

“Love that Lasts a Lifetime”

Text: Various

May 6, 2007

Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

Rev. Chris Gelini

A couple were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. The husband was asked what the secret was to his successful marriage. As the elderly tend to do, the old gentleman answered with a story.

His wife, Sarah, was the only girl he ever dated. He grew up in an orphanage and worked hard for everything he had. He never had time to date until Sarah swept him off his feet. Before he knew it she had managed to get him to ask her to marry him.

After they had said their vows on their wedding day, Sarah's father took the new groom aside and handed him a small gift. He said, "Within this gift is all you really need to know to have a happy marriage." The nervous young man fumbled with the paper and ribbon until he got the package unwrapped. Within the box lay a large gold watch. With great care he picked it up. Upon close examination he saw etched across the face of the watch a prudent reminder he would see whenever he checked the time of day . . . words that, if heeded, held the secret to a successful marriage. They were, "Say something nice to Sarah."

This morning we continue our series, “Building Your Marriage.”

What is it that makes a marriage last? Are there some ingredients that you can count on that will glue a marriage together and will give you a love that will last a lifetime?

- The answer is...Yes, there are.

SIX INGREDIENTS FROM GOD’S WORD THAT BUILD A LASTING RELATIONSHIP.

1. ACCEPTANCE

A. Romans 15:7, *“Accept one another, then, just as Christ has accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”*

1. Accept one another. This is very important in a marriage because 70% of everybody who gets married, marry their opposites. They have differences. Marriage needs to have some diversity. You can’t agree on everything.

B. I honestly think that God has a real sense of humor in putting opposites together.

1. If you’re married, I can almost guarantee you that one of you is an **early riser** and the other one wants to **hibernate** until noon. You’re just opposite.

2. One of you **loves to talk**. The other is **deaf and dumb**.
 3. One of you loves to **spend money**. And your mate is a **tightwad**.
 4. One of you is always **on time** and the other one is **never on time**.
 5. When it comes to **sex**, one of you is **very romantic**. And your mate is a **dud**.
 6. Differences. One of you is **impulsive and daring** and the other one is **cautious and reserved**.
 7. One of you is **decisive**—you make decisions immediately. The other one looks at a menu for 15 minutes and still **can't decide**.
- C. The fact is, folks, your differences are not wrong, you're just different. Two people can be different and still neither is wrong. The question I start out with is, "Do you accept your mate's differences?" Acceptance is essential to marriage because everybody is imperfect. We all need lots of acceptance.

2. ATTENTION

- A. We all need attention. 1 Peter 1:22, "*Love one another deeply from the heart.*"
- B. Everybody needs attention. As a little kid you used to say, "Watch me, Daddy! Watch me, Mommy! Watch me!" When we get older we still need that attention. We just don't do it so blatantly. We say to the world, "Watch me!"
 1. We say it by how we **dress**.
 2. We say it by our **cars**.
 3. We say it by our **homes**.
 4. We say it by the **plaques** on our wall.
 5. **Watch me!** We need attention.
 6. Do you remember how much attention you gave to your mate when you were dating? Compare that to now. It's ridiculous.
- C. The opposite of love is not hate, but apathy. The worst form of rejection is to be ignored. We all need attention. 1 Peter 3:7, "*Husbands, be considerate of your wives.*" Pay attention to them.
 1. A national poll was taken on "How well do you know your mate?" The fact is wives know their husbands a lot better than husbands know their wives. Pay attention to your spouse. It pays off.

3. ADJUSTMENT

- A. We need to adjust to each other. Ephesians 5:21, "*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*" That means there is a mutual adjusting. Submission means "to adjust to". It says "submit to one another".

1. Doesn't the Bible say that the husband is the spiritual leader of the home? Yes, that's very true.
 2. Doesn't the Bible say that the wife is to follow her husband's leadership? Yes, it does.
 3. But it also says, "*Submit to one another.*" When a wife follows her husband's leadership it doesn't mean she does all the adjusting. There is a mutual adjusting – submitting to one another. There's a place for compromise. You both need to give in sometimes.
- B. The problem is, we get so busy trying to change our mates that we don't have time to look at what we need to change.
1. So often I'll hear people say, "After marriage, he'll change." Or "After we're married I'll change him." Then we implement this personal development program for our spouse and they soon resent it.
- C. Some people can't adjust so they divorce and remarry. The fact is, the longer you live the more set in your ways you become. Often in a second marriage you're even more stubborn and more unwilling to change.

