

Marriage That Last

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, good morning. I didn't realize this until this week. My oldest daughter, who is 37 years old, you say, why are you telling that?
- Because I'm going to tell you a story about it. She said, are you preaching at Pick and Sunday? I said, yes. She said, are you going to preach a sanctity of life message? And I had already prepared a message.
- I said, I'll take care of it. So I'll mention it. Today is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. And we should care about life.
- We should not just be against abortion. We should be for adoption. And we should practice it. My oldest daughter that I mentioned is 37 years old.
- Over five years ago, she finally came to a conclusion after going through surgeries and different drugs and all kinds of specialists. And the doctors told her that most likely she would never be able to have children.
- [1 : 1 0] So she and her husband started the adoption process. And usually they had been told it could take up to two years. Well, within a matter of nine weeks, they had adopted a little boy and brought him home from the hospital.
- Now, people ask her, she started getting phone calls from all over the place. And how did you do that? And she said, the only thing I can tell you is just God answered our prayers.
- And that little boy is a little over five years old now. His dad is left-handed. And guess what? He's left-handed.
- And he looks like his papa. And he is as much a part of our family in any way, in any depth.
- He's one of us. He's with us. He's ours. He's ours. But a few weeks ago, she sent us a text.
- [2 : 1 2] It had a picture in it with one of those sticks that women use to tell if they're pregnant. And it was showing positive. And then at Christmas, they gave us, as we were opening our gifts, we opened one package and it was a frame.
- And it says, we're having a boy. And not only that, but the doctors told her that everything so far in the development of this child is perfect.
- And he doesn't consider this an at-risk pregnancy at all. When she went to the doctor and he was examining her, he said, now you've had this and this and you've had this surgery and this surgery and you've been on these drugs.
- He said, and you're pregnant. And then the doctor said, wow. And my daughter said, well, I want you to know that there's some women in my church that have been praying for me to get pregnant.
- And his nurse said, oh my goodness, that makes the hair stand up on my neck. But we think our first grandson in that family was a miracle. And we're sure that the second grandson is a miracle too.

[3 : 21] So, sanctity of human life is about respecting life. It's about opposing things that would destroy life, but promoting things that bring about a better life.

Well, this morning I want to talk to you about marriage. Now, I know some of you have been through, I don't know, I've done three seminars and then I've done retreats twice.

So, probably everybody here has heard this. Let's just be dismissed and go home. I know you're going to want to pray for Fred as he recovers and hope that that procedure, as far as the recovery goes, will be quick and he'll be on schedule for Wednesday night.

We have been away a lot. I did tell Fred before we joined, we would be the sorriest members that you have. And we've pretty much lived up to it. We went to one interim and then two weeks later we went to another one and then we stopped that at the end of the year.

And then I started a Bible conference on Sunday night in Inman. And we finished that tonight. And then next Sunday we go to Union Baptist Church in Iva for no more than three months.

[4 : 39] And then, to highlight it all, on the first Sunday in April, we'll be going to preach at the First Baptist Church of Lowndesville.

Do you know where Lowndesville is? A man came to the convention and came up to our booth and said, would you preach for me sometime? I said, I'd be delighted. And he said, well now we just got a little old church.

And I said, you do not. He said, what do you mean? I said, you got the biggest church in Lowndesville. He said, that's right. That's what he tells everybody. Well, Genesis chapter 2 and verse 24 is the most important verse in the Bible about marriage.

It's quoted by Jesus in Mark 10, Matthew 19. It's quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 and in Ephesians 5.

It says, for this reason or for this cause, A man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

[5 : 47] We've heard for some time, for a period of years, that we had a divorce rate in this country of about 50%. And then the last few years we began to hear, no, that's way down now.

We don't have a divorce rate anywhere near 50%. Well, Bella DiPaolo, writing in a recent edition of Psychology Today, said, The chances that a marriage will end in divorce is probably somewhere between 42% and 45%.

But couples who go for at least eight hours of premarital counseling increase their probability of staying married by 32%.

So it's important to prepare for marriage. Dysfunctional marriages includes divorce is about 50% of all marriages now.

Well, when you get married, you should prepare for it. We should enter it thinking you want this to last a lifetime.

[6 : 57] If you want to be an electrician, approved electrician, you have to work and get a license. If you want to be a contractor, you have to get a license.

