

Commitment and Respect in Marriage

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[0 : 00] And hopefully everybody got a handout here for part three of our series here as we've been going through just some helps here with marriage. And, you know, even if you're married, you need to hear this.

If you're not married, you need to hear this because if nothing else, you need to know how to help somebody else because, you know, we have a lot of hurting people today. And one of the big areas of hurt is in relationships.

But God gives us the information and the helps that we need to walk through these things, to be able to do it right, to have a right perspective and a right attitude towards that.

And so if you found Song of Solomon, chapter 5, let's look down at verse 16 again here this morning as our themes we've been looking at here. It says this, it says, His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely.

This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. So let's pray. Heavenly Fathers, we come before you this morning, Lord. We just thank you for your word.

[1 : 03] We're thankful for all that you've given to us. Lord, we're just thankful that your word reveals even those things of our relationship, of in marriage and together.

Lord, we pray just have your hand upon the things said and done here this morning might glorify you, encourage your people. Lord, to help us to draw together, especially the married couples. Lord, that they might understand the importance of this principle of being friends that are tight, friends that are close. And Lord, we just love you and thank you in Jesus' name.

Amen. You know, we begin looking here. We began a few weeks ago and we've looked at three key words to unlocking this idea of friendship in marriage. You know, one of the things today that we've looked at, oftentimes people don't look at marriage as needing to marry their best friend.

But the Bible says that whoever you marry, your spouse needs to be your friend. It needs to be somebody that you're connected with. And that part of that, building that connection, is companionship.

[2 : 07] You know, companionship. And we talked about that dynamic of companionship in this because we saw in our text there that this is my friend.

You know, this is my friend. Friends are companions. You know, there's a companionship that is there. That's time together. You know, one thing you cannot replace is time.

You know, oftentimes people think about replacing all sorts of things, but there's only one commodity that we've been given that you can't get more of. Once it's gone, it's gone.

And that's time. Everything else, you know, you can make more money. You can get more things. You can do all sorts of things, but you cannot replace time.

And companionship and time are essential together. You know, I want you to understand the importance of having that tie together. You know, oftentimes couples get separated because they're not companions.

[3 : 04] They don't want to take an interest. You know, it's one of those things. Even wives, you know, take an interest in what your husband does. Because you know what? What your husband does is a key part of their life.

You ought to understand it. You know, it's funny that the longer you hang out, you know, it's my daughter and my wife, you know, they've hung out with me and I've been around vehicles and equipment and things my whole life.

And it's funny how she'll look at me and she says, the strange part is after this many years, I understand what you're saying, you know. But you know what? As companions, you ought to, and guys, you ought to know the things about your wife.

You ought to know those things. And that connection that is there, that companionship. And so last week we talked about conversation. You know, we looked at the reality here that his mouth is most sweet.

Now we're not talking about perfume or lip balm or breath mints. It's talking about the words that are there. You know, our words are important.

[4 : 04] And we understood, you know, we talked last week and Gene tried to get me in trouble, you know, that women need more words than men do. But, you know, God wired men and women differently.

And communication needs to be understood both ways. You know, it's just like, I want you, we talked about this reality that women, you can't expect your husband to be another woman. To communicate and want all the words and all the little things. Guys, we need to learn to be good communicators. It doesn't mean that you have to speak as much, but you need to learn to communicate.

And both sides have to understand where the other is. And work to grow those things together. To understand that tie together in that.

And so we've seen companionship. We've seen conversation. And this morning we're going to look about commitment. Commitment. This is trying together.

[5 : 06] Trying. T-R-Y-I-N-G. Not trouble type trying, but effort type trying. Putting in the effort that it takes. Because a marriage is way more than a wedding.

You know, one of the realities of today is oftentimes the wedding is focused more than the marriage. The wedding is but for a moment. A wedding will come and go.

But when you look at the reality, 30 minutes of the wedding ceremony pales in comparison to 30 years. Or 40 years. Or 50 years.

Or if you're really blessed, God gives you 60 years or 70 years. You know, I often tell people, you know, they said the things here in Nebraska, you know, where they talk about people that have been married for a long time. And it's one of those things that I hear some of these.

And the only thought in the back of my mind is, is yeah, they made it through everything else. How you celebrate 70 years together, you both live a long time. You know, because if you've been together 70 years, you've worked through these other things that we've talked about.

[6 : 05] How do you celebrate 70, 75 years? You live a long time. I think it was a few years ago, they had some couple out in the panhandle. They actually celebrated their 80th wedding anniversary.

