

How To Ruin Your Marriage: Part 3- It's not supposed to be like this...
Romans 13:8, Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5b-7

I. ME

- A. Welcome/Online/So What About
- B. Series
 - 1. Singles still apply
- C. Rules
 - 1. No Nudging
 - 2. No Saying, "I wish so and so could hear this."
- D. Marriage is hard... which is weird b/c dating and being engaged is usually not.
 - 1. You can't wait to see them... spend as much time together as possible
 - 2. Even enjoy getting to know their family
 - 3. Probably most fun... when things get serious and you start dreaming...
 - a. What's our life going to be like, kids, grow old together, etc.
- E. Probably starts even before you meet your ONE.
 - 1. Start dreaming about that perfect person.

F. ME- Perfect wife criteria

- 1. Rich/Orphan/Accent was a plus/Thought I was awesome.
- 2. She would take care of the food, kids, house, bills, phone calls, insurance, basically anything I didn't want to do...
- 3. Funny that I never daydreamed about being the perfect person for her... I just assumed I would be.

II. WE

- A. We all have an invisible bag that we carry with us full of hopes, dreams, and desires for our future and especially the future of our relationships.
 - 1. Examples-
 - a. Kids/ Roles and responsibilities/ Money/ Houses/ Hobbies/ Jobs/ Holidays/ Celebrations/ Sex.
 - 2. Either comes from trying to recreate the best parts of our childhood, avoid the worst parts, or emulate what we saw on tv and movies.
 - 3. And we carry these around with us as we date and are looking for our ONE.
 - 4. Often we have hopes, dreams, and desires that we don't even know exist.
 - 5. Nothing wrong with these... just part of being a human that can think and dream about the future...
 - 6. We take these things into our marriages and that's when things get bumpy.
 - 7. B/c we both have a bag full of different hopes and dreams.
- B. We carry these dreams into the marriage and hand them off to our spouse expecting them to fulfill them...
 - 1. But the moment we do that they are no longer hopes and dreams... they are **expectations**...
 - a. The way you think things are SUPPOSED TO be.
 - b. The way you think marriage is SUPPOSED TO look... the way you are SUPPOSED TO show affection and communicate. Etc.

C. We all have a perfect SUPPOSED TO marriage in our minds.

1. The way we think things are **supposed to** go...
 2. What a great marriage is **supposed to** look like...
 3. Things someone who loves us is **supposed to** do.
 4. The way we are **supposed to** show affection and **supposed to** communicate.
2. But here's the problem when those hopes and dreams become SUPPOSED TO expectations the marriage you hoped and dreamed about becomes unattainable.

D. B/c Expectations erode intimacy

1. **Intimacy**- being fully known and fully knowing. Fully accepted and fully accepting. Unconditionally loved and unconditionally loving.
2. If you have expectations of how someone is **supposed to** act in your relationship and they don't live up to it... then, to you, that means they don't love you and you are now guarded with them.
3. If you have an expectation of how someone is supposed to love you and they DO live up to it... well then, dilly dilly for them, they are just doing what they are **supposed to** do. What is expected of them.
 - a. There can never be enough... there is never a way to go above and beyond.

E. Expectations make your relationship a debt contract

1. They owe you what you think they are SUPPOSED TO do.
2. And every time they get it right... it's like they are paying their minimum balance... b/c it's what they are supposed to do.
3. And if they don't get it right... they miss a payment... then debt collector comes for them.
4. You can never have true intimacy if you constantly feel like you owe someone or someone owes you.

F. This debt/debtor relationship is what causes so much frustration, anger, and heartache...

1. Both partners have these expectations that they think are supposed to be met...
2. We hand them off and we assume that the other person has the same expectations in their bag.
3. And we end up holding our partner to a debt expecting them to pay their share when they aren't even sure what they owe.

G. How to ruin your marriage... expect that your expectations are supposed to be met.

H. So what do we do?

1. You could leave.
 - a. Next person has a bag too.
2. You could fight for your own way.
3. You could just give up and become resentful and bitter
4. You could compromise and both never really be happy and keep having the same arguments 2-3 times a year.
5. OR... there's another option. The Jesus Option.

I. It isn't easy, but it can change your life.

1. It's insanely simple but it doesn't totally make sense...
2. It can improve every relationship you have
3. It works whether you're a Jesus Follower or not...
4. It's an idea the Apostle Paul talks about in his letter to a group of Jesus Followers in the ancient city of Rome written about 56 AD.

