



Theology vs. Pragmatism

HOW TO SHEPHERD MARRIAGES IN THE
CHURCH WITH SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY

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Introduction

- ▶ Often in the church, preaching/counseling on marriage defaults to pragmatism, “having a great marriage.”
- ▶ Theological foundations present a loftier motivation: for the glory of God.
- ▶ John 15:14—believers obey in love

Advantages to a Theological Approach

- ▶ It avoids pure pragmatism—generally thought of in terms of “How can I have a better marriage FOR ME?”
- ▶ It encourages selflessness
- ▶ It provides a core foundation that acts as a filter for all actions and words vs. just a list of dos and don'ts for marriage.
- ▶ It engages the heart to be accountable to God in marriage

Foundational Thoughts

- ▶ Genesis 2:18-25 provides definition of marriage
 - ▶ Between a man and woman
 - ▶ Exclusive
 - ▶ Extends for a lifetime
 - ▶ Created before God
 - ▶ Created before others
- ▶ Purpose of marriage: Glorify God and bless humanity

Principle 1: The Principal of Mutual Belonging

- ▶ Quality 1: Loyalty
 - ▶ Gen 2:24 is covenant language
 - ▶ Speaks of the dissolution of one covenant the establishment of another.
- ▶ “Cleave” or “hold fast” is covenant language e.g., Ruth 1:16

Principle 1: The Principal of Mutual Belonging

- ▶ Quality 2: Victory
- ▶ Three declarations by bride of Song of Solomon: 2:16-17, 6:3, 7:10
- ▶ 2:16 and 6:3, 8-9 assert ownership in victory over others

Principle 1: The Principal of Mutual Belonging

- ▶ Quality 3: *Mystery*
- ▶ The one-flesh idea: sexual union and more:
 - ▶ Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 6:15-16; 1 Cor 7:5
- ▶ One-flesh includes a mysterious metaphysical bond

Principle 1: The Principal of Mutual Belonging

- ▶ Summary: The principle of mutual belonging says more than “I belong to you and you belong to me.” It says, “We belong to us.”

Principle 2: The Principal of Mutual Love

- ▶ Quality 1: Functional Love
- ▶ Prov 31:12-18—verbs of love
- ▶ Prov 31:29, affirming verbs of love
- ▶ Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33—verbs of love

Principle 2: The Principal of Mutual Love

- ▶ Quality 2: Sanctifying Love
- ▶ Husbands: Eph 5:25-27
- ▶ Wives: 1 Peter 3:1-4

Principle 2: The Principal of Mutual Love

- ▶ Quality 3: Cherishing Love
- ▶ Husbands: 1 Peter 3:7
- ▶ Wives: Titus 2:4

Principle 2: The Principal of Mutual Love

- ▶ Quality 4: Validating Love
- ▶ Husbands: Prov 31:29
- ▶ Wives: Eph 5:33

Principle 3: The Principal of Protection

- ▶ Protect Wife from Harshness of Life
 - ▶ Marriage and Family Protection—Gen 2:9-10, 15
 - ▶ Spiritual Protection
 - ▶ Material Protection—Exod 21:10; 1 Tim 5:8
 - ▶ Emotional Protection—Ruth 1:9; 1 Peter 3:7

Principle 3: The Principal of Protection

- ▶ Protect Wife from Harshness of Husband's Own Sin Nature
 - ▶ Both created in Image of God
 - ▶ She too is to enjoy the "grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7)
 - ▶ Col 3:19 is a protection for wives

Principle 4: The Principal of Help

- ▶ Gen 2:18 gives the primary purpose of a wife
- ▶ Help is described in Gen 1:28; 2:18-20; 2:24
- ▶ Help is described in Titus 2:3-5
- ▶ Help is what makes wifely submission make sense: submission is best understood in the context of functionally helping

Principle 5: The Principal of Loving Intimacy

- ▶ Attitude 1: Holiness
- ▶ Gen 1:28; Heb 13:4
- ▶ Intimacy is both the symbol of and means to oneness.

Principle 5: The Principal of Loving Intimacy

- ▶ Attitude 2: Responsibility
- ▶ 1 Cor 7:3-5--Duty is a godly reason for intimacy
- ▶ A dependence solely on “romance” creates failure and disappointment
- ▶ Fulfilling obligation is not the opposite of love; it is in fulfilling obligations joyfully that love is expressed

Principle 5: The Principal of Loving Intimacy

- ▶ Attitude 3: Priority
- ▶ Prov 5:18-19
- ▶ Lived out...
 - ▶ Seeing the best in the other
 - ▶ Fully giving yourself to the other

Principle 5: The Principal of Loving Intimacy

- ▶ Attitude 4: Desire
- ▶ Righteousness changes “desire” from a sinful concept (Gen 3:16, 4:7) to a reversal of the curse (Song of Solomon 7:10).
- ▶ Observations of “romance”:
 - ▶ Portrayed in Scripture as building desire in the other
 - ▶ Never portrayed as solely the duty of the husband
 - ▶ ALSO portrayed as building desire in SELF

Principle 6: The Principal of Family

- ▶ Paul's teaching on marriage leads to family: Eph 5:22-33→6:1-4; Col 3:18-21
- ▶ Covenant faithfulness to marriage is meant to produce REWARD and EXPANSION: e.g. Prov 1:8
- ▶ Psalm 127:3
 - ▶ Heritage, Fruit, Reward
- ▶ Psalm 128
 - ▶ Productivity in life comes from obedience
 - ▶ Future blessings come from obedience

Synopsis of Theology of Marriage

- ▶ The Principle of Mutual Belonging—loyalty, victory, mystery
- ▶ The Principle of Mutual Love—functional, sanctifying, cherishing, validating
- ▶ The Principle of Protection—from life and husband's sin nature
- ▶ The Principle of Help—Gen 1, 2; Titus 2
- ▶ The Principle of Loving Intimacy—holiness, responsibility, priority, desire
- ▶ The Principle of Family—family is a reward for covenant faithfulness

Four Final Thoughts

- ▶ Christianity has suffered from pragmatism in teaching on marriage such that it is too separated from theology and Scripture. Be wary of this in your own teaching.
- ▶ Christianity has suffered from following worldly standards of marriage, such as unbiblical notions of romance and emotion as leading the marriage.
- ▶ These principles can be used very simply as a litmus test doing marriage counseling. Assign couples to rate the level of each principle in their marriage. This often reveals some core problems.
- ▶ These principles can be used as the filter by which you help a couple or all the married in the church evaluate and shore up their marriages.