

TEACHING NOTES (underlined words indicate answers for the handout)

Session II — Marriage 101

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

I. What is the secret of a successful marriage?

The secret of a successful marriage is to have the same selfless spirit that Jesus Christ possessed.

Our selfless spirit like Jesus Christ possessed will honor our mates, will lift up our mates, and will actively desire and do what is best for our mates.

The Christians have a guideline for marriage – the Scriptures.

Our proper position in a successful marriage is that of becoming a servant to our spouse.

\* When we understand what this marriage 101 is all about we understand that ... A wedding is an event ... a marriage is an achievement.

\* There is nothing like a little exercise to change a man's life, especially if it's a walk down a church aisle.

II. What are the reasons we are having so many problems in our marriages, including the evangelical church world?

Let's look first at some very alarming statistics:

Statistics of American Marriages

\* 50% marriages will fail

\* 37% compared to 1967

\* 10% of marriages will permanently separate

\* 75% of married couples will experience some kind of marital unfaithfulness.

\* 40% of today's children will see parents divorce by the time they are 8 years old.

Most children will spend part of their lives in a single parent home.

\* Too often we look at the couple getting married and we think WOW, what a kodak moment. And we say to ourselves this marriage will make it. But somehow it often doesn't.

\* George Barna says, "They enter a marital relationship hoping it will last forever – but expecting it to explode or dissolve."

\* John Maxwell says, "Marriage is being the right person. Quit looking for the right person and start being the right person."

\* Someone else said, "It is not marriages that fail, it is people that fail. All that marriage does is to show people up."

\* Most couples get married while their hormones are running wild.

\* Baby boomers are 5 times likely to get a divorce.

Now what are some very basic problems people face when they marry?

A. Many couples enter into marriage too immature to make it work.

Evidence of immature couples:

1. They RUSH into marriage.

2. They believe that DIVORCE is part of the marriage scheme.

3. They often confuse LOVE with ROMANCE.

Marjorie Holmes gave us something special when she wrote, "Turning Sweet Nothings into Sweet Somethings."

Romance is fleeting.

Love is long.

Romance is seeking perfection.

Love is forgiving faults.

Romance is flattering attentions.

Love is genuine thoughtfulness.

Romance is tingling excitement.

Love is tenderness, constancy, being cherished.

Romance is eager striving always trying to appear attractive to others.

Where love is 2 people who find beauty in each other no matter how they look.

Romance is the anguish of waiting for the phone to ring to bring you a voice that will utter endearments.

But love is the anguish of waiting for a call that will assure you that someone else is happy and safe.

Romance is dancing in the moonlight, gazing deep into the desired eyes across the candlelit table.

But love is saying you're tired honey, I'll get up this time and stumble through the darkness to warm a bottle or comfort a frightened child.

Romance is delicious.

Love nourishes.

Romance can't last.

Love can!

The next basic problem:

B. Too often we FOCUS on our self instead of focusing on our COMPANION.

A couple was filling out their marriage certificate. When they were asked which marriage this is: the man said the first. The woman said, "The last."

There is this poem of 2 lovers:

Two lovers walking down the street,  
She trips, he murmurs careful sweet.

Now wed, they tread the same street,  
She trips, he growls, pick up your feet.

It is all in perspective.

The next basic problem:

C. We wake up to FIND out who WE really are. (It is not always a pretty picture.)

The next basic problem:

D. We then FIND out who our COMPANION really is.

Premarital counseling: watch them drive up.

They sit on one seat. You ask them some basic questions like how long have you known each other, do you have a job (get one after the honeymoon) do you have a car (borrowed one). Get back into the car.

Postmarital counseling: Drive up in separate cars. Sit in separate chairs. They both have good jobs. Both have nice cars.

What is the problem? They have changed their focus and they have really gotten to know their companion.

\*\*\* If we work as hard after our marriage as before then we will have a marriage that will last.

We have come to realize that men and women really are different.

Look at some of the standard differences: (You may want to check them off for later consideration.)

Men

Women

Often more logical

Often more emotional

More proud - difficulty admitting fears

Less proud - able to admit fears

More objective

More intuitive

Have a "wandering" tendency

Have a "nesting" instinct

Forgets the "little things"

Remembers the "little things"

More independent

More relational

Respond to sight

Respond to touch

A little girl was hearing the creation story when she went to bed. She heard about Adam being created.

And when God looked at Adam He said, "I can do better than that." So He created Eve. The reason God created woman last was because He did not want them telling Him how to create everything else.

God created earth and rested.

God created man and rested.

God created woman and neither God nor man has rested since then.

The next basic problem:

E. We do not understand marriage UNITY balanced with our INDIVIDUALITY.

The unity candle has great significance when you understand that two individuals are coming together to become one before God and man.

But you should not blow out the separate candles because you are still a specific individual.

Incorrect perceptions about intimacy:

1. It is easy to ACCEPT my mate. I am sure your mate seemed wonderful and still may be but it is not reality.

2. Intimacy means that we are just ALIKE. Our goal in marriage is never to make our mate like ourselves ...we are to leave to cleave, not revolutionize.

Our 25th wedding anniversary last January. Our marriage is getting better. We have our problems but our love for each other is stronger. I love to travel and my wife doesn't like to fly.

When a marriage works well both partners rise to a new level.

Proper steps for intimacy:

1. You should give your companion ROOM. Everyone needs a certain amount of solitude.

2. You should help your companion to BLOOM.

Marney Cromwell was right when she said, "To keep a fire burning brightly there is one easy rule; keep the two logs together, near enough to keep each other warm and far enough apart, about a fingers breadth, for some breathing room. Good fire, good marriage, same rule."

The last basic problem:

F. We QUIT working on the marriage.

I like what the farmer said, "Operating a marriage works like operating a farm. . .you have to start all over every morning."

The message at our wedding ... Remember the love game!

\* Dating brings out the best – marriage brings out the rest.

\* Marriages don't fail, people do.

## CONCLUSION

The stages of too many marriages:

1. The honeymoon period
2. The time when specific irritations begin to occur
3. A time of general discomfort
4. A try harder time
5. The exhaustion stage
6. The separation story

Here is what can be done to keep your marriage from going to step 5 and 6:

1. Determine to do everything you can to have a successful marriage.
2. Give unconditional love to your companion.
3. Consider every possible way to improve your marriage.
4. In the heat of the battle share this phrase from your heart, "I AM YOUR BEST FRIEND."

You will have a wonderful marriage if you both will serve each other.