



RELATIONSHIP STATUS

SERMON SERIES

INTIMACY (Week 2)

WELCOME: Can you name a couple whose marriage relationship you admire?

WORSHIP: Read Psalm 103:1-5 together and pray a prayer of worship.

WORD:

Once again, the goal of this series is to honor God by allowing Him to *re-shape the way we see sex, singleness, dating and marriage through God's Word*. Most, if not all of us, will admit that our view of marriage was shaped and idealized by film and literature. From romantic comedies to Shakespearean tragedies, our ideas of marriage have been greatly shaped by culture. It's almost impossible for us to think of romance and marriage apart from the ideals set by Hollywood.

God's Design for Marriage.

Last Sunday, Pastor Ta said, "Walking down the aisle was easy, but staying true to the vows is tough." While it's easy to see why God designed an other-centered union for a me-centered world, living that way is a challenge. After the wedding, when bills pile up, communication breaks down, the children get hyper-active and you're just plain irritated with spouse, it's a lot easier to give up than working things out because it's not the "happily ever after" you envisioned. If you're married or plan to marry someday, here are four important truths about marriage:

Key Principles in Marriage.

1. The centrality of a strong and growing relationship with God (Mark 12:30).

Finding something in common is the basis for all relationships. In marriage, most people gravitate towards finding the more obvious commonalities like age, race, values, personality, etc. Pastor Ta shared the very important principle of "common faith in the Lord Jesus." While there are evidences and examples of strong inter-faith marriages, Pastor Ta gave the classic illustration of the "relationship triangle" in which couples who share a common faith in Jesus grow deeper in love with each other as they grow deeper in their closeness to God.

For married people:

- Love Jesus more than anything else in your life (Mark 12:30, Psalm 73:24-25). As a couple, make it your goal to grow in your love for Jesus. What are some of the ways you can do this?
- Faith in Jesus is the strongest and most important bond. How can you best teach this truth to your spouse and family?

For unmarried people:

- Refuse to be enslaved by the culture when it comes to finding your future spouse. Romans 12:2 tells us to not follow the patterns of this world, but instead to renew our mind. Do you have a clear vision of "the one" you want to marry one day? What shaped your vision?
- Allow God to change your heart when it comes to finding your "ideal person." Make "a growing relationship with Jesus Christ" as the number one irreducible minimum in finding "the one." Instead of looking for "the one" focus on becoming "the one." How do you focus on becoming the one?

2. The centrality of commitment to the covenant (Genesis 2:23-24)

We live in a culture that is used to getting upgrades. Pastor Ta pointed out that we have brought that mindset into some of the most important aspects of our lives, including marriage. When things become less ideal and we're no longer happy, our culture dictates that an upgrade is needed. God created marriage as a loving life-long loyal partnership between one man and one woman. That is why in weddings, the couple covenant with each other, saying: *to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy law, and this is my solemn vow*. Marriage mirrors God's covenant relationship with His people. A covenant marriage is intended by God to be a lifelong relationship exemplifying unconditional love, reconciliation, sexual purity, and growth. Back in the old days, a covenant is an unbreakable commitment before God which can only be ended by death. People can negotiate out of contracts, but not out of a covenant. The heart of covenant marriage is "the steadfast love of the Lord," which comes from the very heart of God and "never ends" (Lam. 3:22).

For married people:

- What disciplines will you continually practice in order to help maintain your faithfulness and commitment in marriage? What steps would you take if you were having serious difficulties in marriage?

- If you have had issues, how would you help restore your union?
- What ways do you feel God is calling you to pray for more in your marriage?

For unmarried people:

- Regardless of the examples we see around us, marriage is unbreakable. That is why allowing God to develop us into becoming “the one” is crucial to our future marriage. If you let God make you into the kind of person He wants you to be, you bring that “new you” into your marriage covenant.
- Don’t let the devil distract you from becoming whom God wants you to be—a victorious fully-devoted follower of Jesus. What are some ways that you’ve experienced the devil trying to distract you? What should you do when distractions come?
- Develop a strong Godly vision for your life! Developing such a great vision it will help you focus and give you restraint from making unwise decisions.

3. The centrality of partnership in marriage (Genesis 2:18).

Love is more than just a warm, fuzzy feeling. It is selfless concern for another. True love will build up the one you love, not tear him or her down. True love will want to give and serve the other, not take in selfish disregard for the desires of your spouse. A husband should treat his wife like his queen, and a wife should treat her husband as her “knight in shining armor”—as corny as that might sound. Partnership is important. This is the complementarian view of marriage. It’s not about giving or taking; it’s just about giving ourselves into the relationship. Or, as the apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 5, we should treat each other as Christ and His Church do (Read Ephesians 5:21-30).

For married people:

- The key to having a happy marriage is to involve God in your marriage and submit to His way of life. If God has not been part of your marriage up to this point, invite Him in!
- As co-pastors of your family, how can you better complement each other?
- Work on building godly character in your lives and express the love of God to each other!

For unmarried people:

- Unmarried people are usually accustomed to a life of doing things for ourselves and doing what we want. In our desire to become “the one” we must learn, even now, to be selfless, so that we can bring that quality into our future marriage. Would you say you’re self-less? How can you develop selflessness at this point?

4. The centrality of Godly wisdom in navigating through life’s transitions (Ephesians 5:8-10).

In this life, we will have trials and difficult transitions. It is vital to remember that marriage is like a ship that you need to chart through choppy seas. As God’s children, He wants the best for us and He wants us to be equipped with wisdom that can only come from Him. Married couples need to navigate through these difficult transitions. The power of Spirit can only be released in marriage when we embrace the Word of God to navigate through life.

For married people:

- What life transition are you in now? How are you handling it?
- Have you ever had a life transition so traumatic that it threatened your marriage?
- Get in the Word and pray together. Spending time with God allows us to draw strength and wisdom in choppy water. Many couples, rather than giving their concerns to God and submitting to the source of our life with joyful obedience, we have the tendency to grumble, complain and question Him at every turn in the road. This could make couples feeling bitter and it breaks the marriage down.

For unmarried people:

- Being single is not a curse. It’s a blessing. Use this time in your life to prepare yourself for the future. When you feel like you’re missing out on what those who are in a relationship have, you can flip the script and remind yourself that they are missing out on what I have. That you putting your time into an eternal relationship and building a strong foundation.
- Are you viewing your time as a single student as preparation time or wasted time?
- What can you do to embrace the season of preparation? How can you use it to build a strong foundation?

5. The centrality of intimacy in marriage (Hosea 2:14).

There will always be days when married couple will dislike each other, but it is important to not let negativity win. Pastor Ta read Hosea 2:14 and gave us a proper understanding of the word “allure” in relationship. In that verse, God shows us how He attracts people, despite their unfaithfulness, to love Him back—not by judgment or condemnation, but through grace, love and blessing. Grace and love bring intimacy in any relationship.

For married people:

- The time to begin building a happy marriage is now. Start reworking on what you have!
- May your marriage be filled with spiritual strength and indestructible joy. May God bless you with a happy family and may you share marital happiness with many others!

For unmarried people:

- The time to begin building a happy marriage is now by letting God develop you into becoming “the one” for someone.

WORKS: PRAY FOR MARRIAGES AT MOSAIC. PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE.