

Marriage Check-up



The Glory of Marriage

Genesis 1:27-28 Ephesians 5:30-33 Revelations 19:6-8

We are in a marriage series, and I know some of you college students or some who are single think you can wait on this and wonder why you should listen to this series. I think you will find that if you are thinking of marrying one day, this is a great series to sit through because it will give you the foundations and reason for your dating, marriage, and everything in between. If you are single again, by circumstance, whatever the reason, you will see that marriage isn't the end of all ends. There is actually something bigger than even marriage. This series will point to the same thing that marriage is pointing to, which is, ultimately, the true joy we have in Christ as His bride, the Church. So no matter where you are, married or single, there will be stuff for you.

Thinking through this marriage check-up, it had me thinking about my marriage a lot. Hopefully, it had you thinking about your marriage as well. A hint to the guys, think about your marriage during this series. That is a little tip for you. But I was thinking of my marriage, and especially, how it began; I was in college. I ended up coming to Christ in college. I was a new believer as a freshman, walking in the Lord and growing in Him. So I had met Jesus, and shortly after that, I met Katie. I see this girl, meet her, and we talk a little bit. It didn't take me many days to figure out that this might not be just a girl, but the girl. This could be the girl I will spend the rest of my life with, just because she was incredible, the greatest girl I had ever seen in my life, and I loved being around her. So, as a college student, I was getting to pursue her, but I have a relationship with Christ, so His Lordship is ruling and reigning over my relationship with her. I read

the Bible, trying to figure out what I could do, I really, really liked this girl, even possibly loved this girl, and Jesus is my Lord. I read things like, "it is better to marry than burn for passion." I loved this girl and had passion for this girl, so I quickly realized I had three choices. We could either breakup, choice number one; sin, choice number two; or we could get married, so I went with choice number three. I loved this girl, I am passionate, and so it is better to marry. So I had to convince her dad of those things. So then, I had the proposal. This is now our junior year of college, around February. I tried for weeks to plan it out because I wanted it to be special. I wanted to show Katie how much I did love her. I had this whole day kind of planned, and it ended at the old church at the altar, with candles and flower petals, and this drama around this proposal. I asked her...I was putting way too much pressure; I mean, she couldn't say no, right? So she had to say yes, and we were engaged. I was so pumped!

I went back to college the following week, and on Monday, the story begins to be told as people found out I had just got engaged. It was like I was a dead man walking...people were lamenting and bemoaning me! People could not understand why I had chosen to throw my entire life away. I had peers in class that would say things like, "What in the world are you doing? You know you are in college, right? This is your junior year...college is when you are free and you have fun! What are you doing? Why in the world would you want to get married? That is the worst idea ever!" My guy friends, especially, couldn't understand why I would want to do this, "You won't be able to hang out with us as much. What are you doing? You are ruining your life!" It was not only my peers. I had professors, one in particular, who sat me down in her office and said, "Kory, this is the worst decision of your life. If you go through with this, getting married while you are in college, you will ruin your life forever." This was to be words of encouragement to me! She said, "If you don't graduate, have the perfect career, get the perfect life, and then add marriage to that, you will never be fulfilled and truly happy." It was like I was to get all that I could have and then finally, eventually, getting married. So as much as people would ridicule and lament that I was this dead man walking, I was now enslaved to this girl and this thing, marriage, at the same time, I noticed there was a lot of envy, a lot of jealousy of this

thing me and Katie had. I began to notice that when I would go to class that yes, everyone was ridiculing me, but then I got asked to stand up and tell the story. I would tell this drama of how I proposed, and you could see the look, especially in the girl's faces, *Ahhh...I want that!* You could even see the guys and how they could see there was probably more than just hooking up and sleeping around like they were all doing.

What I noticed is that when it came to my peers, although they ridiculed and lamented me, it was not true that they didn't want anything to do with marriage. The truth was that they wanted all the things of marriage; they just didn't want marriage. They wanted romance, intimacy, pursuit, love, and sex. They wanted all those things, but they just wanted it outside of marriage. They wanted all the things of marriage, but they weren't willing to acknowledge there was this real thing, but at the same time, there was envy, like they knew what Katie and I were doing what they should be leading to. There was this, "I can't believe you are doing that," and there was this, "Tell me more about this" scenario.