If you want to be a driver, you have to take a written test and then you have to drive to get a license. Oh, and pass them. To be a counselor, you have to get a degree, a graduate degree, and then you have to do two years of clinical, and then you have to take an exam.

So in just about everything that you're licensed or certified in, you have to have some kind of preparation. But in order to get married in this country, all you've got to do is go down to the courthouse, get you a license, get somebody to sign it, and you are married.

Preparation precedes blessing, and that includes marriage. Now as I look out, I can tell in some of your faces, you look at me and you're saying, but I've been married for a long time and I don't need this.

And I love you, but you do. Because if you're okay, there is somebody else that needs your encouragement and your help as they build their marriage.

[8 : 12] So when you look at Genesis 2.24, he's really talking about doing three things. The first thing he's talking about, he said, for this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother.

So the first thing is leave. Now what does that mean? Well, I've had people over the years when I was doing counseling, and a fair amount of it would come for premarital counseling, and I would ask the question, where are you going to live?

Sometimes I'd get this answer. Oh, we've got a place, we've got a lot next to mom and daddy. And I would respond, can you live at least an hour away from your mamas and your daddies?

And the reason for that is, you have to achieve some emotional distance from your family of origin in order to establish your own family, and it's easier to achieve emotional distance if you have geographical distance.

That and some other practical things. If you live next door, it's real easy for anybody to just pop in anytime unannounced. But if you live an hour away, they've got to make some preparations to let you know they're coming.

[9 : 21] So leave. He says, leave your family to build a new family. And then he says, and shall cleave to his wife. And if the Hebrews had a word for super glue, this would be it.

To stick together, through thick and through thin, through sickness and in health, to stay with each other, to cleave. And then the third thing is implied.

It's weave. Have you ever seen those ladder back chairs that had cane bottoms in them? They were woven? Anybody? We can be interactive.

Anybody? Okay. If you took a ladder back chair and you took a five-gallon bucket of water and you poured it in the seat of that chair, what would happen to the water?

You got the answer. What is it? It would go through. That's right. Thank you, Mike. It would go through. Then you wipe it off because it's covered in polyurethane and everything. You wipe it off. Then you sit down in that chair.

[10 : 22] What's going to happen to the chair? And the answer is nothing. And that's the way marriage ought to be. We ought to have enough space between us that a lot of stuff can pass through.

But we need to have enough strength in that weave that we're going to stick together. So he says, leave and cleave and weave. Now, I want you to look what he says for this reason, for the reason for the cause of marriage.

A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they too shall become one flesh. So if you look in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 18, it says, The Lord said, it is not good for the man to be alone.

I will make a helper suitable for him. And that operative word in that verse is suitable. It means to correspond to each other. It doesn't mean to be exactly like each other.

And it doesn't mean that you complete somebody else. I heard it when I was growing up. Many of you heard it. I heard preachers preach it. They'd come and they'd preach on the family and they'd say, You need to find you a young man.

[11 : 31] You need to find you a young woman. We're talking about young people. And you can complete her and she can complete you. And I bought it. I thought, yeah, that's the way it is.

Until years later, I realized that's just not true. There is nobody on this earth who can complete you but Jesus Christ.

Augustine says man has a God-shaped vacuum inside of him. And the only thing that will complete him, that will fill him, that will make him whole is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

So what does he mean when he says suitable? He means someone who can complement the other. Not complete, but complement to aid each other.

Well, I want to share with you this morning what I call the four F's of marriage. And the first one is the foundation. The foundation of marriage is commitment or love.

[12 : 35] The greatest commandment is love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind. The second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself. And your number one neighbor will be your mate.

So you love God, that's the foundation. And then the very next thing is you love your neighbor. Who is your neighbor? Anybody that God puts in the path of your life whose needs you can help meet.

So you love your wife, you love your husband. Well, what does that really look like in practice? Well, first of all, it's the word agape. And agape is not necessarily a feeling word.

It's a word of commitment. So sometimes we talk about love. And in our culture, we bandy around a word. And we have one word that covers a multitude of things. The Greeks had four.

And they were more specific in what that word meant. But love that's talked about in Scripture. For God so loved the world, for example. Love one another. Love the brethren.

[13 : 36] Love your enemies. That word is agape. And it's not talking so much about feeling as it is a commitment. Have you ever noticed when two people meet? And they meet because, well, they like the way each other looks.

