

The Marriage Covenant Seminar

I. Overview

- a. Cornerstones of this seminar
 - i. I am not here to tell you that the Bible does not say what it says, not to free you from the commands of Holy Scripture. I am here to tell you what the holy, eternal, inerrant, written Word of God commands in terms of your marriage and to bring you under the authority of the commands of Holy Scripture
 - ii. Both husbands and wives bring into their marriages legitimate needs as created by God.
 - iii. A need is not rooted in or based on sin or lack of faith.
 - iv. Two reoccurring questions will continually be asked:
 - 1. If you do not meet this need, then who do you want to meet it?
 - 2. Same alternatives when it comes to your needs
- b. The covenant defined
 - i. The covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally accountable.
 - ii. Six components of the covenant
 - 1. Legitimate needs do not indicate imperfection or fault; God created Adam both perfect and good yet with needs only Eve could meet and visa versa.
 - 2. Covenant needs are not “grown out of” but instead increase with spiritual growth.
 - 3. Defraud
 - 4. Cruel expectations
 - 5. You cannot understand; rather, you must accept
 - 6. If not you, then who?

II. The Covenant of Marriage

- a. The Covenant
 - i. Made with God
 - 1. By the Husband (Malachi 2:14)
 - 2. By the Wife (Proverbs 2:17)
 - ii. Meeting covenant needs is not to be a legal burden or duty
 - 1. Out of love
 - 2. Out of a desire to be the one to meet these needs in your spouse
 - 3. Out of desire to be the “missing piece” of the puzzle and serve your spouse by becoming one through the meeting of these needs
 - iii. Made with your spouse (Matthew 19:4-6)
 - iv. Made with the State (Romans 13:1)
 - v. Made before the Church (Hebrews 13:4)
 - vi. Is by nature binding
 - 1. The question of divorce (Malachi 2:16; Mark 10:9)
 - 2. The question of remarriage (Mark 10:11; Matthew 5:31-32)
 - vii. Did I marry the wrong person? (Proverbs 3:5-6, 5:21, 16:33, 19:14)
 - 1. The “form” or “type” of wedding or marriage has no bearing on this issue

2. Whether you were married in the church, by a rabbi, by an Islamic Mullah, by a Hindu Priest, by a cultural ceremony, by the state or legal system, or by common law declaration, if you are married, then you are married.
 3. The Word of God gives no guidelines for what constitutes a marriage ceremony. Thus, the desire for some to rid themselves of an undesirable spouse by declaring that the marriage is void because it did not follow some prescribed church ordinance or ceremony is completely false. Even the commonly held conventional wisdom that if a marriage is not consummated then it is not valid is false. Once married, you are joined by God, not the church, not sexual intimacy – but by God. The church may bless, but you are joined by God regardless (1 Corinthians 7:12-13, 27, 39)
- viii. What if my spouse does not fulfill his or her part of the covenant?
1. Husband yes, wife no (Ephesians 5:25)
 2. Wife yes, husband no (Ephesians 5:22)
 3. Covenants are binding even when they are “man’s” (Galatians 3:15)
 4. God holds us to our covenants (Psalm 15:4)
 5. Therefore, what is to be my response?
 - a. Wives (Colossians 3:18)
 - b. Husbands (Colossians 3:19)
- b. In the Covenant of Marriage, if you do not meet your spouse’s legitimate needs, then who do you want to do this?
- i. Legitimate needs do not indicate imperfection or fault
 1. God created Adam both perfect and good
 2. Yet Adam had some needs only Eve could meet
 - ii. Issue of trapping your spouse with his or her devotion to God
 - iii. Issue of teaching your spouse to meet legitimate needs outside the primary will of God
 - iv. Again, meeting covenant needs is not to be a legal burden or duty but rather an act of service based on love and a desire to fulfill the role God intended when you spoke vows with your spouse.
- c. The “fine print” of the Marriage Covenant
- i. Whether viewed as the fine print of the Marriage Covenant or the bold print of the Bible – either way it is still your responsibility.
 - ii. Remember, the covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally responsible.

