

Introduction to Marriage for Teenagers

(appropriate for High Schoolers or older)

Michael R. Daily 1/30/06 (60 minutes)

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Tonight we are going to talk about marriage. Since you all are not married yet I want you to take this study and put it in your hip pocket. A few years from now when it looks like you might get engaged soon, take it out and refresh your memory – perhaps it will help you make the right decision on who to marry.

In America for every 100 first marriages (statistics on 2nd marriages are worse):

20 will be successful and happy

30 will be somewhat disappointing to the members but they will stay married

50 will become so painful that the couple will destroy the marriage through divorce.

Statistically speaking your chances of having a happy, successful marriage are about 1 out of 5, all else being equal – being Christians not longer seems to make a difference statistically.

Why so much failure?

1) The actions needed for success are counter-intuitive. They are not obvious or natural – because men and women are dramatically different from each other. This is why “marriage is hard work”.

2) Lack of an eternal perspective without which marriage appears to cost more than it provides.

3) Misunderstanding of what marriage fundamentally is.

It is not a happiness delivery system (we just proved that using statistics),

It is not a 50-50 partnership (we'll explain why later).

Key Point #1 - Marriage is you falling to the ground and dying (development of a Godly Faith and a Christlike Character)

John 12:24-26

²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. ²⁶If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

This issue came up with the disciples. When Jesus had finished explaining God's expectations for marriage what was their response?

Matthew 19:10

¹⁰The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."

Why is it not a 50-50 partnership?

Marriage is hard work. Imagine that the work of marriage is like you lifting weights. Day in and day out week after week year after year you and your spouse are doing the work of marriage – you are both lifting those weights. The problem is you can see your spouse lifting their weight but you can't feel what it is like for them – but you can feel what it is like for you. Also, you are clothed in sinful flesh which is going to make you feel that you are doing most of the lifting in the marriage and making most of the sacrifices. If you have a 50-50 marriage you will start to feel that you are doing more than your spouse is and you will feel that that is not fair. Eventually you will slack off a little out of a sense of fairness. At the same time your spouse thinks that they are the one doing most of the work and making the bigger sacrifices for the marriage. When they see you slack off they will be upset because they were already doing most of the work and now you are slacking off even more! Since your marriage is 50-50 they will either nag you to do more or they will slack off more. Your marriage will then begin a death spiral where each of you tries less and less until the marriage dies.

Key Point #2 - In your marriage much of the time you will feel that you are making more sacrifices than your spouse and you need to be OK with that, looking to God's reward.

How? The Eternal Perspective is Critical

Colossians 3: 18, 19, 23, 24

¹⁸Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them..... ²³Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Sometimes I take my family to Furr's Cafeteria. We get our trays of food and find a table and we unload our trays and someone has to take the trays to the tray stand. Sometimes one of the kids will volunteer but sometimes they don't. But I will do it because "I want the rewards". Does God reward taking the trays? Yes, He does.

Revelation 22:12, 13

¹²Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Hebrews 11:24-26

²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

Fulfilling our responsibilities in marriage is not about how we feel about our spouse or what they do or don't do. We do these things not to please our spouse or to get something in return from them (because you may not) but because we love God and we know that he will richly reward in heaven any service and sacrifice we make out of devotion to him. Because of that we can cheerfully serve our spouse without becoming bitter.

Red Flag - When someone says that they would do what they are supposed to "if only my spouse would do what they are supposed to" they are on a fast track to divorce.

Its not about your spouse – Its about you falling to the ground and dying. Its about your obedience to God and the reward He has for you.

1 Peter 3:1-2

¹In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ²as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

Ladies, does your dirty rotten husband deserve your submission and respect? Absolutely not – and he never will. The only reason a wife submits to and respects her husband is because she loves Jesus Christ, is committed to obeying Him, and is looking to the reward she will receive from him someday – it has nothing to do with him.

The other thing you need to realize is that the submission of wives, unlike the obedience of children, is not enforceable. If a wife chooses to rebel against God and not submit to her husband the only thing the husband is allowed to do is love her sacrificially. In other words he is stuck.

Actions Required for Success in Marriage are Counter-Intuitive

One of the biggest felt needs that wives have is for emotional intimacy. Wives' felt need for emotional intimacy in terms of frequency and importance is significantly higher than it is for husbands. The 50-50 marriage says that you compromise and make both people equally miserable. God's plan is for husbands to view this as an opportunity to serve their wives in this area – it will take work.

Husbands have a different felt need that follows a similar pattern to emotional intimacy for their wives. Does anyone know what it is? Physical intimacy. Husband's felt need for physical intimacy in terms of frequency and importance is significantly higher than it is for wives. God's plan is for wives to view this as an opportunity to serve their husbands in this area – it will take work.

Key Point #3: emotional intimacy for women is relationally equivalent to physical intimacy for men.

This is good because it gives us a way to generate empathy for our spouse.

