*\*Welcome / Thank God for our Freedom / July 4th Picnic Saturday – Take Hwy1 / Prayer Requests*

Fighting for Your Family Series

Pt. 3 – “Maintaining a Strong Christian Marriage”

Genesis 2:24/ Ephesians 5:21–33, Ecclesiastes 4:9–12, 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

6/29/25

It’s been said that marriage is like flies on a screen door. Those that are in want out, and those that are out want in.

The question is why is it that so many people get married with such good intentions, but it ends so disastrously? I’ve married 12 couples, and I don’t ever recall a couple saying, “Our intention is to have a miserable marriage.” Yet, there are couples who are living in a miserable marriage, or even worse, who end in divorce.

* If you flew from L.A. to Tokyo non-stop, and that jet plane had been off by one degree all the way to Tokyo, do you know you wouldn’t end in Tokyo. You’d end up somewhere else in another country.
* The bar-tailed godwits are little birds that fly from one island 7100 miles to nest and then they fly back. One degree off and they’d miss those islands.

My prayer today is that our married couples would learn to keep “on-point”, so our marriages don’t miss the mark of Gods purpose for them! For some, I pray today’s message helps regroup our marriages; causes a passion to fight for our marriages! We’re going to help you with a new trajectory, a new focus, a mid-course correction...on how to develop and maintain a strong Christian marriage!

So far in this series, we’ve began to Rebuild the Foundation of the family, with the roles and responsibilities of everyone in the family, then we saw how Dads have the responsibility of “controlling the temperature” of their home with love and respect.

**Past assignments:**

* **Read 1 Cor. 13 daily together**
* **Read the scriptures given that explain your roles in leading your children**

Today our 3rd message, and it too has an assignment, which we’ll give later. I fully believe that your life should be changed as a result of this series. Let this message not simply be heard, but I pray that you’ll hear the voice of the Holy Spirit and apply it!

Is no secret that marriage is under spiritual attack in our culture and even in the church. I’m convinced that if we go back to the Word, and follow what it says, and truly apply what I’m going to share with you today, divorce wouldn’t be so big in our vocab. That’s a very strong statement, but after all, God created marriage and created it for a purpose and for success. Not to fail! There are certain requirements in marriage, and unfortunately some have missed those, and because of that go in the general direction, but they end up in a bad place. Truth is that many couples are passively enduring instead of actively fighting for their marriage.

Some of you have come to this with all kinds of relational issues, and you may have, God forbid, thought about divorce. Marriage Is Worth Fighting For. We need to fight together, not against each other. Maybe it’s time for you to rethink about what marriage is all about.

The real purpose of marriage is to reveal Gods purpose. We see this in Eph. 5 and then again to Genesis 2 where it’s all laid out for us. We’re going to follow the outline in the Bible, as we should always defer to if we want success. The goal is to pour grace & hope into our families today, but you have to stay with me. Today's message is about making intentional, godly choices every day to strengthen your marriage and how to maintain a strong Christian marriage.

* Ephesians 5:21-33

*21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. 25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26 to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. 27 He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. 28 In the same way, husband’s ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. 29 No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. 30 And we are members of his body. 31 As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” 32 This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ, and the church are one. 33 So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

(V 31 throwback to Genesis 2:24 - 24. “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”)

It’s important to note that marriage wasn’t only created for companionship—but it was a divine preview of the eternal (forever) union between Christ and His Bride. This is what Paul means when he says a great illustration or mystery.

Just as Christ came and gave himself for the church, as we must give ourselves completely to our unions. They are sacred before God! The vows spoken, are more than mere words...They are a covenant to each other and before God! A FOREVER covenant.

Society today says, “Why should we have a covenant? Why this oath? - For richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, **till death do us part**. “What’s a piece of paper anyway? Let’s just live together.”

If you buy a house, you sign a piece of paper. Why do we even sign anything? Why don’t we just shake hands and say, “Okay, we’ll pay you this much and you give us the title and sign it over because what’s a piece of paper anyway?” Why? Because after you’ve made the deal you might have buyer’s remorse, and you might say, “I didn’t know that the roof leaks, that there were termites in the attic, and that the windows don’t close properly.” Furthermore, you drive down the street and two blocks away there is this house that you always admired but you never bought it, and now suddenly there’s a “for sale” sign on it, and you say to yourself, “Oh now what do I do?”

Well, you know life is tough. You signed the documents and what you are going to have to do is fix the roof, take care of the termites and have to get new windows. Furthermore, you know that house down the street that you liked so much. You didn’t know it has a basement that is going to collapse within six months?

