

Prep for Marriage

“Me to We” Series - Elders Conell & Rhonda Hollins
“Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts” – Drs. Les & Leslie Parrott
“The Two Shall Become One Flesh...”
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Top 5 Biggest Life Transitions:

1. Leaving the Nest
2. Falling in Love
3. Single to Married
4. Married to Divorce
5. Married to Family

Of the *Top 5 Biggest Life Transitions* one of the most challenging transitions is missing; **Engagement to Marriage**. Moving from engagement to marriage is one of the biggest life transitions that many couples are not preparing for. Married couples, experience the same lack of depth in training as well; assuming that since they are already married the battle is won. When in all actuality, the test hasn't even started yet. That transition is evolving from Married to One-Flesh. A One-Flesh marriage is understanding that God is the one that put you together and God is the only one that can keep you together.

Mark 10:8 (NKJV) “And the two shall become one flesh”; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh”.

It is vital that engaged and married couples utilize all the tools available in their **tool belt**; for instance, premarital counseling can be a useful tool but most couple refuse the help, thinking they can do it all by themselves.

Hosea 4:6 (KJV) “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of the thy God, I will also forget they children;”

All couples should seek further clarity in becoming One-Flesh, whether engaged or married, continued education is essential to having a happy marriage. “But many still ask, what is being One Flesh? One flesh is understanding the delicate balance of modifying from Me to We. Like most new couples, no one wants to leave too much of **“Me”** behind but many also want to evolve the **“We”** within their marriages. There is no exact science in making unique individuals successful in marriage and certainly not with one cookie cutter response. However, recognizing that God is in control and choosing him to be your guide is the start of a Happy Marriage.

Are you One Flesh or One Individual?

²³ **The man said,
"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman, [d] '**
for she was taken out of man."

However, the Bible; the owner's manual of life; containing 783,137 living words will most certainly guide you along your marital path. However, just like an owner's manual stuffed in the glove compartment of your car...newly engaged couples neglect spiritual maintenance until something is inoperable in their relationship. Why? Often, new couples are so enamored with the idea of marriage, the newness of engagement or the idea of love; that new couples fail to realize that marriage-**real marriage** requires work!

James 2:18-20 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without [a] your works, and I will show you my faith by [b] my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is [c] dead

The Equally Yoked Mandate

2 Corinthians 6:14 "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"

*Why make marriage harder than it should be? Why start off on the wrong foot?
Starting off on the wrong foot is an understatement...*

The Greek meaning of unequally yoked or **Heterozygēō**. (*from héteros, "another of a different kind" zygós, "a yoke, joining two to a single plow"*) – properly, *different kinds of people joined together but unevenly matched*; hence "unequally yoked" (not aptly joined) or **"mismatched"** *attaching or binding yourself to someone in marriage that is running contrary to faith.*

- ***Literally two individuals-running in two different directions at a high rate of speed.***

Adjust, the earlier metaphor of starting off on the wrong foot. Marrying an unbeliever is more like having one broken right foot in a race for your life. Realize that throughout your **marriage race** that a broken right foot is a painful burden; especially the longer you attempt to stand upright, injured-the less likely that right

foot will be able to heal properly, over time it will become infected and will not only hold you back but will contaminate your entire blood stream.

James 3:11-13

” Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.”

Premarital Counseling...

Premarital Counseling is a must in today's society. There is no blue-print for success for marriage but there is a formula according to the word of God.

Matthew 6:33 New King James Version (NKJV)

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- It is naïve to think we innately know how to be married or to parent.
- In the 1930's, 1 of 7 marriages failed. In the 60's, 1 of 4. Now, 1 of 2.
- 49% of all newlywed's report having serious marital problems.
- Most engaged couples prepare more for the wedding than marriage.
 - \$20,000,000 / year wedding industry
 - Average 200 guest wedding costs \$15,000 to \$30,000
 - 1,000,000 bridal magazines sold each month.
 - Few receive pre-marital counseling, fewer than one fifth (1 out of 5 couples) 20% .

11 Benefits of Premarital Counseling...

- **Divorce Prevention**
- **Recognizing Red Flags**
- **Set realistic Expectations**
- **Conflict Resolution** – When predictors of divorce apply to you. Understanding your individual opportunities for growth preemptively to remain proactive (premarital counseling) rather than reactive (divorce counseling).
- **Equipped to Evolve**
- **Define Role / Debunk Myths of Marriage**
- **Establish Deal-Breakers**
- **Determine Non-Negotiables**
- **Create Communication Covenants**
- **Kingdom Counsel**
- **Build Your Marital Empire**

Dr. Les & Leslie Parrott – Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts:

What is the basis of your relationship? Why are you together? Establish your foundation and build your marital empire on the truth and not fantasy.

