

# 10. Gospel Shaped Lifestyle

## *Worship God, Not Marriage*

1. Intro
  - a. Above reproach, concerned w/ character, integrity
    - i. We see a person's true character displayed clearly in their relationships
  - b. Makes logical sense, then, to see that the first thing Paul addresses is marriage
    - i. Church leaders should be tested in various circles of life
    - ii. A leader of the church who doesn't lead his family is disqualified
  - c. So for leaders or potential leaders: This is a reality check
  - d. For all of us: this is something to aspire to
    - i. Christianity isn't about what we look like in public (moralism)
    - ii. It's about a heart transplant that transforms us from the inside out
  - e. **A gospel shaped lifestyle is prescribed for all, but must describe our leadership.**
2. This week: Husband of one wife
  - a. This phrase is used only four times in the NT...
    - i. *Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, (1 Timothy 3:2 ESV)*
    - ii. *Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. (1 Timothy 3:12 ESV)*
    - iii. *Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, (1 Timothy 5:9 ESV)*
    - iv. *[Elders should be] above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. (Titus 1:6 ESV)*
  - b. Difficult to interpret → literally: "one wife/woman husband/man"
3. Elders must be a 'one woman man' → What does that mean?
  - a. Option 1: Elders must be married
    - i. Problem: This interpretation directly contradicts 1 Corinthians 7
  - b. Option 2: Paul is addressing polygamists
    - i. Problem: True DQ, but 1 Tim 5:9 regarding "wife of one husband" makes this interpretation nearly impossible (polyandry was abhorred and absent)
  - c. Option 3: Elders may only marry once in a lifetime (divorce or widowed is DQ)
    - i. Ex: guy losing job after wife passing and getting remarried
    - ii. Scripture interprets scripture
    - iii. "Nowhere else in the New Testament is there even the slightest trace of any ordinance against second marriages [for the widowed]." J.E. Huther
      1. Paul even encourages widows to remarry in 1 Tim 5
    - iv. Paul could be prohibiting remarriage following divorce, but this creates more problems than it solves... ex: pagans coming to faith in NT

- v. In 1 Tim 3, **Paul is dealing with PRESENT character**
  - 1. Not during a time when you weren't walking w/ Christ, or your spouse wasn't walking w/ Christ, stumbled, past sins, etc
  - 2. E.G. "Well, pastor, I had an affair two decades ago. Am I DQ?"
  - 3. After all, this is the Gospel!!!
- vi. Now, if you are on your third marriage, might you be DQ? Depends...
- vii. Regarding divorce, the Bible is clear → God "hates" divorce (his words...)
- viii. There are specific situations when divorce seems permissible in the Bible
  - 1. Sexual sin (The Gospel can bring a destroyed marriage back to life and it is beautiful and glorious when it happens)
  - 2. Unbelieving spouse leaves; (Win them w/ your love and prayers)
- ix. This topic could be a book, but I personally reject the interpretation that remarriage disqualifies a person from eldership (though it could / ad hoc)
- d. What I think it means: **Elders must be maritally and sexually above reproach**
  - i. *"The point is not [necessarily] how often one can be married... but rather how one conducts himself in his marriage."* - Philip H. Towner
  - ii. Negatively, this prohibits all questionable sexual activity...
  - iii. Positively, it means that elders are emotionally/sexually pure, faithful and above reproach within married life
  - iv. Elder loves his wife, honors, respects, leads, provides for, protects, defends, prays for, serves his wife
- 4. Why is it important to have a godly marriage?
  - a. **A healthy marriage accurately depicts the Gospel and glorifies God.**
  - b. Speaking of marriage, Paul writes: *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:32)*
  - c. This is one of the purposes of marriage → to fulfill God's mission
    - i. Marriage isn't eternal, but what you do together in this life is
    - ii. God gives you a spouse to glorify Himself... (ever think about that?)
  - d. Marriage is primarily about being on mission together, glorifying God together, loving one another for the glory of Christ...
  - e. This happens, in part, when husbands and wives submit to one another
    - i. Husbands submit like Christ → sacrificial, loving, strong/tender leadership
    - ii. Wives submit like the church submits to Christ → intelligent, gracious, trusting, respectful
    - iii. In marriage, **Mutual submission is the best decision**
    - iv. Count the other as more important than you
    - v. "They are so lucky to have me" = problem
  - f. **When you love your spouse more than you love yourself, you paint a beautiful picture of the love that Christ has for the church.**
    - i. When you don't behave like this, however, you undermine the Gospel
    - ii. Men: Domineering leadership, abuse, belittling when no one's around is NOT submitting like Christ. His kindness leads us to repentance
      - 1. Neither is spineless, weak-willed leadership, by the way

- iii. Wives: Nagging, gossiping, throwing under the bus, controlling, manipulating is not submitting like the church
    - iv. When we love one another the way Christ loves us, however, we reflect the Gospel in a beautiful way
  - g. This is important for our elders and for all of us b/c **A healthy marriage accurately depicts the Gospel.**
- 5. How do you do it?
  - a. In your flesh, you can't. A healthy marriage is a supernatural work of the Gospel
  - b. *By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. (1 John 3:16 ESV)*
    - i. How much more for your spouse, your family
  - c. The point is this - without Christ, the truest form of love - do we really even know what selfless love is?
  - d. To put it another way: our marriage problems aren't marriage problems - they're God problems. (sin, selfishness, lack of understanding of the Gospel, lost)
  - e. So, how do you grow in your love? How do you love your spouse?
  - f. **Worship God, not marriage.**
    - i. You can't be the spouse that the Bible wants you to be
    - ii. You can't live the life God wants you to live, but God in/through you can
    - iii. How can you be a better spouse? Be shaped by the Gospel.
  - g. **Love your spouse more by loving your spouse less than God.**
    - i. Stare at Jesus and everything else fades away → how to defeat sin
    - ii. Marriage isn't primarily about marriage, it's about God → all of life
  - h. Draw closer to Christ and...
    - i. Your love will change, Your patience, Your controlling spirit, Your leadership, Your cares, Your fears, Your hopes and dreams for the future will change, what you live for (marriage vs. mission) will change
    - ii. **Draw closer to Christ and YOU will change.** God at work in you will mold you into a different person.
    - iii. **Draw closer to Christ as a couple and your marriage will change**
    - iv. Draw close to God and your marriage will become the marriage it is supposed to be → a tool to bring glory to Christ, co-laboring together
  - i. **A healthy marriage accurately depicts the Gospel.**
  - j. So **Worship God, not marriage.** → That's how to have a "successful" marriage, how to make a difference, how to make your marriage count now and forever
    - i. Draw closer to Christ individually.
    - ii. Draw closer to Christ together.