Couples say, “We don’t need that piece of paper.” To that I say that mixed messages are being sent. On the one hand there’s the message, “I love you so much I want to be with you.” On the other hand, another message is being sent, “But I want to keep an escape hatch; I want to make sure that I can get out of this without a lot of trouble just in case you and we can’t work it out.”

* A Bible College Professor wife had Alzheimer’s disease. He decided to resign to take care of her full-time. The School Board said, “No, we need you here! Can’t you hire someone else to take care of her. She won’t know who is taking care of her anyway.” Answering with a voice clear and to the point, he said, “I made the promise till death do us part,” He said he would take care of her & he did till she died years later.

That’s what till death do us part means. That’s the covenant that you make when you get married. – ITS FOREVER!

Because of this sacred covenant, Satan attacks marriage and despises it as well as what it represents. Thus, more of a reason we need to fight for our marriage. When we fight for our marriage, we are also honoring God’s covenant design.

Ask yourself: Am I treating my marriage like a contract or a covenant?

**Keys to Maintain a Strong Christian Marriage:**

**1. Make Christ the Center of Your Marriage**

* Matthew 6:33

*Seek first the Kingdom of God*

* Matthew 19:6

*What God has joined together, let no one separate.*

A Christ-centered marriage brings unity, purpose, and peace. A marriage built on biblical and Godly foundations will prosper. They will be unified in Christ!

Unity doesn't mean uniformity—

* Unity means being committed to each other, sharing values, supporting each other, and working as a one.
* Uniformity would mean always thinking the same, acting the same, or giving up personal identity to “keep the peace.”

Being unified means bringing your full, individual selves to the relationship and still choosing to walk in the same direction together as one in spirit, purpose, and mission!

Remember the umbrella with Christ covering all members of the family...If Christ is allowed the center of the marriage and family, then that marriage will maintain strong in Christs strength!

Stay spiritually aligned with your spouse through shared faith and vision. Pray together, worship together, serve together. Your spiritual connection strengthens your emotional and physical connection.

**2. Be Intentional in Your Effort**

* Ephesians 5:22-25

***22****For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord.****23****For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church.****24****As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.****25****For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her*

Love is not just a feeling; it's a daily choice and action. Both spouses are called to sacrifice, serve, and support.

Marriage Takes Intentional Effort:

* Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

“*9 Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. 10 If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. 11 Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? 12 A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.*

Healthy marriages are the result of intentional effort, not luck. They’re built and maintained through daily actions like:

* Communicating openly and kindly
* Showing appreciation and gratitude
* Listening with empathy
* Being quick to forgive
* Investing time in each other
* Respecting each other’s individuality

Each day presents choices — to prioritize your spouse, to respond with patience, and to grow together instead of apart. Over time, these small, consistent choices form the foundation of a strong, lasting relationship.

Notice though the scripture says, “three are even better”. That’s because again a Christ-centered marriage involves you, your spouse, and God.

Key Thought: Selfless love mirrors Christ’s love — patient, forgiving, and enduring.

Practical Tip: Look for one act of service to do for your spouse each day.

**3. Fight Against Individual Selfishness**

* 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

*“4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.”*

* Philippians 2:3–4

*“Do nothing out of selfish ambition... rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”*

Real love fights pride, bitterness, and unforgiveness. As mentioned earlier, love is a verb, not just a feeling—it requires action, especially in conflict.

Questions for Reflection:

Am I more concerned about being right or being loving? How can I show sacrificial love to my spouse today?

**4. Communicate with Grace and Truth**

* Proverbs 18:21 – "The tongue has the power of life and death..."

Words can heal or harm. Christian couples should be speaking life into one another, into their children, and anyone within the family.

Healthy communication includes honesty, humility, and listening more than talking!

Practical Tip:

* Use “I” statements instead of “You” accusations.
	+ "You" Accusation:
		- "You never listen to me!"
		- This can make the other person feel attacked and defensive.
	+ "I" Statement:
		- "I feel hurt when I don’t feel heard during our conversations. I really need to feel like my thoughts matter to you."

This shifts the tone from blame to vulnerability and invites connection instead of conflict. Married couples MUST Set aside distraction-free time to talk daily.

**5. Commit to Forgiveness**

* Colossians 3:13

*“Make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”*

*Peter 4:8*

*“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”*

\*Forgiveness Is a Weapon Against the Enemy

Commit to Forgiveness and Grace from day one. Marriage involves two imperfect people learning to extend grace. Don’t let bitterness take root.

* Unforgiveness breeds bitterness and breaks intimacy.
* Forgiveness is not excusing sin but releasing your spouse from the debt they owe you.