Emotional Intimacy

1 Peter 3:7, 8

⁷You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. ⁸To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

Examples:

Guys, when you get married you are going to marry a very beautiful woman. And you may think to yourself, boy my wife is really hot! And you may go ahead and tell her that. Hon, you know you are really hot. You are really well built. Your wife may say something like – thanks hon, so I'm hot and well-built –kind of like a car, Huh?

It would be better if you translated into the language of emotional intimacy. This is not easy for us men but it is vitally important to your wife and your marriage. So, instead you might say something like, Hon, can I talk to you for a minute? Sit down, hold her hand, look into her eyes and say,

"You are the most beautiful woman in the world, you are the love of my life, you are everything I ever wanted in a woman, I love you with all of my heart and I cannot live without you!"

Another example is you come home from work and your wife wants to talk about her day and how things went and who said what to her and the problems she ran into. Most men will naturally respond by wanting to solve the problem. They might say, "OK, I see the problem, do this, do this, and then do this. Do those 3 things and your problem will be solved". Is that what she wants?

It might be better to say." Oh you poor thing – It must have really hurt your feelings when that person said that to you – come here and give me a big hug!"

This is something that you will have to work at every day to keep your marriage on track.

Physical Intimacy

Physical intimacy inside of marriage makes men feel loved. But let's be clear – outside of marriage it does not make men feel loved – it provides a cheap thrill followed by shame and humiliation (assuming the man has a conscience).

Its important to remember that men can wait for marriage – it is not only God's will but it is also not that difficult. But the reason, ladies, that men can wait for marriage it because they have you to look forward to. In fact, your spouse is alive on the Earth right now. They don't know your name or what you look like but they are thinking about you and they are looking forward to the day when they will marry you. And if they are smart they are praying for you. And that is something you can do for them – pray for their spiritual growth, their sexual purity, and that God would bring you together at the right time.

Keep in mind that fidelity in marriage does not start when you get married – it starts right now. Whatever you are doing to that girl you are doing to someone's future wife. Do you want someone doing that to your future wife?

Guys, you are going to see a number of women in the world who present themselves in a highly sexualized way. They wear tight, skimpy clothes and low cut shirts and some of them are going to see you and think you are cute and kind of a nice guy (because you are) and they are going to smile at you and talk to you and be nice to you. At some point you might be tempted to think the following: You can tell by the way she dresses and presents herself that sex must be very important to her – more so than for other women. It is clearly something she is comfortable with and highly values." You might think, "She doesn't know much about the Bible and she probably isn't even a Christian but I bet being married to someone like that would be a lot of fun!" The truth is a woman that presents herself in public in a highly sexualized way is not any more sensual than any other woman. The reason she does it is because she has learned that she can use sex to manipulate and control other people- particularly men – in order to get things she wants. If you marry her she will do the same thing to you. If you marry her you will not get more and better sex – instead you will get a wife that will use sex to manipulate and control you in order to get what she wants. You will be miserable and then you will be divorced. You don't want that. What you want is to marry a woman who will cooperate with God's plan for sex in marriage.

So, let's turn to Proverbs 5 to see what the plan is.

Proverbs 5:18-20

¹⁸Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth. ¹⁹As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love. ²⁰For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress And embrace the bosom of a foreigner?

Girls, the words for satisfy and exhilarated as used in verse 19 are not referring to emotional satisfaction or exhilaration – they are referring to physical satisfaction and exhilaration.

Look at the words "at all times". How often is at all times? Look at the word always. How often is always? Does God exaggerate? No.

Now, guys, you need to know that non-christian women (no matter how sexualized they present themselves) are not going to go along with this. Carnal Christian women also will not. Immature Christian women also will not. There is only one type of woman in existence that will cooperate with this plan – a mature, godly Christian woman whose top priority in life is obedience to the Word of God at all costs.

Girls, keep in mind that there are also some Casanovas out there who have learned to talk romantically to girls in order to manipulate and control them in order to get what they want. Even though the romance is fun you need to look at where he spends his time and money and who he is currently sacrificing for before you commit to him or you may also find marriage to him to be disappointing.

Men are to Sacrifice for their Wives

Ephesians 5:25-29

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

There are 2 big areas of sacrifice that we need to discuss

- 1) Money
- 2) Career

Money

Wives and children burn through enormous amounts of money. It is no big deal for you to live in an apartment as a single man but wives and children like to have houses with yards to play in. By the time you are ready to buy your first home the price of a modest home will be around a quarter of a million dollars! And we won't even talk about braces and college! The truth is that if I had never had a wife and children and also did not chase women – I would have enough money in the bank that I could travel anywhere in the world, I could have any experience in life I wanted, and I could drive around town in any car I wanted (Corvette, Porche Turbo, Lamborgini, etc). I work with people my age who have never been married and have no children and they actually do live like this. But because I have a wife and children I drive around town in a Toyota Corolla and I struggle to pay the bills. I will also have to work many more years before I can retire than I otherwise would have to. Now, it is definitely worth it – I wouldn't trade it for anything – but it is a real sacrifice you will have to make – all your money!

