

Week Six: *What About...Marriage?*

Luke 20:27-40

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Read Luke 20:27-40.
 - a. Who was questioning Jesus?
 - b. What were they asking?
 - c. What were their intentions?
2. The only time Jesus addresses marriage head-on is when someone comes with a complicated marriage question for him. And their intentions were never to better understand marriage. In order for us to understand marriage, it is important to understand how the people saw marriage in Jesus' day. Read Genesis 2:18. Why was woman created in the first place?
3. In ancient time, there were three stages to a Jewish wedding "ceremony." 1) Shiddukhin, a mutual commitment, 2) Erusin, a period of betrothal or engagement, and 3) Nissuin, a final marriage commitment. Read Matthew 1:19-20. What stage would Mary and Joseph have been in during the time of Jesus' conception? How does this help clarify what Joseph was going through at the time?
4. If you have ever skimmed through some of the many passages of genealogies in the Bible, you can tell by the meticulous recordkeeping that lineage was very important to the Hebrew people. Since lineage was taken so seriously, why would an appropriate-length engagement period be so important?
5. Besides ensuring lineage, the engagement period was also a time of preparation. Both parties would be doing all of the things necessary to prepare for a marriage. The final phase was the legal transfer of property. Bride prices were paid, legal ownership of property was transferred. In the Hebrew culture, women did not own property. All valuables now belonged to the new union and all wealth would be protected for the heirs of this new union. How is this similar to our views of marriage today? How does it differ?
6. Marriage was not always viewed in the romantic way we see it today; marriage was intended to get work done. As we saw in Genesis 2:18, it was not good for man to be alone. The work of the family was going to take the support of a strong unit. As you end your FIFTEEN today, pray for the marriages of the people in your sphere of influence. Pray that God would make them of one heart and mind.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

7. Look again at Luke 20:27-40. How did Jesus answer the Sadducees' question in Luke 20:35?
8. The law the Sadducees were referring is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-6. What was the purpose listed for this law?
9. As we saw in yesterday's lesson, lineage was very important to the ancient Hebrews. Having an heir was essential. How is this similar to our society today? How is it different?

10. What other purposes do we see for marriage today? In your opinion, which is a better way to look at marriage?
11. If marriage on Earth was created to offer stability to the family and to accomplish work on Earth, why would marriage in Heaven not be necessary? In other words, what does it say about the differences between Heaven and Earth?
12. We don't know many specifics about Heaven, but we see in these verses that there will be no marriage; marriage was designed for life on Earth now. (This may or may not be good news, depending on your perspective.) This does not mean we won't have relationships or possibly even recognize one another in Heaven. (See an interesting portion of Scripture in Luke 16:19-31 that seems to suggest that we may recognize each other.) As you end your FIFTEEN today, ask God to help you trust in the plans and purposes he has in your life regardless of what your marital status may be on Earth.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

13. As we have seen this week, marriage was a serious commitment impacting every aspect of life. What can go wrong in a marriage if it is looked at merely as a business transaction?
14. If you type the words “marriage is” in a Google search, likely the first option that pops up would be “marriage is ...hard.” Whether you are married or love some people who are married, you've probably witnessed enough evidence to agree with that statement. What makes marriage so hard?
15. Paul had some words for those who were missing the other important aspects of the marriage relationship. Read Ephesians 5:22-33. How did Paul say that we are to treat one another in marriage?
16. What does this section say about the mutual nature of marriage?
17. Look again at Ephesians 5:32. Other than strong marriages, why is it important for us to understand the nature of marriage?
18. End your FIFTEEN by thanking God for helping you get a better glimpse of him and his love for us through the mystery of marriage, even though marriage is challenging.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

19. Thinking back to our study on Day One, what is the marital couple doing during the betrothal or engagement phase of their relationship?
20. While the couple is busy doing the work of preparing for the marriage, what else are they doing while waiting to unite in marriage? Read Matthew 25:1-12 to get a better picture.

21. Just like the bride who waits for her groom's arrival, we as his people await Jesus' return. Read John 3:28-36. John the Baptist is helping us see the posture in which we are to wait for Christ's return.
22. Who is the bride in these parables? Who is the Bridegroom?
23. What does that say about how much we are loved?
24. Bonus question: Using the analogy in John 3:28-36, John the Baptist compares himself to the friend, standing beside the Bridegroom at the wedding feast. What would be his role in a wedding today?
25. As you finish your FIFTEEN, ask God to help you look forward to the return of the Bridegroom and to live your life expectantly. After all, no one knows the hour of his return.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

26. As we have seen this week, marriage is intended to strengthen families to give a stable base to society. People in strong, secure family units should be able to accomplish more together than the sum of the individual parts alone. Describe a time when you have seen or experienced an example of this.
27. Living in a fallen, sinful world, this is not always the case. Sometimes in our marriages we can do the opposite of providing a strong base. How can you tell if a family unit is strong? Read Matthew 12:33 for a clue.
28. Read John 15:1-8. If your family is not bearing fruit, there is hope. Using the analogy in John 15, answer the following questions.
 - a. Who can help your family be fruitful?
 - b. What does God (the gardener) do for your family?
 - c. What do you need to do?
 - d. What is the result if we remain in him? (See vs. 8.)
29. One thing we know is that we are never without hope. Neither are our marriages. If we want our families to bear fruit, we need to remain in him. After all, God is not in the business of making things better, he's in the business of making dead things come to life! Yet trusting in him can be one of the most terrifying things we do, especially with our marriages. And yet, his promise to us is that when we remain in him, he will remove dead branches, he will prune us, and we will bear fruit. End your final FIFTEEN this week committing to God the most important marriage relationships in your life so that those marriages will be fruitful.