

Sunday, March 26, 2017

## "The Mission of Marriage" (Part 2)

THE MEANING  
OF MARRIAGE

### The Great Horizon: God's Chisel

Have you ever seen this kind of love modeled in your earthly relationships?

If so, where? When?

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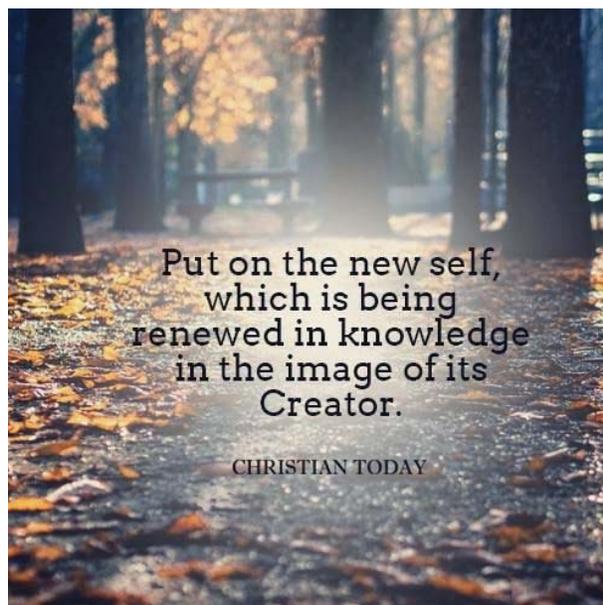
### A Message for Our Culture

"Your spouse has got to be your best friend, or be on the way to becoming your best friend, or you won't have a strong, rich marriage that endures and that makes you both vastly better persons for having been in it."

"Screen first for friendship. Look for someone who understands you better than you do yourself, who makes you a better person just by being around them. And then explore whether that friendship could become romance and a marriage."

### The Priority of Marriage

"Your marriage must be more important to you than anything else. No other human being should get more of your love, energy, industry, and commitment than your spouse. God asks that a man leave his father and mother, as powerful as that relationship may have been, to forge a new union that must be an even more important and powerful force in his life."



1. Coming home exhausted for yet another time, Brian notices his wife, Samantha, trying to distance herself from him. For a while, she had been a great source of relaxation for him – listening to him vent about the demanding people and long overtime hours he has to endure on the job nearly every week. But now, it seems that home is hardly a place for him to rest. Samantha frequently brings up many things around the house that she needs Brian to do... and is also discouraged by the lack of time and energy Brian has given exclusively to her. Neither seems to put much effort any more in using a joyful tone in their conversations, and both are beginning to wonder whether the other really cares any more.

What is the misplaced priority in this case study? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the consequence? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Kayla and Sean have been married for a few months now and both work outside the home. Driving home from work one hot August day, Kayla's tire pressure light comes on, and her car begins to feel shaky. She pulls over to the side of the road and discovers a flat tire. It occurs to her that she has never encountered this problem before, so she calls her dad for advice. He talks her through the process, and she manages to switch the flat tire for the spare in her trunk and continue on her way back home. Later that day, Sean also arrives at the house and notices the spare tire. During their dinner conversation, Sean expresses his thankfulness that Kayla is alright but also feels hurt and disrespected that she didn't call him for help.

What is the misplaced priority in this case study? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the consequence? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Austin and Travis have known each other since childhood, way before either of them got married. Spending another Saturday morning out on the boat, their conversation follows a familiar pattern. Travis brings up again how frustrating it is when his wife, Megan, just can't let him do what he wants. She keeps asking him to at least let her know a couple days before he plans "these little fishing trips" so that they can make sure the kids will have a ride their practices, which often happen at the same time. Austin laughs at the whole thing and remarks, "Travis, you're so whipped. I can hardly believe how controlling Megan is of your time. She should seriously lighten up."

What is the misplaced priority in this case study? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the consequence? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Ethan and April have three children (15, 12, and 8) who are all very active. April serves on the parents' association at school, is the team mom for their youngest child's soccer team, and always packs a nutritious lunch for all three of her kids. Ethan coaches a club team for their oldest child, and he "coaches from the sideline" for the other two who aren't quite old enough yet to play in that same league. One day, the eight-year-old comes home with a note from the teacher describing an incident in which the child was caught bullying a classmate. Ethan wants to contact the teacher to figure out the best punishment to teach his kid a lesson, but April is vocally appalled that he would consider this accusation against her little angel to be even partially true.

What is the misplaced priority in this case study? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the consequence? \_\_\_\_\_



## Pseudo-Spouses

"You have failed to leave your parents if you are more driven by their wishes and expectations than by your spouse's. But you can also fail to leave your parents if you resent or hate them too much."

Quoting a counselor, "The best way for you to be a great mother to your daughter is by being a great wife to your husband. That is the main thing your daughter needs from you."

### Journal/Personal Reflection

If you are married, what are the most likely things in your life to slip into that "pseudo-spouse" seat, and why do they present such a threat to your marriage?

If you are not married and want to be, what priorities in your life do you expect will have to change to keep them from turning into pseudo-spouses?

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## The Power of Marriage

"Marriage is so much like salvation and our relationship with Christ that Paul says you can't understand marriage without looking at the gospel."

"...the key to giving marriage that kind of priority is spiritual friendship."

"[Spiritual friendship] is eagerly helping one another know, serve, love, and resemble God in deeper and deeper ways."

"When Jesus's love, wisdom, and greatness are formed in us, each with our own unique gifts and callings, we become our 'true selves,' the persons we were created to be."

"If you come to understand what holiness is, you come to see that real happiness is on the far side of holiness, not the near side. Holiness gives us new desires and brings old desires into line with one another. So if we want to be happy in marriage, we will accept that marriage is designed to make us holy."



The idea of the great horizon is an important part of this chapter. Now is a chance to begin building a hope-filled, Jesus centered vision into your marriage. Kathy (Keller's wife) used the idea of thinking of your spouse as an unfinished piece of stone that still needs chiseling in order to become the final work of art. She made the important observation that chiseling is always constructive, not destructive.

In this marriage plan you are going to write out a profile for who you see God making your spouse into—a specific description of their great horizon.

Answer the following questions about your spouse and then have a conversation with him/her this week about what you wrote:

1. I see the love of Jesus on display in your life when you \_\_\_\_\_

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(This is where you see the gospel alive and at work in your spouse.)

2. God has clearly gifted you in \_\_\_\_\_

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(This is where you see your spouse really flourishing.)

3. As believers, we are promised a future glory—freedom from all of our sins and agonies—when we encounter Jesus face to face. What particular kind of unbridled redemption, and freedom do you envision for your spouse?

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