And I'm like thinking, you definitely lived a long time. Why? Because that's the only way you get that point. Is live a long time. You know? Well, but I want you to understand, how did they get there? Well, one of those areas was not only companionship or conversation, but was commitment. Because there's some time, it's going to take some grit. It's going to take some intentionality. And we understand that this commitment and trying together, this is a critical part of marriage relationship.

But yet, even though it's so important, it's oftentimes so lacking. The importance of commitment. Because we see here, our friendship to continue to grow, there must be a mutual respect for each other.

You know, this idea of mutual respect. You know, often when relationships have trouble, you'll find that it boils down to oftentimes, them not respecting one another.

[7 : 11] There's been a loss of respect. Respect. This idea of respect is critical. You know? The opposite is true.

In a strong marriage, there's a high degree of respect for each other. This idea of respect within the marriage is key to its strength. Of respecting one another.

You know? There are things that I can do to lose the respect of my wife, and there's things I can do to gain respect. And the same is true in reverse. We have to have commitment.

We have to be desirous to do those things. Because I want you to understand, when it comes to respect and disrespect, it's important.

There was an article that was written here, I thought, made a few statements that are very important for us this morning in this area. Because it said this, disrespect in relationships isn't simply a matter of not being nice.

[8 : 16] Disrespect goes beyond just not being nice. It's a subtle, often unconscious erosion of trust and equality. At its core, it reflects a sense of imbalance, where one partner feels undervalued, unheard, and even disregarded.

And this imbalance can be manifest in countless ways. And he gives a list here I thought was pretty good. You know? Some of the best things you can do sometimes is not try to rewrite something, but just tell what somebody else already came up with.

And this is good, because listen to what he has to say in this. The imbalance can manifest. In other words, this is how it's shown, a lack of respect. Passive aggressive behavior.

Backhanded compliments, silent treatment, or deliberate forgetfulness. You know? Passive aggressive behavior. Trying to manipulate.

You know? One of the things of lack of respect is trying to manipulate the other person into doing something. Emotional manipulation. Guilt trips, threats, or making a partner feel responsible for their emotions.

[9 : 26] Now, I want you to understand, the reality is that sometimes people use those as tools against somebody. And we have to be careful because it's a sign of no respect.

When we have breaches of trust, dishonesty, secrets, or neglecting needs or agreements. Dismissive or invalidating communication. Interrupting, belittling, or refusing to consider their partner's perspectives.

You know? We see that play out oftentimes when it comes to respect amongst couples. These things tear down a relationship. And that's exactly, if we're going to build those things together, we need to understand this need of respect.

And these things will show up. It says this, While the surface may show irritation or anger, the hidden seed of disrespect often stems from fear and insecurity.

Whether it's the fear of losing control, not feeling good enough, or past hurts, this fear can distort communication and actions leading to disrespectful behavior.

[10 : 31] You know? I want you to understand, disrespectful behavior becomes a toxic relationship. Now I want you to understand, those things can be fixed if we go back and look and do what God's Word tells us.

I want you to understand that we can correct those areas and correct those things. And while there's many symptoms of a lack of respect, but one of the very common ones you'll find is name-calling.

You know, today, it's amazing as you talk to couples, they try to negate the other. They try to downplay, they name-call the other, they degrade, they have lack of respect in their terminology.

You know, we need to be careful with our words. You know, we talked about that in communication. You know? We need to understand that names hurt, but they're not the real problem. The real problem is the lack of respect which led to it.

In other words, like many things in life, it has to do, how are we thinking? Because what we have in here is what comes out here. When we understand the importance of that, it's critical for us.

[11 : 36] So I want you to understand this morning, your spouse should have a position of respect in your mind. You say, why should your spouse have a position of respect? Because of the position they hold.

Because they're your spouse. You chose to marry them. That's important to always remember. You both made a choice. Part of that choice was to respect one another.

To understand, we're going to look at these things about commitment here today because commitment to this is what helps build mutual respect. You know? And we're going to understand that all the verses we're going to look at deal with friendship in marriage and true friends will have a commitment to these things.

You know? Because the sad part is people can be married and not friends. We've looked at those things. You know, you ought to enjoy hanging out with the person you're married to.

To enjoy those things. But the first one we're going to look at is a commitment to sacrifice. A commitment to sacrifice. You know, take a look over in the Gospel of John with me this morning.