4. AMNESTY

- A. You need to call a truce. Total forgiveness. How many of you agree that you can't make it in a marriage without forgiveness? You've got to have a lot of forgiving going on in a marriage. One guy said, "We have a beef stew relationship: I beef and my wife stews."
- B. Resentment will kill your marriage quicker than anything. What do you tend to resent in your marriage?
1. Maybe you resent that your spouse **doesn't accept the responsibility** that is theirs.
 2. Maybe you resent that he or she **doesn't clean up her mess**.
 3. Maybe you resent the fact that your **spouse gets to travel more** than you do.
 4. Maybe you resent the fact that they **won't talk to you or listen to you**.
 5. Maybe you resent the fact that they are **irresponsive or insensitive to your sexual needs**.
- C. The fact is, resentment always hurts **you** worse than the person you're resenting. What do you do? Remember that God has forgiven you. Colossians 3:14, "*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*" That's the key. You've been forgiven so you ought to forgive.
1. Margaret

5. APPRECIATION

- A. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.”* The most encouraging thing you can do is express appreciation. Everybody needs appreciation. The power of praise is awesome in helping people blossom.
- B. What does it mean to appreciate? To appreciate means to raise in value. Whenever you appreciate your spouse you are actually increasing their value, your own value and the relationship’s value.
- C. How often should I appreciate? Hebrews 3:13, *“Encourage one another daily.”* I think every marriage ought to have a minimum daily requirement of at least one compliment a day. Look for ways to be creative and appreciate.
1. Let me tell you what Lee Mayfield did for her husband, Bob. Bob is a teacher and everyday for years since they’ve been married, Lee has prepared Bob’s sack lunch which includes a love note. I think that’s a great idea. A lot of times she gives a word of advice or encouragement. One time, Bob was at work eating and his fellow workers had noticed the note. One of the people said, “Did your wife write you a note today?” Bob said, “Yes, she did.” They asked to read it. One of the things that Lee had written on the love note was “Be kind to your students and co-workers today.” A little encouragement. After the worker friend of Bob’s read the note she said, “You guys have a good marriage, don’t you?” Bob said, Yeah. She said, “Is your wife a Christian, too?” Yes. “You guys go to church every Sunday don’t you?” Yes, we sure do. “It sure makes a difference. You’re one of the lucky ones.”
 2. When you raise the value of your mate, when you love your mate, it’s not only good for them, it’s a testimony to the world. It’s an example of God’s love for us.
- D. Appreciation. Let God build that into your marriage.

6. AFFECTION

- A. I’m talking about the physical expression of love in your marriage. Physical expressions of love are vital to your relationship. Romans 16:16, *“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”* As food is to your body’s health, touching and tenderness and contact are to the emotions. I know a lot of marriages that are dying of malnutrition. They just don’t touch each other any more.
- B. 1 Corinthians 7 is Paul’s advice on sex in marriage and it’s very contemporary. *“The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other (he’s talking about sexual relationships) except by mutual consent and then only for a brief time so that you can devote*

yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because you lack self-control.”

Paul says three things about sex:

1. It is a **legitimate need**, not to be ignored. It's a vital part of your relationship.
2. It is for **mutual benefit**. It's for both the husband and the wife. When the wife married her husband, she gave up part of her right to her own body. When the husband married his wife, he gave up part of his right to his own body. It is a mutual benefit and either spouse may initiate.
3. It is a **spiritual responsibility**. If you're married, your sexual relationship is a spiritual responsibility. If you avoid it and deny it, you are bringing all kinds of possible consequences in your marriage that the devil can try to get hold of. Don't deny it. I'll bet most of you have never thought of sex as a spiritual responsibility.

What is it that makes a marriage Christian? You can both be Christians and not have a Christian marriage. A Christian marriage is a marriage where:

1. They **follow the teachings of Christ** – **love** one another, **accept** one another, **submit** to one another, **encourage** one another, **show affection for** one another.
2. The **Spirit of Christ** is invited to be **present and resident** in the relationship.

Philippians 2:4-5. If we would just follow these verses we would have so many fewer problems in our marriages. *“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Each of you should not only think of yourself but also of the interests of your spouse. And then, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ.”*

The bottom line is you treat your spouse the way Jesus would. That's what it means to have a Christian marriage.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we know that the family is the basic unit of society and that our nation and our church are only as strong as the families in it. I pray, Lord, that You would give us strong marriages. Help us to be different in a world where we see marriages falling apart all around us. May our church be committed to building strong marriages and families. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen