



Part 3 – Love for a Lifetime

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Central Point...

Matthew 19:3-6 Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trick him. They asked, "Is it right for a man to divorce his wife for any reason he chooses?"⁴ Jesus answered, "Surely you have read in the Scriptures: When God made the world, he made them male and female."⁵ And God said, 'So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one body.'⁶ So there are not two, but one. God has joined the two together, so no one should separate them."

Our present culture is such that marriages are viewed as nothing more than a legal contract that can be broken at the **whim** or **displeasure** of either partner.

No one gets married thinking they will get divorced, but the reality is that over 50% of marriages will end in divorce and of the couples that stay married, only **2** out of **5** will be happy.

With permanence in relationships fleeting, many wonder if lasting relationships are even possible. The answer is **YES** and it is rooted in a **personal** relationship with Jesus Christ.

Focal Point...

The Seasons of Marriage

There are four **predictable** seasons, each following the next:

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.

Romance is usually strongest from **infatuation** to the end of the "honeymoon" period – about **2 ½** years into the relationship.

2. The **reality** season.

Reality sets **in** when romance wears **off**.

Reality **clarifies** what romance **conceals**.

3. The **resentment** season.

During the resentment season, the target of our **affection** becomes the target of our **frustration**.

During the resentment season our **character** is tested and the need for **love** come into play.

Colossians 3:12-14 *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.*

4. The **rebuilding** season.

The rebuilding season only occurs when we decide to **move** past the resentment season.

Successful rebuilding requires three skills:

- **Remembering** our differences – especially in communication. For example...

...men tend to talk in **generalities**, women tend to talk in **specifics**.

...men are generally in touch with their **thoughts** first, then **feelings**; women in touch with their **feelings** first, then their **thoughts**.

...men **endure** conversation, women **invite** conversation.

...in matters of intimacy, men tend to be **physically** oriented, while women tend to be **relationally** oriented.

- **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.*

- **Deciding to love and keep on loving.**

1 Corinthians 13:3-7 *If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.*

*Love never gives up,
Love cares more for others than for self,
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have,
Love doesn't strut,
Doesn't have a swelled head,
Doesn't force itself on others,
Isn't always "me first,"
Doesn't fly off the handle,
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Puts up with anything,
Trusts God always,
Always looks for the best,
Never looks back,
But keeps going to the end.*

Turning Point . . .

Whether married or not, our choice is simple. We can choose to continually trade in difficult relationships for new ones and start the process over and over again, or keep and deepen our present ones.

Our challenge...

Believers – simply ask God,

Heavenly Father – Strengthen me to see my relationships through the tough times. In Jesus' Name, Amen

Seekers – If you are one checking out the claims of Christianity, know that the future God desires for you to experience is one that includes a growing personal relationship with Him. The good news is that to receive it, you simply have to ask Him.

To invite Christ into your heart, you can simply pray,

*“Heavenly Father I **admit** that I have left you out of my life, but this morning, I **believe** that Christ is your Son and that He died for my sin of rejecting you and that you raised Him from the dead. I **confess** Him to be my Lord and Savior.
In Jesus' Name, Amen*