[12 : 44] John 15, verse 13. John 15, 13. Here this morning. And I get a volunteer to read that this morning. Brother Dunn, would you stand up and read that for us if you would please?

Verse 13, 13. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. Yeah, think about it. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.

You'll consider here this morning if a true friend is known by being willing to lay down their life for someone they love, shouldn't we be willing to sacrifice their time for them?

You know, oftentimes when we consider sacrifice we think of some great thing but sometimes it's the little sacrifices that make a difference. The little details that make a difference. You know, oftentimes we need to sacrifice something that we desire to do for the sake of us together.

You know, hobbies can become a problem. There's nothing wrong with hobbies. There's nothing wrong with lots of things because we can have things that are good and have them in a wrong order.

[13:53] You know, I always used to laugh at my dad. My dad used to make a statement that I thought was pretty applicable here because my dad loved plants and loved doing things gardening and farming and all these things and he always had an interesting statement because he said, you know what a definition of a weed is?

A weed is nothing more than a plant out of place. The reality is a weed in your marriage is something out of priority. It might not be bad of itself, but it's something that's in the wrong place or the wrong priority.

When we understand the commitment to sacrifice, we need to understand how that plays out in our relationships with one another. You know, we had to have a commitment to taking care of one another.

There's a joke about an old married couple that was up in years and a person witnessed him getting out of the car and he opened the door for her and she took his arm and they walked slowly into McDonald's and she sat and he went up to the counter and got one hamburger, an order of fries, a small Coke, walked over and sat down.

They cut the burger in half and gave her half, counted out the fries and gave her half and then he started eating his half as she just watched, never taking a bite of her half. A man watching said, this is the sweetest thing I've ever seen.

[15:14] Can I just buy you another meal, my treat? You shouldn't have to share. Oh, we share everything, they replied. He continued eating and she just sat there. The man came back and said, I'm going to have to go soon but just wondering why you haven't started eating, ma'am.

She says, don't worry, I will, we share everything. So five minutes went by, the man nervously glanced to watch the lady. Finally he burst out, what are you waiting for?

And she looked at him and said the teeth. Commitment to sacrifice. Not recommended. All the way down to the youngest ages get good dad jokes, right? Commitment to sacrifice. You know, one of the key things is that commitment to be able to say, I'm willing to give up something that I value for something that I value more.

To understand that we need to be willing to sacrifice things for the benefit of the relationship. Now I want you to understand, I'm going to make a little caveat here because there are certain things you should never surrender or sacrifice in a relationship.

Your walk with God should never be sacrificed for a relationship. Who you are and who God made you should not be sacrificed for a relationship. I want you to understand what we're talking about here is your choices that you're making with your time and the things that you're putting forth and that commitment that says this person has a priority.

[16:35] This person is important. This person is going to direct my decision making because of the priority that I place upon them. Secondly, here this morning, we're going to look at a commitment to closeness.

A commitment to closeness. You know, this doesn't happen by accident. You know, it only happens on purpose. You are as close as you choose to be with somebody. That's the reality because if you put in the time and you put in the effort, there's going to be a result.

To understand this dynamic and the importance of how we put those things in the right place. To understand the importance of a commitment to closeness and to understand the priority here.

Look over at Proverbs chapter 18. Proverbs chapter 18 and verse 24. Proverbs 18, 24. All right. Who's got that one for me this morning?

Harry, you got that one back there? Proverbs 18, 24. All right.

[17:49] You know, the reality of closeness. You know, to put those things in the right place, in the right order that we might be bound together because apart from the Lord, your spouse should be your closest friend.

Your spouse should be your closest friend. Now, the problem comes because sometimes I've heard women talk about the guy they're married to that says, well, he's more concerned about his mom than me or their buddies or their coworkers.

You know, I want you to understand that that's that idea of leaving and cleaving. You ought to love your mom, but guys, your mom is not your wife. There's a priority that takes place.

Ladies, it's been said oftentimes that they have a bigger relationship with some other lady. That's their priority and consumes the time and all the things around them instead of time with their husband.

That's important. You know, we need to understand the priority of friendships and that commitment to be together, that commitment to closeness, to say, this is where I want that circle to be.

[19 : 00] This is where I want to draw those things in because sometimes with women, there'll be another woman that she'll talk to that'll be the priority that can cause a problem. Another area is kids.

Now, I want you to understand as a parent, you have a great responsibility to your children, but your children are secondary to your spouse. The best thing you can do for your kids is to have a good marriage.

The best thing you can do for them because if you guys are together and right and things are proper, the kids are going to see and witness and grow up in an environment that's going to benefit them.

