

I WANT A NEW MARRIAGE

Big Idea

Today we launched a new series of messages on marriage. Marriage is difficult! Our society says that if something is difficult, leave it. This can be a job, a church, a relationship, and a marriage. Pastor Steve says that we make marriage even more difficult with unnecessary complications. How? We expect others, especially our spouse, to meet our expectations even though we may or may not have ever told them what the expectations are! That is a recipe for conflict. We may even have unrealistic expectations of ourselves, causing internal conflict. In spite of all this, most of us want to be married. What are we looking for in a marriage? And what should we do when our marriage gets difficult?

Jesus was asked by religious leaders about marriage, and His response is God's truth about marriage. ***"Haven't you read," Jesus replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."* Matthew 19:4-6** So, is marriage obsolete today? Since God's truth is always true, the answer is NO. We talked about five unnecessary complications that make marriage difficult.

- Unrealistic expectations cause conflict and poor communication
- Imaginary scenarios cause fear, worry, and anxiety
- Approval addiction by seeking self-worth from a spouse instead of God
- Regret and resentment when we bring our past hurts into our current reality
- Toxic secrets that can be as deadly as cancer

Your spouse is NOT your real enemy in a difficult marriage! We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the stronghold of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments according to 2 Corinthians 10:3-4. What can we do? What should we do? Pastor Steve gave us three declarations to make.

1. I need Jesus to heal me. He wants to! He has the cure. Will you take it?
2. I need Jesus to show me my blind spots.
3. I need Jesus to empower me.

Discussion Questions

- What does Jesus say about marriage in Matthew 19:4-6?
- From the five unnecessary complications we bring into marriage, which one is most difficult?
- What does Ezekiel 36:26-27 say the cure is for a difficult marriage?
- Using the three declarations, write down a prayer, and pray that prayer this week.

Prayer Focus

God, please show us any areas in our relationships where we have drifted away from good practices, or allowed unnecessary complications to impact us. Help us to value and appreciate our relationships, and invest in them as we should.

Next Steps

Relationships take work in order to be successful. If we neglect them, we can expect poor results. But if we work at them, we should expect God's blessing. The **Married People event** is this Friday and it's a great way to put some effort into your marriage. It's also a lot of fun!

Leader Tip

Take some time to lead your group in prayer specifically for the relationships in your Group. Ask God to bless your relationships, and to protect against any attacks or temptations. Pray for unity, harmony, love, and lots of fun this semester.