That is what we see in our culture. We see a culture that is so longing for something more, yet they don't quite know what that more is. We are living in a sexual revolution where the idea is, if you can just be free and do whatever you want, with whomever you want, that is where satisfaction is going to be happy. Romance, love, pursuit, just whatever; go grab it, that is where you are going to find excitement and pleasure and joy. The problem is that all of those things were meant for this one drama called marriage. Love, intimacy, pursuit, passion was all meant for this big story of marriage. As a culture, we are removing it out of that story and we are wondering why we are eating and eating, but we are never filled, never satisfied, never full. It is because we aren't pursuing these things in the context to which they were given.

Cultural Problem with the Story of Marriage

So the surface level problem of our culture is that we are losing the bigger story of love and romance. The bigger story of love and romance is not just funding someone and hooking up. That is not the bigger story of love and romance. The bigger story of love and romance, intimacy and sex, what it

was meant for, is for the glory and epic event of marriage. As a culture, we are losing that, in a sense. But not only that, we are actually losing something much bigger. As we are losing that sense that love is for marriage, at the same time, we can't get away from shows like *The Bachelor*. We want to say love is just about love, intimacy, and romance, but we still want a wedding, we still want marriage. We still want this thing, even though as a culture, we are still somehow putting it further and further away, but we still want to watch it, still want to long for it; we still know that we eventually need that.

But there is actually a bigger problem. We are losing something else. The something else we are losing is the story of marriage. So, love, intimacy, and romance are about marriage. That is what it is for, but now we are losing what marriage is for. We think marriage is about our happiness and fulfillment, so we get married to be happy and fulfilled. Those things are part of marriage, but it isn't what marriage is for. Marriage is for something else, and the 'for' is the glory of God. That is the bigger story of marriage; that it was meant for the glory of God. Ultimately, it was meant for the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It was meant to live out the drama of Christ and the Church.

The Solution

So what do we do in the midst of these problems? What is the solution? The solution is the Church must live out the true stories of love, romance, and marriage. As a Church, when culture is saying we are going to do whatever we want, we are going to pursue whatever we want, as a Church, we have to say as singles, "I know what love, romance, and intimacy is for. It is for marriage; therefore, I am going to remain pure as a single person until I enter into marriage." That is why Solomon said not to wake up or stir up love until it pleases. Pleasing is marriage. Don't mess with love until it is ready for its intended purpose, which is marriage.

Then, when we are in marriage, we remain pure to our spouse, committed to our spouse, because that is the place where those things are to be enjoyed. But we don't just settle with great marriages. No, we, as a Church, live out marriages that about something bigger than ourselves.

They are about the glory of God in the gospel. It is about Christ and His Church. So as the Church, we have to live out a bigger story. Love and romance is about marriage. Marriage is about Jesus Christ and His bride, the Church. That is the solution; that is what we have to go into culture and show them a compelling vision of something different.

The cultural steps to marriage now is to find someone, probably hook up with them, eventually say you love them, move in with them, break up, and repeat several times. Then eventually, when you think you probably aren't going to break up and repeat again because the pool is getting kind of shallow, you marry the person. So in a cultural view, marriage is the funeral to romance. It is the last step. We are admitting we have had all the romance, all the joy, all the pleasure; we have done it enough times, so let's just go, and have the funeral service. Let's dress in black and come to a wedding, let's do the funeral and live out a dead marriage. That is culture's view of marriage! It is this funeral to this epic romance/love story. So it is romance and love before marriage, and then marriage is the funeral with no romance and love after that.

The Bible tells a completely different story. The Bible doesn't tell the story that the wedding day and marriage is the funeral to love and romance. The Bible says that marriage is the playground of love and romance, and in that scared playground, it only increases day by day, moment by moment. So love and romance, and passion and intimacy; it only grows in this garden, this playground that God has ordained. That is the story that we have, and that is the story we have to start telling. You can't just tell it with words; we have to tell it by the way we love one another.

