are preaching about the grace God has given to love and to trust Jesus.

2. The relationship between a husband and wife reflect the relationship between Jesus and His bride, the church. Eph. 5:32-33

A. A wife preaches to the next two generations what grace God has given to the church to love and trust in Jesus.

I. As a wife arranges herself under her husband -- she testifies of the place of the church to Christ -- she preaches that Jesus is to be trusted and honored.

II. The basis for such submission is faith in Jesus Christ as your shepherd and guardian according to I Pet. 2:25-3:2

III. Submission means to "arrange under."

B. A husband preaches to the next two generations what they can expect from knowing Jesus.

I. Jesus is the head of the church being primarily her preserver. vs. 23

II. Jesus knows God's word about everything! He provides a basis for her submitting to him in everything. vs. 24

III. Jesus gave himself up for his bride because he loved her. vs. 25

IV. Jesus washed his bride with forgiveness, grace, and His Word in order to show His devotion to her. vs. 26-27

V. How does a husband preach Jesus as the savior of the world and worthy to be trusted?

Ways We Are to Minister to Our Wives (Douglas Wilson in *Reforming Marriage*)

1. By loving her. Eph. 5:25-27
2. By nourishing and cherishing her. Eph. 5:28-29
3. By living with her in an understanding way. I Peter 3:7
4. By being jealous over her. 2 Cor. 11:2; Ex. 34:14
5. By providing food, clothing, and shelter. I Tim. 5:8
6. By meeting her sexual needs. I Cor. 7:3-4; Ex. 21:10
7. By being content with his wife. Prov. 5:15-23; Matt 5:28; Ex. 20:17
8. By reviewing and approving of commitments. Num. 30:13-15

Conclusion

1. If we're to have marriages that glorify God and provide a sound foundation for the next generation, we must remember:
 - A. We are preaching Jesus and his relationship with His bride.
 - B. Wives are preaching the side of the gospel that reflects the church's love and trust in God through Jesus Christ.
 - C. Husbands are preaching the side of the gospel that reflects Jesus' love and care for His bride.

2. What are you preaching?

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