Think of forgiveness as cutting the rope the enemy uses to pull your heart into resentment. You have the power within you to cut that rope or let that rope destroy your marriage!

Practical Tip:

To the one that hurt, make it a habit to ask for forgiveness quickly and sincerely. To the one hurt, make it a habit to forgive quickly and sincerely, allowing God to help heal the hurt on both hearts.

**6. Protect Your Marriage**

* Song of Songs 2:15

Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love, for the grapevines are blossoming!

In this portion of scripture, it speaks of little foxes harming the vineyards. These “little foxes” symbolize potential dangers to a relationship. The vineyards symbolize the love and intimacy between the bride and the bridegroom. The little foxes represent the seemingly small but significant issues that can damage that love's beauty and fruitfulness and bring ruin.

Protecting your marriage means being proactive — not waiting until things are broken to fix them. Marriages are constantly being attacked. As a Christian married couple, we MUST guard against emotional, spiritual, or physical compromise.

Mark 10:9

*“What God has joined together, let no one separate.”*

* Set clear boundaries with the opposite sex.
* Be transparent about online activity, friendships, and emotional connections.
* Remember: faithfulness isn’t just physical — emotional intimacy outside your marriage can be just as dangerous.
* Always stay accountable.

Practical Tip:

Regularly evaluate your marriage together: What’s working? What needs prayer or improvement?

**Conclusion:**

It’s no secret, the devil wants to destroy marriages. He is sitting back today laughing at how he has deceived people, tricked people, and broken people in marriages. He’s hoping today that you haven’t listened to a thing the Lord has brought to us today. Well, husbands, wives, it’s time we stand and fight for our marriages by putting God 1st, then our spouse, and be committed to the Covenant and Holy Union that God has put together! Today, stop allowing that weasel to steal your joy in what God has created and blessed!

**A strong Christian marriage is not built in one day but is built on a daily basis. It’s a sacred journey of love, grace, and growth**. Maybe you’re here today and need a big God for your big problems. Maybe you’re here today and you need to recommit today to making Christ the foundation of your marriage You know what, put Him 1st in your marriage, and watch him show up in a big way!

Even if you do this starting today, remember no one is perfect, and you will still have disagreements, and arguments, but don’t let them escalate, ending in sadness, anger or worse. Love each other. Remember these points to build and maintain a strong Christian marriage.

* Wives, submit and love your husband under the authority and responsibility God has created him to walk in.
* Husbands as Christ loves the church love your wife. Allow God to lead you in this authority & responsibility as you will be accountable how you lead you family.

God can do all of this and more when He’s allowed in a marriage and we submit to each other. I don’t know what point or points God talked to you about today, but...

* Maybe some of you have to receive Christ as Savior or rededicate your life to Him so that you might receive a new heart in order to move on these points.
* Some of you may have to go home and begin to listen like you’ve never listened...And do so without interrupting – just listen.
* Some may need to talk. You need to deal with these issues. They are painful. But in the end when there is reconciliation and forgiveness it is all worthwhile.
* Some of you have some huge forgiveness issues that need to be dealt with starting TODAY!

Either way, all of us need God to show up in our marriages. But are we willing to pay the price of selflessness, honesty, & commitment to protect our covenant. That’s what marriage is. So where do we begin?

We fight on our knees. The most powerful way to fight for your marriage and watch it strengthen is through prayer. Ask God to soften your heart, to strengthen your bond, and to begin to heal any brokenness that either one may have.

Homework:

Couples, if you want your marriage and relationship to spill over into a caring, sensitive, fulfilling and strong relationship, then I encourage you to ask these questions of each other this week as well as share in the devotional on the handouts. Some of these might seem tough, but it’s necessary. I want you to get into a safe place, just the two of you, and I want you to discuss the following.

* Is Christ truly the center and foundation of our marriage is.
	+ Does He really hold 1st place in your marriage
* Are we intentional in our efforts to building a strong marriage?
* Are we putting ourselves, needs, and cares above each other’s?
* Are we speaking life or death into each other, by our words and communication?
* Are we committed to asking for forgiveness when we have wronged, and are we committed to forgiving any wrong that’s done to us?
* Are we protecting our sacred covenant? Where is prayer and improvement needed most?

**Call to Action:**

* **If you're struggling—don't give up.**
* **If you're thriving—stay vigilant.**
* **Either way—continue to fight for your marriage with God in the lead, and watch it grow in His strength as you do!**

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for the gift of marriage. Help us to love like You love, to forgive as You forgive, and to fight not against each other but for one another. Strengthen every couple here. Let our marriages reflect Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.