Truth about Love and Marriage

There are two big ideas:

1. Romantic love is about marriage.
2. Marriage is for the glory of God.

Love and romance is about marriage, and marriage is about the gospel, about the glory of God. Hopefully, we are going to see that during our time

as we have titled this message, The Glory of Marriage. That is what we want you to see.

Ray Ortlund, in his book about marriage says that marriage is not like a topic in the Bible. Marriage is actually the wraparound theme of the entire Bible. Think about it. What is the beginning of the Bible? It is marriage in a garden. What is the end of the Bible? It is marriage in a new heaven and a new earth with Christ and His bride. It is the wraparound theme that tells the story of the gospel. That is why marriage is such a big deal to God and why Satan hates marriage so much. It is a display for the world to see that Christ has redeemed His bride, the Church.

So why do we want to talk about the glory of marriage? Just give us practical things. Just tell me what to do as the husband, tell me what to do as the wife, and we will do those things and try to have a better marriage. We can give you some helpful hints and tips and you can have a better marriage. But if you don't have a gospel marriage, it will always be lacking. You can have the best marriage on the planet and it will still not fulfill the deep longings you have, because your marriage wasn't meant for just your marriage. Your marriage was meant for something so much more; it was meant for the gospel. So we are going to get really practical in the weeks to come, but for this sermon, we are going to take a big cloud vision of marriage. We are just going to step back and say that as you're loving your spouse, as you are serving your spouse, as you are going through the day to days of life, don't just look at this marriage. Look up at the big story of Christ and His bride, the Church, and let that cause you to love your spouse even more. It is about getting you to see the bigger vision of your marriage, the glory of your marriage.

Go to Genesis chapter 1 and begin in verse 27. The first thing we are going to say about marriage is that the first marriage was bigger than wedding cake. I mean, wedding cake is good, right? I like wedding cake. I go to a lot of weddings for wedding cake. Wedding cake is awesome! But a marriage is way bigger than wedding cake. It is so much bigger than that. So Adam and Eve didn't just get married to have an event, a celebration, a party, to eat cake, and then sort of eke out life together. No, there was a

bigger purpose to their marriage. We talked about it a little last week. Let's hit it again this week.

Genesis 1:27

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

We see the big picture creation of Adam and Eve. Last week, we looked at it in more detail and how God actually created woman from the man. But here is the big picture; men and women are both created equally in the image of God. So if you are a guy, you image God. If you are a girl, you image God. We both image God, but here is the thing about marriage. As men and women come together, males and females come together in one flesh marriage, those two, who uniquely, differently, image God, come together, and they give a fuller, more glorious imaging of God. As a husband and wife come together in marriage, you can see this little drama of who God is and all that He is and all of His love and all of His characteristics. You can see in a little bit, through this dance or romance between a husband and a wife. So He created them in His image, but it was for a reason, and that is what is in the next verse:

Genesis 1:28

"And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."

God actually tells Adam and Eve to do something. He doesn't say, Hey Adam, I brought you an awesome bride; she's killer! You guys have a garden, so just have fun. Live it up! I made you for each other. The whole universe is about your love, so you just love each other, have fun, be awesome, and it's going to be the greatest story ever! You just enjoy each other forevermore. No, God doesn't leave them to that. Of course, part of those things is true. They are to enjoy each other. God blesses them in that way, but He also gives them something to do with their marriage. He said to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. What is He saying? He is saying, I created you Adam, and you Eve, uniquely different to image Me. When people see you together, loving one another, they