That's the reason as a mom, your priority needs to be first to your husband. Now, I want you to understand very logically, kids take a lot of time. That's just a reality. But I want you to understand you can't let them replace building that closeness and building that commitment to one another. To understand there has to be intentionality, sometimes things just need to wait because there's no other relationship in the Bible that's talked about like the marriage relationship.

[20 : 12] the marriage relationship is the only one where it says the two become one. That two become one. It's spoken of and addressed very directly because let me put it to you this way, children suffer most when mom and dad aren't right with each other.

If mom and dad's relationship is not right, it causes an issue to the children. That's the reason the most important relationship in a family is the husband and the wife because that's what produces the children that God wants them to grow up in that environment.

That's God's design. He understands that there's a security that's there. You know, I think today we have a lot of insecurities amongst kids because parents create the insecurities in the children by their relationships and the things that are happening and the instabilities.

It creates a lot of insecurities in the kids because you know what? Your kids look at you and they look at your relationship and they find security when they know you two are tight, they feel safe. Now, I'm not saying they won't act out and do some weird things. I'm just telling you that when it comes down to it, that gives them security because no matter what else happens in life, they can look and say mom and dad are together.

[21 : 30] There's a security in that, you know. The best thing we can do for the next generation is to nurture marriages and to do that we need to understand the importance of closeness in that relationship.

You know, it's amazing that if you were to be asked how close are you to your spouse on a scale of one to ten. You know, it was interesting when they did a survey with this that a lot of guys said eight and a lot of women said two.

I want you to understand there's something that needs to continue to be worked on to draw together. To draw them together is important because the only way to solve that problem is to do it on purpose because to have a goal of saying we're going to have closeness, we're going to be together.

together. You know, I want you to understand marriages don't fall apart, they drift apart. That's a very important reality because more than once you'll hear, well, you know, we've been married for 20 years and all of a sudden we just, the kids leave home and suddenly we just don't know each other.

You know what the problem was? They were so consumed with everything else that was happening that they didn't notice the drift. The drift didn't happen when the kids left home.

[22 : 52] The drift apart happened way years before. When the kids left is when they realized it. Let me give you an example. Have you ever noticed that when you're home alone that you hear

things in the house that you never hear otherwise?

I'll give you a little insight. The house is making the same noises when everybody's there. The creaks and the moans and the different things that houses do as temperature change, but you don't notice it because of the hustle and the stir and everything else going on.

Oftentimes people begin drifting apart and they don't realize it until it gets quiet that, hey, there's been a problem. They begin to hear and see things that they weren't attentive to because of the noise.

But as a couple, your goal ought to be when the kids leave home, you get to just enjoy each other again or continue to. To be able to have that freedom and the liberties.

You get to go spoil the grandkids. When we understand the problem here is important. You know, there was a, many of you remember an old newspaper commentary, I'm trying to remember what they call it now, the columns that they had, called Dear Abby.

[24 : 00] You know, and people would write in. You know, one of the ones that she received was, it says, I'm a 42-year-old man with three wonderful children and they're all grown and in their 20s.

Yes, we had them young and I have been married for 23 years and things have been good between my wife and me, but a year ago my wife, who is an accountant, decided she wanted to try real estate.

She took a class, got her license and now sells real estate part-time. She's doing so well at it that she plans on quitting her accounting job soon and concentrating on real estate full-time. My problem is I have been having empty nest syndrome and now my wife is working every weekend. On weeknights I sit and watch TV by myself while she works on her computer. On the weekends I try to keep busy doing jobs around the house and cleaning, but I'm bored, lonely and depressed. Have I mentioned, I have mentioned this to my wife and she says I should find a hobby. His comment is this, he says, Abby, I don't want a hobby, I want to be with my wife. She absolutely loves her new job and talks about it constantly.

[25 : 04] I don't want to ask her to quit her job because she would resent me for it and no, I don't want to sell real estate with her. Any suggestions? You know, that didn't happen overnight.

That drift and the lack of commitment to maintain things throughout began to display itself. You know, we need to be on guard to make sure that it doesn't happen to us.

You know, to understand we need a commitment to sacrifice, we need a commitment to closeness, we need a commitment to honesty. You know, Proverbs 27 and verse 6. Proverbs 27, verse 6.

Proverbs 27, verse 6. You got that one, Darren? Can you stand and read that one for me? Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the differences of an enemy are the people. Okay.