III. GOD (Romans 13:8)

A. Paul

1. Hated Christians/ Met Jesus/ 180
2. Huge work on the meaning of Jesus and God's love.
3. But this one little verse holds the key to how we can eliminate expectations in our marriages and relationships.
4. Paul goes from talking about submitting to government authority (not always popular with American Xians) to paying taxes and basically paying everyone what you owe them... but then he takes this idea and applies it to love...

B. Rom. 13:8

1. Pay what you owe... don't borrow and never pay back.
2. But the real debt we all have is a debt that we can never fully pay off and we aren't meant to.
3. LOVE
4. Love= Giving all of me for all of you
5. Love fulfills every law of God.

C. Love is what we owe everyone.

1. We do have a debt to each other... it's a debt of love.
2. But it's not a debt we force on others
3. It's a debt that we accept on ourselves.
4. Not a debt to their whims and their control
5. But a debt to love them as you love yourself... to love them as Jesus loved you and gave up his life for you.

D. Love cancels debt

1. You don't enforce any SUPPOSED TO'S on them... All of the SUPPOSED TO'S you worry about is that YOU and SUPPOSED TO love them.
2. Does love fight for its own wants? It's own preferences? It's own SUPPOSED TO'S?

E. Love accepts that you owe everything.

1. Love says "You don't owe me anything and I owe you everything."
2. You have a debt to them.
3. That's what you worry about.
4. In your thinking the only SUPPOSED TO in your relationship is that **YOU** are SUPPOSED TO always ask... what does love look like right now?
5. Let THEM worry about their debt to you.
6. It's counter-intuitive but it is the route to a great marriage.

F. If you want a great marriage you have to cut the bag off of them, stop making them owe you and accept that you owe them everything.

G. And if you are a Jesus-Follower you have to go first.

1. Ephesians 5:21

2. Christian marriage is submission competition.

H. Yeah but, what if I go first and I'm still left holding their bag?

1. 1 Peter 5:5b-7

2. Stop looking to your partner to fulfill your expectations
3. Trust God with them
4. He will fill your bag with better realities than your unfulfilled hopes and dreams.

IV. YOU

A. What does this look like?

B. 3 ways to SUPPOSED TO proof your marriage...

C. Open Your Bag

1. Ask yourself... what's in my bag? Maybe ask them what they think is in your bag... then listen.
2. What have you put on your partner that you think they owe you?

D. Cancel their debt

1. Actually look them in the eye and tell them... "you don't owe me anything."
2. Tell them they are off of your hook.
3. They don't have to bow to your expectations any more
4. And then actually follow through
5. Take off all the supposed to's and...

E. Pay what you owe

1. Accept your debt of love
2. In every situation... "What does love look like?"

V. WE

A. It doesn't make perfect sense but when you go first and cancel the debt of your expectations... you get more than you could have hoped for.

B. What if your spouse knew there were no expectations on them... there was nothing that they had to do or were supposed to do?

1. Every act of kindness, of loving gesture would be from their own free-will.
2. Not out of compulsion or fear of your wrath or disappointment.

C. What if your family was free of arbitrary SUPPOSED TO's and everyone was accepted and appreciated for exactly who they are and how they were made?

D. What if every marriage in your extended family were paying each other their debt of love?

E. It can happen. This can be your marriage...

F. A great marriage expects nothing and owes everything.

QUESTIONS:

1. We all have hopes and dreams, especially when it comes to relationships. What are some things you hope(d) for in a marriage? [Too similar to previous questions?](#)

[Maybe we could start with something lighter? A fun / funny q....](#)

[Something like...](#)

[What sitcom or movie marriage resonates the most with you? Why?](#)

2. Have you ever not met someone's expectations of you? Describe how that felt.
3. [Not sure this is good...](#) Read Galatians 5:13-15. What do you think loving your spouse as yourself looks like? How would practicing that love keep you from devouring your relationship?
4. [OR...](#) Read [BOOK?](#) 5:21-33. What role do you think submission plays in a SUPPOSED TO free marriage?
5. Jon gave us three steps to SUPPOSED TO proof our marriages. Which of these three seems to be [\(or would be\)](#) the most difficult for you, why? How can your group support you in taking that step this week?