

How to Ruin Your Marriage: Part 1- Who Wins?

I. Intro

- A. Welcome/Online
- B. Marriage.
 - 1. Before you're married it seems like the ideal existence.
 - 2. Even if you didn't grow up in a family with a great marriage... you still see the dream in movies and books, your friends parents seem happy.
 - 3. Everyone has great dreams and high expectations about what their "ever after." Will be.
- C. But then... you actually get married
 - 1. And the dishes aren't done
 - 2. The dirty clothes are still on the floor
 - 3. You can't agree on how to use your money
 - 4. She seems to get an awful lot of headaches right around bedtime.
 - 5. He always seems to have ulterior motives whenever he is sweet or romantic.
 - 6. That person you couldn't wait to spend your life with becomes the person who makes your life the hardest.
 - 7. So what do we do?
- D. Look for help...
 - 1. Lot's of advice and books and articles/online on how to fix your marriage
 - 2. Do this/ buy that/tell them this/go on these dates
 - 3. But what you find is...
 - 4. **There is no quick fix**, magic actions, no one sentence formulas, **that will give you a perfect marriage.**

- E. So what if we looked at some of the subtle, deep rooted causes for ruined marriages instead?
- F. **Series...** talk about 4 common ways we ruin our marriages. And how to avoid them.

1. Rule #1 No nudging.

2. Rule #2 No saying, "I wish so and so could hear this..."

- a. They didn't hear it. You did. What are **YOU** going to do about it.

G. Singles

- 1. Not everyone here or watching is married
- 2. Too young/Never married/divorced/dating/dating again.
- 3. Single is good.
- 4. There is nothing wrong with being single... Apostle Paul recommends it. Jesus modeled it.
- 5. This series can still apply to your life.
- 6. This series really could be titled How to ruin any relationship and your life... but we chose marriage b/c it is a good picture of human relationships...

II. WE

A. **There are no perfect marriages. There are only real marriages.**

1. Because there are no perfect people. Only real people.
2. When you bring two real people together, what happens? Friction... why?

B. Cut to the chase...

1. What is the common denominator in all of your struggles as a couple?
2. Who has been at the center of every disagreement, annoyance, and fight you've ever had?
3. YOU
4. You are worried about getting what makes you happy.
5. You fight for what you think will satisfy you
6. **How to Ruin Your Marriage... Be Selfish.**

C. Keep it up and you won't have anyone to fight with.

1. **Constantly fighting for what you want will leave you with nothing but wants.**
2. So what do we do about it?
 - a. Stop being selfish. Easy. See you next week.
3. There's more to it than that.
4. It's deeper than that.
5. And it's so much better and more satisfying than that.
6. Jesus explains it in one of the most world changing conversations he had. He's not talking about marriage, but all of relationships and all of life... and in it is the key to a joyful and loving marriage.

III. GOD (John 15:9-13)

A. **V. 9** Remain in my love...

1. Perfect love
2. Perfectly known and accepted.
3. God's perfect plan for your life.
4. They way humans operate best.
5. Remain in that. How?

B. **V. 10** Keep his commands...

1. Rules. Sweet! Just wait.
2. And if we do what is the result?

C. **V. 11** JOY!

1. So if we keep his commands we'll be operating the way we were designed and we'll have joy and be happy?
2. That's what he said.
3. A joyful, life, and marriage!
4. Ok, I'm listening... what are the commands?

D. **V. 12** Love each other...

1. "We love each other. Where's the joy?"
2. "Uh yeah I love him. I'm still here aren't I?"
3. "Of course I love her. I told her at our wedding. I'll let her know if anything changes."
4. I can say anything I want... doesn't prove it.
 - a. "I can lift this car up. I'm in shape."
 - b. Prove it.
 - c. "Why? I already said I'm in shape."
5. As I have loved you... how did he love? Just saying it? Bringing them flowers once a year?

E. **V. 13**

1. Jesus proved his love through his death AND his life.
2. "Of course I love him/her... I would die for him/her!"
3. Anyone can say they will die for you... and they might. It's easy to die. Everyone does it.
4. But are you willing to LIVE for them... are you willing to die to your self daily?

F. **True love means giving up your life daily.**

1. Laying down all of yourself for the better of someone else.
2. Giving up your preferences for what's best for them.

G. When you do this you'll find joy. Why?

1. Worry steals joy.
2. When you are constantly grasping and fighting for your own happiness... you're constantly worried that you won't be happy.
3. You can't enjoy life if you're always worried about it.
4. **Paradox of existence... if you constantly try to make yourself happy you'll be miserable.**
5. When you focus your attention on someone else's needs instead of your own... you worry about yourself less.
6. You are FREE from that worry.
7. You're doing what you were created to do... love others.

H. But that sounds really exhausting!

1. It does. If you're doing it all on your own.
2. There is a secret trick to this.
3. If you are not a Jesus-follower you can try this and it'll make you a better person and give you a better marriage...
4. But if you ARE a Jesus-Follower there's something deeper going on that takes a lot of the difficulty out of it.

I. Back to **V. 9**

1. Remain IN MY LOVE.
2. It's not your love you are mustering up.
3. You are simply allowing the love Jesus' has for you and your spouse to flow out of you.
4. You are the conduit to allow Jesus to love them through you.
5. And the more of his love you give away the more you are filled with it to give even more away.
6. It's a bottomless well that you can draw from.

IV. YOU

- A. How do we love like this? How lay down our lives for our best-friends?
- B. What are your wants for your life that are getting in the way of your love for your spouse?
 1. Career?
 2. Goals?
 3. Reputation?
 4. Hobbies/Entertainment?
 5. Comfort?
- C. All good things
 1. But they often compete for our time, attention, energy, passion and we let them win b/c it's what WE want for OUR lives.
 2. But **When what you want consistently steals from the person you love... everyone loses.**
- D. So to make sure your spouse wins. To experience joy in your life and your marriage ask **two questions** daily...
- E. **Who's winning... my partner or my preferences?**
 1. Whose life are you laying down... yours or theirs?
 2. **Liz and Me-** I hate folding Laundry she hates putting clothes away.
 - a. We have a system.
 - b. But sometimes she breaks the system and puts the clothes away.
 - c. It's awesome.
 3. Who is getting the most of you? Your wants or your wife? Your hobbies or your husband?

F. Who's love am I relying on?

1. If it's just yours it's easy get tired and cynical
 - a. It's like climbing a mountain by yourself
 - b. You can do it but it's a lot harder than it could be.
2. If it's Jesus' then it's secure and empowering.
 - a. And it will be better and stronger and they will actually feel more loved b/c it's the Holy Spirit guiding you into how to love them best.
 - b. It's like climbing a mountain with a trained and experienced guide... who knows how to cook really well.

V. WE

- A. What if your marriage was a competition to see who could give the most instead of arguing about who's getting the most?
- B. What if instead of fighting about dirty underwear on the floor it was a race to see who could get them in the laundry first?
- C. What if your spouse had nothing to argue about b/c it was obvious you were putting their needs above your preferences?
?
- D. Whether you are a Jesus-Follower or not, your kids are learning what marriage is "supposed to look like" by watching you.
 1. They will use your marriage as a template for their own future relationships
 2. What template do you want to give them?
- E. What if your kids could grow up seeing daily examples of how much God loves them by watching how their parents love each other by laying down their lives for each other?
- F. Let your partner win over your preferences and love them with Jesus' love.

G. A selfless marriage is impossible to ruin