would see the image of God, so here is what you need to do. You need to take the image that I've given you, that's in a garden, and you need to make more images of Me. You need to procreate, have babies, and raise them in a way where they know about marriage so that they can come together in marriage and they can procreate, they can have more babies. Why? Because everywhere you see, a man and a woman coming together in marriage, in the original intent, you see the glory of God. You see His image. So what does God tell Adam and Eve? Fill the earth, the whole place; fill it up with marriages! Why? Because marriages show My glory. They image Me in the way a husband and a wife love each other, and dance together, and sing together; that is My glory! You can see who I am and how I rule and reign by the way these marriages are going to rule and reign over the world. That was the original intent. So the original intent of marriage was way bigger than wedding cake. It was about the glory of God, and spreading His glory throughout all the world. No matter where you go, you would find a marriage, and in that marriage, you could look at them and see a little bit about who God is, how good He is, and how loving He is by the way these marriages selflessly love each other. Of course, Adam and Eve said no to that. They said we aren't going to live about Your glory, we are going to live out our happiness. So we are going to actually go against You and take matters into our own hands. And what happens, instead of living for the glory of God through their marriage, they decided to make their marriage and their happiness ultimate. They took and they ate, and what happened? Cursing happened; guilt, shame, sin, death, murder is what happened when they made their marriage about themselves and inward; they actually split each other apart. Marriage was never meant to be just about you two; it was meant to be about the glory of God for the world to see.

Bigger than Your Wedding Cake

So the very first marriage was way more than wedding cake. As I said, I love wedding cake. I didn't even know you do this when you get married, but you actually save a piece of your wedding cake and freeze it. Did any of you guys do that? Everyone is kind of shamefully admitting that! Katie and I did that, and a year later on our anniversary, we got it out, thawed

it, and ate it. It just wasn't as good! We didn't finish it, we threw it away...it wasn't like it was that day. If you make your marriage about the cake, about the temporal things of everyday, then you can try to freeze them and hold on to them, but eventually they won't give you the pleasure they were intended to give you. Because your marriage is not just about cake and the things you do together, it is about something way bigger. It is about the glory of God, and it doesn't have to be frozen to savor the flavor. So if you are married, if you are thinking about marriage, know that it's about the glory of God. If you will live that out, you will find that your marriage is way more of a blessing that you could ever imagine if you will live it for the glory of God.

Bigger than Your Honeymoon

The second thing is that your marriage is bigger than your honeymoon. If you think about honeymoon; that is one of those words we throw around that means happiness. Honeymoon is great. If you remember your honeymoon, if you had a great honeymoon, you think about a tropical place maybe. Like no pressures of the world, just you and your spouse. It was great, no kids crying, none of that stuff. It was just honeymoon, you and your spouse, just great. Then, if you are a happy married couple, especially the first few months, we call it the honeymoon phase. People say, Ahhh, you guys are in the honeymoon phase! You look so happy...(it's not going to last, but) I'm happy for you! This is great! If you do see those weird people who are just in love twenty years later, it's like man...your whole marriage is like one big honeymoon! It's the idea that if we could just have a marriage that is like a honeymoon forever, that would be the ultimate thing for marriage. So we make marriage, ultimately, about happiness. If we can be happy in marriage, we've succeeded; we've done it. Yet, what Paul would say is there is actually something bigger than just your happiness. If you only seek after happiness, then you're going to be left wanting. There is always going to be something more that you are longing for because your marriage wasn't just meant for happiness. It was meant for that, but not for happiness only. It was about something much bigger than that. That is where Paul would take us to in Ephesians 5, beginning in verse 30. He is talking about the Church, about Christians.

Ephesians 5:30-33

"...because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Paul brings up marriage in this letter. He is writing about the roles of the wife and the roles of the husband. He is telling them how to practically live out marriage, how to practically serve one another and love one another. He is giving them the nuts and bolts. In the next few weeks, we are going to really look into how you practically do that as a husband and as a wife. But he gets to the end of it, and he just wants to make sure this is not just about doing the right things in marriage. It is not just about fulfilling roles in marriage. It is actually something way bigger than that, and he wants to make sure nobody misses that. So he has this "therefore," and he quotes the Old Testament. He quotes Genesis 2, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." He quotes that passage we studied last week. But if you remember last week, the context was the "therefore" was therefore, because God made Eve from Adam. The woman was taken from the man, so we have two people who image God, but we are made from each other. Therefore, marriage should happen because the two come back together in a one-flesh relationship that glorifies God. So that is the reason for marriage. Because God made men and women, male and female, marriage should happen. That is why marriage should be, according to the beginning of the Bible. But Paul gives a deeper meaning for why marriage should happen. Not only should marriage happen because we have male and female, but marriage should be happening because we know the gospel. What does Paul root his "therefore" in? It is not because you are men and women, but because you are part of the body of Christ. Because you are a member of Christ, because you are a believer, because you've been redeemed, "therefore," a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. What is he saying? If you are a

