



The following notes are from a sermon by Pastor Wayne Flowers preached at Smythe Street Cathedral on Sunday June 10th, 2018

Marriage – Racing to the Back of the Line Sunday June 10th, 2018

We have been doing a series called “All in the Family”
So far...Mothers, Seniors, Parents, Singles.

Today the topic is **Marriage**.

The Subtitle is: **“Racing to the Back of the Line”**

I will not explain what that means right now.

Materials that I have found helpful...will be in the notes online (ssc.church)

Books: (Written and Audio – I counted over 2 dozen)

- The Meaning of Marriage by Timothy Keller
- Sacred Marriage and A Lifelong Love by Gary Chapman

Podcasts:

- North Point Community Church (Andy Stanley) “What Happy Couples Know”
- Love and Respect Podcast by Emmerson Eggerichs
- Focus on the Family Marriage Podcast

What is the “place at the table” for married couples?

Explanation...

I will make **one qualifying statement**...(to modify a statement by restating it and including the specific conditions that make the meaning less strong or less general)

Today I want to **elevate marriage**. I want to declare it’s value.

There are people who have lived through or are living in a failed marriage.

I do not wish to isolate or marginalize you.

The church needs to be a safe place for you!!

* Someone needs to hear the words “it’s not your fault.”

“There is not something wrong with you.”

What is the “place at the table” for married couples?

1. Vibrant marriages bring strength to a church family/community!

- See you worshipping, praying, serving together.
- Ministry involvement considers the impact on their marriage.

2. Healthy marriages model Christian character. (forgiveness, patience, kindness)

3. Marriage points to the relationship between Christ and the church.

- A prophetic sign of God's love for the church and the world.

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Eph. 5:30-33

After several weeks of listening and reading...I have two points to share.

1. A vibrant marriage requires intentional effort from both spouses.

That does not sound romantic. It seem counter-intuitive.

If you really love someone, shouldn't it be easy?

Falling in love is beautiful. * Did not have to be that intentional!

I hope you still fall for your spouse.

But sometimes infatuation was ruling the heart. (intense, but short-lived)

It is not the person you are falling in love with. It is the ideal and the concept.

To be loved and not known is shallow and fleeting.

To be known and not loved is our greatest fear.

To be known and loved is our greatest joy.

Physical beauty, feelings of infatuation, sexual chemistry...

- Cannot be sustained.

- Are not the right foundation for true love.

- Will most certainly fade.

In regard to sexual attraction and activity...Three stages of marriage?

Tri-weekly, try weekly and try weakly!

Mature love – which is the best kind of love – is intentional about:

- being self sacrificing.

- being kind.

- listening well.

- encouraging and edifying.

Speaking of growing and developing a mature love...

Marriage is the perfect setting (*incubator, laboratory*) for developing our lives.

Illustration:

Marriage is like a Rock Tumbler!

The right amount of time and material will produce a beautiful gem.

This young lady looks very happy.

It is however often very messy and labourious – but so worth it!

You do not throw a few rocks in there and let them bounce off of one another.

You must be intentional about having the right amount of each ingredient and giving the process the right amount of time to produce the right results.

If you will be intentional in your effort to put the right things...

Grace, kindness, tenderness, honesty, vulnerability into the tumbler of your marriage, you will produce in each other a thing great and enduring beauty!

If you don't see your mate's deep flaws and weaknesses and dependencies , you're not even in the game.

If we don't get excited about the person our spouse has already grown into and will become, we aren't tapping into the power of marriage.

The goal is to see something absolutely ravishing that God is making of the beloved.

What keeps the marriage going is your commitment...

- to your spouse's holiness. You're committed to his or her beauty.
- to his greatness and perfection.
- to her honesty and passion for the things of God.

That's your job as a spouse.

To let her land in the spotlight.

To elevate her and her place in life.

2. A vibrant marriage puts each other first.

We often enter into marriage with the feeling...

"Finally, someone who will complete me and fulfill my deepest longings."

We have a big box of hopes, dreams and desires.

We place them on the lap of our spouse and essentially say "this is your job."

They become expectations that crush the true essence of marital joy.

Two problems with this:

a) No one person can fulfill this demand. It is impossible!

b) It is based on selfishness. Selfishness always sabotages a good relationship, especially marriage.

Complete me, fulfill my dreams, meet my needs.

Me, my....this is a problem. There is a better way!!

Start by recognizing deep seated selfishness and lay it down.

Be willing to make sacrifices!

The ultimate weapon against selfishness is sacrifice, and a happy marriage is often predicated on two people trying to out-serve each other.

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Eph. 5:1,2

The chapter that speaks to us about marriage starts with this admonition!

Givers and takers. 2 takers? 1 giver and one taker?

The answer? Both trying to out give.

A race to the back of the line.

A submission competition.

Not a tug of war. It is laying down your end of the rope!

Conclusion...

What commitments can I/we make to the health and growth of our marriage?