



Small Group Discussion Guide

Not in a group? Email us at smallgroups@myriversidechurch.com

Ice Breaker: Who's your favorite television married couple? Why are they your favorite?

Instructions: If your group meets bi weekly, answer questions 1 & 2.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 and Ephesians 5:22-33. Pastor Tom said that marriage is a gift from God. He created the idea and designed it to be a certain way. What are some of the things that God tells about marriage in these verses? How does this make marriage work best? If you are married, how do these passages influence your marriage? If you are single, how do these verses influence the way you view marriage?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. Pastor Tom explained that marriage is designed by God to be permanent. In contrast, our culture and legal system indicates divorce is acceptable for any reason. When we see a struggling marriage, why do we often think that divorce is the answer instead of allowing God's grace to restore that marriage? Have you seen God redeem a marriage you thought was hopeless? What was the result? What godly advice can you offer to married couples who are struggling?
3. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 6:14 that we should not be yoked together with non-believers. When we apply this to marriage, we come to the understanding that believers should not marry unbelievers. What struggles can occur as a result of this kind of relationship? If you are currently single, have you considered dating an unbeliever? If you have children, how will you help your children avoid this situation?
4. Pastor Tom said the gift of singleness is not the source of unhappiness. It offers great advantages in ministry. As a church body, it is easy to view single people as simply those who haven't found the right person to share their lives with, but Paul says this is not the case. Read 1 Corinthians 7:26-38. What are the advantages of being single with regard to ministry? How does marriage or the choice of not being married affect God's ultimate plan for us?

Save the Date!

The Art of Marriage Workshop is coming Friday, April 22nd and Saturday, April 23rd. Plan now to attend!

Registration & additional info at
www.myriversidechurch.com/workshop



MESSAGE NOTES & DISCUSSION GUIDE

"For Better or Worse?" - Week of March 6th, 2016



“For Better or Worse?”

[Senior Pastor, Tom Lundeen]

(You can sign up for Pastor Tom's e-newsletter for his thoughts on various subjects at pastortom@myriversidechurch.com)

MESSAGE NOTES

...The main way we engage the culture without losing the gospel is by demonstrating a counter-culture reality as followers of Jesus that is _____ expressed in relationships (with God and others).

Jesus is creating in His _____ a counter-culture to the prevailing culture...God's love that is _____ and real in our lives is the primary evidence to the culture that we're followers of Jesus. (note John 13:35).

Note I Corinthians 7:1a

I Corinthians 7 is the longest _____ on marriage in the Bible.

God used Paul's experiences to teach the Corinthians and us about God's _____ about marriage and singleness.

1. God _____ Marriage

- A. Marriage is a _____ from God (note I Corinthians 7:1-2) - it is God's _____/invention..._____ in a God-designed marriage...is normal and good (note I Corinthians 7:3-4; Hebrews 13:4)...to f _____ marriage (or corrupt it) is a sign of the “_____ apostasy” (note I Timothy 4:1-3). Note Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; I Timothy 3 and 5; I Corinthians 7:7.
- B. Marriage is created to be p _____ (note I Corinthians 7:10-11; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9) - *Paul's fundamental approach to the question of Christians getting divorced is, therefore, very simple—_____.* *The Lord has expressly forbidden it; so do not even allow yourselves the luxury of entertaining it as a possibility.'* *If this is the express command of the Lord, it does no good whatsoever mentally to _____ with what is so clearly beyond limits. If, as not infrequently happens, a Christian couple think they have made a mistake in getting married, then it is important for them to accept the Lord's teaching and apply themselves to their relationship, in the conviction that, if they work at it, God can make it _____ and vital.”* (Prior) - God's institution of marriage is true for _____. Note I Corinthians 7:12-13—when Christianity comes into an unbelieving home, it should be a source of blessing, not new _____. There is a real sense that the believer can be an instrument of God's _____ to their family (note I Corinthians 7:14). It is the _____ of the unbelieving spouse that is a determining factor (note I Corinthians 7:15-16).

