



GROWING – Understanding Marriage 19th July 2020 Brian Greenaway

This Study Guide provides a summarised study with additional discussion questions based on the scriptures mentioned in the sermon.

Connect:

“God invented marriage right back at the beginning of creation. It is defined and blessed by Him. It is important that husbands and wives understand their role and submit to one another in love.”

Pastor Brian Greenaway

1. What is the greatest demonstration of the Kingdom of God? Miracles, financial provision, hundreds becoming believers?
2. What is the most important building block of human society? Go back through history and see great and long-lasting civilisations. What has been their foundation? Their strength?
3. What is at the centre of Old Testament spirituality? What is the core area where God built a society that would be morally strong?

Engage:

4. The answer to all those 3 questions is: Family, and at the centre of the family – Marriage.
- Following the seemingly hopeless situation in Genesis 11 where God has to scatter the people because of their insistence to get together to do wickedness, He has a plan starting in Genesis 12 where He chose a husband and a wife (a marriage) and said, ‘right let’s start right here’.
5. A foundational issue:
One man – one woman, there is no alternative. And God has the call on that, He invented the concept and He has not modified it for anyone, ever.
6. Societies have attempted to change and modify the concept God created. For example, the polygamy in the Old Testament, God never sanctioned it, they were His people and He worked with them in their imperfections. (There were some massive problems in polygamous marriages in the Old Testament – jealousy, envy, bickering, strife.)
- If we look back through history, societies that valued marriage and the family unit were strong. There were major civilisations that collapsed when they turned on their families.
7. God said that everything was good or very good except one thing – He said, ‘it is not good for man to be _____’ ?
8. What is marriage?
 - Marriage is bringing two fallen imperfect people together in intimate, constant proximity. Carrying out their relationship in a broken, sin-filled world which constantly provokes their sinful state.
9. What must you do to experience the real joy of marriage?

“Marriage requires honesty and transparency. It needs light.”

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10. What must the way we interact with one another be led by?

Framework:

11. Read Ephesians 5:22-33
12. **This is for the husbands:** What does this scripture say to you?
 - When was the last time you made a plan to love and cherish your wife? To encourage her, to sacrifice your desires for her.
 - What was the last thing you gave up for her?

- When was the last time your dream died so that you can help her to fulfil hers?

13. For everyone:

“In the end it is relationships – how we treat one another – that are the most important aspects of our lives to God.”

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14. Historical context:

- If you look at the writing of Plato and Aristotle it will give you some idea of how men in a Greco Roman context treated women, it certainly wasn't as equals. In fact, Plato says that men who lived cowardly and immoral lives were reborn as women.
 - History tells that around the time of Roman rule of Israel, that many prominent Roman women converted to Judaism because it gave them more rights and so a ban was put on conversion.
 - The Bible has never subjugated women or put them as second class. In fact, correctly interpreted it raises the profile of women and sees them as equal. Jesus did. It is misinterpretation and men's desires that have done that.
15. We are all accountable to God for everything He has given us. The Bible likens us to stewards. God gives us gifts, abilities, finance, resources, relationships. And all of those we are accountable to Him for.
16. Did you realise that marriage is temporary? When we die it's over. If you are married in this life, we believe that that relationship and the person to whom God has brought you, was your most important earthly relationship. How have you been stewarding that relationship?
17. Have you really been putting your best effort in?
18. What will God say to you about how you treated the one who was supposed to be the most important person in your life, after God?
- Marriage is a Covenant relationship. God uses covenants because they are the highest form of relationship and demonstrates what God has given His people.
19. What is a covenant?
- Covenant is intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman. Marriage is a vow to God, to each other, our families and our community to remain steadfast in unconditional love, reconciliation and sexual purity, while purposefully growing in our covenant marriage relationship.
 - A covenant is **NOT** a contract! Contracts are based on protection and mistrust. They allow the parties involved to look for loop holes and exit clauses, and are centred on your rights and protection. In fact, the Bible doesn't say anything about “contracts”.

20. The difference between a Contractual and Covenant Marriage:

Contract	Covenant
<i>I take you for me.</i>	<i>I give myself to you.</i>
<i>You had better do it!</i>	<i>How may I serve you?</i>
<i>What do I get?</i>	<i>What can I give?</i>
<i>I'll meet you halfway</i>	<i>I'll give you 100% plus</i>
<i>I have to</i>	<i>I want to</i>

21. Discuss what elements make up a covenant marriage?

“The goal of a covenant marriage is to glorify God in your relationship and to exemplify Christ to the world.”

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The Challenge:

This week ahead begins with earthquake and our week of prayer. And I want to put a challenge out.

We are beginning to see this move out of lockdown. As a church we are not just going to fall out of it, things will never be the same. And as a family in the church we cannot sit back and say, what's the church doing? You are the church. Whether you are an individual or a family. Don't just switch on the PC, or phone at 7:57pm for the Prayer and Fasting evening meetings and work your way through the list. Dedicate this week to be a time of prayer. A time when you will look back and say, that week set us up for the next season. You won't just remember it in August or September, you will remember it next year and the year after.

We believe that God is calling us to use this lockdown period to change our season. We talk about seasons of life but did you know that you can change your season? You can alter the very atmosphere and framework of your family. You can experience things like never before, you can move your situation to a different level in God.

Prayer for All:

“Thank you for marriages and for families. Thank you that you created them as a building block of society. Please bless the families in our church, make them strong. In Jesus Name Amen.”

Prayer for Husbands & Wives:

“Dear Lord, please help me to fulfil my responsibility under You, to be a godly husband/wife.
In Jesus Name Amen.”

Extra Resources to further your study:

- www.focusonthefamily.com
- www.goingbeyond.com/
- [*The five Love Languages – Gary Chapman*](#)
- [*The Power of Prayer to Change your Marriage – Stormie Omartian*](#)
- [*Love and War - John and Stasi Eldredge*](#)
- [*The Love Dare – Alex and Stephen Kendrick*](#)
- [*Love and Respect - Emerson Eggerichs*](#)