And then they like each other's personality. And then they like some of the things they have in common. And they date for two or three weeks. And invariably, somewhere along the way, somebody's going to say, I love you.

And what they mean is this. I am infatuated with you. And we know that all relationships begin with infatuation.

We also know if it doesn't grow out of the infatuation stage, before people get married, it becomes a predictor for trouble later in the marriage.

But in a practical sense, what does that look like? How does it show up in marriage? Well, 1 Corinthians 13, verses 4 through 7, describes agape, describes this love.

[14 : 40] It's not a definition of it. It's a description of it. Love is patient. Love is kind and is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not arrogant. Does not act unbecomingly.

It does not seek its own. Is not provoked. Does not take into account a wrong suffered. Does not rejoice in unrighteousness. But rejoices with the truth. Bears all things. Believes all things. Which, by the way, means gives the other person the benefit of the doubt.

Hopes all things. Endures all things. Love is from God. God is love. The fruit of His Spirit is love. And we can't really love another person until we have the love of God inside of us.

But it's seen. It shows up. What it looks like in practical ways, when you love your mate, you show your mate that you value them.

If you devalue them, it is the opposite of love. So, two people that say they love each other and are going to build a marriage are two people who are going to be showing that other person value throughout their marriage.

[15 : 56] Even when they get angry with each other. Even when they don't agree with things, they still show the other person value. So the foundations.

Love God. Love your neighbor and your first neighbor as your mate. The second thing is friendship. Our best friends should be our mates. That's not always the case.

And a lot of dysfunctional marriages, it's not the case at all. And some people have even been taught that your wife or your husband should not be your best friend. Your wife or your husband should be your best friend.

Have you ever heard of a man named John Gottman? Anybody? John Gottman? He was a professor out at the University of Washington. He had a place called the Love Lab.

And it was an apartment that the university set up for him. Couples that were having trouble in their marriage would come. This apartment was set up with cameras and microphones. They would take their blood pressure and their heart rate periodically.

[16 : 55] And you'd think that going into a situation like that, it sounds kind of clinical and sterile, that there would be, people would be so self-conscious about, how am I going to act? What am I going to do? But they found out that after being there, get settling in, for two hours, they started acting like themselves.

And in over 35 years, they recorded all this stuff. And Gottman and his associates put it all together. And he started to publish his material and then write popular books.

One was called Why Marriages Fail. Another one was The Seven Principles to a Successful Marriage. If you were to go to the Gottman Institute today for 2018, they've got a program.

You go online to Gottman Institute. He's Professor Emeritus at Washington now, and he heads up the Gottman Institute with his wife, who's also a clinical psychologist. But they've got this plan.

Now you go there, I think it's for 10 minutes a day for a certain period of time, how to build, how to strengthen your marriage. Now, John Gottman is a Jewish man.

[17 : 55] John Gottman is not a Christian. But he is regarded by those who look at relationships as one of the leading experts. He's been called the guru of relationships in America.

Well, friendship, is it important? This is what Gottman says. The determining factor in whether wives feel satisfied with sex, romance, and passion in their marriage is 70% by the quality of the couple's friendship.

For men, the determining factor is by 70% the quality of the couple's friendship. And then he makes this little caveat here that sounds like a shot at John Gray, who wrote the book, Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus.

He said, So, men and women come from the same planet after all. We need to build friendship. Song of Solomon, chapter 5 and verse 16 says, The king is admiring his wife, Nesheulamite.

And he says, This is my beloved and this is my friend. Well, if we're going to keep our friendship, and that's going to be a big part of keeping a marriage strong, making a marriage last, what do we need to do?

[19 : 10] We need to make sure that the positives are more than the negatives. That pleasing behaviors are more than negative behaviors.

Gottman also came up with this formula, and he says, Any successful marriage will have a ratio of at least five positives to one negative.

And he said, Anything less than that brings about a degree of tension and even dysfunction inside the marriage. 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, verse 32, Paul wrote, I want you to be free from concern.

One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife. Because marriage is an earthly institution.

It is of this world. And his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried and the virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit. But one who is married is concerned about the things of the Lord, how she may please her husband.

[20 : 15] So what he says in that verse is this. Here's the ideal thing to do. Don't ever get married. Spend all your time, all your money, all your devotion in serving God.

