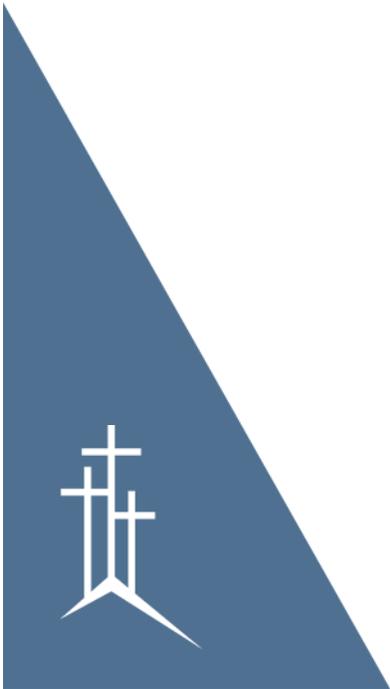
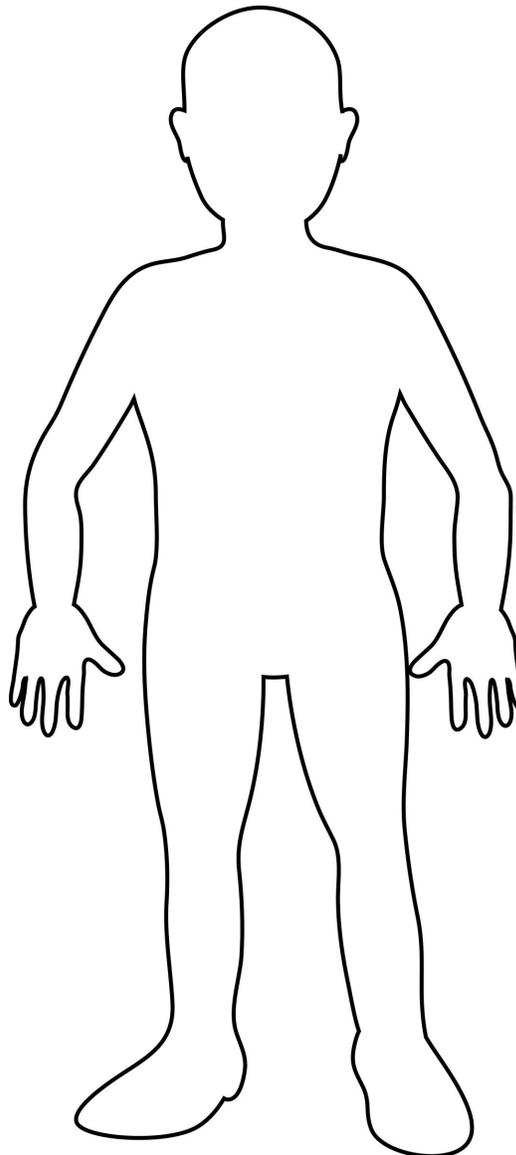


Sunday, January 29, 2017

"The Secret of Marriage" (Part 2)

THE MEANING
OF MARRIAGE

Personal Reflection/Journaling: Using the "person" below, depict your ideal mate! List the qualities and characteristics (inside and out) that would make up an ideal boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse!



Making Men Truly Masculine

"This is a significant break with the past. Traditionally, men married knowing it would mean a great deal of personal alteration. Part of the traditional understanding of marriage was that it "civilized: men." (Keller, 25)

"But Lipton argued that marriage was traditionally a place where males became truly masculine: "For most of Western history, the primary and most valued characteristic of manhood was self-mastery... A man who indulged in excessive eating, drinking, sleeping or sex—who failed to 'rule himself'—was considered unfit to rule his household, much less a polity." (Keller, 26)

Talk and Reflect:

1. What is the greatest challenge you face in our society as someone of your gender?

2. What do you think is the greatest challenge facing someone of the other gender?

THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

The Irony of Pessimistic Idealism

"To conduct a Me-Marriage requires two completely well-adjusted, happy individuals, with very little in the way of emotional neediness of their own or character flaws that need a lot of work. The problem is—there is almost no one like that out there to marry! The new conception of marriage-as-self-realization has put us in a position of wanting too much out of marriage and yet not nearly enough—at the same time." (Keller, 28)

You Never Marry the Right Person

"Marriage brings you into more intense proximity to another human being than any other relationship can. Therefore, the moment you marry someone, you and your spouse begin to change in profound ways, and you can't know ahead of time what those changes will be." (Keller 33)

Talk and Reflect: Take some time to think about your *actual* spouse or someone in a present or past relationship. How does he or she respond to conflict? How does he or she respond during happy or exciting times? How does he or she respond during difficult or stressful times? Consider these questions and describe your "actual" spouse/relationship below



Look back at your "ideal" mate. Compare the two! Share with your group some of the similarities or differences you noticed! Is there anything that surprised you when you compared your ideal spouse with your actual spouse or significant other?

THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

Apocalyptic Romance

"In our day, something has intensified this natural experience and turned it toxic. It is the illusion that if we find our one true soul mate everything wrong with us will be healed; but that makes the lover into God, and no human being can live up to that." (Keller, 38)

Deep Ambivalence

"According to Genesis 1 and 2, we were made for marriage, and marriage was made for us. Genesis 3 tells us that marriage, along with every other aspect of human life, has been broken because of sin." (Keller, 40)

"If our views of marriage are too romantic and idealistic, we underestimate the influence of sin on human life. If they are too pessimistic and cynical, we misunderstand marriage's divine origin." (Keller, 40)

The Great Secret

"In short, the "secret" is not simply the fact of marriage per se. It is the message that what husbands should do for their wives is what Jesus did to bring us into union with himself. And what was that? Jesus gave himself up for us." (Keller, 41)

"Jesus the Son, though equal with the Father, gave up his glory and took on our human nature." (Keller, 41)

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:5-8)

"He gave up his glory and power and became a servant. He died to his own interests and looked to our needs and interests instead. (Keller, 41-42)

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself, but as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." (Romans 15:1-3)



No False Choices

"Is the purpose of marriage to deny your interests for the good of the family, or is it rather to assert your interests for the fulfillment of yourself? The Christian teaching does not offer a choice between fulfillment and sacrifice but rather mutual fulfillment through mutual sacrifice." (Keller, 43)

Talk and Reflect: Think of a time you gave up something that made a friendship or relationship stronger as a result?

"There then, is the message of this book—that through marriage, "the mystery of the gospel is unveiled." Marriage is a major vehicle for the gospel's remaking of your heart from the inside out and your life from the ground up." (Keller, 44)

Talk and Reflect: Based on what we've learned today, (Take another look at the Scripture verses!) what is a new or meaningful way you understand what Jesus has done for you?

"The hard times of marriage drive us to experience more of this transforming love of God. But a good marriage will also be a place where we experience more of this kind of transforming love at a human level." (Keller, 44-45)

Talk and Reflect: As you experience hardships or joys in a relationship, how can those experiences help you learn more about God and his love for you?

Closing Reflection:

What is something new you have learned about marriage today? How has your view of marriage been impacted or changed?

What is one way today's lesson/discussion can help you be a better spouse, friend, or family member?

THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

