

Rough Patches

Happily Ever After Series

Did You Know?

While there is a seemingly endless list of both silly and serious reasons for divorce in our culture, the Bible only supports one reason for divorce. There are a lot of principles in the Bible concerning relationships and marriage. Pastor Jon has also included a number of resources on marriage that may help you. If your marriage is going through rough patches, don't let these issues endanger your relationship. Get professional help if you need it so that your marriage gets stronger and better!

Monday, February 25, 2013

Read: Proverbs 5:15-20

Discuss: What images does Solomon use to refer to the wife of his son's youth? Solomon taught his son in this wisdom to find pleasure and be drawn to his wife only. Wandering eyes get one in trouble. Living with someone for a long time can make you bitter about their faults, but how much time do you spend on their admirable qualities? Solomon calls spouses to find those gems in their spouses, not in others outside of their marriage.

Act: How does our culture affect this biblical principle of sticking with one person in marriage? What kinds of influences destroy the mental process of not developing wandering eyes or looking for greener grass? What are some ways you can heed the counsel of Solomon? How can you keep your eyes from wandering?

Tuesday, February 26, 2013

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Discuss: Although we looked at this passage last week, focus now on this paragraph on love. There is a key to love that we do not fully understand. Our culture has understood love as an emotion, but the Bible speaks of love as a choice, a will, a decision. Sure, there are feelings attached to it, but it is a choice. It is not a reaction, like an emotion, but a decisive regular behavior.

Act: What are the dangers of marrying based on the emotion of love rather than the commitment and choice to love? How has our culture affected the way you see love? Can you have both the passion of romantic love and the commitment of biblical love? How are you loving your spouse, through emotion or through choice?

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Read: Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4

Discuss: These passages are about parents and children. Child discipline and rearing is one of the more serious and foundational differences that can derail a marriage. What is the biblical advice given in these passages? Can you think of other passages that teach us how to rear children? What kinds of expectations are there of parents in the Bible?

Act: Parents are tasked with the most important duty, to raise their children in the fear of the Lord. Every parent has an immense amount of influence in their children's lives, but they rarely realize it. What can you do to make your children better? Do you and your spouse have a program for punishment and keep a united front so that your kids don't look for loop holes?

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Read: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Discuss: What are some images Paul uses to explain the principle of not uniting believers to unbelievers in marriage? The principle actually extends to holy living as well. Believers are not to be united with the world and its sinful practices. Anything that influences you to not follow the Bible is a problem. Many apply it to marriage, and it is fitting, because religious differences will put quite a strain on a marriage or any relationship.

Act: How can you live out the principle of not being unequally yoked? For some, it is too late to apply this to their marriage. But God can help you in such a situation. It's not impossible, just harder. What about the smaller differences in religion or doctrine between you and your spouse. Do you think there needs to be agreement in the marriage even on the details and doctrines of some commonly held beliefs?

Friday, March 1, 2013

Read: 1 Corinthians 7:1-7

Discuss: The Corinthians had written about marriage and Paul needed to clarify what they understood. They understood that it was better to not marry, but Paul showed them that marriage helps to get over passions that God has designed us with. He deals with the issue of sex in marriage and talks about not withholding sex from one another. It is a door for Satan to enter into the marriage and cause division. That oneness of marriage goes to every part, the body, the soul and the mind.

Act: Make a list of three reasons you are thankful you are married to your spouse. Share this list with your spouse to encourage them. Are you surprised that the Bible is so straight forward about sex in marriage? How can you make your marriage better in these areas? Be careful not to use this passage to demand sex from your spouse, but don't ignore it either. Hold it, as well as your passion, in a healthy balance.

Saturday, March 2, 2013

Read: 1 Corinthians 7:8-16

Discuss: Paul deals next with marriage situations. First, he deals with singles and widows. It was common for a widow to be younger in Paul's day due to marrying older men and no real health care. Second, Paul deals with divorce and separation in marriage. He reminds us of the oneness and unity that a marriage should be. Finally, he mentions those who are in a special situation of having an unbeliever for a spouse. What are the rulings he gives for each of these groups?

Act: What are some ways you can make sure that you are obedient to this passage in your own marriage? Do you think that this passage is well understood and followed in the Church today? Does the Church have an unhealthy fear of physical passion, and of marriage as a solution to the problem of lust, or do we have a balanced approach to both singleness and marriage?

Sunday, March 3, 2013

Read: Revelation 12:10-12

Discuss: This is our text for Pastor's message this morning about the power of your personal testimony. Pastor will be showing how your testimony can help someone else have greater faith in God to do something in their life. As you read through the text, think of two questions that puzzle you concerning prayer and persistence.

Act: If Pastor does not answer these questions, ask him after service to help you understand better this parable.