III. The “Fine Print” of the Marriage Covenant

- a. The Husband
- i. Overview
 1. If he, as Ephesians 5:25 commands, is to love his wife as “Christ loved the Church,” then those verses which define Christ’s undying love for us also define the husband’s undying love for his wife.
 2. Remember that
 - a. Legitimate needs do not indicate imperfection or fault (Adam & Eve);
 - b. Covenant needs are not grown out of but instead increase with spiritual growth;
 - c. Warning against defrauding your spouse;

- d. Warning against cruel expectations;
 - e. You cannot understand but rather must accept these needs; and
 - f. If not you, then who?
- ii. Spiritual Leader of the family (Ephesians 5:26)
 - 1. Wife (Ephesians 5:23, 26; 1 Corinthians 14:35)
 - 2. Children (Ephesians 6:4)
 - 3. Ministry (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2)
 - 4. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
 - b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?
 - c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?
 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 5. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- iii. Love wife by sacrificially meeting her emotional needs (Ephesians 5:25)
 - 1. Conversational intimacy
 - a. Access (Hebrews 4:16)
 - b. Topics that result in emotional comfort and security (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - 2. Intimacy through emotional / psychological comfort and care (Ephesians 5:33)
 - 3. Actually being there
 - a. In the beginning, given by God the Father (Genesis 2:24)
 - b. Reaffirmed by God the Son (Matthew 19:5)
 - c. Instituted in the Church Age by God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:31)
 - 4. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
 - b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?
 - c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?
 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 5. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- iv. Trusting and truthful relationship (Proverbs 31:11)
 - 1. All men want the wife of Proverbs 31, but here we also have insight into the husband of this type of wife.
 - 2. If we continually "protect" our wife by not telling her the truth, then we treat her as a child not as a helpmate.
 - 3. The reason it was not good for man to live alone is the need for a helpmate.
 - a. If we refuse to be open and honest with our wives, we deprive ourselves of this provision by God.
 - b. Not only that, we deprive her of her God-given ministry
 - 4. It would be as if your wife intercepted your mail and threw away any correspondence concerning your work, finances, and ministry that she thought would be disrespectful.
 - a. This would not be helpful but hurtful.

- b. In the same way, we hurt our wives by not allowing them to minister to us.
 - 5. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
 - b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?
 - c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?
 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 6. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- v. Material needs (Ephesians 5:28)
 - 1. Key verses
 - a. 1 Corinthians 7:32-34
 - b. 1 Timothy 3:4, 5:8
 - c. 2 Thessalonians 3:10
 - d. Hebrews 11:7
 - e. 1 Peter 3:7
 - 2. Important comparisons
 - a. How we clothe our body vs. our wife's
 - b. Our office and supplies vs. wife's kitchen and supplies
 - c. Our "business lunches" vs. wife's getting out to eat
 - d. Our travel and conferences vs. wife's vacations and conferences
 - e. Our transportation vs. wife's transportation
 - f. The sin of putting your wife to work so you can pursue your career, ministry, or hobby
 - 3. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
 - b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?
 - c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?
 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 4. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- vi. Home and family a priority (Ephesians 5:31)
 - 1. Loving our wives as Christ loved the church at meal times (Luke 24:30; Revelation 3:20, 19:9)
 - 2. Priority of the home (Ephesians 5:31)
 - 3. Discipline of children (Ephesians 6:1-4)
 - 4. Honor in the home (Proverbs 31:28; 1 Peter 3:7)
 - a. The mother is not the children's servant
 - b. Servant as defined by Christ in Luke 22:27
 - 5. We cannot use "ministry" or God as an excuse to neglect our responsibilities in the home (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6)
 - 6. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
 - b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?
 - c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?

- d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 7. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- b. The Wife
 - i. Overview
 - 1. If she, as Ephesians 5:24 commands, is to be subject to her husband "as the Church is subject to Christ," then those verses which define the Church's undying love for Christ also define the wife's undying love for her husband.
 - 2. Remember that
 - a. Legitimate needs do not indicate imperfection or fault (Adam & Eve);
 - b. Covenant needs are not grown out of but instead increase with spiritual growth;
 - c. Warning against defrauding your spouse;
 - d. Warning against cruel expectations;
 - e. You cannot understand but rather must accept these needs; and
 - f. If not you, then who?
 - ii. Submission to his leadership (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18)
 - 1. If you define "submission" in Ephesians 5:22 as being virtually neutralized by Ephesians 5:21 (i.e. that they are equal in terms of authority), then the wife must be consistent with this application in all of her relationships, not just with her husband
 - a. She must be consistent with her application of submission and her children.
 - b. She must be consistent with her application of submission and domestic help.
 - c. Both use the same Greek word, and both are found in the exact same context of this passage (Ephesians 5:22-6:9)
 - 2. Submission and obedience (1 Peter 3:1-2, 5-6)
 - a. Stripped of obedience, submission has virtually no meaning.
 - i. Again, be consistent in the use of this same Greek word with respect to government, employees, domestic help, children, etc. – keeping in mind that submission by or to these groups without obedience is virtually meaningless.
 - ii. You cannot say that "I will be submissive to the tax laws of my government, but I retain the right to ultimately make my own choices when there is a dispute."
 - b. Special note
 - i. This verse does not cut both ways.
 - ii. The wife wins the reluctant husband by submission; it does not say this will work for the husband's relationship with the wife.
 - iii. The husband wins the reluctant wife by decisive leadership.
 - 3. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
 - b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?

