

ONE INGREDIENT YOUR MARRIAGE MAY BE MISSING

Do you know what the most difficult year is of marriage? It is the current one. Every marriage may have its unique challenges, but the underlying problem...and solution is the same. So often the struggles of marriage have more to do with a lack of communication than anything else. Yet even good communication cannot inoculate a marriage from conflict. The God who instituted marriage offers some insight to the one ingredient your marriage may be missing.

Most passages that deal with marriage, a single attitude and action is found repeatedly. Peter tells wives to *“be submissive to your own husbands”* (1 Pet. 3.1). He provides an example is Sarah’s relationship to Abraham, *“calling him lord”* (1 Pet. 3.6). To husbands, Peter wrote that they are to give *“honor to the wife”* (1 Pet. 3.7). To both husbands and wives, Peter challenges them to show one another respect. One of the most important ingredients that may be lacking in many marriages is respect.

Gary Smalley, founder of the Smalley Relationship Center, once described respect by handing a genuine Picasso painting to his audience to pass around. As the painting went from one hand to the other, it was greeted with gasps and wonderment. Then he made this point: When you see your spouse, treat him/her like they have a Picasso painting on their forehead. Be excited to see them. Be in awe of the chance to spend time with them. Be fascinated with everything they have to say. Show them a great deal of respect.

When there is conflict in the relationship, do you respect your spouse enough to genuinely listen to their side of the issue? Do you respect your spouse enough to pay attention to their needs and go out of the way to satisfy them? Do you respect your spouse enough not to criticize or correct them in public, but privately and gently?

The apostle Paul wrote, *“Render therefore to all their due...honor to whom honor. Owe no one anything but to love one another”* (Rom. 13.7,8). I am never to withhold respect to someone who deserves it and thus owe it to them. Who is more deserving of my respect than the one whom I married and promised to honor for the rest of my life? CLP

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

September 15, 2024

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:00 PM

WHY DO PEOPLE COME TO CHURCH?

Getting the lost to come and hear the gospel has always been a challenge. Some congregations have resorted to unconventional and unscriptural ways to attract the world. They offer recreational activities, promise gifts such as food and even money to the first 10 visitors. But what really moves people to leave their homes on a Sunday morning and visit the Lord’s church?

According to a variety of studies we learn why the lost have come to the Lord’s church and eventually became faithful members. The study indicates that only 2% come through advertising such as putting an ad in the newspaper or radio. Only 6% come because of the direct contact of the local preacher. Only 6% come because of the various evangelism done by the church, that is, knocking on doors, mailing bulletins, internet. But 86% of all people who had come to the church and eventually obeyed the gospel did so because they were invited by a friend or relative.

God told Jeremiah to tell the children of Israel, *“Will you not receive instruction to obey My words”* (Jer. 35.13)? In spite of the statistics, most of us fail to apply what we know and give the lost instructions to obey God’s word. In fact, a recent Gallup poll revealed that 63% of those who do not attend any church service say they have never been invited. CLP

THE FOURTH FINGER

As couples stand before the wedding officiant and say their vows, each one places their wedding ring on the ring finger. Have you ever wondered why? Why not put the ring on your pinkie? Why is the fourth finger called the ring finger? Is it tradition?

Ancient Chinese lore offers a theory. They tell us that each finger represents a relationship. The pointer finger represents your relationship with your parents. The middle finger represents your relationship with yourself. The ring finger represents your relationship with your spouse. The pinkie represents your relationship with your children. And the thumb represents your relationship with your friends.

Now try this experiment. Place your hands with your palms together and finger spread apart. Without moving the other fingers, try separating your thumbs from each other. That should be easy to do. If you do the same with each of the other fingers, you will notice that it is easy with all but one. When you come to the ring finger, it is very difficult if not impossible to separate them while keeping the others together.

Relationships are always temporary. Your relationship with your children will eventually be separated as *“a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife”* (Gen. 2.24). But in contrast, there should never be a separation between you and your spouse, for *“the two shall become one flesh”* (Gen. 2.24). Jesus Himself tells us that *“what God has joined together, let not man separate.”*

There are no human relationships that should supersede the relationship you have with your spouse. You should never choose your friends over your spouse. Many marital problems arise when someone allows their parents to insert themselves into their children’s marriages. Even your relationship with yourself should never be elevated over your relationship with your spouse, but in keeping with the words of the Holy Spirit, each one should *“esteem others better than himself”* (Phil. 2.3). Is that not especially true in marriage.

God intended marriage to be for life. There is to be no human relationship more important than your relationship with your spouse. However, there is one relationship that should come before all others. Jesus tells us that the one who *“does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple”* (Luke 14.26). CLP

WHAT’S THE POINT?

Why get up early on one of the few days you have off? Why get dressed up? Why go through the hassle of getting the kids ready? Why drop some of my hard earned money into the collection plate? What’s the point of taking communion, bowing my head to pray, listening to the preacher preach a sermon? What’s the point?

Our culture is moving away from public worship services believing that there is no value in gathering with other Christians. Religion has become individualized, and many in this generation are asking, what’s the point?

In a post-Covid world where everything is done digitally, even those who were once faithful believe it is good enough to just sit at home and watch a digital broadcast. After all, you don’t have to get dressed up...or dressed at all. You can lounge around in your comfortable chair. You can your thermostat at a comfortable temperature. You can sit your favorite beverage or even have a snack while watching the church broadcast on your television. With those conveniences so readily available, many ask, what’s the point?

If you had given your son to save someone else, would you expect that person to be more appreciative? God gave His Son for your salvation, and He expects you to show gratitude through worship (Luke 17.11-19). If you were a judge, would you expect the one standing before you to be more respectful while asking for leniency? You stand condemned before God because of the bad choices you have made. God as the righteous Judge extends His grace through Jesus, and it is disrespectful to God when you chose not to worship, but to spend your time in other ways (Lev. 10.3). If you were at the graveside burying your loved one, how would you feel if your family did not see the point of showing up to mourn with you? God set a time to both mourn for His Son and to be grateful for His sacrifice (1 Cor. 11.23-25). When we are not properly thinking about Jesus, we bring condemnation on ourselves (1 Cor. 11.27).

Suppose God asked, “What’s the point?” Where would we be if God asked, “What’s the point of sending My Son? Most people won’t care anyway?” The fact is, God did send His Son for you. Even when people did not care, or worse, were hostile toward Him, *“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son”* (John 3.16; cf. Rom. 5.8). Think about that next time you wake up on Sunday and wonder, what’s the point? CLP