III. How to Predict a Happy Marriage

- Over the last 3 decades, there has been much research into the ingredients of a happy marriage. As a result, we know more about building a successful marriage than ever before. Les and Leslie Parrott, Gary Smalley, SmartMarriages, etc.
- Seven indicators:
 1. Healthy expectations of marriage
 2. An accurate and realistic concept of love (1 Corinthians 13)
 3. A positive attitude and outlook toward life
 4. The ability to communicate their feelings
 5. An understanding and acceptance of each other and gender differences
(Personality Types: Choleric, Sanguine, Melancholy, Phlegmatic)
 6. The ability to make decisions and settle arguments
 7. A common spiritual foundation and goal
- Living in a successful marriage is less than a mystery & more about learning certain life skills.
- *Many couples wrongly blame in-laws, each other, money, sexual issues, but generally the hot points in marriage usually stem from poor communication, gender/personality issues, and lack of spiritual health (unwillingness to forgive, etc.).*

IV. Have You Faced the Myths of Marriage with Honesty?

Myth 1: If I just find the right soul-mate, I will live happily ever after without ever being challenged.

Myth 2: I can discover whether my fiancé and I are compatible by living together before marriage.

Myth 3: Families of origin don't make any difference when you're really in love.

Myth 4: We expect exactly the same things from marriage.

Do you have a clear picture of what life together will be like? Have you discussed it in practical detail? How have your ideas of married life been formed?

A. **Unspoken Rules** (who will cook, clean, take out garbage, shop, etc....)

What unspoken rules might you have inherited from your family of origin?

Examples:

- Don't interrupt another's work
- Don't talk about money in public
- Don't express anger
- Don't work too long
- Leaving clothes all over is not OK
- Tip big or don't tip
- Boundary issues with the opposite sex

B. Unconscious Roles

- Just as an actor in a play follows a script, married couples fall into unconscious roles, almost involuntarily, inherited usually from parents, but also personal dispositions.

Examples:

- The planner
- The boss
- The navigator
- The shopper
- The cook
- The comedian
- The fixit person
- The cleaner

What roles might you follow? Make your roles conscious!!

Myth 5: Everything good in our relationship will get better.

- Many things improve in relationships, but some things become more difficult.
- Every successful marriage requires necessary losses.
- In choosing to marry, you inevitably go through a mourning process.

What are three things you will have to give up when you marry?

Examples:

- Childhood
- Parents
- Freedom and carefree lifestyle
- Idealized image you have of your partner
 - We want to see our partner at their best
 - We don't consider they might get fat or irritable

“No matter whom we fall in love with, we sooner or later fall out of love if the relationship continues long enough. The honeymoon always ends, the bloom of romance always fades.” - Dr. Scott Peck

- Romantic love is actually chemistry in the brain and blood which is measurable.
- Has a half-life of about 3 months.
- Thus the essence of married love is covenant and affection, not romance.
- No human being can fulfill your idealized dreams.
- BUT: disenchantment enables you to move into deeper intimacy.

Myth 6: Everything bad or difficult in my life will disappear.

- This myth has been handed down through countless generations, especially in movies such as Cinderella.
- Deep down, we all long to meet a Prince Charming or Cinderella and make all the hurt go away.
- No matter how glorious is marriage, it is no substitute for inner spiritual healing and transformation.
- Marriage does not erase personal pain or eliminate loneliness. Why? Because people get married primarily to further their own well-being, not to take care of their partner's needs.
- The bad feelings and traits you carried around before marriage are still with you as you leave the wedding chapel.
- Marriage therapy vs marriage as therapy. Three Colorado psychologists discovered that many growing up in dysfunctional homes (alcoholic, abusive, etc.) healed themselves through marriage.
- Harvell Hendrix, *Getting the Love You Want*, explains that a healthy marriage becomes a place to wrap up unfinished business from childhood.

Myth 7: My spouse will make me whole.

Prov 27:17 - Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

- Growth will occur from marriage, but not wholeness. Wholeness comes from God.
- Marriage is where the rubber meets the road of Christianity.
- Mr. or Ms. Right – marrying the wrong person? Growing in relationship.
- Enmeshed relationships – dependent on the partner. Coupled with low self-esteem, feelings of inferiority, easily controlled by partner. Want to suck happiness out of their partner, rather than personal growth.
- Opposite problem is the disengaged relationship. Living together under same roof.
- Healthy marriage is not mutual dependence, but shared life together.