believer, and you haven't been called to a life of singleness, which is glorious, but if that's not you, then he says the reason you should want to get married is because you have been redeemed by Christ. You have seen the glory of the gospel in your life. You have seen the greatest love story play out in your life personally, when Christ redeemed you and bought you, and is promising a wedding with you in the future. Because you know that, you should long to want to get married, because your marriage gets to be part of that drama. So because you are a believer, because you know the gospel, then you should be compelled (if not called to singleness) to be married.

Marriage Reveals the Gospel

Then what does Paul say in verse 32. In case we didn't read between the lines, he says, "...this mystery is profound..." There is a profound mystery, so he goes back to that Old Testament quoting of marriage. There was a mystery to it. Now not a mystery in like it was hard to understand and you had to have a magnifying glass, a long pipe, and a cool hat to figure it out. This is not that kind of a mystery, like puzzle pieces. No, mystery meant that there was something more to the original version that was hidden from everybody, but has now been revealed because of the gospel. What is the original thing that was hidden? Marriage, always, all along, was ultimately all about Christ and the Church. That was the mystery that was hidden from the ages, but when Christ came to redeem His bride, we got it! The lights came on...oh, that is what marriage is about! It's about Christ and the Church; that a husband and a wife will live out, in flesh and blood, the drama of Christ and the Church. The husband representing Christ and the wife representing the Church, as they come together and live out marriage, we see what it is for now. It is for, ultimately, this profound mystery. Which is what? I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church. I am talking about this thing, what it really means; the bigger purpose of it was that it represents Jesus Christ and the Church.

It's important to see that this 'Christ and the Church' is not a metaphor that Paul uses to try to color up marriage. Like hey, I'm doing a sermon on marriage today, let's give an illustration. Oh, what about Christ and the Church; that would be a good illustration that will kind of point to

marriage, that will shine glory on marriage. Hey, do you remember Jesus and you? Kind of think about that...Because if you take that into your marriage, it will make your marriage that much better. No, Christ and the Church is not a metaphor, or an example, of your marriage. No, Christ and the Church is the reality of what your marriage is about and for. It is not some illustration. No, your marriage, in a real sense, is about the glory of God in the redemption of His Son Jesus Christ and His bride, the Church. So your marriage is ultimately about the gospel. That is the bigger glory of marriage. It's about the gospel. It's about Christ and His Church. That is why in the closing verse he will say, However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." Why should you do that? Husbands, why should you love your wife as yourself? Why should you sacrifice for her like Jesus sacrificed for the Church? Why should you do any of that? It's because the point of your relationship is not just her happiness and your happiness, but it's about Christ. And the way you love her shows the world the love that Jesus has shown you.

It is very practical. If you realize your marriage is about the gospel, then husbands, the way you love your wife, you will love her in a way that shows people around you guys, the gospel. If you want to know how Jesus loves me, watch me love my bride. That is pretty tough guys. Can you imagine if an unbeliever who knows you read these verses and he realized hey, if I'm was going to learn about the love of God, I just has to watch you love your bride. So I'm just going to watch you for a few weeks. What would they see? Would they see more about the love of Christ, or would they see less about the love of Christ because of you?