- c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?
 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 4. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- iii. Love your husband by giving him a sexually exciting marriage (Proverbs 5:15-19)
 - 1. The care of her body as the temple of God (Proverbs 27:20; Ecclesiastes 1:8; Song of Solomon 4:1-7; Luke 16:8; 1 Corinthians 7:4)
 - 2. Sexual intimacy (Proverbs 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5)
 - a. What has the woman in Song of Solomon 4:1-16 done to make herself appealing?
 - b. The wife's encouragement and aggressiveness
 - i. The godly wife recognizes that behavior which was once immoral is now part of her ministry to her husband.
 - ii. Song of Solomon 1:2-4, 2:3-6, 3:1, 3:4, 4:16, 7:11-12, 8:14
 - c. Three women
 - i. Eve (Genesis 2:25)
 - ii. Rebekah (Genesis 24:67, 26:8)
 - iii. Esther (Esther 2:8-9, 12, 14-17)
 - 3. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
 - b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?
 - c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?
 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 4. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- iv. Helpmate and companion in his life pursuits (Ecclesiastes 9:7-9)
 - 1. A life-long companion (Genesis 2:18; Proverbs 5:18; Ecclesiastes 9:7-9; 1 Corinthians 11:9)
 - 2. Consider these following areas of his life
 - a. Career – Who do you want to be helping him and praising him?
 - b. Ministry – Why do other women praise him more than you with what results?
 - c. Leisure / Sports – Who is his greatest fan?
 - 3. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
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 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 4. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- v. The home as a refuge (Proverbs 31:12)
 - 1. What a refuge is not (Proverbs 7:11, 14:1, 21:9, 25:24)
 - 2. What a refuge is (Proverbs 31:12, 15, 26-27)
 - 3. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?

- b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?
 - c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?
 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 4. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.
- vi. Respect (Ephesians 5:33)
 - 1. Genuine respect (Proverbs 12:4, 31:26-27; 1 Peter 3:1-2)
 - a. Every mother knows the shallowness of mocking, feigned respect by a child.
 - b. The wife should not repeat this behavior in her relationship with her husband.
 - 2. Questions to consider
 - a. If you do not meet these needs, who do you want to meet them?
 - b. What are your spouse's moral alternatives?
 - c. Will you trap your wife in the prison of a Christian marriage?
 - d. Are you willing for these same alternatives when it comes to your needs?
 - 3. Reminder: You don't have to get married, but if you do, then fulfill your vows to God.

IV. Closing

- a. Key Points
 - i. The covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally accountable.
 - ii. Remember: I am not here to tell you that the Bible does not say what it in actuality does say, nor to free you from the commands of Holy Scripture. Rather, I am here to tell you what the holy, eternal, inerrant, written Word of God commands in terms of your marriage and to bring you under the authority of the commands of Holy Scripture.
 - iii. Remember that
 - 1. Legitimate needs do not indicate imperfection or fault (Adam & Eve);
 - 2. Covenant needs are not grown out of but instead increase with spiritual growth;
 - 3. Warning against defrauding your spouse;
 - 4. Warning against cruel expectations;
 - 5. You cannot understand but rather must accept these needs; and
 - 6. If not you, then who?

b. Interaction between the husband's and wife's covenantal commitments

HUSBAND	WIFE
Spiritual leader of the family	Submission to his leadership
If you do not meet your spouse's need, then who do you want to do this?	
What is their moral alternative?	
Meet emotional needs	Sexual fulfillment
If you do not meet your spouse's need, then who do you want to do this?	
What is their moral alternative?	
Trusting and truthful Relationship	Helpmate and companion in life's pursuits
If you do not meet your spouse's need, then who do you want to do this?	
What is their moral alternative?	
Material needs	The home as a refuge
If you do not meet your spouse's need, then who do you want to do this?	
What is their moral alternative?	
Home and family	Respect
If you do not meet your spouse's need, then who do you want to do this?	
What is their moral alternative?	