A commitment to honesty. You know, faithful are the wounds of a friend. Now, how would a friend wound you? You know, being honest.

[26 : 02] You know, honesty is important. This powerful verse, you know, some people sugarcoat everything and gloss over the truth. They say what you want to hear and not what you need to hear.

The one thing to keep in mind, you need a friend, and especially your spouse ought to be able to tell you things that you are uncomfortable with. Because a friend will tell you the truth even when the truth hurts.

Because sometimes the truth does hurt. Because sometimes we might know it, but when we hear it, it changes the perspective, doesn't it? To understand, to speak the truth, truth. But a friend speaks truth uniquely.

Because I want you to understand, there's people that you meet, they might speak truth to you, but their truth is not being presented in the right way. They're trying to jab you with truth to hurt you.

A friend doesn't jab you with truth to hurt you, but to help you. The perspective of one is to do what they can to destroy the others out of love to build up, to encourage, to do that which is right.

[27 : 06] You know, to speak it in love. You know, isn't that what God calls us to do, to speak the truth in love, with the right attitude and the right spirit? Because you can say the right things the wrong way.

You need to understand the importance of this. And oftentimes people speak what people want to hear rather than what they need to hear.

You know, one of the problems, I think, with a lot of preachers today, we see people preaching things that people want to hear instead of what they need to hear. We need the whole counsel of God. We don't need the little antidotes and problem things.

We need to understand the importance of God's counsel and what God has given to us. Because nothing will undermine respect in marriage like dishonesty.

Openness and honesty are such important qualities in marriage. If your spouse discovers they can't trust you to tell the truth, they will not respect you. You know?

[28 : 09] Because the problem is, is when there's a lie, there's always disrespect. It causes a problem that needs to be dealt with. You know? It's been said there's three types of liars.

There's some who are born liars. You know? How many remember the Lucille Ball show? You know? Lucy. I mean, she's, this is a great illustration here.

Because she's habitually lying about everything. The money, the kids, the dinner, the new clothes. And it's interesting in that show that Ricky doesn't respect her because of it.

Now it seems funny and cute on TV. You know, little things you see in sitcoms and things in relationships might seem quaint or kind of cute or, you know.

But I want you to understand those things destroy a real marriage. Those things destroy a real marriage. A compulsive liar has formed a habit of constantly deceiving.

[29 : 05] Almost a subconscious power trip to holding truth away from others. When they lie, it serves a purpose even when it doesn't. You know? You need to understand that sometimes people are liars and causes a problem.

I want you to understand that's one reason that God tells us that we need to get to know one another. You need to look at, if you're going to, young people, before you get married, you need to look at the character of the person that you're talking to.

It's important because if you're not honest and true and right in the things you do, if they're not honest with you before marriage, I guarantee you it's not going to get any better after marriage.

Matter of fact, it'll get worse. I want you to understand that you need to drop them like a hot rock because it's going to cause disruption in your marriage. You know, it amazes me how many people tell somebody when they're dating they want to put things under the rug and not be honest.

But if there's ever a time for honesty, it's when a couple is dating. Because anything that you disguise while you're dating, you'll have to deal with while you're married. We need to understand the importance of what we're looking at.

[30 : 12] You also have what you call a band-aid liar. You know? Lies to try to fix situations or get out of trouble when the pressure's on. You know? To try to fix things up or to smooth things over.

You know? And that goes right into the next one, that protector-type liar. You know, lying about finances saying, I didn't want my spouse to have that kind of pressure. You know, some people can't bear to let their spouse know the hard truth.

You know? It's amazing. And I think in our current economic situation we're facing, there's going to be a lot of people that are going to wake up one day and find out that a spouse has been lying to them because there's no money to pay the bills.

You'll be surprised how much that happens. Because they weren't honest with one another.

Because sometimes honesty, especially in finances, is important. You can get in trouble in finances in a marriage trying to be honest.

dishonesty will crush it. I want you to understand that we need, we hide behind the fact that we don't want to hurt somebody else, but it hurts even worse when they realize that you haven't told them the truth.

[31 : 27] To understand the importance of this. And so as we begin, continue looking at these things, you know, we're getting pretty practical here about things such as commitment and how you earn and keep respect.

A commitment to sacrifice. A commitment to closeness. A commitment to honesty. And we'll continue next week and we'll look at three more commitments that bear and are needful in this.

So we're out of time here this morning, so we're going to stop there and we'll pick up here, Lord willing, next Sunday on that. And so, but let's go ahead and we'll be.

We'll be.