

The Two Becoming One

SGC Marriage Seminar

Session 2: Love in the Face of Sin, Weakness, and Uniqueness

Marriage seems to specialize, at times, in radically de-emphasizing the similarities between the partners and wildly exaggerating the points of difference (especially at the superficial level of personality or temperament)...It is so that a couple may be reduced to sheer amazement that they are together at all, and that they may know that what has brought them together and what keeps them together is something entirely outside of themselves, something not natural but supernatural, something which they themselves cannot control or produce at will. It is so that they may come to know God, the One Who is supremely other, but to Whom nevertheless all people are profoundly related and bound in love.

- Mike Mason, The Mystery of Marriage, 28, 29

Introduction

- A. 1 Cor. 12:31; 16:14; 13:1-3, 8-13
 1. 12:31
 - a. "Love" is called the "way" that is "still more excellent," though the phrase in other passages can be "beyond measure."
 - b. In other words, "spiritual gifts" are wonderful, but nothing compared to love.
 2. 16:14
 - a. "Love" is the distinctive that we are to bring to "all things" in our lives. "Love" and the Christian life are to be connected at every moment and in every part of our lives.
 - b. It is to be a distinctive of our relationships, of our words, of our thoughts, of our obedience, of our worship, of our romance, of our marriage, of our work lives, of...everything. "Let all things be done in love."
 3. 1 Cor. 13:1-3, 8-13.
 - a. 13:1 – not enough to say the write things. We need to love our spouse.
 - b. 13:2 – not enough to be really spiritual in our home groups or on Sunday mornings or with our friends. Without love, "I am nothing."
 - c. 13:3 – not enough to do all kinds of sacrificial acts for yourself. Without love you "gain nothing."
 - d. 13:8-13 – love will endure beyond the grave. That is why it is more precious than spiritual gifts, greater even than faith and hope (things which evaporate when what is believed in and hoped in is actually possessed).

4. More straight-forwardly still:
 - a. Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives.”
 - b. Titus 2:4, “Train the young women to love their husbands.”
 5. Above all things, love your spouse.
- B. Marriage is not engagement.
1. Why is marital love harder?
 2. Because it gets tested by three things from our spouse: *sin*, *weakness*, and *uniqueness*.

II. Love in the Face of Sin...Means Forgiveness (and Truth)

- A. 1 Cor. 13:5, Love “keeps no record of wrongs”
1. ESV has the much less effective “Love is...not...resentful.”
 2. “Wrongs” (*to kakon*) in Romans 12:17, “Repay no one evil for evil, but give through to do what is honorable in the sight of all.”
 3. Romans 13:10, “Love does no wrong (*kakon*) to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
 4. These are the wrongs/evils we are not to “count” or “consider.”
 5. “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:19)
- B. Example
- C. How?
1. See their sin proportionate to your own (unforgiving servant of Matt. 18:21-35) – Man was forgiven 10,000 talents (1 million days’ wages), but required of his fellow servant to be jailed because of a debt of 100 denarii (100 days’ wages).
 2. See their sin in light of your own (logs and specks of Matt. 7:3-5) – “First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”
 3. Do not count, but when you do count, remember Jesus saying, “I do not say to you [to forgive] seven times, but seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:22).
- D. What about...?
1. Unrepentant Sin?
 2. Serious Sin?

III. Love in the Face of Weakness...Means Patience

- A. 1 Cor. 13:4, "Love is patient."
1. Patience implies that others are making things difficult for you.
 2. Patience is not required if things are easy.
 3. Of course, sin requires patience at times.
 4. But there's a broader context for patience.
- B. 1 Thessalonians 5:14
1. "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."
 2. This verse has three categories of people.
 3. The "idle"—sinfully lazy (1 Thess. 5:10-12)
 4. The "fainthearted"—Greek word seems to have something to do with its two parts: "little" + "soul" (oligopsuchos).
 5. The "weak"—can be "sick, ill" or simply "weak" as a husband is to "show honor to the woman as the weaker vessel" (1 Pet. 3:7).
 6. These three types of people can be the same person in different seasons, or the same person in different areas of their life.
 7. We have areas where we are idle.
 8. Others where we are fainthearted.
 9. Others where we are simply "weak."
- C. Weakness
1. Weakness is not sin.
 2. It could be physical.
 3. It could be an issue of aptitude.
 4. Just as God gives us gifts and strengths; he also gives us weaknesses.

'For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin' (Hebrews 4:15). Scripture assumes we each have weaknesses, and Christ is aware of and extends mercy toward every single one. He can relate to our struggles and calls us to do the same for our spouses.

-Dave Harvey¹

¹ *When Sinners Say, "I Do,"* 93.

- D. Example
- E. Weaknesses can never be excuses to sin.
 - 1. I am weak in logistics, but I still need to “manage” my household well.
 - 2. I am weak in leaving clothes on the floor, but I need to grow to serve my wife.

IV. Love in the Face of Uniqueness...Means Appreciation

- A. Ps. 139:13-16
 - 1. What is true of you is true of your spouse.
 - 2. Your spouse is...
 - “...knitted together in their mother’s womb”
 - “...fearfully and wonderfully made.”
 - “...made in secret, intricately woven...”
 - “in his book...written, every one of them, the days that were formed for your spouse, when as yet there was none of them.”
 - 3. What is “knitted together”? Hair color, physique, height, DNA, personality (though personality always involves our character), metabolism, hormones, overall health, medical issues, genes from their parents and grandparents and..., different aptitudes, food preferences, temperature preferences, etc. – *What are some others?*
 - 4. What are the “days that were formed”? Their past before Christ, the spirituality of their parents, their journey in different churches as a Christian, their educational background, the skills their parents taught them (or failed to teach them), their birthplace and primary place of their upbringing (or its lack), etc. – *What are some others?*
 - 5. All of these affect the *uniqueness of your spouse*, and almost none of them are related to their sinfulness. Simply uniqueness.
- B. Example
- C. Application: Verse 14: “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”

V. Conclusion

- Prayer time meditation, date night discussion:

- A. Sin – Forgive as you have been forgiven (1 Cor. 13:4-7; Matt. 18:21-35)
 - Are you withholding forgiveness you need to give?
 - Are you failing to deal with repetitive sin that your spouse has forgiven seventy times seven? What is the next step in putting this sin to death?

- B. Weakness – Be patient as Christ himself has sympathized with your weaknesses (1 Cor. 13:4; Heb. 4:14-16)
 - Are you patient with the sincere weaknesses of your spouse?
 - Are you failing to appreciate how Christ sympathizes with your weaknesses?

- C. Uniqueness – Marvel at God's unique creative brilliance (Ps. 139:13-16)
 - Do you regularly thank God for your spouse? For their uniquenesses?
 - Do you laugh at each other's uniqueness? Why or why not?
 - Do you see how the weaknesses of your spouse are custom-designed for you as well?