

Marriage and Family

Lesson 5 – Failures in Marriage

Why do so many marriages fail? When I mention “fail”, I’m not necessarily speaking only of those marriages that end in divorce. We have seen over the previous 4 lessons that a marriage fails when it falls short of what God intends for it to be. Marriage is the most difficult of all human relationships. It is the joining of two, imperfect humans. Each man and woman that enters into marriage has a large quantity of stored up reactions, ideals, ideas, thoughts and feelings – all that come from their past and will generally consist of what their home and family have given them. Most husbands and wives have had little or no training in the problems of marriage except for those they have seen their parents handle. Some of what is learned in these situations will work well for them and their partner; but some of it will be detrimental. This is where God’s power and truth will help a Christian evaluate those things which are negative and harmful in human relations and change them for the better.

We have studied that God intends for marriage to help men, women, and families enjoy life to its fullest and help one another prepare for an eternity with God. The underlying reason for marriages failing and frequent divorce is the abandonment of the Bible and its authority over our lives. Regardless of whether the problem has to do with doctrine regarding marriage or the practical matters of day-to-day living as a husband and wife, the Bible has the answer. To hear and obey the word of God would be to guarantee a happy home.

If we are to avoid failure in marriage, we must understand what marriage is. Movies, books, TV shows have carried us away from the spiritual conception of marriage. People have been convinced that marital happiness depends on living in a certain type of house, driving a certain type of car, or is measured by the finest of materialistic goods. The truth is that marital happiness depends on living in the fear of the Lord. Marriage was not originated in the mind of man. Genesis 2 clearly shows God’s intention for the marital state.

Based on the scriptures, we know that marriage is an institution given to man from God. Given so that moral purity could prevail (Ref. **I Cor. 7**). Given for the comfort and pleasure of the husband and wife. Given for the birth, preservation and comfort of children, and the continuation of the human race. It is a union, which God intends to last for a lifetime. It is to consist of love and submission (Ref **Eph 5:22-28**), the intention of living together (Ref. **Matt 19:5-6**), and unselfish attitude, actions, and behavior toward each other. Marriage is a spiritual institution and can be fully successful only when it is guided by spiritual considerations.

If we are to avoid failure in marriage, we must understand what causes the failure to occur. The cause, very simply, is sin. We sin when we fail to obey God’s

design for marriage as laid out for us in the Bible. Sin against God, sin against our companions. *SIN = FAILURE*.

In what form can *SIN = FAILURE* take shape?

1. Failing to love one another

1.1. **Ephesians 5:25-29**

1.1.1. The husband is to love his wife the way Christ loves the church.

Thus, the husbands love is **NOT** dictatorial, tyrannical, overbearing or unreasonable in nature. This authority, being practiced in love, should not be disturbing or deplorable to the wife.

1.1.2. The husband should love the wife as he does himself.

1.2. Love is to be given without reserve or limit.

1.3. A love that is, not because of, but in spite of. It lets your spouse know that no matter who or what you are, no matter the circumstances and tribulations of life, I will love you with a steadfast and unabandoning love.

1.4. A love so comprehensive as to embrace and embody all the beautiful elements of every word Jesus and the apostles utilized to define man's feelings and duties to his wife.

1.5. Apply the teachings of **I Corinthians 13:4-8** to your life.

1.6. **Titus 2:4**

2. Failing in your responsibilities to your spouse in the sexual relationship

2.1. Breaking the marriage vows in regards to the physical relationship.

2.1.1. Union with anyone other than your spouse is adultery/fornication.

Hebrews 13:4

2.1.2. **Galatians 5:19-21**

2.2. Being neglectful of your partners needs and desires in your physical relationship.

2.2.1. **I Corinthians 7:2-5**

2.2.2. Each spouse has a very definite responsibility to the other. When love is present it leads each person in the marriage relationship to lovingly consider the other's desires and the needs of the other.

2.3. Incompatibility

2.3.1. Very seldom stems from anatomical incompatibilities. More often the problems come from lack of education, improper education, superstition, and "old wives' tales". This is because sex in American culture has been treated in such an apologetic and hush-hush manner.

