

FIGHT

Fight For Your Marriage
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Discussion Notes
The Crossing Church
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OPENING

Families are the most complex, frustrating and life-giving relationships in our lives. I don't know where you are in your relationships, but over the next few weeks we are going to be talking about families. You might wonder why we would name a family series "FIGHT". It is because great families don't happen by accident. If you want a great family, you have to fight for it. God says it is worth fighting for.

SCRIPTURE¹

Matthew 19:4 "Haven't you read," Jesus replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female.' "

1 Corinthians 7:28 "But if you do marry, you have not sinned...But those who do marry will face many troubles in this life..."

Ephesians 5:18b "Be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Ephesians 5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ."

Ephesians 5:22 "Wives, submit to your husband as to the Lord."

Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

Ephesians 5:30-31 "For we are members of his body. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

Ephesians 5:33 "However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

OBSERVATION

God made husbands and wives to be uniquely different.

- Our souls have certain characteristics which God implanted in our DNA.
- Differences cause conflicts, not from evil intent, but from being created intentionally to be a perfect union.
- We are to remain content in whatever state we find ourselves.

Question: Why do you think God created us to be so different?

Marriage is hard work. Being single frees us up to serve God without any distractions, but St. Paul says it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Question: What advice would you give a young person about marrying or remaining single?

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

APPLICATION

St. Paul's command is for men to love their wives unconditionally and for women to respect their husbands unconditionally.

Question: Why are these commands different for wives and husbands?

Wives are not commanded to love their husbands, but to respect them. Men would rather be alone and unloved than to be disrespected and inadequate. Unloved wives nitpick and nag. Disrespected husbands withdraw and work more because that is where their self-respect comes from.

Question: If you have a nagging wife or a withdrawn husband, what do you plan to do about it?

Because marriage is difficult, we need to:

- practice mutual submission;
- put one another first;
- ask, "What can I do for you?"
- do these things out of reverence for Christ because of what He has done for you;

Question: What did your spouse say the last time you asked, "What can I do for you?" Did you do it?

God wired us to need these responses from our mates.

- Unconditional love means you love them in spite of what they do or say, in spite of your emotions, and in spite of how they hurt you.
- Unconditional respect is a choice and not based upon how you feel.

Question: Why do people think respect has to be earned and love doesn't?

This process involves acceptance and creates a one-ness relationally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. It starts a new energizing cycle in a marriage: the husband's love motivates the wife's respect, therefore, he loves her more. He asks, "What can I do to help you feel more loved?" She asks, "What can I do to help you feel more respected?"

Question: Since, at the heart of flourishing relationships, is unconditional love and unconditional respect, what do they look like to others?

St. Peter says there is a link between how you treat your wife and your spiritual life.

Question: What is this relationship? How does it work?

Question: If you are separated or divorced, how would these principles have helped your marriage?

When it comes to our roles as evangelists for our God, there is no greater strategy than our marriages.

Question: What does this mean? How do others react to when observing your marriage?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the realizations you have brought to us today. We know how important our marriages are to you, but we don't always recognize our role in keeping them strong and supporting our spouses. We are so grateful for your loving us and we want to love our families in reverence to you. We are in awe of the marvelous creations you have made for us, not the least of which are our marriages. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

EVENTS

Child dedication is available at all four services on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 8, 2016. You can register online at www.thecrossinglv.com/childdedication.