But he goes on to say, but most of us, I'm thinking 99% of us don't have that gift. And then he comes with this principle.

So, if husband, you have a wife, he says, please her. And wives, if you have a husband, please him.

Now I think that has to be disciplined by reason and common sense. If my wife told me I would like a new, a spanking new BMW, my response would be we can't afford it.

She would say, but I've been watching, I think it's Snyder's in Greenville. She said, I've been watching Snyder's and between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning, there's no security. She said, I've got this thing that I downloaded, here's how you hotbar one of those BMWs and get inside of it.

[21 : 33] She said, you could steal it for me. Now she said, and then she said, that would please me. And I'm going to say, nothing doing because I'm not interested in starting a prison ministry.

So it has to be with reason and good sense. But husbands, please your wives. That's what he's saying. Wives, please your husband. And now, in order to do things like that, we have to communicate.

Inside a relationship, in any kind of relationship, there's a communication equation that equals 100%. 7% are the words we use and we thought they were so important.

7% of the words we use, 38% is the way we say the words, and 55% are non-verbals, body language. And all those years I spent preaching and doing the seminars and stuff, I developed a gift.

When I'm preaching to a congregation, I can tell. 100% of the time, I look out when somebody's not listening. I can tell. Somebody's got their legs crossed like this, they got their hands crossed like this, their heads roll back on the back of the pew and I hear this noise.

[22 : 47] I know they're not listening. I know they're not listening. Non-verbals are important. How you look at somebody in a relationship is important.

One of the things that's real important is how we have an open posture to one another. How we imply to that person, I'm open to you. And sometimes we don't. Sometimes it's a habit.

Sometimes we're talking to people, we automatically do this. Well, that's an example of closed posture. Sometimes you do it because you're cold. I was leading a retreat in Ridgecrest and there was a group of people and there was this one little woman on the front.

This was in February and it actually was snowing a little bit that night. It was cold. They had problems with the heat and she's doing this the whole time like this. And I said, stop.

I shouldn't have done it. I've asked God to forgive me. But I said, stop. I said, this is an example of closed posture. Well, we had a break. And then she comes up to me and she's, I'm talking to somebody and she tugs on my sleeve.

[23 : 48] She says, Dr. Gray? I said, yes, ma'am. I want you to know I was listening to you but it's so cold in here I'm about to freeze. She was right. It was cold. She was trying to stay warm. But there are clues.

Maintain contact. A little principle of solar. If you want to really communicate with somebody face that other person squarely. Square it up. Have an open posture. Don't close anything.

Lean slightly forward. By the way, you listen to sermons better if you find yourself leaning slightly forward. Just lean slightly forward. Maintain eye contact with that person and then breathe and relax.

And that helps you become a better listener. Now, sometimes men have a problem with listening. How many women in the room would say, I agree with that?

If you agree with that, would you raise your hand high and proud? Okay. Alright. In fact, the number, you know what the number one complaint that women have about men is?

[24 : 58] They don't listen. So then I ask the men, is it true? Do you listen? Jeff said in the first service, he's listening as long as there's not a ball game on that he's interested in.

Men, Deborah Tannen wrote a book called Men and Women in Conversation. She'd done her PhD work on communication, especially in relationships. And she said that men actually hear.

But she kind of explained it this way, that because men don't like to get all involved in messy emotional stuff, because men just don't like that stuff, that they kind of, we kind of come to this conclusion.

Okay, she's going to share something with me. I can tell this is going to be emotional. It's going to take a while. It's going to tear me up. So, I'm just not really going to listen.

I hear her. I know what she said, but I'm not going to listen. And she gets mad at him and she goes off and they have a little dispute. And he thinks he's won because he thinks he's won because he thinks her anger is less than him having to go through dealing with all that stuff.

[26 : 11] Well, since I said something about number one complaint women have about men, what's the number one complaint that men have about women? Huh? Talk too much.

That's not right, but that's good. All these seminars and stuff I've gotten, that's the top answer I get is women talk too much and women are more verbal than men.

But here's the number one. Women say their number one complaint about men is that, men say their number one complaint about women is that women are always trying to change them.

Always trying to change them. And I suppose you have to talk some in order to do that. Well, the third F I want you to look at is finances. Finances. For years and years, the top three problems in America has been sex, in-laws, and money.