Wives, it is the same for you. He is appealing to you, "wives, respect your husbands." In the previous verses, which we will deal with in the next few weeks, he calls us to the idea of a wife to submit to her husband as to the Lord, as the Church submits to the Lord Jesus; this idea of lovingly respecting and following your husband. Why in the world would you do that? It is because you get to tell a story that is bigger than yourself. You get to tell a story that is bigger than yourself. You get to tell the story of how you respond to the Lord Jesus every single day. Because He loves you so greatly, you respond to Him greatly. And you get to flesh that out in the

way you respond to your husbands. You can tell all your girlfriends, hey, if you want to see how I respond to Jesus throughout my day, then just watch me respond to my husband. Now if they took you up on that and watched you, how would they think you treat the Lord Jesus? Would you tell the truth or would you lie about the way the Church treats the Lord Jesus? What Paul is saying is that your marriage is bigger than just yourself, or just your spouse. It's about the glory of God, always, from the very beginning. But we, as believer, know something even more than that. We know that ultimately, it's about the glory of Christ and the Church. What we get to do in marriages is show the people around us what a relationship with the Lord looks like by the way we love our spouse. That is what we get to do! So it becomes, not just about us, not just about them, it becomes about Him. When we make it about Him, it becomes so much better for us and our spouse because that is how it was meant to be.

Your Marriage will End

The last thing I just want to remind you of is that your marriage will end. Just think about that for a moment...one day, your marriage will end. That is the reality of all marriages. All marriages will end. You are sitting beside your spouse thinking you could never live without them, but the reality is you will have to at some point. Your marriage will end. Think about your vows. What did you say? "Till death do us part..." In that vow, you were saying something of permanence. I'm always going to be with you, I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you; till death do us part. This is a permanent thing. Yet at the same time, you were speaking of something very temporal because you were acknowledging that death does part us. We will part. Death will end us. We will have no marriage from that point forward. So our marriages will end. Why do I end with that bad news? It is because it makes us remember that our marriages were not just about our marriage. And if it is, it will be lost forever when it ends. But if our marriage is about a bigger marriage, a better marriage, and then it will last forever in the sense of pointing to a greater marriage.

The Greater Marriage

This is exactly what we see at the end of the Bible. We see a greater marriage.

Revelation 19:6 -8

"...Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God

the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult

and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his Bride has made herself ready;

it was granted her to clothe herself

with fine linen, bright and pure"—

That is what your marriage points to, not just you guys in love. Your love is pointing to a greater love and a greater marriage that is to come, the marriage of Christ and the Church. It's pointing to the marriage at the end of the age. That is what John is telling us. You see, when you had your wedding ceremony, it was actually a drama about the close of the age. So when the doors of the back of the church opened, when you walked in as a bride, or a groom who saw her walk in, you were telling something. You were saying this is how it's all going to end, and at the end, there is going to be a prince from a far country who comes for his wayward bride. And though she was sinful and rebellious, when the doors open, she will be clothed in white, in His very righteousness! And by His grace, she will come and they will be wed forevermore! And there will be joy because it will be the marriage that will last forever. That is what your wedding was about. That is what it should have been about.

So if your wedding was about that, then what's your marriage about? What is your marriage showing? This is what it's going to be like after the wedding. This is what eternity is going to be like living with God. It's me and my spouse, the way we love each other, is showing the whole world what eternity is going to be like with God. So if someone came to your home and spent some time with you and your spouse, would they be

excited about Heaven? Would they be excited about the new Kingdom? Or, would they be dreading it? You see, we either tell the truth about how the end is going to be, or we tell a lie about how the end is going to be. The way we do that is the way we love, and serve, and give our lives for one another. But if we don't know that story, then we make the whole story about us and it will always not satisfy. But if we know the bigger story, it will compel us to love even greater than we can imagine.

I read about Ruth this week in our daily readings. It was this epic story of Ruth and Boaz, this marriage. What was it ultimately about? There was a son who would be born and his name was David, who will bring another son who is going to be Jesus, and He is the kinsman redeemer, ultimately. So the ultimate thing is that Boaz is not the ultimate kinsman redeemer and it's not just about their marriage. It's about the pointing to a greater kinsman redeemer, who is Christ, and the greater marriage that is to come. That is what your marriage gets to do. It gets to tell the truth about the glory of Christ.

Ways to Live Out Glory of Marriage

So in the final five minutes, I want to give you three practical ways to live out the bigger glory of marriage.