2.3.2. Ignorance of simple anatomy and of the emotional differences that exist between man and woman.

2.3.3. We must condition our children to understand that sex is a gift from God to be experienced in the marriage relationship. Too often they are conditioned that it is wrong or "dirty" within the confines of marriage. This leads to problems later on.

2.4. Healthy aims

2.4.1. Achieve pleasure for oneself.

- 2.4.2. Give pleasure to one's rightful companion.
- 2.4.3. Express the depth of love and affection for the companion.
- 2.4.4. Conceive children.
- 2.4.5. Help in the spiritual development of both husband and wife and the children as well. This is done through the atmosphere of love and affection, which results from the proper sex life of the husband and wife.
- 2.4.6. It is not to be used for selfish means, motives, or practices. A husband or wife is not a mere thing to be used.
- 3. Failure to develop and maintain togetherness.
 - 3.1. **I Peter 3:7**
 - 3.2. Husband and wives should plan together, pray together, grow spiritually together, engage in recreation together, and train their children together.
 - 3.3. Separate bank accounts, different friends, different recreational activities and leisure pursuits, and individual vacations should be avoided. Cleaving to each other is essential. It is risky for marriage partners to be apart. It can make you much more subject to unfaithfulness and alienation of affection. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but often times it is for someone else. **Matthew 19:3-6** tells us that "the two shall become one flesh, they are no longer two but one".
 - 3.4. Inner conflicts can tear a marriage apart. **Mark 3:25**
 - 3.5. Apply the teachings of **Romans 12** and **Luke 6:31** to your life.
 - 3.6. **Matthew 5:1-16** is a pattern for mental health.
- 4. Allowing materialism to control your lives.
 - 4.1. Success or failure is in direct proportion to the extent that God's will enters into the lives of the parties involved. Marriage must be seen as a relationship for mature individuals, ready for responsibility as well as privileges.
 - 4.2. American families face a financial situation for the last 30 years that no other in history has faced. We live in a money-based economy with almost everything bought rather than produced at home. Another problem is the high level of prosperity of so many families. This calls for a new and deeper understanding of the Christian standard of stewardship.
 - 4.3. Jesus said in **John 10:10** that "he came that they might have a more abundant life". That does not necessarily include affluence. The truly good life to the Christian is not to be found in material things. (**Luke 12:15**)
 - 4.4. **Matthew 6:19-34**
 - 4.5. **Matthew 19:16-26**
- 5. Failing to encourage, appreciate and reassure one another.
 - 5.1. There will be times, due to doubt, fear, despondency or insecurity, when words of reassurance, support, appreciation and praise will need to be spoken.
- 6. Failure to trust one another.
- 7. Failure to take your respective roles

- 7.1. Man must understand that God has made him the head of the wife and the homes they lead. The husband sets the tone of marital togetherness and family fellowship.
 - 7.1.1. Ref. **I Corinthians 11:3**
 - 7.1.2. Ref. **Genesis 2:23**
 - 7.1.3. Ref. **I Corinthians 11:8**
 - 7.1.4. Ref. **Ephesians 5:23**
 - 7.1.5. Ref. **Ephesians 6:4**
 - 7.1.6. Ref. **I Timothy 5:8**
- 7.2. The wife is to be in subjection to her husband. She is to be the completion of man, not competition for him.
 - 7.2.1. Ref. **I Peter 3:1-6**
 - 7.2.2. Ref. **Ephesians 5:22-24**
 - 7.2.3. Marriages can fail when the wife will not submit herself to the leadership of her husband as the Bible teaches.

Establishing and maintaining a Christian home is the greatest contribution a man will make in a lifetime. A man may succeed in his business or professional life and yet fail in his home. In such a case, the man's life has been a failure. At the same time a man may fail in his business or profession yet succeed in establishing and maintaining a happy Christian home. His life will have been worthwhile.

No man is able to concentrate on his work and do his best at it if, in his home life, there are problems and difficulties, which are causing him to be unhappy. No woman can have the peace of mind and personal satisfaction she desires if, in her home, there is constant tension, strife, and quarreling. No child can find the security they need for development if angry threats and separations constantly interrupt their home life.

We must have more good Christian homes. But this can be realized only if we go to the word of God as the guide for our lives.