- C. Marriage should always be “in the _____” (note I Corinthians 7:39; II Corinthians 6:14) - nowhere does Paul even _____ of a believer marrying an unbeliever.
- D. Marriage means r _____ (note I Corinthians 7:33-34; I Corinthians 9:5) - marriage and family do make serving the Lord more complicated (more demands on time), but doesn't create _____ excuse.

2. Singleness

- A. Singleness is a _____ from God (note I Corinthians 7:1, 7; Matthew 19:10-11) - the gift of singleness is not the source of u _____. It offers great a _____ in ministry (note I Corinthians 7:32-35)...
- B. Singleness can often be a better choice, depending on c _____ (note I Corinthians 7:26-31) - “p _____ constraint”

“When we allow God to “Re-New” us personally and as a church, we will be able to engage the culture without losing the gospel:

- Neither marriage or singleness is _____.
- Note I Corinthians 7:9.
- Only _____ other Christ-followers.
- If married to an unbeliever, be willing to _____ to preserve the marriage.
- If married to a believer, then also _____ at it.
- Marriage is not a “piece of paper” - in God's eyes it is a c _____.
- He takes our _____ seriously. So should we.
- When marriage and singleness as God designed are celebrated and practiced and committed to, a confused culture will take notice...

Tell someone about the next step you took today in your spiritual journey. You can use the connect card to let us know about your commitment, too!



"For Better or Worse?"

[Sr Pastor, Tom Lundeen]

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the main way we engage the culture without losing the gospel is by demonstrating a counter-culture reality as followers of Jesus that is primarily expressed in relationships (with God and others).

Jesus is creating in His Church a counter-culture to the prevailing culture
God's love that is visible and real in our lives is the primary evidence to the culture that we're followers of Jesus (note John 13:35).

Note 1 Corinthians 7:1a

1 Corinthians 7 is the longest essay on marriage in the Bible.

God used Paul's experiences to teach the Corinthians and us about God's design about marriage and singleness.

1. God Values Marriage

- A. Marriage is a gift from God (note 1 Corinthians 7:1-2) it is God's idea/invention sex in a God-designed marriage is normal and good (note 1 Corinthians 7:3-4; Hebrews 13:4) to forbid marriage (or corrupt it) is a sign of the "great apostasy" (note 1 Timothy 4:1-3). Note Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 3 and 5; 1 Corinthians 7:7.
- B. Marriage is created to be permanent (note 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9) *Paul's fundamental approach to the question of Christians getting divorced is, therefore, very simple 'Don't. The Lord has expressly forbidden it; so do not even allow yourselves the luxury of entertaining it as a possibility.' If this is the express command of the Lord, it does no good whatsoever mentally to flirt with what is so clearly beyond limits. If, as not infrequently happens, a Christian couple think they have made a mistake in getting married, then it is important for them to accept the Lord's teaching and apply themselves to their relationship, in the conviction that, if they work at it, God can make it new and vital.* "(Prior) - God's institution of marriage is true for all. Note 1 Corinthians 7:12-13 when Christianity comes into an unbelieving home, it should be a source of blessing, not new grief. There is a real sense that the believer can be an instrument of God's grace to their family (note 1 Corinthians 7:14). It is the attitude of the unbelieving spouse that is a determining factor (note 1 Corinthians 7:15-16).

- C. Marriage should always be "in the Lord" (note 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14) nowhere does Paul even conceive of a believer marrying an unbeliever.
- D. Marriage means responsibility (note 1 Corinthians 7:33-34; 1 Corinthians 9:5) marriage and family do make serving the Lord more complicated (more demands on time), but doesn't create viable excuse.

2. Singleness

- A. Singleness is a gift from God (note 1 Corinthians 7:1, 7; Matthew 19:10-11) the gift of singleness is not the source of unhappiness. It offers great advantages in ministry (note 1 Corinthians 7:32-35)
- B. Singleness can often be a better choice, depending on circumstances (note 1 Corinthians 7:26-31) "pressing constraint"

When we allow God to "Re-New" us personally and as a church we will be able to engage the culture without losing the gospel:

- Neither marriage or singleness is superior.
- Note 1 Corinthians 7:9.
- Only marry other Christ-followers.
- If married to an unbeliever, be willing to work to preserve the marriage.
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