



### Part 3 – “Love for a Lifetime”

#### *Central Point . . .*

#### **Matthew 19:3-6**

3 Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: "Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for any reason?" 4 "Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied. "They record that from the beginning `God made them male and female.' 5 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.' 6 Since they are no longer two but one, let no one separate them, for God has joined them together."

The Pharisees had come to focus more on the fact that the Lord had given provisions for divorce more than His main and first truth that marriage was a lifetime commitment.

The Pharisees had reduced marriage to only a business transaction. It was regarded the same as buying and selling a tract of land.

Jesus condemned this attitude, clarifying God's original intention – that marriage is a lifelong "COMMITMENT" that ...

*<sup>6</sup> Since they are no longer two but one, let no one separate them, for God has joined them together."*

#### **Monday:**

#### **Start your week with a general assessment of your relationship.**

1. What changes can you make in your current habits that will enrich the life you share with your life partner?

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2. When others evaluate your marriage relationship will they conclude that you consider it a valued treasure for which you would die, or do your daily priorities reveal that it is not your #1 commitment? Identify why they would come to either of the two conclusions.

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3. What are some activities and deeds that you are using or should be using to constantly share your feelings, thoughts, and ideas that your spouse is the most important part of your life only next to God?

**Prayer for the day:** Heavenly Father, help me develop a biblical perspective of my marriage that the relationship with my spouse will honor you.

#### **Tuesday:**

#### *Focal Point . . .*

#### Seasons of Marriage . . .

#### **Four Predictable Seasons**

**Season # 1: The romance season** Song of Songs 2:7

*7 "Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the swift gazelles and the deer of the wild, not to awaken love until the time is right.*

1. List things that you and your spouse did to attract each other's attention and to create a positive impression before you married.

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2. Which one of the above list are you still practicing?

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3. What changes do you need to make to communicate to your spouse that he or she is special, you love him or her and they arouse special feelings in you?

**Prayer for the day:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the romance that I have shared with my spouse. Help me to stay reminded of its importance in the continued enrichment of my marriage and not to take it for granted.  
In Jesus Name, Amen

#### **Wednesday:**

**Season # 2: The reality season.** Colossians 3:13

*<sup>13</sup> You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

In a short period couples become busy with occupations, a house and in some cases children. They become consumed with these responsibilities and forget to feed "romance". Romance is like a rose - if it is not watered and given plant food it soon withers and dies. That creates the second season called "Reality". Some reality must come, but not to the extent and style that is destructive to the relationship.

1. Have you neglected the romance to where you see only irritating habits and quirks that were once overlooked or tolerated by infatuation? List some.

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2. You and your spouse will naturally have differences in your approach to life. What can you do to harness them to make the sum of who you are more effective in your marriage, parenting and serving in your church?

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3. What can you do today to start bringing back the romance in your marriage? Remember, it is the catalyst that makes the glue of commitment binding.

**Prayer for the day:** Heavenly Father, help me turn the reality of my marriage into strengths that makes us reflect your power and presence in our marriage.

#### **Thursday:**

**Season # 3: The resentment season.** Colossians 3:12-14

*12 Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.*

13 You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14 And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

1. If your marriage has been filled with grievances, what special element have you allowed to be missing in your life? (Verse 15)

2. When you are not letting the "peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts", what behavior will be present? How many of these behaviors are present in your marriage?

James 4:1-3 *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

3. What is your relationship with Christ? A right relationship with Christ will produce peace. One way that peace will be identified is in being thankful. You will be thankful for who you are, where you are, and for who you have married. After honestly assessing your deep inner person, are you at peace with yourself? At peace with yourself can create an attitude of peace with others. Do you have an attitude that can be at peace with others?

**Prayer for the day:** Heavenly Father, I don't want to be at odds with my spouse. Help me to develop a personal peace that allows me to be at peace with others.

### **Friday:**

**Season # 4: The rebuilding season.** Ephesians 4:32

*Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

#### **Successful rebuilding requires three skills.**

Skill # 1: Remember God created men and women to be different...

Genesis 1:27 (New Living Translation)

<sup>27</sup> *So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.*

♪ men communicate in generalities while women speak in specifics!

♪ men are in touch with their thoughts first then their feelings.

♪ Women are in touch with their feelings then their thoughts.

♪ Women invite conversation, men endure conversation.

♪ men tend to be physically oriented.

♪ Women tend to be relationally oriented.

1. After examining the preceding comparison between men and women, what answers do you find to barriers you have been experiencing in communication between you and your spouse?

2. What changes do you need to make in listening to your spouse to hear what is really being said or asked for without words?

Skill #2: Asking and Granting forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:32 *Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

1. "Tenderhearted" is lived out by demonstrating compassion. What are some acts of love you have shown toward your spouse that show that you care more about him or her than you care about yourself?

2. What is Christ's rule for forgiving? **Mark 11:25** *And when you stand praying, do not hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.*

3. How would you rate your ability to forgive and forget? (Circle one of the following) Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent.

Skill # 3: Your positive decision to Love and keep on loving. 1 Corinthians 13:3-7

*3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would be of no value whatsoever.*

*4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude.*

*Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. 6 It is never glad 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. 8 Love will last forever, but prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special*

*knowledge will all disappear.*

1. Which of these components of love do you need to work on?

2. Have you surrendered to the leadership of Christ in your life to the point you can unselfishly give yourself away like He did and expect nothing in return? What evidence can you find in your life that you are moving in this direction?

3. Can others see your love is genuine, not just a way of manipulating them? Give examples and reasons why, for either the "YES" or "NO" answer.

**Prayer for the day:** Heavenly Father, thank you for making men and women different. Help me to better understand the differences and enjoy the relationship as you intended. In Jesus Name, Amen

### *Turning Point...*

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**OVE AND LIVE WITH THE HEART OF CHRIST.**

**O**

**PEN YOUR HEART AND ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE YOU.**

**V**

**ALIDATE LOVE FOR GOD AND OTHERS DAILY.**

**E**

**NTHUSIASTICALLY STAND FIRM IN YOUR BELIEF IN GOD.**