

Surviving Bad Romance

Hebrews 13:4 – “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

Matthew 19:3-11 – “3 And Pharisees came up to Him and tested Him by asking, ‘Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?’ 4 He answered, ‘Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.’ 7 They said to him, ‘Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?’ 8 He said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.’ 10 The disciples said to him, ‘If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.’ 11 But He said to them, ‘Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.’”

Oneness is the Glory of Marriage.

Jesus and Divorce

The Controversy – Is it okay with God if Christians get divorced?

- 1) The loaded question: the Pharisees were determined to trick Jesus into saying something that would get Him in trouble with either the Roman government or the Jewish people.
 - a) Their question about divorce was a no-win topic for Jesus.
 - i) In that day there was a division among the Jewish leaders regarding the qualifications needed for a legal divorce:

Deuteronomy 24:1 – “When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house...”

- (1) The followers of Shammai: They interpreted the words “some indecency” in a very strict sense to mean adultery and that alone.
 - (2) The followers of Hillel: These scholars took a very liberal interpretation of this passage. If she spoiled a dish, if she talked to a strange man, if she spoke disrespectfully of her in-laws, or if her husband happened to find a more attractive woman, he could trade up.
 - ii) No matter how Jesus answered the question, His words were bound to get Him in trouble with someone!

- 2) The loving answer: Jesus explains that divorce was not God's standard, that Moses allowed divorce because of the hardness of human hearts. Moses didn't command divorce. He simply permitted it for the protection of women so that they would not be subject to exploitation and vindictiveness of male domination.

Neither Moses, nor Jesus, nor Paul ever encouraged divorce. At the very best, it was a reluctant permission.

Define Romance: Romance is any adoring act that takes place between lovers, wherein one partner woos the other. It is used to establish and maintain intimacy and emotional closeness in a pair-bond relationship.

The best place to start understanding biblical romance in marriage is the Song of Solomon.

Fiery Passion: *Song of Solomon 8:6,7 – “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. 7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it...”*

Note: **A seal** was used to indicate ownership of a person's valued possessions. So the beloved asked to be her lover's most valued possession, a possession that would influence his thoughts (**over your heart**) and his actions (**over your arm**).

People long for fiery passion. This longing is what often causes people to fill a void with harmful substitutes such as pornography, overeating, alcohol, rampant desires for material things, and other addiction.

The Little Foxes: *Song of Solomon 2:15 – “Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom.”*

Fox 1: Apathy

- 1) Comfortable predictable routine has ruined romance from many marriages.
- 2) Apathy causes both husband and wife to think the courtship is long over.

James 4:17NLT – “Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.”

Fox 2: Children

- 1) This little fox is predictable.
- 2) Your marriage must be built to outlast the children.

Fox 3: A Mistress

- 1) Proverbs calls the mistress idea the “strange woman” (chapters 5 and 7) who lures with smooth words and alluring eyes.

People need to understand the ways mistresses can cause strange affections when life is out of balance because of careers, children, community service, hobbies, sports, church work—the list seems endless.

- 2) Satisfying your desire for passion in things other than God and then your partner will eventually destroy your ONENESS.

Fox 4: Conflict

- 1) Your mate is not your enemy.

- a) Ephesians 6 – “We are not wrestling against flesh and blood ...”

- b) Turn and face one another and say, “My mate is not my enemy.”

- 2) Romance and resentment cannot both dwell in the same heart; conflict *can* and *must* be resolved.

Ruth Bell Graham says: “Marriage is the union of two forgivers.”

Your marriage will not survive ignored conflict.

Fox 5: Differences

- 1) Communication: the two sections in the brain which are responsible for language have been found to be significantly larger in women than in men. Men typically process language in one hemisphere while women process language on both sides of their brains.

This is why women communicate better than men using verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Men on the other hand, tend to be more task-oriented, less talkative and more isolated. Men have a hard time understanding emotions that are not spoken.

- 2) Reactions to Stress: In stress situations, men have a response reaction that resembles “fight or flight” while women react with a “tend and befriend” strategy.

The reason behind these different reactions to stress is hormones. When someone is under stress the hormone oxytocin is released at a higher level.

Oxytocin is called the “bonding hormone.”

In men under stress, testosterone reduces the effects of oxytocin as it is produced in high volumes during stress; this explains the reason for the “fight or flight” response.

In women, estrogen amplifies the effects of oxytocin resulting in calming and nurturing feelings.

3) Emotions: The most obvious difference is probably the emotions.

Women have a larger deep limbic system than men, which allows them to be more in touch with their feelings and better able to express themselves, which promotes bonding with others.

What is the Limbic System? The Limbic System is a complex part of the brain that supports a variety of functions including adrenaline flow, emotion, behavior, motivation, long-term memory, and sense of smell.

Emotional life is largely housed in the Limbic System, and it has a great deal to do with the formation of memories.

Building Oneness

The “*two shall become one flesh.*”

1) The two of you...take a day off with one another.

2) The two of you...talk to one another.

a) Have you ever thought about how important words are to God?

John 1:1 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 – “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Jesus is called The Word of God!

b) The Power of Words

Christ Jesus is the personification of the power of words.

i) Words have the power to bring us into relationship.

ii) Words have the power to heal conflicts in our relationship.

- iii) Therefore, words should not be withheld or neglected from the object of our love.
- 3) The two of you...date one another.
 - a) Schedule weekly times together; they do not just happen.
 - b) Be creative. Surprise each other. Sometimes be extravagant.
- 4) The two of you...take a vacation alone with one another.
- 5) The two of you...go to bed with one another.