Today, and it has been for the last several years, number one is money. We have over one million bankruptcies a year. We've had that since 2007. We have a total credit card debt for all Americans of around 700 billion dollars.

[27 : 21] Most couples in America have a debt problem. The average amount of unpaid credit card debt per family in America averages 15,355 dollars.

And the average debt excluding the mortgage is 129,579 dollars. And we've got an undisciplined approach to finances.

Now, Gottman, Dave Ramsey's one, Larry Burkett was one, say everybody should have a budget. And like I told the service at 8 o'clock, I would not suggest to the First Baptist Church of Pickens that everybody here doesn't have a budget.

I know you do. I know you follow it. I know you plan it every year. I know that everybody here has got a budget. But for those two couples that don't have one, this is what they say how you go about preparing a budget.

You list all of your expenditures. All the money you've got going out, you list it. You come up with a total. And then you come over here on this side of the ledger and you list up all of your income.

[28 : 31] List all of your income. And if your expenditures are greater than your revenue, guess what you've got? You've got a federal government on your hands. No, you've got a problem.

You've got a problem. And so the idea, and all of these finance councils say the same thing, you've got to cut down on expenditures because you have to have a balanced budget. And in that balanced budget, you should leave room for tithing.

Not just nodding to God, but to actually tithing. And here's the good news about that. Tithing ought to be a part of our budget. And the good news is, you don't have to give just 10%.

We live in the age of grace. You can give 20% if you want to. Saving should be a part of that. I have had couples over the years, usually the man would say to me, and this happened to one guy in particular, I still remember it, and he was a student at Southwestern Seminary.

He said, I can't afford to tithe. And my response to him was, you can't afford not to tithe. Years later, he came back to me and he sat down and he said, I want you to know something.

[29 : 38] That was right. He said, when I stopped tithing, we got in all kinds of trouble, all kind of financial trouble. He said, we finally got it straightened out. But yeah, tithing should be a part.

Our children should know that we value God enough that we put aside what we're going to give to God in our family budget. And God calls us to be good stewards, to be faithful stewards.

1 Corinthians 4 and verse 2 says, it's required of stewards that one be found trustworthy or faithful. And Malachi says, bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.

We don't love money. We shouldn't live for money. But everybody here has to use money for certain things. And we should be good stewards with what God has given us.

In fact, Proverbs 13 and verse 22 says, a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children. So finances. Our finances could be in shape because if it's the number one problem that couples have now, then it means that once we get that in shape, then we've reduced the number one problem that most couples have.

[30 : 42] Well, the last thing is finishing well. Finishing well. Marriage is an earthly institution. The Bible says they're neither giving nor receiving in the resurrection.

It's made for the earth. No marriage in heaven. I know some people have been married a long time and love each other and care for each other and just have endeared themselves to each other will say things like I can't imagine heaven without my husband or without my wife.

I even heard a president of a Bible college at one of our conferences he was speaking and he said I can't imagine heaven without his wife. But the truth is when we get to heaven that is such a higher, greater experience than we've ever seen, it won't matter.

I mean, it'll be something so much greater it'll be enveloped in something greater. We'll know people but we'll know them and understand them at such a higher level, such a spiritual power and dimension that there won't be the need for marriage.

Well, couples get into difficulty along the way and sometimes they don't finish well. So I want to give you four things that Gottman says and he says these are core things. He says if these four things are present in a marriage, there's a 94% chance that marriage is going to fail.

[31 : 58] So number one is contempt. Contempt. And that is the intention to insult, to hurt, or to damage your mate.

It's things like name calling and hostile humor of ridicule, mocking, negative body language, sighs, eye rolling. Have you ever been talking to your mate and they do something like this?

Or they just roll their eyes at you? How do you interpret that? Well, what Gottman says is they're sending you a message. That's a message of contempt and he says don't do it.

The second one is criticism. Now, he makes a distinction between a criticism and a complaint. He says a criticism is global. A criticism is broad and a complaint is specific.

A criticism is an attack on somebody and a complaint is pointing out something that can be done. Suppose that Mike is kind of sloppy at home and he gets ready to go to bed at night and he just throws clothes all over the place before he gets to the bedroom.

[33 : 11] And finally, his wife just had it. Oh, that's you. Oh, we'll just reverse it. So, and then she finally had it with him and she says, Mike, honey, look at this.

