

A "G.R.E.A.T." MARRIAGE (Genesis 2:23-24)

1. God must be in your marriage.

- a. God is the Designer and Institutor of marriage (Genesis 2:18).
- b. As such, He has the right to say who can and can't be married (Matthew 19:1-9).
- c. But the fact is, unless we honor God by allowing Him to be present in our marriages, they will fail.
- d. Since God instituted marriage, He has given us the manual for how to have the type marriage He has always had in mind for mankind.
 - i. He has allowed it to be modeled by the relationship of Christ and the church.
 - ii. He has given the parameters of marriage for our benefit.
- e. He must be allowed into our marriages and that is our part.
- f. Ecclesiastes 4:12 - God is to be that third cord.
- g. The couple who allows the Lord to be a vital part of their marriage has a tremendous advantage over those who don't.
 - i. He must be present in prayer.
 - ii. He must be present in study.
 - iii. He must be present in worship.
 - iv. He must be present in the type love shown to one another.

2. Remember your vows.

- a. Will you have this man to be your husband, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?
- b. Will you have this woman to be your wife; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?
- c. For those of you who are not married, these are type vows you will one day make if you decide to get married to someone.
 - i. Notice the seriousness of each of these promises you are going to make the one you have decided to marry.
 - ii. Notice also that these are for life.
 - iii. That is the way God intended for marriage to be (Romans 7:2).
- d. For those of us who are married, do you remember these vows you made to the one who was standing before you?
 - i. Your voice may have been quivering as you said them.
 - ii. Hopefully, each of us realized the seriousness of the words to which we were saying I do.
- e. But what happens is that over time, we tend to forget these words that are of such great import.
 - i. We fail to bring the love to the ones we made the vow that they deserve.
 - ii. We say biting words that bring no honor or comfort to them.
 - iii. Sadly, sometimes we fail to forsake all others and become unfaithful.
- f. It may be we would never consider committing adultery, but our marriages can

still be failing because, while keeping ourselves only for our spouse, we are failing in the other vows we made.

g. Love, honor, comfort, companionship, are all things we promised and we must make sure that we are living up to those vows we made.

h. Every aspect of each vow is vital to keeping our marriages great!

3. Enjoy life together.

a. Ecclesiastes 9:9.

b. Remember what God said recorded in Genesis 2:18?

c. When marriage is entered into by a man and woman, which is the biblical standard for marriage, God says it is good.

d. Those two are to be together till death parts them.

i. We don't know when death will come for either party in the marriage.

ii. Therefore, they are committing to being together for many years.

e. A lot happens during those married years doesn't it?

i. Some very good things happen.

ii. Some very bad things can happen.

f. A husband and wife must be able to enjoy life together because many of the years are going to be with one another only.

i. Yes, children, if the Lord blesses the couple with one or more, will be present for several years.

ii. However, those years fly by.

iii. I looked at Jincy Thursday and said, "I can't believe the school year is almost over".

iv. Many of you have warned me about this phenomenon of time flying by as we age and I am truly realizing it really happens.

g. Many couples run into problems when their children leave home because they wrapped their lives up in the activities of their children and didn't take the time to continue growing their relationship with their spouses.

i. While in Memphis for the lectures, I asked a close friend whose last child is now in college, away from home, how it felt to have an empty nest.

ii. She told me that if she and her husband hadn't taken the time to be with one another while the kids were at home, she doesn't know what they would have done when they left.

iii. She emphasized the fact that couples need to do things together while the children are in the home so that they will not feel lost when the kids leave.

h. A husband and wife are blessed greatly if they are given children by the Lord, but those children are not to be the center of their marriage to one another.

i. A husband is to love His wife as He loves himself.

ii. A wife is to honor her husband.

iii. Those are to be ongoing while the children are in the home.

iv. The spouse is to be loved above all else except the Lord.

v. Our spouses are to be our closest friends and included in all things.

vi. They should never feel left out or alienated by us.

4. Appreciate one another.

a. Proverbs 18:22.

- b. Do you thank your spouse for the things he or she does?
 - i. We might think, "Hey, she's supposed to do this or, he's supposed to do that".
 - ii. While it may be true that he or she is supposed to do that, you and I are still to appreciate their doing it.
- c. All of us like to be shown appreciation for things we do for the ones we love.
- d. If we like it, we should believe our spouses like it as well.
- e. Too many times, after the newness of marriage wears off, we begin to take one another for granted.
 - i. One psychologist wrote, "We become deadened to our spouse's special qualities and instead focus on things that annoy us about them. These doldrums leave couples confused and discouraged".
 - ii. This same psychologist blamed lack of appreciation in marriage for the downfall of many marriages.
- f. One writer said that appreciation in marriage is an antidote to divorce.
- g. Our God has done great things for us and we show Him our appreciation by the life we live for Him, as well as the prayers we offer Him.
 - i. While we don't pray to our spouses, we must make sure we are showing them our appreciation for the love and sacrifice they show us.
 - ii. They need to hear and see it.

5. Treat your spouse as the most important person on earth.

- a. Who is more important to you on earth than your spouse?
- b. If you can answer someone else, you have deep problems in your marriage.
- c. There should be no relationship on this earth that is more important than the one with your spouse.
 - i. Too many allow parental relationships to hinder their marriages.
 - ii. Too many allow work relationships to hinder their marriages.
 - iii. Too many allow relationships with children to hinder their marriages.
- d. Jesus gave Himself for the church according to Ephesians 5:25 tells us.
- e. That is how important His relationship with the church was to Him and that is the model we are given for marriage.
- f. As a Christian, I know there is nothing more important to Jesus than the church of which I am a part.
- g. My wife needs to know there is no one more important on earth, just like your spouse needs to know there is no one more important on earth to you.