

How a Righteous Life Makes a Better Marriage

Intro: It has been extolled as one of the greatest sermons ever delivered—the Sermon on the Mount. Regrettably it has also been one of the least applied sermons ever delivered.

Think of how our world would be changed if everybody practiced the righteousness Jesus taught his disciples to practice. Think about how the world would be changed. Think about how every relationship of our lives would be changed.

I don't know of any relationship that would profit more from the simple righteous living Jesus prescribes than our relationship with our husband or wife. If we took the Sermon on the Mount and applied it to marriage we would have a perfect marriage manual.

Do not let anger cause you to be abusive but instead make reconciliation a priority!

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

(Matthew 5:21-26)

Jesus urged his disciples to see that selfish anger is not only sinful; because it is sinful it is also harmful and destructive.

Our relationships with our spouses often suffer lasting hurt because we are careless with our words when angry!

When we are upset with our spouses we need to be careful how we communicate our dissatisfaction. Sometimes we can attack the person rather than address the problem and the effect it has on us.

Think of how marriages would be changed if each partner practiced the righteousness Jesus taught! What if there was never a hurtful word spoken to be remembered?

But if we are be righteous we must not only abuse others in anger, we must also make efforts to pacify the anger of others.

Jesus urges us to honestly acknowledge the dangers that our misdeed create for others who become angry with us and to take initiative in pacifying their anger. What good does it do to go to church where we

are saying we want the favor of God in worship while we know we are living in disobedience to God—while we know that we have mistreated someone else and even set the conditions for their own sin.

Jesus says instead we should seek reconciliation and that quickly!

Think of how marriages would be changed if each partner practiced the righteousness Jesus taught! What if every couple determined to never let anger cause them to say or do abusive things? What if each person sought to bring resolution to anger we have caused? If each person in a marriage practiced the righteousness of a true disciple, there would never be angry fights, hurtful words, or unresolved hurts.

Keep your desire for your spouse alone.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. (Matthew 5:27-30)

Here the application to marriage is obvious. God made us sexual beings. He created the desire of the man for the woman and the woman for the man; but He reserves the fulfillment of that desire for one’s marriage alone.

As marriage partners we cannot justify any outlet for sexual desire outside our marriages. We must affirm the truth of Heb. 13:4. Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. (Hebrews 13:4)

But it means more! It means that we will take precautions not to let adultery occur. We will keep our “eyes” on our spouse and not upon another.

We must not allow fantasy a place in our thinking. As men we must say as did Job:

“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. (Job 31:1)

Jesus stresses that we can’t take lust lightly. He uses the most dramatic statements to show how we ought to get a handle on it before it leads us to sin.

If every person in marriage practiced the righteousness of a true disciple, there would never be a relationship between a man or woman and a fellow-worker. There would never be the pain of a betrayal, the feelings of shame and inadequacy that come to those who are the victims of infidelity. There would never be a divorce for fornication!

Really mean it when you say “till death do us part”.

“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital

unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:31-32)

Jesus showed how the Pharisees had used the Law to justify a lack of commitment to their wives, a commitment that respected God's creation intention that they "leave and cleave" to one another. Instead he urged his disciples to fulfill the divine purpose by living together for life. (Oliver's statement that the word "divorce" had never come up in over sixty years of marriage).

Jesus revealed that his disciples would not put away their wives, for doing so, except in the case of fornication, would make them culpable in the adultery that occurs by marrying another!

What if every marriage partner said, "I want my marriage to last for life. I don't want to be the cause of my spouse committing adultery because of my divorce!" The divorce lawyers would go out of business; bitter custody battles would be non-existent, children would no longer feel responsible for the breakup of their parents' marriage. Think how things would be changed if every marriage person practiced the righteousness of a disciple!

Conclusion: The real key to a happy marriage is a righteous marriage. Or more properly the union and interaction of two righteous people who want to please God.

What is getting in the way of your marital happiness? Is it your selfishness? Your unwillingness to yield to God? If so, I hope I have persuaded you to reconsider.

There is of course a more serious issue involved here. An unrighteous life not only destroys marriages; ultimately it destroys souls (Rom. 6:23). We all need to repent of our sins against God and come back to the life He created us to live! (Ac. 17:30-31).