Career

Most men like getting bigger raises and getting promoted quicker than their peers. It appeals to a man's fundamental need to be respected. But the World system provides a false respect that can trap a man and damage his marriage. Your family is not there to support your career – your job is there to support your family – don't make the mistake of reversing that by working excessive hours or traveling too much.

In most American companies who are the people who get promoted the fastest and make the biggest money? It is the top performers in Marketing, Sales, and Finance. Why? Because they are the ones who make the sales and generate income for the company. Everyone else is considered an expense. Even in a research and development organization the engineers who land the big projects and bring in the big money are the ones who get the biggest rewards. Now here's the problem – companies don't buy, individuals buy. In other words face-to-face interactions are essential to successful results. What does this mean these people are going to have to do? Travel a lot. Because most of the customers don't live in your city.

But if you travel a lot you pay a big price. I drive David to school most days – we get something to eat and we read the Bible and pray together. If I was traveling all the time I could not do that and that is infinitely more important than promotions and raises. If I traveled all the time I could not be a leader or bible teacher with teenagers. – but what we do here is far more important than anything I could do in my career. Its also difficult to have intimacy with your spouse if you are not there.

So, men will have to hold themselves back and let others pass them by for the sake of their families. It turns out that I am good at marketing and sales – in fact I am an instructor in my company's Advanced Sales Training Program to train managers and engineers how to sell. But I rarely travel. To limit my travel and work hours I set things up so that I train lots of people in how to sell effectively and then we sell to people who come to us. So, we have fewer clients but we are more effective with them. So, we don't have to travel so much.

But what happens over time is some of the people I train don't mind traveling. They leave their wives and children home and travel every week and it does not bother them. And what happens? They become successful. Then they come and talk to me and they say, "Ha, Ha, I used to work for you and now look at me, I am more successful than you, Ha Ha – and I need to be OK with that. Sometimes I think, "Son, if I wanted to I could mop the floor with you". But I don't say that, I say, "well, I have a life" and they usually respond, "Yeah, I have no life".

Years ago I was talking to another manager. This guy is a driven, workaholic, traveling, madman and I asked him what he really thought of me. He said, "You and I are a lot alike, we are both empire builders, but there is something holding you back". He's right, there is something holding me back.

I am not going to sacrifice my family for my career and the things we do here at church are far more important than anything I do at work, and that's the truth.

It even happens with Pastors – I was at one of my kids events years ago and I was talking to one of the other fathers and I asked him what he did. He was a pastor at a conservative evangelical church. I said that was great and asked him how long he had been there. He said, "Don't you want to know when I am going to get a real job? Don't you want to know what it is like to only work one day a week on Sunday?"

The pressure of the World system constantly presses men to sacrifice their families for their career and for the false respect of others.

Ladies, If Husbands don't get respect at home they are open to the temptation of working for the false respect of the World System. If your husband starts working excessive hours and travels too much you might want to think about this.

Women are to Respect their Husbands

1 Peter 3:1-2

¹In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ²as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

Ephesians 5:22,33

²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ³³Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

There are 2 big areas of respect that we need to discuss

- 3) Serving without Words
- 4) Controlling the Tongue

Serving without Words

A woman who cheerfully, consistently, and voluntarily serves her husband is one of the most powerful tools God has.

Example: My wife and I were at a picnic with another Christian couple. My wife disappeared for a few minutes. As I continued to talk to the other couple my wife returned, sat a glass of soda in front of me and disappeared again without saying a word. The other couple looked at the Coke, then each other, and the other wife said to her husband – "I'm not serving you". This was a lost opportunity.

A servant wife is going to be attacked by Satan. He will try to make you feel that you are being a sap and that it is unfair. Other women may be hostile to you. Maybe you are making them look bad.

But a woman who cheerfully and voluntarily serves her husband melts his heart. Other men who see it are stunned – they would kill for a wife like that and want to know what is going on. If they are non-christian men they will begin digging to find out how you got such an amazing wife and they will soon hear the gospel.

Serving without words is important because as soon as you say something you draw attention to yourself instead of your service and its power is diminished.

The power of a servant wife is orders of magnitude greater than you realize. In my opinion it is the single most power tool there is for bringing men into the kingdom of God.

Controlling the Tongue

Although encouraging words are nice, men will respond to physical intimacy and service much better as long as they are not attacked verbally. Criticism, nagging, belittling, name calling or talking to your husband like he is a child are as negatively powerful as service is positive. You will destroy your marriage if you cannot control your tongue.

I Peter 3:4-6

⁴but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. ⁵For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; ⁶just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

I Peter 3:8-10

⁸To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. ¹⁰For, "THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Introduction to Marriage for Teenagers*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 12:24-26, Matthew 19:1-10*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Colossians 3:18-24, Revelation 22:12-13, Hebrews 11:24-26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *1 Peter 3:1-10*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Introduction to Marriage for Teenagers*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 5:18-20, I Corinthians 7:1-5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 5:22-33*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Malachi 2:13-16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?