

Part 2 - Marriage is Complicated

"Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied. "They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.' " And he said, "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together."

Matthew 19:4-6 (NLT)

- **Understand that marriage is a _____, not a _____.**

You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Malachi 2:14 (NIV)

- **Fight to stay _____ through the changing _____.**

Enjoy life with the woman you love. Cherish every moment of the fleeting life which God has given you under the sun. ...

Ecclesiastes 9:9 (VOICE)

NIV (New International Translation)
VOICE (The Voice Translation)

NLT (New Living Translation)

- **Make _____ the common goal of your marriage.**

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

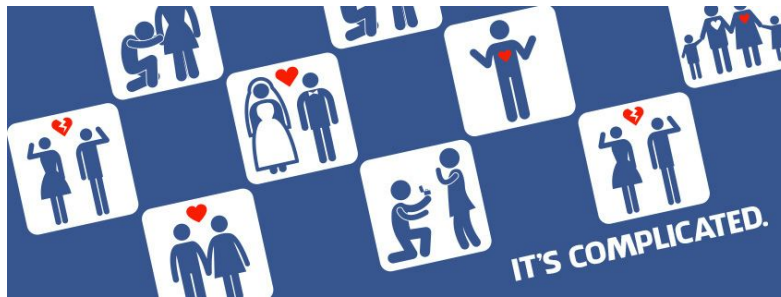
This (marriage) is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

Ephesians 5:32 (NLT)

- **Bottom line: Our marriage will be as good as _____ decide it will be.**

Recommended Resources:

- *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, by Dr. John Gottman
- *From This Day Forward*, by Craig and Amy Groeschel
- *His Needs Her Needs*, by Willard Harley
- *The Mingling of Souls*, by Matt Chandler



It's Complicated Week Two

Opening Prayer: Father God, thank you for the amazing people in this group! Open our hearts to what you would teach us through your Word and through the raw and real stories from our lives.

Talk It Over: In this series we've acknowledged that relationships are complicated! Each of us brings both strengths and weaknesses into our relationships.

- Share one strength you have that has helped one of your relationships grow stronger.
- Share one weakness you have that has—at times—made one of your relationships more difficult or complicated.

Read Matthew 19:3-6 (NLT)

In the biblical view of marriage, two individuals blend their lives to create one life together (1+1=1).

- Why does oneness and unity seem easy at first, but harder with the passage of time?
- What kinds of things can cause two people who were once deeply in love to want to split up?
- What advice would you give to a close friend or family member who is entering into marriage?

From a biblical point of view, marriage is a covenant before God, not just a legal contract.

Here are some contrasts between a contract and a covenant. Which of these do you connect with and why?

- A contract is Legal – based on both parties getting something. A covenant is Relational – based on both parties giving something.
- A Contract is an Obligation – something I am required to do. A Covenant is an Opportunity – something I want to do.
- A Contract is Conditional – if you do your part, I'll do mine. A Covenant is Unconditional – I commit to doing my part, even in the hard times when it seems I am getting nothing back.
- A Contract is a Compromise – I'll meet you halfway, 50/50. A Covenant is Sacrifice – I'll give 100%, all I am and all I have.
- A Contract is Temporary – once the obligation has been met, it's over. A Covenant is Permanent – a forever promise.

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

We are all moving through the seasons of our lives and find ourselves at different places.

- Choose several adjectives to describe your current season (is it stressful or peaceful; challenging or boring; best-ever or worst-ever; fun or painful...).
- Are you struggling to fully embrace the season you find yourself in right now? If yes, why?

Gratitude for the good things in our lives can often open us up to embracing our present realities in their true context.

- Share one thing you are thankful for in this season.

Being connected in life-giving relationships with other people is a basic human need. Strong friendships are built on shared experiences.

- Share one thing you have done this week--that is not related to your work or home responsibilities--that has helped strengthen one of your most important relationships.

Read Galatians 5:22-23

We regularly come to the end of our human energy, strength and ability. Thank God we have the resource of the Holy Spirit to empower us when we need it most!

- Where do you most need God's Spirit to help you in unraveling complicated relationships and increasing the joy in your life?

Closing Prayer: Holy Spirit, we invite your love into the deepest places of our hearts. Let it heal us where we are hurting, allowing us to have the capacity to love others the way you have loved us.