I want you to pick up your clothes. I don't like it when you leave your clothes out. Now, that's a complaint. He can do something about that. She hasn't attacked him. But if she said, Mike, look at this, look at this, you are a slob.

That's criticism because he's attacked his person. So, Gottman says marriages can thrive on complaints when they're delivered rightly but they'll dry up from criticism.

The third thing is defensiveness. You retaliate against your mate in order to protect yourself. In other words, you make something the problem that's not a problem. For an example, you get married, guys, and you promise your wife, I'll always carry the garbage, put it in the can, I'll always push it out to the curb on the days when the truck comes to pick it up.

And that goes good for three months and then you stop doing it. and the garbage just piles up right there in your mud room. Maybe spills over in the garage. And you know what happens to garbage if it sits around a few days?

[34 : 27] What happens? It stinketh. Yeah, it stinks. And she's just had it and she comes to you and says, you promised you would carry this garbage always out.

The house smells as a stench. You need to take this garbage out. Well, he gets defensive and he says this, well, you don't cook anymore. You used to cook supper every, and you don't ever cook anymore.

What's going on with that? And all of a sudden she's kind of backpedaling and she's thinking, wait a minute, is that true? I don't cook supper anymore? That's a simple illustration, but that's what defensiveness is. It's putting a problem out there that's not a problem in order to protect yourself against something that's presented to you.

And then the last thing, the fourth one is stonewalling. And when you stonewall, you send a message. Have you ever heard of people in the south, I know this is true, that say that they're not getting along with each other and they say, what's going on?

They say, we're not speaking to each other. You ever heard that? You ever seen people do that? Not speaking to each other? I remember watching my parents do it. One day I went in and they both were sick and I go in to see them and they're sitting on different ends of the couch and they're not talking to each other.

[35 : 37] And I'm there for several minutes and they're not talking to each other. They talk to me but they're not talking to each other. What's going on with y'all? We're not speaking to each other. Stonewalling is like that.

It's a deliberate move to build a barrier to get away from dealing with the other person. Now the big question is, who does it the most?

Men or women? We did this at the 8 o'clock service, let's do it today. How many of you think women stonewall the most? Would you raise your hand? Oh, not many.

Not many. How many of you think men do it the most? Would you raise your hand? Oh, and the rest of you are non-committed. I see. Gottman says 85% of the time it's done by men.

And it goes back to what I said earlier, men stonewall because they don't want to have to deal with some of that messy emotional stuff that they may have to deal with. When all four things are present, Gottman says there's a 94% chance that marriage will fail.

[36 : 42] So if you want your marriage to last, these are four important principles to keep in mind. Life is short. James says it is a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

This year is going to be a banner year for Ann and myself. Coming up soon, she's going to have both her knees replaced. We are going to turn 65.

We are going to sign up for Medicare this year. Looking back over the years, I wonder, you know, sometimes, how did they go by so fast?

I used to hear old people say that when I was younger and I said, can't they talk about anything else? And then I got to be old and I realized, well, they were telling the truth.

It's like, bam, it's gone. Life is short. Life is precious. Marriage is something given to us by God. It deserves our attention.

[37 : 46] It deserves our time. It deserves our energy. It deserves our commitment to God and to one another to do those things, to please that other person, to please God, to love him and to love our mate.

Well, what's the state of your marriage? How are you getting along? If you're not married and you're preparing, you think someday you will be married, I hope you'll prepare for it.

Don't just do it, prepare for it. But how about your marriage? You say, my marriage is great. Can you help others? Can you encourage others?

Can you let them be a part of your life? Your marriage is going good. And if you're struggling in your marriage, try to put these things into practice because they work and your marriage can be better because of it.

You know, one of the things they used to say, it's still true, that repetition is the mother of learning, that you repeat it enough, you repeat it enough, it becomes second nature with you.

[38 : 58] Just like some of these things. You repeat it enough, it becomes second nature. How's your marriage? How's your influence with others?

Most importantly, how's your relationship with God? Do you know, do you walk with Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Would you bow your heads? A musician is going to play, Jeff's going to be here. if God has spoken to your heart, you need to make some kind of public commitment. You have a prayer request, you have a concern, or God leads you in any other way, maybe to trust Christ.

If God speaks to your heart and leads you, while she plays, but you listen to God, you come as He leads of one half of couple weeks.

All right.