1. Love Jesus more than your spouse.

Now that sounds counterproductive. I'm supposed to love my spouse the most. I'm supposed to make her or him ultimate, right? I just need to make her my whole life. We tell each other that, "You're my whole life! I would be lost without you. If you go, my whole life is over." Those things sound great, but if you say those to your spouse, it puts too much pressure on them. They can't hold your life. They can't hold your happiness. They can't hold the weight of all your hopes, all your dreams, and all your joys. You will crush them if you put all that pressure on them. They weren't meant to hold it. Who was? The Lord Jesus, Jesus was meant to hold all of your love. You were meant to say to Him, "I can't live without you." And Jesus says, "That's good, because I can't ever die. I got you." "I would be lost without you!" "That's good, because I'm never leaving you, never forsaking you." You can't say that about your spouse. You see, Jesus was

meant to be the one you love more than anyone else on the planet. And if you love Jesus more than you love your spouse, you will love your spouse more than you are doing currently, because you'll love your spouse as the gift they are from God, not as a god you worship in place of God. So love Jesus more than your spouse.

2. Make Jesus the center of your marriage.

This is key. If you are going to live a marriage that is about the glory of the gospel, you have to make Jesus the center of your marriage. We can make all sorts of things the center of our marriage. We can make the kids the center of our marriage, the house the center of our marriage, the cars, the things, the jobs, the schedules, the hobbies, the sports. Whatever it is, we can make all sorts of things the most important. We spend all of our time, all of our focus, all of our energy on this thing as the center of our marriage, and if the home got taken, we would be crushed because we have nothing else. If something got taken, it would destroy us. That is why we have to have Jesus at the center of our marriage, because He is the only thing that cannot be taken away by the winds and the storms of this world. If you will put Jesus at the absolute center of your marriage, everything else around Him and orbit around Him, then everything else will be seen as a gift to enjoy, not a god to be worshipped. And your marriage will flourish because Christ is at the center. Pray together, read together, talk about the Lord together, serve together, go to church together, and share with your neighbors together. Do things of the gospel together. Live out His Word together and make Jesus the center of your marriage.

3. Don't build the perfect marriage, but use your marriage to build God's perfect Kingdom.

Some of you will spend your whole life trying to build the perfect marriage and you will get to the end and realize there is no such thing as a perfect marriage. You will always have issues, always have little bitty flaws, so if you spend all of your time focused on just your marriage, you will be left wanting at the end. But there is a perfect marriage, there is a perfect Kingdom, and what God has designed for your marriage to do is to build that Kingdom and to glorify that Kingdom. So don't focus all of your time

and all of your energy just on each other to make your marriage perfect. No, use your marriage and the time together and how you love each other to build, ultimately, the Kingdom of God by showing people how great the love Jesus has to His bride, the Church. Love each other like crazy, but not just for the sake of each other, but ultimately, for the sake of another, for the sake of Christ, and the for sake of His glory. If you will do that, you will find the full satisfaction that marriage was meant for. It was meant for the gospel. It was meant to be deeper than just surface level love and romance. It was meant to tell of the epic story of the cosmos, the story of Christ who redeems us.

That is the glory of marriage, and that is why God cares so deeply about your marriage, because it tells something true or false about Him. That is why, singles, God cares so much about your purity before marriage. It either tells the truth or it lies about Jesus. That is why, married couples, the purity of your marriage, how your eyes and heart and thoughts and hands and everything is only for your spouse, because it tells a lie or the truth about Jesus. That is why He cares so deeply about marriage, because it is about glory. If you have a happy and holy marriage, it tells something also to the principalities and the demons and to Satan himself. It tells them that this age is coming to an end, that Christ has won the victory, He is coming to take His bride, and your little marriage tells of that marriage of the cosmos where Christ will marry His bride. Your marriage is meant to tell everyone around you that you desire love, you desire intimacy, and you desire all those things of your heart. But what you ultimately desire is something deeper. You desire the gospel, you desire Jesus Christ; that is who you ultimately long for. If you will live a marriage about the glory of marriage, about Christ and His Church, then those around you will see that ultimately what they need is not just a great marriage, no they need a great marriage, but it's about something even greater, and that is the story of Christ and His Church. Church, we have that story, it is up to us to go and tell it and live. So let's go and live the best marriages because we know that there is something even better than our marriages.